



#### **Mission Statement**

Impelled by the love of Christ,
we, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth,
offer every loving service in our power
to meet the critical needs
of God's people.

#### **Vision Statement**

As Sisters of Charity we commit ourselves here and now to embrace anew the charism given us by Vincent, Louise, Mother Xavier:

- to love the poor,
- to love one another,
- to live simply,
- and to unite the whole of our lives
- in the poor and loving Christ.



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#### **Voices of Charity**

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#### in this issue







From the	
Community	Director

Sister Maureen Hall . . . . . . . . . . . . 2

#### Celebration of Charity

Sister Therese Bangert	3
Sister Judith Jackson	4
Sister Eileen Marie Johnson	5
Sister Susan Yerkich	6

#### Re-markings

Mastering the fine art of parody 8
Discipleship: 'What on earth is it?' 10
Of Special Note
Highlighting special honors
and 'in the news' items

#### Book Review

Book captures Vincent's	
passion, energy 1	13

#### SCL Associates

God 'colors outside the lines'	
in Associate's life	14

'Making Choices'	15
Discipleship within the wide tent	16

#### Leavenwords

Laughter a key ingredient	
for Sister Marie Helen Grieshaber	17

#### Beyond All Borders New experience, new culture

for two SCLs	3
Xavier students donate funds to benefit children in Peru	)
Needs assessment producing results 21	I

#### Sponsored Ministries

Mount Saint Vincent receives
prestigious designation for
program targeted to help children $\dots$ 23
News from SCL Health System 24

#### Blessings! ¡Bendiciones!

Forward – 2013.......25







#### Community Director



Sister Maureen Hall

In early May, I was privileged to attend my first meeting of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) in Rome. What an amazing experience to share community with 800 women religious who are leaders of congregations in 76 countries and to absorb the community of our universal Church.

With the theme, "'It will not be so among you' (Mt. 20:26) – The service of leadership under the Gospel," we discussed leadership and service, the cost of discipleship and our role in today's Church. I was blessed to attend a general audience with Pope Francis on May 1, Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. Together, we prayed for all those who "labor in the vineyard" and the many worldwide who are seeking meaningful work. The theme of the conference and the connectedness of community with these international leaders will remain with me for a very long time.

We have just hosted the annual meeting of the Sisters of Charity Federation on our Leavenworth campus. From June 11 through 16, leaders of congregations that share the traditions of Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac and Elizabeth Ann Seton met around the theme "Courageous Charity – Deepening Collaboration."

Following this gathering, we are celebrating Jubilee with four SCLs marking their 50th anniversaries. Their stories of leadership, discipleship, service and community are highlighted in this edition of Voices of Charity. June will end with our annual Leadership Camp for sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

A few days later, approximately 300 Sisters and Associates will come together for our All Community Gathering around the theme, "Come. Look forward..." Our guest speaker will explore the radical demands of discipleship with us. We are looking forward to being together for wonderful celebrations of the 50th anniversary of our South American missions and the 25th anniversary of our SCL Associate program. The weekend will end with the joy-filled profession of perpetual vows by Sister Rejane Cytacki.

These themes of leadership, discipleship, service and community have recurred throughout our history. They remain with us as we look ahead to the future in hope. They are very much part of who we are as SCLs and Associates. And for this, we give thanks and anticipate "the good that is yet to be."

Sister Maureen Hall

SCL Community Director

State James Hall

As four Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth observe their 50th anniversaries of entering the Community, we extend sincere congratulations to each of them and wish them continued blessings in years ahead.

The support of living my faith and the encouragement to develop and share my gifts continue to come from these women [the SCL Community].

— Sister Therese Bangert



#### **Sister Therese Bangert**

To have the health and energy to celebrate and reflect on 50 years of a Call is no small gift. I find my heart full of gratitude for all the teachers who have guided and inspired me in the classroom of Life.

My first teachers were my parents, Edna and Gerald, both graduates of the Jesuit Creighton University. They witnessed values of faith, family, hospitality and a detachment from material things. We lived an enthusiasm for children and welcoming New Life. I am privileged to be number three with seven sisters and four brothers. These siblings are also my teachers as I witness them within their families living the values of our parents, each in diverse ways. My brothers and nephews whose vocation is farming provide me the opportunity to come home to the land and continue to learn her lessons.

Our beloved Community of SCLs has been the second core of my teachers. I have carried a quote in my heart for years: "If you think you are holy, go live by yourself. It's when you live with other people that you find you are not holy."The support of living my faith and the encouragement to develop and share my gifts continue to come from these women. Both of my parents encouraged the equality of women. Witnessing our strong Sister leaders and reading the history of our remarkable/courageous founding Sisters only underline this equality.

St. Vincent says, "Grace moves," and that summarizes the many teachers I have met in my varied ministries from students in the classroom to the Church Family at Our Lady & St. Rose. Through the years, I've grown to redefine who is holy. For 40 years, I've been involved on some level in praying with people who are incarcerated. Those who choose to gather to pray have touched me for years with their ability to give God thanks and petition God for the addicted, the homeless, the mentally ill. Grace moves! In the past 17 years, I've volunteered as a police chaplain. There is a lot to learn about God, Jesus, the Spirit on the scenes of homicides, suicides and natural deaths. I often say, "I love police and prisoners," and I have found holiness in them.

The call to enter the world of policy – being a low-paid lobbyist – came at the mid-way of these 50 years. I've been taught the crucial importance of public policy and its impact on the lives of the poor. My relationship with public officials has taught me to heed Jesus' admonition to "shake the dust" in relating to a few. But for the majority, I've learned to respect them, despite our differences, and to be careful never to put them in a box. They have taught me that the courage I expect of them, I do not always have myself.

This policy work has led me to be the social justice coordinator of our Sisters and Associates. "Send the Sisters after them" is not an infrequent request that I receive from team members in advocacy. It is my privilege to join our SCL voices with the "Nuns on the Bus," Catholic Relief Services, Justice for Immigrants and many more who attend to policy that lifts up the poor.

My 25 years' journey with the struggle to end the death penalty has brought me face to face, hand to hand with amazing sons, daughters, mothers, fathers of persons who speak forgiveness to the ones who murdered their loved ones. "Can I be so forgiving of things much less?" my spirit questions me.

In my early years, Grace moved me to nine years at St. Vincent's Home in Topeka, Kan. In

# Celebration of Charity

those years I absorbed and touched the raw deep anguish of what it meant to not belong to anyone ... to not have a home! Throughout the rest of my life, I've carried in my heart the lessons learned at the feet of St. Vincent's children. And St. Vincent's gave me one of the greatest gifts of my life – my adopted-in-the-heart son, Gary Harris. I am his Mom. We walk the walk. He is one of the strongest persons I know. Without words, he has taught me what I can unconsciously hold in White privilege.

I entered our SCL Community at the time of Vatican II and was privileged to live within the pain and glory of the renewal of religious life and the Church. I still cling to the teaching of Vatican II that the Church I love and serve is to be Light and Salt in the world. The deepest hunger in my own spirit is the hunger for God's Kingdom – "Thy Kingdom Come." With the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit, my Master Teacher, my ministries

and life have enabled me to address that hunger. That hunger is nurtured and strengthened by the prayer of the Psalms and praying with the stories of the Gospels. So I desire to embrace the movement of grace in the years ahead with the hope of the ending song of "Les Miserables":

Do you hear the people sing Lost in the valley of the night? It is the music of a people Who are climbing to the light...

They will live again in freedom
In the garden of the Lord,
They will walk behind the plough-share,
They will put away the sword.
The chain will be broken
And all men will have their reward.

As I look back on my life, it is the relationships that are most meaningful: God, family, friends, Community members, students, patients, their families, co-workers, the poor.





#### Sister Judith Jackson

Proclaim Jubilee: A Spirituality for the Twenty-First Century by Maria Harris with her descriptors of biblical jubilee captures in images/metaphors my joy and gratitude as I reflect on the fullness of life and the Jubilee celebration of 50 years as a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth.

- To keep Sabbath, lie fallow, be still, contemplate.
- To forgive and be forgiven.
- To liberate self and others.
- · To do justice.
- · To feast at the table of LIFE.

I treasure the gift of my life; it has been a graced journey. Yet, I have been a pilgrim, always searching, and a lifelong learner. Blessed from birth, I was born in Kansas City, Mo., on May 31, 1945, the youngest of three children to loving, faith-filled and supportive parents, Bill and Mary Virginia. My Father was an accountant and my Mother, a stay-at-home Mom. My brother Roger is the eldest, and my sister Jane, two years my senior. To this day, Jane, also a Sister of Charity,

is my soul-mate, and my brother, Roger, one of my dearest friends. Our lives together have revolved around family, extended family, school, parish, service, annual family vacations and friends.

My brother always claims that his finest decision in life was his marriage to Nadyne. Nadyne has been the greatest sister-in-law. We celebrated in joy their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 2012. It has been a lifelong delight to enjoy their daughters, my nieces, Susan, Teresa, Mary and Jane, and to watch them flourish and grow into such beautiful women. I treasure them, their husbands and my 15 fantastic grandnieces and grandnephews.

From my earliest memories, I was interested in people, in connections, in relationships. Prior to my school years, family lore relates that I would visit neighbors daily "on my own" to engage in conversation. I loved school, sports (played first base on a softball team with the same girls from third grade until high school graduation) and engaged in multiple organizations and activities.

The call to religious life as a Sister of Charity was in some ways inevitable. From kindergarten through my first year in college (St. Louis Grade School, Bishop Hogan High School, Saint Mary College), the Sisters modeled a loving, prayerful community, inspired a love of learning, and created a hunger for justice. I entered the religious community in August 1963 at the time of Vatican II. My formation years bridged the old and the new, a very definite time of transition in religious life.

After profession of vows, I stayed on in the juniorate to complete my initial degree in history, secondary education and theology. My further education included a master's in spirituality from Creighton University; two years' internship in clinical pastoral education, St. Francis Health Center, Topeka; and a yearlong fellowship in administration/ ethics to prepare for the health system leadership role. All of these rich opportunities enabled me to grow in my ministries of service.

My ministries have come full circle. Initially, I taught history, political science and theology at the secondary level. Early on, I became an administrator. While in pursuit of the higher degree, a clinical rotation was required, so I chose clinical pastoral education. In this process, I recognized my calling to minister to the sick and the dying.

For many (17) years, I served as a chaplain in our health system hospitals. From 1995 on, I assumed a leadership position in our health

system as vice president of sponsorship/mission. In this role, I blended the teaching and healing ministries, cherished so many colleagues, served as a spiritual guide and moral rudder within the ministry. I retired from the health system in 2010. After a spiritual sabbatical, I have currently returned to direct service as a hospice chaplain with Catholic Community Hospice, an arm of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas.

Community life has been both gift and challenge. I treasure the Community's heritage and tradition: the interconnectedness of the generations within Community; our communal concern for the poor and vulnerable; our mission integrity for we are who we say we are; and the prayerful witness of those who have gone before and the challenge of those who have come after.

I delight in people and their stories, music, poetry, reading, following sports, the beauty of nature, travel and diverse spiritualities.

As I look back on my life, it is the relationships that are most meaningful: God, family, friends, Community members, students, patients, their families, co-workers, the poor. I treasure so many relationships. Because I do, I have known great joy and great loss. I am most grateful for the gift of awareness of the sacred encounters of each day and the provident hand of God that has and will guide my life's journey.

Working closely with the Sisters of Charity, I became fascinated with their lifestyle.

— Sister Eileen Marie Johnson



#### Sister Eileen Marie Johnson

I was born Carol Lee Johnson on Jan. 5, 1945 in Roswell, N. M., to Helen (Schmitt) and William (Bill) Johnson. My Dad was in the Army at the time. I had an older sister, Mary Ann who was 3 years old. When I was able to be taken out of the incubator, we moved to Lansing, Kan. Three years later, my younger sister Linda was born.

Growing up in Lansing, a small community, I was the typical tomboy, doing things like catching snakes and being a gofer for my dad who was a plumber by trade and also a mechanic at the VA Center. In grade school, I played softball

and ran dashes for track and field. I liked playing basketball and volleyball, but there were no girls' teams. I loved sports a lot.

I am a musician. I took accordion lessons through high school and played trumpet and baritone in the band. I also took chorus classes and did some ensemble singing at the music festivals. In college, I played the French horn in the orchestra. In my years at Mount Saint Vincent Home, I taught myself to play the guitar.

As a high school student, I worked every day at Saint Mary College in the cafeteria after

# Celebration of Charity

school. Working closely with the Sisters of Charity, I became fascinated with their lifestyle. I applied for entrance into the Community after I graduated in May 1963. I entered the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth that August.

My first mission was to teach third grade at Nativity School in Independence, Mo. After that first year, I was sent back to the Mother House to attend Saint Mary College. I was then missioned to Denver to be a child care worker at Mount Saint Vincent Home from 1968 to 1970. I returned to the Mother House. I told the Community I was interested in sports, and so I began studies toward a degree in physical education. I started at Saint Mary College and transferred to Kansas University to complete my degree. I graduated from college in 1973. I was missioned to Butte Central High School in Montana that year. I taught girl's physical education and health classes for the first seven years and theology classes for all four grades for the last six years. I was also assistant coach for cross country and girls' basketball.

I loved my years at Central, but when I was asked to come to Anaconda by Father Timothy "Coke" Shea, I accepted. He needed a music minister and a youth minister. In Anaconda, I had a youth group and Confirmation classes for juniors and seniors. I also typed presider guides and lector guides for every weekend liturgy. I gave homilies until it was no longer allowed that women give "reflections" at Mass. I worked with Father Jack Murray for 19 years. We had a very good working relationship.

As a youth minister at Anaconda Catholic Community, I had the privilege of accompanying high school students, college students, young adults, adults and Sisters to Tijuana, Mexico, to build houses for the poor. There were anywhere from 12 to 26 of us in our group. Each year the group got larger. What a wonderful experience for everyone!

I took groups there for 10 years, and many of the same people went back time and time again. At some point in that 10-year span, Sister Mary Jo McDonald and youth and adults from Butte joined our group. Sister Lin Sayatovic, Sister Nancy Svetlecic and Erica Berg joined us, too. It was always the highlight of my summers. I started in 2000 and continued until 2009 when the drug cartel began some heavy trafficking in that area.

I was also director of the Food Bank and Project Care, which helped people who needed assistance in any way. In addition, I also worked with a grief group that was very rewarding for all of us.

The last 34 years in Montana have been wonderful. My successes have far outweighed all that came before. I will always cherish my years in Montana!!!

From August 2011 to June 2012, I was in a sabbatical program in Berkeley, Calif., called "New Directions." This experience was very helpful for me to heal and renew my spirit. I began school at McKinnon Massage in June 2012 and finished in March 2013. By my Jubilee celebration, I should have my feet firmly planted somewhere, so in the meantime, I do have to be open to the Spirit and "Look to the good that is yet to be."

Those of us who lived and worked together formed a special bond that continues to this day.

— Sister Susan Yerkich



#### Sister Susan Yerkich

Although I left Butte 50 years ago when I entered the Community, I still call it "home." I was born at St. James Hospital on May 24, 1945 to Joe and Leona (Guidi) Yerkich. I joined my older brother Sam who was a little more than two years older than me. By 1960, I had six more siblings: Jolene, Daniel, Nancy, Michael, Kathy and Peter. There was a six-year gap between Daniel and Nancy, so by the time the four younger ones joined our family, I was old enough to help care

for them. I had many opportunities to entertain them, play with them, and trick them into doing what I wanted them to do! Little did I realize that they were preparing me for a career of working with children.

My Dad was an insurance salesman for most of his working career. He was a great golfer and spent a great deal of time teaching others to golf. His other love was music. He played the big bass and the guitar. We spent a lot of time singing along to his guitar playing. Mom was a very busy homemaker caring for eight children. When the "little kids" were enrolled in school, she began working for the public schools as a teacher's aide. Both of my parents were involved with parish and school activities.

I have fond memories of my childhood days. There were a number of kids in our neighborhood, and we were pretty creative in creating fun. The age span of "the gang" was at least six years, but we didn't let that affect our activities. We often hiked to the mountain as a group, played typical games like kick the can, played cowboys and Indians, and put on productions and even charged admission for some of them. Most of us attended St. Ann's School, so we spent a lot of time together.

I also have wonderful memories of spending time with my grandparents. Nonno (Italian for grandfather) was my maternal Grandfather. Nonno became a widower when my Mother was 7 and the youngest of four girls, so he was a single parent. He and my great uncle Fred, owned and operated Guidi Brothers' Grocery, an Italian grocery store. He made wonderful salami, sausage and other Italian lunch meats. I loved visiting his store. In addition to cooking delicious meals for us, he let us play store. My siblings and I had a great time pretending to be workers at the store. Nonno didn't speak much English, but he certainly communicated his love and care for all of us.

My paternal Grandmother was widowed twice by the time my Father was 9. Grandma had five children to feed and clothe. She took in boarders and befriended many Butte miners, who did not have families in the city. What she had, she generously shared with other people. She put on a marvelous spread for holidays. Many folks who had nowhere else to go gathered at Grandma's house.

I attended St. Ann's School for eight years, where I was taught by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVMs). I enjoyed school, had good friends and belonged to some clubs outside of school. I attended public schools my freshman and sophomore years. By the time I was reaching my junior year, I realized that I missed my close friends who were attending Girls' Central. I enrolled there and loved it. That's when I met the SCLs.

It was during one of our retreats at school that I started thinking about entering religious life. Sister Mary Cecilia Carig was the person I talked to about this. She was very helpful with my preparations to enter the Community, Ironically, I decided not to enter the BVM community because they only taught school as a ministry. I knew that the SCLs ministered in orphanages, and that was what interested me.

While we were in our early formation years and not yet on a mission, we were asked to list our

preferences regarding ministry; orphanage work was first on my list. Of course, as was common in those days, my first mission was a teaching position at St. Patrick School in North Kansas City, Mo. I was there for two years and loved it. Teaching was better than I had anticipated.

Next, I was assigned to St. Joseph School in Anaconda, Mont. I was thrilled to be so close to Butte. It meant that I was able to spend time with my family. My youngest brothers and sisters were so little when I entered the Community that I was afraid they wouldn't remember me. Those four years in Anaconda took care of that!

Then, I returned to the Mother House to finish my degree. I only needed a semester of school, so that meant I was free to serve somewhere second semester. At that same time, a child care worker was needed at St. Vincent's Home in Topeka. Someone found my "list," and I was invited to join the staff at "The Home," as we called it. By then, St. Vincent's didn't really have orphans. The children who lived there were not able to live at home for various reasons. St. Vincent's was a treatment center for children with emotional problems. My eight years there taught me more than I expected. Those of us who lived and worked together formed a special bond that continues to this day.

When I moved from St. Vincent's Home, I joined the staff of Ancilla Center, the daycare/pre-school on the campus of the University of Saint Mary that was opening that year. I loved the little kids, but I also realized that I wanted to get back to the classroom that I had left 10 years before.

I joined the faculty of St. John School in Lawrence, Kan., in August 1982. My 30 years there have gone by very quickly. For a number of years, I've been teaching the "children of the children" I've taught. No grandchildren of the children yet! I'm very proud and honored to be a member of the St. John faculty.

The city of Lawrence has an energy that I love. Soon after I started teaching here, I was asked to talk to a group at KU about religious life. Since I didn't know when we SCLs first came to Lawrence, I did a little research! Sister Mary Buckner in the History of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas, wrote that Sisters arrived in Lawrence in 1865. The "colony of sisters" returned to the Mother House in 1878. In 1956, St. John School began the ministry of education. It feels right to be where we first branched out from Leavenworth in 1865.

I celebrate my Golden Jubilee with a grateful heart. I pray in thanksgiving for the support and love of my family, friends and Community. These 50 years have gone by quickly, but they have been filled with many blessings, some challenges and a deep appreciation for all that has shaped my life and for what the future may hold.

#### Re-markings

# Mastering the fine art of PARODY

We salute three Sisters of Charity who have mastered the fine art of parody.

They do it with ease, aiming to please, and often for fun and hilarity!

All right already. Let's have some fun and tease out how three SCLs have played word games and transformed songs to reflect and celebrate people, special events and observances.

#### Sister Peg Johnson

Her parents told Sister Peg Johnson that she danced in the crib before she could walk. That natural sense of rhythm cultivated by her musically gifted family and her SCL teachers nurtured Sister Peg's talents.

Her Dad was her first teacher. He taught her harmony and sight reading, how to chord on the piano and how to play ukulele. She started piano lessons in third grade instructed by Sister Anne Callahan. By fourth grade at St. Louis Grade School, Kansas City, Mo., Sister Peg was at the xylophone. Benefiting from free community tickets, her family enjoyed musicals performed outdoors at Starlight Theatre. In eighth grade, Sister Peg conducted the school orchestra because Sisters weren't allowed to conduct in public in those days. She also learned clarinet and trombone.

"From grade school through college, I had powerhouse music teachers," Sister Peg recalls, listing names including Sisters Anne Callahan, Madeleva Ditmars, Dominique Long and Rose Tomlin.

After one year of college at the University of Saint Mary (USM), Sister Peg entered the Community. It was as a postulant that she was first tapped for the "parody business." For Parents' Visiting Day, the aspiring SCLs settled on a musical account of their lives as postulants. Sister Peg penned the lyrics by adapting songs of the popular "Mary Poppins."

"That launched my parody career," she says smiling.
A high point came in 1992 with a memorable Carmen
Miranda-like rendition of "La Cucaracha" to recognize



Not only does she write parodies, Sister Peg Johnson is a gifted musician – pictured in costume performing at a Mother House Mardi Gras celebration.

Sisters Regina DeCoursey, Andrea Johnston and Daniel Stefani on their Golden Jubilees. Sisters Peg, Mary Pat Lenahan and Rita McGinnis did the honors decked out in appropriate attire: white blouses, dark skirts, colorful sashes, false eyelashes and hats with plastic fruit. They sang:

Las tres hermanas, las tres hermanas came to us in '42. La tres hermanas, las tres hermanas, now it's time to honor you.

Sister Peg reports that she receives regular requests for a repeat performance – costumes, makeup and all!

When writing parodies, Sister Peg strives to match the song with the message she wants to convey. And rhythm remains important to her. "I try to make the words fit the rhythm and rhyme scheme of the song," she explains.

In between her parody gigs, Sister Peg taught music in grade school and high school. She currently serves as Community Secretary. And in this role, she continues to write parodies for special occasions and engages the Community Officers in entertaining antics. SCLs and Associates attending this summer's All Community Gathering will experience this in action. Stay tuned!



Sister Mary Lenore Martin has played the saxophone since high school, most notably with the Remnants SCL performing group.

#### **Sister Mary Lenore Martin**

It was her good friend Sister Madeleva Ditmars who first asked Sister Mary Lenore Martin to write a parody. One of the early requests she recalls was to adapt a song from "Jesus Christ Superstar" for use at Mass.

From then on, Sister Mary Lenore was pegged as the parody go-to person at the University of Saint Mary and at the request of some high school music teachers! "I didn't write poetry," she says. "Why they came to me, I don't know."

But Sister Mary Lenore loves music, and she likes performing, so writing parodies became part of her creative repertoire! Among her favorites was the October 1988 celebration of Sister Mary Janet McGilley's 25th anniversary as president of the University of Saint Mary (USM). Sister Mary Lenore collaborated with Sister Madeleva to transform words of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas into a musical tribute. In summer 1997, for her own group of Golden Jubilarians, Sister Mary Lenore took "Ode to Joy" and wrote:

On this day of celebration, we praise God in heaven above who this day has brought together Sisters, families, friends we love. Years now golden bring rejoicing for the blessings we've received. And today with grateful voices, we confirm faith long believed.

Music has been an important part of Sister Mary Lenore's life. For \$1 and two bus tokens, a man with a strong German accent – whose name escapes her – came to the Martin home in Butte, Mont., and gave the siblings piano lessons. At Girls' Central, Sister Marianna DeTarr, the music teacher, asked Sister Mary Lenore if she could read music and play an instrument. Responding "yes" to both questions, the high school student received a

saxophone. She continued to play the sax in the college band and then with the Remnants SCL performing group.

Sisters Mary Lenore and Madeleva both entered the Community in August 1947. They had become friends in college at USM where Sister Mary Lenore played in Sister Madeleva's dance band. The two tempted fate and their novice mistress on several counts their first day on the Mother House campus. They showed up as late as they could. Then having donned their postulant garb, the pair decided to venture over to the college campus, only to encounter Sister Laurentia Sullivan, their novice mistress who had chapel in mind for the new entrants to the Community.

Escorted to the front pew of the chapel packed with Sisters making retreat, the two lasted as long as they could and with all eyes on them decided to make an exit. Sister Dorothy Hanly told them, "I thought I'd seen the last of you that day!" "But they kept us," Sister Mary Lenore laughs 66 years later.

Sister Mary Lenore taught high school for 20 years, seven of which she spent as principal. In 1969, she joined the faculty of USM as a history professor; from 1980 to 2000, she chaired the history department.

It was during her years at USM that the parodywriting began. "Most of it was for someone who needed words to go with the music," she says. "I was asked, and I wrote the parody!"

#### Sister Barbara Wieseler

Growing up in a small town in northeast Nebraska, Sister Barbara Wieseler had rich musical experiences in her youth. Her Dad played fiddle and harmonica during his generation of barn dances. At the piano, Sister Barbara or her sister would accompany him for family sing-alongs.

"My Mother saved money from selling eggs and cream so that my sister and I could take piano lessons," she says.

The Wieselers and their cousins traveled 12 miles to Yankton, S.D., for piano lessons from Herbert Donaldson and later Mabel Donaldson, his Mother, both professional musicians. From fifth grade through high school, Sister Barbara took accordion lessons from Johnny Matuska, a world-class performer who had perfect pitch and could play any instrument.

In high school, Sister Barbara continued piano lessons with a talented Benedictine Sister and accompanied the high school ensemble and many soloists. Her exposure to great talent carried over to the University of Saint Mary where she had Sisters Rose Tomlin and Anne Callahan as instructors. During the summer before her senior

Continued ▶

year, in preparation for playing the first movement of a Beethoven concerto, Sister Barbara took lessons from a professor from Yankton College who in his youth had studied with Tchaikovsky.

Following graduation from the University of Saint Mary with a degree in music education, Sister Barbara joined the SCLs. She taught high school and some junior high band and vocal music for 25 years. In the SCL Community, she has often used her musical skills with others and for liturgies, programs and celebrations.

"I got into writing parodies by accident, and, you might say, by necessity," Sister Barbara explains.

In her role as assistant coordinator of the Mother House and Ross Hall, she organizes programs for celebrations. These have included anniversaries, jubilees, blessings, retirement gatherings and concerts that honor a person or group.

The first step of her creative process is to identify the purpose of an event or program, what it should accomplish or what message it should convey. Next, Sister Barbara zeroes in on how to impart the message or intent creatively and interestingly. She brainstorms with a core group of SCLs on a theme. Then, she focuses on the person(s) or group being recognized and their core goodness or essence. Based upon the theme and the person(s), songs



Props are an important part of the programs Sister Barbara Wieseler organizes for the Mother House and Ross Hall Sisters.

are selected. Sister Barbara views the production of the event as a whole – props, music, parodies, decorations and interjection of unexpected elements to sustain attention and interest.

As she does for planning events, Sister Barbara enlists the assistance of other SCLs for writing parodies. She regularly turns to Sisters Ann Barton, Elizabeth Ann Skalicky and Sheila Taylor for this. Sister Barbara also appreciates Sister Gloria Solomon's talents at the piano.

"What makes these events special for me is seeing performers become totally involved and fully alive," she summarizes, "and seeing those being honored be transformed through love, respect and appreciation. I also enjoy just being creative."

Discipleship: 'What on earth is it?' Come! Look forward...

Ven! Mira hacia el futuro...

And how does it affect or involve each of us. and why does it matter?

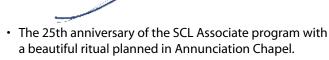


Rev. Anthony Gittins, CSSp, PhD

SCLs and SCL Associates are eager to hear more on the topic from Rev. Anthony Gittins, CSSp, PhD, featured guest speaker at this summer's All Community Gathering in Leavenworth.

An estimated 300 Sisters and Associates from the United States and Peru will meet in Leavenworth July 4-7. In addition to discipleship, the emphasis of the gathering will be celebrations:

- The Fourth of July. (Look out, Yankee Doodle Dandy) and Lady Liberty!)
- The 50th anniversary of the SCL South American missions complete with food specialties and Peruvian dance.



- · The joyful profession of perpetual vows by Sister Rejane Cytacki.

The planning committee for the gathering includes Joyce Rauth-Fears, SCLA, and Sister Linda Roth, co-chairs; and members Sisters Barbara Aldrich, Catrina Bones, Kathleen Mary Connelly, Eileen Haynes and Pam Hinkle, Hermana Julia Huiman Ipanaque, Therese Horvat, SCLA, Sisters Vicki Lichtenauer and Gloria Solomon.

#### OF SPECIAL NOTE

In this section, Voices of Charity highlights Sisters, Associates and friends who have earned special honors or been in the news.

#### **Volunteer recognition** for SCL Associate Dan Dakotas'

dedicated work at Lansing Correctional Facility earned him recognition as Volunteer of the Year at the Kansas state prison in April. Dan,



an SCL Associate, has worked with inmates at the facility for many years. He volunteers in the Bethany fellowship/ Bible study program every Wednesday evening. In addition, he spends almost every Monday evening teaching inmates techniques in art. He has also worked in the TRUE program, a prison art therapy program for persons with mental illness. Dan is a well-known artist, having previously been selected as a Kansas "artist laureate."

#### **Honors received** from American Royal

In recognition for her vears of service to the American Royal in Kansas City, Sister Mary Laura **Huddleston** was presented the organization's 2013



Honorary Governorship. The annual American Royal Livestock Show draws owners/breeders, future business and agriculture leaders (high school and collegiate), and animal enthusiasts from across the country. The longtime Kansas City tradition also includes a horse show, rodeo and barbecue competition. Events attract people from across the United States and Canada. Sister Mary Laura has also received a Lifetime Governorship from the American Royal and is the organization's appointed chaplain and archivist.

#### 'Changing the heart of the city'

Congratulations to **Sister Vickie Perkins** who was honored this year by City Union Mission as one of three "Women Who've Changed the Heart of the City." At the



luncheon event, honorees were commended for their leadership, compassion and humanitarianism. Sister Vickie's lifetime commitment to education and her founding role with Cristo Rey Kansas City High School were cited as deserving of special recognition. City Union Mission offers separate emergency shelters for men and for women and families; long-term recovery programs for men, women and families: after-school and summer programs for youth; summer camp for kids 4-16; and two thrift stores.

#### **USM** names professor emerita

Toward the end of the spring semester, **Sister Mary Pat Lenahan**, a professor of both undergraduate and graduate education programs, was named professor



emerita recognizing her 23 years of service to the University of Saint Mary community. Sister Mary Pat is turning her attention to her role as director of candidates for the SCL Community.

"A hallmark of Sister Mary Pat's teaching is her love for her students and colleagues," says Bryan F. Le Beau, PhD, USM vice president for academic affairs. "As a person who forms a community in her classes, she helps students find ways to be as understanding of each other as she is of each of them."

#### **Artist featured in national** publication

Drew Bodner, SCLA, was the featured artist in the April edition of Med Monthly, an online magazine for physicians, health care professionals, hospital



administrators and other financial decision makers within the health care industry. Drew is a retired clinical pharmacist who worked 39 years at Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Shawnee Mission, Kan. He draws much of his inspiration from Montana where his grandparents homesteaded and where Drew and his wife Joanne, also an SCL Associate, own a ranch. Watch for Drew's art on display and for sale at the All Community Gathering in Leavenworth, July 4-7.



#### **New website for Heartland Charity Volunteers**

If you know young women (ages 21 to 30) interested in volunteering in the Greater Kansas City Area, direct their attention to the new website of Heartland Charity Volunteers at www.heartlandcv.org.We will continue to expand upon the website. It currently provides information about the SCL volunteer program and links to placements.

#### Blisters for Sisters draws large group of SCLs



A large group of Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth and Associates participated in the annual Blisters for Sisters in the Kansas City area on Saturday, May 4. They are pictured here at Church of the Nativity, Leawood, Kan.

Sisters and Associates in the Kansas City and Leavenworth areas gathered for the annual Blisters for Sisters hosted by the Serra Clubs in Kansas and Missouri on Saturday, May 4. This year's seventh annual event took place at Church of the Nativity, Leawood, Kan., and included Mass, a luncheon, a walk, a fundraiser and party to recognize Sisters from different religious communities. Sister Paula Rose Jauernig was the first finisher in the walk – she ran the course. "I love it," Sister Paula Rose said. "Not only does it get us all together. It's a chance to get out and be active and see Sisters in other communities." (Source: The Leaven, May 10, 2013)



SCLs meet famous author Sisters Mary Clarita Sternitzke and J. Vianney Martinez enjoyed a special evening in Loveland, Colo., listening to Alexander McCall Smith, world famous Scottish author of "The Number 1 Ladies Detective Agency" mystery stories whose characters live in Botswana, Africa. The SCLs attended the event with their good friends Caroline Montano and Virginia Teter. Virginia, former student of Sister Mary Clarita, took this picture of the author signing Sister's book with Sister J. Vianney at the far right.

#### Mother House and Ross Hall jubilarians celebrated

It was a festive day in Leavenworth on April 27 as Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth who reside at the Mother House and Ross Hall marked their landmark jubilees of joining the religious community. The day began with prayers and Mass in Ross Chapel and was followed by a festive meal and program in the dining room.



Sister Rosella Mary Hehn, 60-year jubilarian (left), and Sister Mary Cecilia Carig, 75-year honoree (middle), were congratulated by Sister Maureen Hall, **SCL Community** Director.



Sister Ann Winifred McGarry received her crown of flowers for being a 75th jubilee star. Sister Anita Marie Westhues did the crowning.

If we've overlooked an item of importance, please email (thorvat@scls.org) or mail information to Communications, Cantwell Hall, 4200 South Fourth Street, Leavenworth, KS 66048-5054.

#### Book Review

#### Book captures Vincent's passion, energy

Maloney, R.P. (1992). The way of Vincent de Paul: A contemporary spirituality in the service of the poor. New Rochelle, New York: New City Press.

"May God instill in you ... a deep love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our father, our mother, and our all" (p. 10). With these words of St. Vincent, Father Maloney begins his review of Vincent's spirituality.

Several years ago, we received a copy of this book, and I read it dutifully. I am sure that I found it interesting and helpful in my spiritual growth. However, as I recently reread it, I discovered many layers of insight and invitation to even deeper prayer and spirituality.

Father Maloney states, "A spirituality is an energizing vision, a driving force. It is, on the one hand, the specific way in which a person is rooted in God. It is, on the other hand, the specific way in which he or she relates to the created world. It is insight as the source of action" (p. 13). It is our relationship with Jesus in service to his people in building the kingdom.

Within this text, Father Maloney lists and describes five missionary virtues in living out this service: simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification and zeal. He describes simplicity as speaking the truth within a simple lifestyle (p. 38). Humility is total dependence on God in a spirit of gratitude (p. 40). Meekness is enduring offenses because one is guided by love (p. 42). Mortification is discipline of passion focused by reason (p. 43); and zeal is a balanced attentiveness permeated by "love on fire" (p. 46).

From these missionary characteristics, the author outlines poverty, chastity and obedience, and then describes stability as perseverance (p. 87). When one enters freely into this way of life, it binds her/him to a path through commitment to this decision (p. 124). Unlocking these treasures is the key of

listening (p. 126), according to the author, so that the member of a religious community realizes that "true community is always being created" (p. 134).

How appropriate that an undergirding focus of our SCL Community these last two years continues to be that of transformation and renewal, both individual and communal. Though diverse in background, members share a "commonality of experience, understanding, judgment, and action" (p. 135). "True community is not simply physical or functional presence. It is being with and for the other person." "It is personal concern and care" (p. 133). The author further adds that "community is not a static reality. It is always being created" (p. 134).

This renewal demands a plan of action, a clear mission statement, a reflection on the present situation of the community, reading the signs of the times, and a commitment of one's whole life as well as a commitment to this ongoing process and shared journey (p. 140).

In this book, Father Maloney not only teases out more of Vincent's spirituality in the service of the poor, but he manages to underscore the possibilities and realities of all who love according to the Vincentian charism and challenge. Over all, there is a clear and total trust in God's Divine Providence and the free gift of placing one's self in God's hands (p. 179). This is not a one-time only decision but a turning to God each moment of each day.

A strong point of Father Maloney's research and connections that I found most helpful was his generous insertion and reference to texts from the Gospel



by Sister Mary Pat Lenahan, SCL

upon which to base his assumptions and rationale for Vincent's spirituality. He accomplishes this by reflecting Christ's response to and living in the person of the poor, readily reminding us always of Vincent's exhortation that the "poor are our lords and masters" (p. 26). Father Maloney quotes St. Ambrose who said, "You are not making a gift to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his" (p. 120).

For Vincent, this ability to "live Iesus" was in his love of and service of those who are poor and derived from the example of Jesus who was "constantly before the Father in prayer" (p. 32). Father Maloney also reminds the reader that, "Personal experience of God is at the heart of all spirituality" (p. 111).

Since the time of my first reading, several years ago, I found this small book insightful and worthy of further reflection. In this fast-paced world, the passion of Vincent's energy urges the reader with, "If love of God is a fire, then zeal is its flame" (p. 171). Father Malonev invites the reader to "know your limitations. Live a balanced life, so that you might have the energy that nourishes zeal. While the Lord asks you to cooperate in his work, it still remains his work. When the time comes to rest, place the work in his hands" (p. 171).

In the midst of so many needs in our world today, there is consolation and wisdom worth remembering in Psalm 172:2 that tells us, "the Lord gives to His beloved in sleep" (p. 171).

#### SCL Associates

## God 'colors outside the lines' in Associate's life

ie Thorgren, SCL Associate, was recognized this spring as a "Woman of Distinction" by *The Denver Post* for the outstanding mentoring program she developed that has reduced the recidivism rate of women returning to the Denver Women's Correctional Facility.

As Vie reflects on her own life, there's another point of distinction and a recurring theme that's made a world of difference to her. "In my life, God has always colored outside the lines," she says. "God is always introducing interesting surprises." And Vie is at the ready – willing to try new things and seize opportunities to serve.

#### The pattern begins

While her husband Rick had an unaccompanied Air Force assignment to a remote mountaintop in Korea during the Vietnam War, Vie spent two years teaching children with special needs at a Presbyterian mission in South Korea. Not only was this an incredibly formative experience for her, but Vie and Rick adopted their older daughter as a special treasure.

Back in the United States, Vie taught in a Catholic school in Florida and earned her master's in counseling psychology. When the family moved to Atlanta, Ga., she responded to the call for youth ministers. Vie was the first layperson on the parish staff in the post-Vatican II era.

On relocation in Denver, Vie followed the youth ministry track, working for two parishes. Pregnant

with her second daughter, she next opted for a part-time position with the archdiocese coordinating a mentoring program for at-risk youth.

Vie's diverse skillset attracted the attention of the Vincentian priests who recruited her to develop and lead a spiritual formation program for lay students attending the religious order's seminary in Denver. For 10 years, Vie served as director of spiritual formation for the Lay Pastoral Institute and assistant professor of spiritual theology. In this setting, she became immersed in Vincentian spirituality.

In the meantime, she also earned her doctorate in spiritual theology through the Graduate Theological Foundation of Indiana and began giving retreats for religious communities. When

the Vincentian seminary closed, Vie thought she would happily spend the rest of her life as a retreat facilitator.

#### **Starting something new**

But the Vincentians – and God – had different plans in mind for her. The Vincentian priests at a downtown Denver parish invited Vie to develop a spirituality and work program. "It seems like God has always used me to start something that doesn't exist and to build it," she recalls.

In 1996, Vie hosted the first luncheon for this initiative. She thought 15 attendees would be a success. When 250 showed up, it was testimony to the need for such a program. The Center for Spirituality at Work evolved with Vie as executive



Presentations and retreats remain an important part of Vie Thorgren's life and her ministry.

director and responsible for program development, fund-raising and overall coordination. One other staff member and a large group of volunteers complement her work.

Vie describes the Center's mission as built on Vincent's view of the power of relationships to change the world and systems. It was in this context that Vie first met the SCLs. She organized an evening for organizations and individuals committed to the Vincentian charism to explore ways to work together. This encounter helped foster the connection between the SCLs and the Vincentian Volunteers from whom the religious community has attracted vocations.

#### SCL ties deepen

Vie's own connections with the SCLs continued to develop. Sister Karen Guth studied in the spiritual direction training program at the center and joined the staff to coordinate the Making Choices mentoring program for women in prison who are approaching re-entry. Sister Mary Siefken joined the governing board of the Center for Spirituality at Work. Vie began doing retreats and programs through Marillac Center in Leavenworth.

In 2002, Vie became an SCL Associate with Sister Bernadette Marie Teasdale as her sponsor. Vie is also an Associate of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth from which the SCL Community traces its roots. She likes that she can be a Vincentian bridge interacting with both religious communities.

#### 'Making Choices'



Vie Thorgren, SCLA (left), discusses future plans with one of the graduates of the Making Choices program who is now on the "outside" and has recently become a homeowner.

Making Choices, for which Vie Thorgren received special recognition as a "Woman of Distinction" this year, is a program that works with women in the Denver Women's Correctional Facility. In 2012, the program saved the state an estimated \$1.2 million by preventing recidivism.

Annually, 90 women are served through Making Choices. Approximately 80 volunteers staff the program. Volunteers mentor and teach the women life skills and good decision-making over a 10-week period inside the correctional facility. Once the women have re-entered society, mentoring continues for 18 months. Since 1999, Making Choices has brought together almost 600 incarcerated women with volunteer teachers and mentors.

# Discipleship within the wide tent



by Terri Butel, SCLA Director of Associates

ecently, I attended a gathering of 260 Sisters and Associates; the topic was "Caught by Common Charism, Creating Uncommon Community." (More about this during our Associate meeting at the All Community Gathering!) At one point, a panel member answered this question, "What hopeful future do you vision for the Church?" The respondent said, "Catholicism is a *wide tent*, and there are many who call themselves Catholic although we can be very different. My hope is that we can all reach a place where we embrace this fact, where all are welcome, where we do not judge or exclude."

It reminded me of an open forum held in my diocese some years ago in response to strong reactions to decisions made by our new bishop. The small room was packed – at least 200 present – and the extreme polarization and anger in the room were shocking. I grew up in the Vatican II Church and, until that evening, had NO awareness of the very deep feelings and pain of my fellow disenfranchised Catholics who felt that Vatican II had corrupted the Church.

Soon after, at five discernment meetings to consider becoming a candidate for our parish council, we were told: as a member of a parish council, you do not bring *your* agendas to the council for implementation; you are the eyes and ears of the entire parish, and you

bring *their* desires and concerns. Despite that message being emphasized in every single meeting, one of the candidates asked in our last meeting, "If we get elected to the parish council, can we fix this place?"

Our call to discipleship requires that we address our human tendency to link elbows with those who are like us and to exclude all others. We could, for example, take delight in our differences and find this a source of prayerful praise: "Oh God, how persistent you are in your boundless love to have created so very many versions of humankind!" We could dismiss our differences as unimportant distractions, and each time we hear that judging voice within or feel that look of disapproval cross our faces, remember to pray: "Thank you, Jesus, for coming to me today in this unlikely and surprising package!!!"

It inspires me to recall how St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac did their ministry. They didn't first check to see if the needy before them were Christians; they let themselves be moved by love and by recognition of their common solidarity as human beings. That was enough to experience the transformative love necessary to respond. It should be enough for us, whether we are operating within the "big tent" or outside of it.

#### Leavenwords

#### Laughter a key ingredient for Sister Marie Helen Grieshaber

ister Marie Helen Grieshaber is a firm believer in the value of laughter. "I think people need a laugh," she says.

That's why a ride on the Mother House elevator and a stop at the second floor will have her remarking, "Second floor, lingerie."

Or there's the story about when her sister Lillian was considering which religious community to join. Two Precious Blood Sisters from the Grieshabers' hometown of St. Joseph, Mo., came to the SCL Mother House for a retreat. The Sisters mentioned to Sister Agnes Vincent Bauman, SCL Secretary General at the time, "We have a young woman for you." To which, Sister Marie Helen says Sister Agnes Vincent replied, "What's wrong with her?"

The answer was that the Precious Blood Sisters thought Lillian would be happier closer to home. Her Dad brought her to meet the SCLs, and Lillian decided on the spot to join.

Sister Marie Helen took a while longer with her deliberations. She didn't want to enter the SCLs just because her older sister Lillian had. For two years following high school, Sister Marie Helen worked for the Daughters of Charity in their hospital in St. Joseph, Mo. She almost entered that community because of the assurance she could continue being a payroll clerk. But in August 1951, Sister Marie Helen made the trip to the SCL Mother House. She's looked back and ahead with many smiles.

She became a teacher and loved it. Sister Marie Helen taught first grade



Sister Marie Helen Grieshaber not only inherited budget responsibilities from Sister Mary Rose Erickson, Sister Mary Rose gifted her successor with the beautiful statue of the Blessed Mother.

most of her years in the classroom. "They are the true folk," she says. "They tell it like it is and don't say anything to gain points. When do we change them?"

Her last few years in education were spent as supervisor in the computer room. From being someone who didn't know how to turn on the computer, Sister Marie Helen learned her lessons well. This proved helpful for duties she soon assumed at the Mother House.

"I had said for years, 'Give me a corner and let me do some bookwork," Sister Marie Helen recalls.

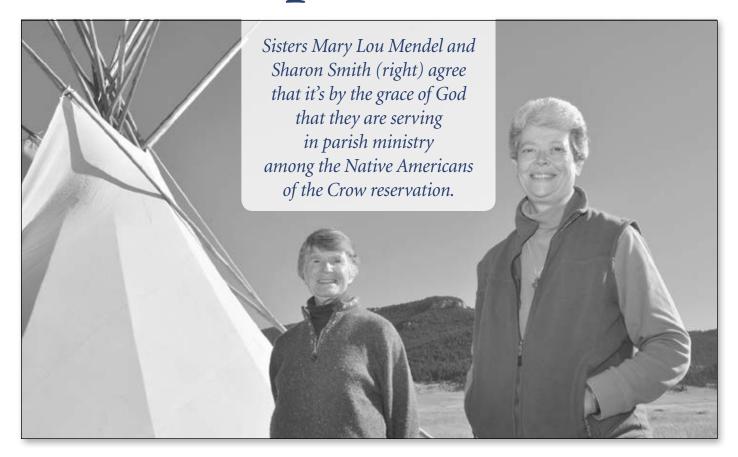
Her wish came true as she was mentored by Sister Mary Rose Erickson who established the Mother House office that receives monthly budget reports and bank statements from SCL houses across the country. Much of the work Sister Marie Helen assumed is computerized now, but she continues to enjoy her contact with the Sisters and the treasurers of all the houses.

Early in her life, Sister Marie Helen had decided that it's important to make people laugh. And that's what she does in the hallways, on the telephone, in the dining room and on the elevator. "This is home," she says of the Mother House. "No matter what, the Sisters are here for you."

And Sister Marie Helen is here for them – with a quip, a tease or a few words to make them smile.

#### Beyond All Borders

## New experience, new



riends for years, the two SCLs had never ministered together in the past. Nor had either been involved in direct service to people with economic challenges and of a different culture. Since August 2011, Sisters Mary Lou and Sharon have been based at St. Charles Mission, Pryor, Mont. – and enjoying what they call largely "a ministry of presence" along with performing a number of duties associated with parish ministry.

It was Father Randolph Grazyck, OFM Cap, pastor, who introduced Sister Mary Lou to this opportunity. She had known him from previous missions and would see him at St. Vincent Healthcare, Billings, during her work at the hospital. Sister Mary Lou inquired if Father Randolph would like to have Sisters at the parish, and one thing led to another.

It had been 12 years since the Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg served the mission. "We walked into a wonderful legacy," Sister Mary Lou says. "The people are glad to have Sisters among them again."

Sister Sharon says that one of the elders, Bernadette Smith, commented, "We are so happy you are here. Now our church is complete!"

#### **Intentional ministry**

Sisters Mary Lou and Sharon facilitate religious education programs and sacramental preparation for adults and youth in the parish of

### culture for two SCLs

100 families. They host a Sunday morning scripture series for adults and a Monday afternoon women's faith circle. Youth participate in a monthly Bible Boot Camp and Vacation Bible School. A group of Sisters of Charity of Nazareth will be at the mission again this year helping with the summer program. (At the July 4-7 All Community Gathering in Leavenworth, Sister Sharon will be selling photos and jewelry that she's made to raise money for the bible school.)

The two SCLs also visit the homebound and persons in hospitals and nursing centers. From a listening session to identify needs of the people, Sister Mary Lou laid the groundwork for an Al-Anon group that has been meeting for a year. Sister Sharon helped start a coed volleyball team to address the need for social/recreational activities. And both Sisters attend a lot of community events – basketball games, lunch at the seniors' center, meetings with the elders.

"We could be overwhelmed with the needs in the area," Sister Sharon observes. "We are intentional about what we take on, and we commit to doing these things well."

"We can't meet all of the economic and social needs," Sister Mary Lou adds. "But we are experiencing integration of the Catholic faith and the Crow culture."

The two SCLS consider it providential to serve in a place that they never thought they would and in a culture where they are the outsiders. They feel blessed to be in Pryor and working among and with the Crow people.



Sister Mary Lou Mendel (left) and Sister Sharon Smith (right) take Sylvia Gone, St. Charles' parishioner, Communion weekly.



Sister Mary Lou Mendel (third from left) with a gathering in the Pryor Mountains around an altar on which the Feast of Corpus Christi has been celebrated for many years, embracing both the Catholic faith and the Crow culture.



## Xavier students donate funds to benefit children in Peru

tudents from Xavier Elementary School, Leavenworth, doubled their contributions to this year's "Pennies for Peru" fund-raising competition to benefit children served by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth in their South American missions.

Fourth through eighth graders donate to Pennies for Peru throughout Lent each year. Proceeds go to the Sisters of Charity in Peru who purchase children's books for libraries in their facilities in Piura and Chuschi. In the past, proceeds have also gone toward book shelves.

Last year, Xavier students raised \$1,000. This year, Karen Davis, principal, set the goal at \$1,200. To motivate students, Sarah Wise, administrative intern and teacher, said she would dye her hair blue if they met their goal. Rapid progress toward the goal led Sarah to extend the challenge to one week of blue hair if \$1,500 was raised. The final tally was over \$2,400 collected.

Sister Mary Jane Schmitz, director of faith formation at Xavier, helps with project coordination. She initiated a similar program several years ago when she was principal of an elementary school in Billings, Mont. Sister Anita Sullivan picked up on the idea and transported it to Leavenworth where the effort has continued.

#### Needs assessment producing results

Building on last year's needs assessment in Leavenworth, an expanded task force, coordinated by Sister Vickie Perkins, is serving as a catalyst to prompt responses to identified needs.

And good things are happening as a result.

#### Focus on youth

For example, members of the task force advocated for an alternative school for kids on the verge of dropping out or who have already dropped out or been dismissed. The Leavenworth and Lansing school districts will be collaborating on this initiative in fall 2013 for seventh through 12th graders. The University of Saint Mary will provide interns for behavioral counseling. SCLs and Associates will be invited to help kids consider post-high school plans and serve as mentors.

With the encouragement of the task force, the Leavenworth School District has applied to the state of Kansas for funding of an after-school program. This would allow tutoring, snacks, exercise and homework support to be available at elementary schools.

With the goal of expanding the existing "Backpack Buddies" program in Leavenworth, Sister Vickie wrote a grant to extend the service to third graders. Currently, the program provides pre-kindergartners through second graders who qualify with a bag of food each Friday for nourishment through the weekend. The first week of the program, kids receive their food in backpacks that they can use year-round.

This program began in Leavenworth four years ago and is operated by Sandy Simons and Cindy Geiger. They coordinate a strong network of volunteers and churches for sorting and distribution through the schools. Annual expenses are \$75,000. Grant funds would allow more kids to benefit.

#### **Starting conversations**

Another role the Leavenworth Needs Assessment Task Force has played is convener. On three different occasions, the task force has brought together representatives of churches for what Sister Vickie describes as "good conversations and good sharing about ways to collaborate." From these discussions, free lunch service for persons in need has expanded from one Saturday a month to every Saturday and dinner every Thursday. Meals are prepared and served by members of area churches.

The task force also convened a think tank of representatives from agencies and churches to discuss community needs. Two focus groups of persons with low incomes were held. In addition, Sister Vickie will be meeting individually with clients of Saint Vincent Clinic and Catholic Charities in Leavenworth to gain their perspectives.

One of the many unmet needs appears to be a location or center where people could access some services, receive information and referrals, be helped to navigate complex social and health care systems, and possibly learn sustainable life skills and enjoy enrichment opportunities.

"It's been exciting to watch this entire process and involvement grow," Sister Vickie says. "We know we – the task force, SCLs and Associates – can't do it all. As we bring groups from churches and agencies together to discuss opportunities, people seem willing to step up and get involved."



### New NGO liaison named

After 16 years as the SCL liaison to the Sisters of Charity Federation NGO (non-governmental organization), Sister Marie de Paul Combo has passed the baton to Sister Eileen Haynes, Community Councilor.

ister Marie de Paul served in this role since 1997 when the then-named Elizabeth Seton Federation received NGO recognition from the United Nations. Sister Marie Elena Dio, SC Halifax, was chosen as the Federation's first NGO representative.

That same year, Sister Marie de Paul and liaisons from other religious congregation Federation members first met and thereafter attended UN meetings at least once annually. Since that time, the NGO has evolved into a dynamic opportunity to advocate and be involved at the global level.

In 2008, the Federation officially changed its name to the Sisters of Charity Federation. The Federation currently has 13 member congregations which live the charism of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. Ten of these communities trace their roots to Elizabeth Seton; the Nazareth, Leavenworth and Charleston congregations had other founders. Federation members have Sisters serving in more than 30 countries.

NGO recognition entitles Federation members to serve on UN committees that parallel official UN commissions through which recommendations on global concerns can be brought to the



consideration of the General Assembly. The NGO representative can suggest ideas and interventions on behalf of the NGO, often working in concert with other groups committed to the same issues. (One group called RUN, Religious at the United Nations, collaborates on matters of common concern.)

NGO projects include peace, social development, economic development, refugee assistance, human rights, women, children and sustainable development. The liaison role is designed to share information with the respective religious community and garner feedback, involvement, action and prayer.

Sister Marie de Paul recalls the Charity Federation Corporate Response on Debt that encompassed an educational and engagement effort across the religious communities in 1998 and 1999. SCLs and Associates learned and prayed about the impact of debt on third world

countries and subsequently adopted a corporate stance on reducing the debt.

Sister Marie de Paul considers this a memorable accomplishment that involved significant participation in an international effort. The ability to have this type of voice and impact excites Sister Eileen as she assumes the liaison role.

"To work on a global scope and connect in a broader sense reminds me that we're all in this together," she says, "and that the choices we make impact our brothers and sisters around the world."

Sister Eileen is anticipating orientation to her new role and working with other liaisons and with Sister Caroljean Willie, SC Cincinnati and current Charity Federation NGO representative. Sister Marie de Paul believes Sister Eileen will be ideal for the liaison role because of her leadership position in the Community and her familiarity with goals of the Charity Federation.

"She's a natural," Sister Marie de Paul says of Sister Eileen. "She has the ability to listen to complex discussions of many voices, and condense and sum things up succinctly and purposefully."

Sister Eileen is a past chair of the SCL Social Justice Committee and is currently SCL Council liaison with the committee. She also serves with Sister Nancy Bauman as Council liaison with the Care of Creation Committee.

#### SISTER MARIE DE PAUL RECOGNIZED FOR HER SERVICE

SCLs and Associates acknowledge and express gratitude to Sister Marie de Paul Combo. She served as social justice coordinator of the Community from 1987 to 2002 and liaison to the Charity Federation from 1997 to 2013. Of the latter experience, Sister Marie de Paul says, "There are wonderful people in the world trying to do their best and giving courage, support and hope to people from poorer nations. The solidarity of working together with people of justice is another way of being Community and living our mission."

#### Sponsored Ministries

#### **Mount Saint Vincent receives** prestigious designation for program targeted to help children

Mount Saint Vincent, a leading provider of treatment and education for children who are victims of abuse or neglect, or suffer from mental health issues, has received Flagship Program designation from The ChildTrauma Academy of Houston, Texas.

ount Saint Vincent is the fourth treatment facility in the world to earn this distinction. Mount Saint Vincent's clinical team was required to complete The ChildTrauma Academy's extensive Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT) Training Certification Program to earn the designation.

In related action, Kirk Ward, Mount Saint Vincent clinical director, was named a CTA Fellow by The ChildTrauma Academy. Fellows are nominated based on their recognized capacity to work well in crossinstitutional settings and their ability to communicate effectively across disciplines. Kirk joins the ranks of 30 people around the world who are specialists in the treatment of children who suffer from the effects of trauma, often due to physical or sexual abuse.

NMT techniques focus on stimulating brain development to help children overcome the debilitating effects of abuse and neglect. The clinical staff at Mount Saint Vincent uses the NMT assessment to evaluate each child's specific needs and the most appropriate therapeutic modalities and treatment techniques.

"NMT is a developmentally sensitive approach to trauma treatment," Kirk explains. "It's an intuitive model that focuses on the elements that make people human and expands on innate instincts and skills. These include very natural activities like rocking and soothing kids, praising kids – actions that are simple to do but have profound impacts on brain development."

"We are honored to have earned this important designation," says Sister Amy Willcott, Mount Saint Vincent executive director. "The use of the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics allows us to more effectively treat the children under our care.

"Kirk's well-deserved recognition as a leader in trauma-informed care builds upon our designation as a flagship site for NMT. His knowledge of NMT and its impact on brain development is extensive, and we are seeing marked improvements in our children as a result of the application of these innovative techniques," Sister Amy adds.



Kirk Ward, clinical director of Mount Saint Vincent, was named a fellow by The ChildTrauma Academy.

## NEWS

#### FROM SCL HEALTH SYSTEM





To mark the spring 2013 transition in ownership of Saint John Hospital, Leavenworth, and Providence Medical Center, Kansas City, Kan., from SCL Health System to Prime Healthcare Services, the care sites hosted rituals in their main lobbies. In Leavenworth (left above), Sister Maureen Hall, SCL Community Director, gave the plaque presented to the Community to Sister Jeanne Marie Zeugin who had served at Saint John Hospital for many years. At Providence Medical Center, Father Roger Schmit, OSB, chaplain, invited guests to extend their hands in blessing for new leaders of the hospital.



It was the end of an era as Ed Barker retired from his position as chief legal officer and general counsel for SCL Health System. Ed was recognized with a reception at the Mother House that was attended by Sisters, health system staff and friends. Ed and his wife Linda admired the statue of Mother Xavier Ross, a gift from the SCLs, as Sister Maureen Hall, Community Director, read the inscription.

#### Blessings! ¡Bendiciones!

#### Forward – 2013

We stand
On the cusp of time
Looking hopefully for
The "not-yet" experience.

We stand
Expectantly
The calendar marks
July 2013 as "digging" time
In preparation for
Direction for the
Rest of the Journey

We stand
Unsteadily
Readying ourselves for
The Pentecost of possibility
Listening forward to the Promise
"I will ask the Father
And He will send..."

We stand
Knowing deep within
Each of us has the talent
Potential yet untouched
No one too old
No one too young
Mission power for
The glory of God!

We stand
On the cusp of Time
Looking toward the "not yet"
Gift of Transformation
Purely the work of the Spirit

We stand
Eye on the unknown "not yet"
Mother Xavier's words for hope
Ringing in our ears
"Sisters, look forward...
TO WHAT IS YET TO BE."



by Sister Marie Carmel Dunning (Written looking ahead to the July 2013 All Community Gathering)





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