

A CELEBRATION OF CHARITY

Jubilee!

SUMMER 2024



Chapter 2022 Directional Statement

NOW, WITH GOD'S GRACE, we are called in these days

"...to give freely of ourselves and our goods for the sake of the Kingdom..." (SCL Constitution, Norm 14)

In the spirit and charism of Vincent, Louise, Xavier, and our founding Sisters, we step into our future with a renewed sense of mission.

Through the lens of integral ecology, we will:

- tend to the care of marginalized people and the fragile earth;
- use spiritual and tangible resources to meet the critical needs of God's people and earth;
- broaden collaboration with local and global groups working to achieve systemic change;
- explore our relationship with sponsored works;
- clarify the structure of our governance model.

As Gospel-centered, ecclesial women rooted in Christ, we are called to love and serve in these times and in these places and to stand and pray with those who suffer, who grieve, who hope.

NOW, WITH GOD'S GRACE.

in this issue

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Community Director
Sister Melissa Camardo,
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Voices of Charity

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The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth trace our roots to the spirit, spirituality, and outreach of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac. Founded in Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1858 by Mother Xavier Ross, the SCL Community continues this Vincentian tradition through ministering to and on behalf of the poor and those on the margins of society.

Voices of Charity seeks to remain faithful to the charism of St. Vincent, St. Louise, and Mother Xavier. Looking through the lens of integral ecology, these articles hope to educate, highlight ministries, and inspire readers to continue the mission of charity.

FROM THE Community Director



Sister Eileen Haynes, SCL

The *SCL Constitution* states, "Jesus came into the world, and by his living, dying, and rising, every Christian is called to bring the Kingdom to its fulfillment. Living out the call to communion and mission in Christ and in his Church, our call is to know the human condition in the contemporary world in those issues affecting the deepest human needs, especially of justice and service to the poor."

- Nature and End, Norms 1-5

Considering your life's experiences, how have you known God's calling in your life? What people and events have shaped your life and guided you to living out the call to communion and mission in Christ? Perhaps you discovered God's desire for service within you through words from a loved one, through quiet prayer time, or through the day-to-day normal activities of work, family, and community. God consistently calls us to respond to those in need, and it is there that we experience God's love residing within ourselves while recognizing God in the other.

I often marvel at the depth of influence one person has in our world, seemingly without being aware of her/his actions upon another. We celebrate in an abundance of gratitude our three Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, who have dedicated their lives of service to those in need throughout the past 50 years. Their ministries of education and music continue to assist others in living out *their* call to communion and mission in Christ. We also recognize our Jubilarians who have served God's people for 60, 70, and 75 years. We celebrate, too, John Sage, recipient of the 2024 Vincentian Charism Award, who is transforming lives through the Bridges to Life Ministry. It is important, as well, to introduce you to our three executive directors of mission, resources, and communal life, who are responding to God's call to service within the SCL Community. Two leaders within the San Vicente Pastoral Center, one of our sponsored ministries in Piura, Peru, are highlighted that we may learn from them in their living out their call to communion and mission.

What about you? How do you live out *your* call to communion and mission in Christ? Perhaps it is the gentle smile, holding the door open for the person who is behind you, stopping to listen to a story that someone wants to share with you, or going out of your way to let another person know she/he is being held in prayer. It is in these actions and words that we are able to live out the call to communion and mission wherever we are and whoever we may be.

Love has no limits. May we intentionally take time to pause and consider the people in our lives who have influenced the person we are today as we call one another forth to embrace our call from God. Let us give thanks to God. Now, with God's grace. We are blessed, indeed.

L. Eileen Haynes & CL Sister Eileen Haynes

SCL Community Director

celebration of Charity

"Called to bear the love of God ... this divine fire ... everywhere."

On September 1, 2024, Sister Judy Hayes, Sister Sheila Taylor, and Sister Elizabeth Youngs each celebrate 50 years of being Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. This month, they have shared their journey in faith with us.

Sister Judy Hayes



As I sat down to compose this reflection, Jeremiah 29:11 kept coming to me: "For I know well the plans I have in mind for you," declares the Lord, "plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope." This verse is true of my journey to the place where my heart always has been.

I was the oldest of six children – three girls and three boys. My mother and father were Irish, and faith and church were important. Dad took any of us who were out of diapers to two novenas each week.

Prayer and faith were just a part of who we were. For example, my dad's oldest sister was a Sister of Charity. Her name was Sister Amadeus, but we kids thought her name was, "I'm a desk," since she was a school principal.

I went to Blessed Sacrament Grade School and Hogan High School. The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth were important, joyous models for me. I believe my calling to be a Sister came when I was about eight years old. We lived behind the convent and the church. I asked my mom if I could go after school to church to pray. I assured her that I was not playing, but I never told her that I loved going to watch Monsignor McCaffrey. He would walk around the church, praying with his breviary. The look of joy and peace on his face made me want that kind of life. I decided then that I wanted that joy and to be like him.

I started teaching when I was five – luring my three preschool brothers into the kitchen with the promise of a cookie. I would teach what Sister Genevieve Macan had taught my class that day.

I attended Saint Mary College and, later, Emporia State University to get a master's degree in education with an emphasis on reading. I also took classes at the University of Missouri - Kansas City, and San Francisco College for Women. I attended Columbia University for five summers to acquire additional reading and writing instruction certifications.

Professionally, I taught kindergarten through eighth grade. I loved teaching kindergarten through second grade the most. I taught in seven states, but mostly at St. Patrick's School in North Kansas City.

My current ministry is volunteering as a language

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tutor at the University of Saint Mary. I love teaching religion. I also minister to many as a friend or helper. I love knitting, watercolor painting, calligraphy, counted cross stitch, and quilling. I have not met a craft I did not love.

The story of the lost coin always tugs at my heart. The woman swept and turned over everything to find the lost coin. Then, she gathered her neighbors to celebrate. I am like the lost coin. After an absence of 14 years, coming

home was both scary and joyous. As a returning member, being a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth is part of my DNA. As I said at my vows on November 11, 1993, "I have come home, for my heart has always been here."

I have been blessed with siblings who supported my journey. A special blessing along the way was Sister Mary Kathleen Stefani's listening heart and the Sisters who welcomed me home, especially Sister Maureen Hall and Sister Vickie Perkins. Every SCL has been a blessing to me.

Sister Sheila Taylor



"To whom much is given, much is expected." (Luke 12:48)

Up until I was a teenager I thought my parents coined that phrase because they instilled that principle early in my life, and I have certainly been given so much!

I was born in 1950 in Kansas City, Missouri, the first child of Harry Lee

Taylor and Mary Michaela Canavan Taylor. (Later on, I was really glad that the SCL Community stopped giving novices a combination of parents' first names. Imagine being Sister Harry Mary; the reverse is almost as awkward!)

Growing up in the 50s and 60s was carefree and happy. I have many delightful memories of playing in our backyard, throwing a softball back and forth with my dad, chasing our dogs around the yard, and running through the sprinkler during the heat of the summer.

For four years I savored the limelight, and then my sister, Sharon, was born. We had our share of sibling rivalry, but deep down we were best friends. And now,

even more so. She and her husband Mike gave me the wonderful gifts of the best nieces and nephews ever!

We certainly weren't wealthy, but we had the luxury of piano lessons, dance classes, 4H Club, traveling, etc., balanced with a loving and stable homelife, Catholic education, and doting grandparents who thought we could do no wrong. My mother knew better! I wish I could quote a Scripture verse as my mantra for motivation, but it's probably my mother's voice saying, "I think if you get up, put on your uniform, and get to school, you'll be fine," after I was whining about some trivial malady that might keep me from going to school. She was right!

After Catholic grade school and public high school, I began looking around at colleges. I wasn't crazy about going to an all-girls college, but my mother had gone to Saint Mary College (SMC), so I agreed to look at it. It only took one trip driving up the lane to make me feel that I belonged there. I enrolled at SMC, and after a year of basic courses and piano lessons, along with encouragement from Sister Dominique Long and Sister Rose Tomlin, I declared music as my major. My dad was especially happy since he was a gifted violinist. I had taken piano lessons since the age of four, and at an early age, felt a sense of spirituality and God's presence through music. It was during my years at SMC that I was able to name that calling that I felt deep in my heart. At the same time, I had read about a relatively new field called

music therapy. So, after graduation from SMC, my good friend, Jeannie, and I enrolled at the University of Kansas to pursue our master's degrees in music education and music therapy. While there, we became associated with the SCLs in Lawrence, Kansas. Their cheerful nature and hospitality gave me a glimpse of how joyful ministry and communal life could be. Sister Kathleen Marie Henscheid continued to be an inspiration to me as we taught together for several years.

In the fall of 1974, I entered the SCL Community and made first vows in 1976. I loved my years of teaching music to children K-8. I'm fond of a quote that says, "I teach music not so children will necessarily have a career in music, but that they may know beauty." And, so, I hope that through these 50 years I've enabled people to know beauty in a world that needs it so much.

After 35 years of teaching, my interest in music therapy, coupled with the desire to help others, came knocking at my door. Along with being the Temporary

Vow Director at the time, I was able to complete an additional certification as a music practitioner, narrowing the field to providing harp music for the terminally ill. I could write a book about the awesome experiences I've had with those who are next in line to see the face of God. What a blessing!

I never aspired to become the music director at the Mother House, especially since I'd be following such great musicians who held that position before me. But with the encouragement, support, and camaraderie of Sister Anne Callahan and Sister Gloria Solomon, I'm finding that I love providing music for the cantors, choir, and congregation that enhances our liturgies and special feast days.

"And now, with God's grace" (Mother Xavier Ross), I hope to continue "getting up, putting on my uniform," and basking in gratitude for my family, friends, and SCL Community as I continue to serve in whatever capacity I am called.

Sister Elizabeth Youngs



My parents, Honora Harrington and Ford Youngs, high school sweethearts, came from regular church-going families. They were active in their respective faiths – Catholic and Episcopalian. The Harringtons came from County Cork, Ireland, and had several professional educators among

them. The Youngs were a musical family. My grandmother taught voice and piano at Denver University. Both music and teaching influenced my life.

When we were little, we would go to early Mass in Lent, starting on Ash Wednesday. I'm the eldest of seven (Diana, Kathy, Tom, Steve, Jim, and Dan), and I can remember helping little ones dress for this adventure. After some days of this, Mom would finally just go by herself, leaving the kids at home with our sleeping father. I learned if I woke up when I saw her light turn on and got myself ready, I could go to Mass with her. I loved hearing the choir singing in Latin, and on the way home I had her all to myself! That didn't happen very often. We talked about church and vocations on those cold mornings, and a seed was planted.

In 1968, I went to St. Mary-of-the-Woods College in Indiana, the fifth generation of women in a family tradition. When Ash Wednesday came during freshman year, I began going to daily Mass and that habit persisted past Lent. I learned to play the guitar so I could join the

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students who played for the daily Masses. Making music helped bring me closer to God.

Senior year, I applied for teaching positions in Colorado so I could be closer to my family and Denver. Interviews with the major Colorado school districts during spring break that year were very discouraging, and I returned to Terre Haute for the last weeks of school a bit frantic. The principal of Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Grand Junction, Colorado, sent me a letter saying she had an opening. Sister Katherine Franchett, SCL, found my application to the Grand Junction public schools and saw I was graduating from a Catholic college. She needed a Catholic teacher. I had an interview with her, and she offered me a contract to teach third grade. I had a memorable two years of teaching there, and then entered the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. Teaching music brought me closer to God.

I thought Grand Junction was my first encounter with the SCLs, until we were doing an assignment in the Novitiate using "Relay" magazines. I realized that these were the Sisters who taught CCD and vacation bible school at my parish, Our Lady of Grace, close to Annunciation School in Denver. The SCLs had been training me all along!

After the Novitiate, I taught in Rock Springs, Wyoming, for two years, and then at St. Martin de Porres in Kansas City, Missouri, until 1985. During that time, I earned a master's degree in administration from Boston College. In 1985, I had my first opportunity to be a principal at Xavier Catholic School in Leavenworth. In 1988, I moved to St. John School in Lawrence, Kansas, where I was principal for six years. I moved to Billings, Montana, in 1994 to be the principal at St. Francis Primary and lead principal for the elementary schools. After a year, I became the director of Billings Catholic Schools. In 2001, I moved to Denver to serve as Associate Superintendent for the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools. One of my first duties there was to help principals deal with the trauma of the 9/11 tragedy.

While in Denver, I earned a PhD from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. My brother, Dan, and his family would host me for a few days before and after school sessions. It was a treat to connect with his family and see his two children grow up.

In 2015, I became the Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri. One of the greatest gifts of that mission was that since no other SCLs were in Jefferson City, I lived in community with the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. Getting to know them and the School Sisters of Notre Dame, who worked at the Chancery, was formative for me. I got to know some wonderful women and learned how much our communities truly have in common and how little difference there is between us.

I moved to the University of Saint Mary, Leavenworth, in 2019 and became the director of the Doctor of Education in Leadership (EdD) program. I continue to watch as this program develops powerful leaders in education and related fields.

Follow the SCLs on



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Instagram www.instagram.com/sc_leavenworth

www.scls.org



Jubilee artwork was painted by 70-year Jubilarian Sister Frances Marie Grady.

The Source is represented by water...the gift of grace
The source of waterfalls always comes from above
The oneness of our diverse missions gather into bubbling activity
Waterfalls are all different depending on what gifts of grace
pour over them

United in mission, together we flow to what shall be. (artist's inspiration)

A GIFT TO BE GATHERED

Let There be Jubilee!

It was a day of joy and togetherness as Sisters and their guests gathered in Leavenworth, Kansas, on Saturday, June 29, 2024. Joining our 19 celebrating SCLs, they shared a special Jubilee Mass followed by a luncheon honoring the Sisters celebrating 60, 70, and 75 years of faithfulness.

Sister Phyllis Stowell, 60-year Jubilarian, shared a reflection on the Gospel reading at the Jubilee Mass, asking Jesus' question, "Do you love me?" She offered that this is the question Jesus has asked each day through the 60, 70, or 75 years of living for our SCLs. Each day, our Jubilarians have responded as best they could to his mandate to "Feed my sheep," making that loving visible. Learning to "love big," she shared a story of a child learning what love means and challenged all to answer Jesus' question, "Do you love me?" with an expansive reply, "Bigger than a bus, bigger than a truck, bigger than an airplane..."

She shared that these years of service for our Jubilarians have not been done alone, "The grace of our God and the blessing of each other carried us then and encourages us now as the journey continues."

2024 Jubilarians

Congratulations to the 2024 Jubilarians! 50-year Jubilarians will be celebrated on September 1, 2024.

- 75 Sister Mary Clarice Lousberg Sister Mary Geraldine Yelich Sister Marie Benedict Young
- Sister Mary Cecile Breen
 Sister Jean Martin Dawson
 Sister Mary Jo Downey
 Sister Loretta Fick
 Sister Frances Marie Grady
 Sister J. Vianney Martinez
 Sister Marie Michael Mollis
 Sister Mary Jane Schmitz
- Sister Margaret Finch
 Sister Maureen Kehoe
 Sister Jean Lockett
 Sister Susan Rieke
 Sister Jean Marian Rilinger
 Sister Phyllis Stowell
 Sister Mary Ann Theisen
 Sister Renée Washut
- 50 Sister Judy Hayes
 Sister Sheila Taylor
 Sister Elizabeth Youngs



Let there be Jubilee!



75-Year Jubilarians. Left to right, Sisters Marie Benedict Young, Mary Clarice Lousberg, and Mary Geraldine Yelich



70-Year Jubilarians. Front row, left to right, Sisters J. Vianney Martinez, Loretta Fick, Mary Cecile Breen, Mary Jo Downey. Back row, left to right, Sisters Jean Martin Dawson, Marie Michael Mollis, Mary Jane Schmitz, and Frances Marie Grady



60-Year Jubilarians. Front row, left to right, Sisters Jean Marian Rilinger and Maureen Kehoe. Back row, left to right, Sisters Margaret Finch, Jean Lockett, Renée Washut, Susan Rieke, Phyllis Stowell, Mary Ann Theisen



Assistant Coordinator of Communal Life Kate Geer pins a corsage onto Sister Marie Benedict Young.



70-year Jubilarian Sister Frances Marie Grady painted the 2024 Jubilee artwork.



Sister Phyllis Stowell, 60-year Jubilarian, delivers the reflection during Mass.

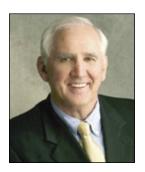




Escorted by Sisters Vicki Lichtenauer (left) and Mary Lex Smith (right), Sister Mary Geraldine Yelich (left) and Sister Loretta Fick (right) carry the gifts during Mass.

Honoring John Sage: Transforming Lives Through Bridges to Life

The Vincentian Charism Award was established by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth on November 11, 2018, as the SCL Community celebrated its 160th anniversary of the pioneer Sisters' arrival in Leavenworth and as the Vincentian charism marked the beginning of its fifth century. The award is named after SCL patron, St. Vincent de Paul, a 17th-century French priest known for his charity and compassion towards the poor, and honors individuals who embody St. Vincent's charism and spirit, demonstrate a sustained commitment to gentle and humble service to the poor, and inspire and influence others toward service.



John Sage, founder and CEO of Bridges to Life, has been named the 2024 recipient of the Vincentian Charism Award as he transforms lives through a faith-based prison ministry program.

Catholic Upbringing

John's commitment to service is deeply rooted in his upbringing. He received a Catholic education from grades 1-12. In a 2019 interview, John reflected on this time by saying, "The daily presence of priests and nuns showed me the merits of service to others. I was taught and loved by people outside of my family unit who had no direct responsibility or gain by helping me. What a blessing it was to have this ingrained in my young heart during my formative years." This early influence instilled in him a core belief in the importance of service, guiding him throughout his life.

After he graduated from St. Thomas High School in Houston, John attended Louisiana State University,

earning a B.S. in finance and a master's degree in business administration. Before founding Bridges to Life in 1998, John's professional career was in real estate and finance. John has been married to his high school sweetheart, Frances, for over 50 years. Together, they have two sons and four grandchildren.

The Journey from Tragedy to Healing

John's life took a tragic turn in 1993 when he lost his sister, Marilyn, to a violent act of crime. This profound loss left him grappling with trauma, rage, and grief for the next five years. During this challenging period, John's spiritual search led him to participate in a pilot prison program called Sycamore Tree, where crime victims shared their stories with inmates. This experience profoundly changed him, enhancing his healing and positively impacting the inmates participating in the program.

Inspired by the empathy, healing, and transformation he observed, and because of his strong faith and dedication to service, John developed Bridges to Life. This Texas-based organization has significantly impacted communities in numerous states and foreign countries.



John Sage, second from left in back row, is pictured with Bridges to Life's 50,000th graduate.

"We try to instill hope, and we want the offenders to admit their guilt. But we want them to understand this: 'You have made mistakes.

But you are not a mistake."

- John Sage - Purpose Prize Fellow 2011, Cogenerate.org

Bridges to Life

Bridges to Life is based on the principles of restorative justice. It aims to connect communities to prisons to reduce recidivism, especially for violent crimes, decrease the number of crime victims, and enhance public safety. Bridges to Life's spiritual mission is to



minister to victims and offenders, demonstrating the transformative power of God's love and forgiveness.

"Saint Vincent Would Admire John"

John's dedication to restorative justice has transformed the lives of over 84,000 offenders and inspired thousands of volunteers. His efforts have resulted in a remarkable reduction in recidivism, demonstrating the effectiveness of his approach in promoting genuine rehabilitation and societal reintegration. The program's success in operating across multiple states and countries further underscores John's influence and the far-reaching benefits of his vision.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, John's life illuminates the Vincentian values of humility, compassion, and service to the poor. His strong faith and commitment to helping others have been a guiding force throughout his journey, making a tangible difference in the lives of countless individuals. For these reasons, John Sage epitomizes the ideals of the Vincentian Charism Award, making him a genuinely deserving honoree.

In nominating John for this award, Rolly Dessert, SCLA, wrote, "Saint Vincent de Paul would admire John for his work of mercy for those incarcerated in prisons in the U.S. and abroad. John, an All-American athlete and successful businessman, clearly saw, through a family tragedy, that he was in a prison of his own and he needed to be healed of the grief, trauma, and anger."

John will be formally honored by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth at the Mother House on September 27, the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul.

To find out more about Bridges to Life, visit www.bridgestolife.org or scan here:



Program Impact:

- Recidivism Reduction: Over 86% of Bridges to Life's graduates do not return to prison within three years of release, which shows the program's effectiveness in reducing repeat offenses.
- Empathy and Responsibility: Offenders develop empathy for crime victims, which leads them to take responsibility for their actions and reduces their likelihood of returning to crime.
- Community Safety: As fewer offenders return to crime, crime rates decrease, making communities safer.
- Volunteer Fulfillment: Bridges to Life volunteers report higher levels of fulfillment, forgiveness, and hope after participating in the program.

Scope and Reach:

- Since 1998, Bridges to Life has operated in over 200 prisons across 17 states and seven countries.
- Over 84,000 graduates have completed the program with the support of 3,600 volunteers.
- In 2024, Bridges to Life anticipates completing 270 projects in more than 110 prisons and alternative facilities, graduating 7,700 participants with the help of over 750 volunteers.

Celebrating 23 Years at Marillac Center

For 23 years, Sister Noreen Walter has been a welcoming face at Marillac Center. As the center's director, she has led the development of programs and retreats for Sisters, Associates, and guests. She describes her time as a blessing, "I witnessed the transformation that takes place when people can come to



Sister Noreen Walter

a place to welcome the Spirit to enter their lives and their work."

On August 8, Sisters, Associates, and staff gathered at O'Shea Conference Center to celebrate Sister Noreen's retirement. In her comments to the well-wishers, she thanked everyone who helped with the center's operation: "I want to take this opportunity to thank all the support workers who have made Marillac Center outstanding. The housekeepers, food service staff, maintenance, groundkeepers, and volunteers have been outstanding in their dedication and service. Yes, it takes a village to run a retreat center."

As Sister Eileen thanked Sister Noreen for her faithful and loving service as director, she commented on Sister Noreen's gift of guiding and supporting the staff in a collaborative team environment. She said Sister Noreen played a significant role in shaping the mission of Marillac Center so that all persons would know they are welcome to "an environment of prayer, peace, hope, and transformation in the spirit of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth."

Recognizing the contributions of others who have helped develop Marillac Center's programs, Sister Noreen said, "Over these past years, I have worked with many wonderful SCL Sisters as the Marillac Center team from its beginning to now." She also recognized the growth of the center's staff to include Father Kevin Cullen, S.J. She further said, "Working with a team approach has enabled us to grow and change for the better. And now, after 23 years, it is time to pass the torch on to a new director."

Marillac Center welcomes Sue Robb as its new director. Sue previously served as the Pastoral Associate for Justice and Life at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Kansas City, Missouri.



Sister Eileen Haynes leading a blessing over Sister Noreen Walter.

A Unified Mission of Service and Growth

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

During this time of profound change in religious life, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth consider how changes in SCL demographics will affect the mission and future direction of the Community. In 2023, the SCL Council presented a plan to Sisters and employees that separated some of the Council's responsibilities through a new organizational structure that created three executive director positions for the administrative structure of the SCL Community.

The SCL Council has traditionally held dual roles: canonical responsibilities related to the Church's mission and civil responsibilities involving the management of a non-profit organization. The SCL Council's primary role is to attend to canonical needs and requirements in religious life. Civil responsibilities may be delegated to others, and so the new executive directors will oversee various areas of mission expression, communal life enrichment, and resource management.

When presenting this new structure to employees, the Council said, "What we are realizing as a leadership team and as a Community is that it is no longer just about us witnessing and sharing the mission. It is about all of us, Sisters and employees, embracing this mission and living it together in a new and dynamic way into the future. We realize many of you – in your actions and interactions – are already living and sharing this mission."

Further, the Council emphasized that the new structure expands the SCL concept of community by sharing the responsibility of the Vincentian mission.

Over the past six months, John Shively, Sharon Kibbe, and Larry Wilkus were hired as the Executive Directors for Mission, Communal Life, and Resources, respectively. Recently, they took some time to answer questions about their backgrounds, what attracted them to the SCL Community, and their visions for the future in their roles.



John Shively and Sister Marueen Kehoe



Julie Butler, head of nursing, and Sharon Kibbe

A Shared Vision of Service

John Shively, executive director of mission, is a familiar face on the SCL campus. For the past five years, he has coordinated the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office (JPIC). "I have had many opportunities to work with prophetic and courageous Sisters and lay people," he comments, adding, "It has felt rewarding to have played a role, however small, in advocating for marginalized people at the policy-making table – whether in getting low-income housing tax credits passed, rolling back the Kansas food sales tax, or preventing the expansion of laws against homelessness."

Resonating with this sentiment, Sharon Kibbe, executive director of communal life, has a deep sense of service shaped by her extensive experience in healthcare and education. "Wrapping my professional experience in the blanket of my Catholic faith has infused a sense. of service to those in need, which is in line with the SCL Vincentian charism," Sharon explained. She is focused on energizing, sustaining, and enriching the communal and spiritual life of the Sisters.

Emphasizing the alignment of his professional skills with the SCL mission, Larry Wilkus, executive director of resources, shared, "I was particularly inspired by



John Shively, Executive Director of Mission

John Shively, SCLA, started his career with the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth as the coordinator of the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office. With a degree in international affairs from Marquette University, John is well-versed in Catholic Social Teaching. His work

focuses on advocating for marginalized communities and promoting social justice initiatives. As the Executive Director of Mission, John is committed to deepening the understanding and practice of the SCL mission, fostering strong relationships, and empowering staff. Outside of work, John enjoys hiking, reading non-fiction and poetry, and cooking South American-inspired cuisine.



Sharon Kibbe, Executive Director of Communal Life

Sharon Kibbe blends her extensive experience in healthcare and education to serve the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. Having worked as an executive administrator in assisted living and hospice care, and as a vice president at a community college, Sharon's

professional journey is rooted in service and education. Her Catholic faith and dedication to lifelong learning drive her mission to support the communal and spiritual lives of the Sisters. Sharon values personal engagement and participatory leadership, aiming to understand and meet the needs of the Community. She enjoys family time, especially with her grandchildren, and is completing a postgraduate degree in teaching and learning.



Larry Wilkus, Executive Director of Resources

Larry Wilkus brings a diverse background in engineering, finance, and busiiness management to his role for the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. With extensive experience in the utility and manufacturing industries, Larry has also served on several nonprofit boards in

Kansas City. His Catholic faith and commitment to social justice align perfectly with the SCL mission. Larry aims to leverage his skills to support the Community during a time of change, focusing on resource management and environmental sustainability. A lifelong Kansas City resident, Larry enjoys traveling with his wife, Karen, and spending time with their two dogs.

the SCL mission of social justice and the environment of promoting spiritual growth." Although Larry's background is in engineering and finance, he is excited that his role provides a unique opportunity to integrate his faith with his professional career.

Engaging with the Community

Engagement with the Sisters and staff is a cornerstone of their leadership. John Shively prioritizes building strong, trusting relationships, emphasizing this with a common quote from social justice circles, "Change happens at the speed of trust." By listening to others and empowering staff, John is excited to expand the circle of people who live out the mission of the SCLs.

Sharon Kibbe dedicates significant time to learning the stories and challenges of the Sisters. "Personal engagements are often the best way to understand challenges and support needs," Sharon explained. Her focus is on building strong relationships and listening to individual and group needs to plan for the future effectively.

Larry Wilkus highlights the importance of open communication and understanding the Community's needs. "I do that by walking around to get to know the community and talk about issues of the day," he noted. This approach helps Larry identify and address concerns while fostering a collaborative environment.

Looking to the Future

With the new executive director roles, the three continue to explore and define their roles within the SCL Community. Eager to help the Office of Mission become a central resource for mission formation, John Shively aims to create opportunities for Sisters, staff, and Associates to explore and deepen their understanding of the mission. Informed by Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si*', John said, "Our faith invites us into a lifelong journey of transformation and evolution." The SCL charism "calls us to respond to the needs of the time," John explained, highlighting the importance of ongoing discernment and adaptation.

Sharon Kibbe's vision aligns with the communal needs of the SCL Community. She is committed to supporting the works of service that meet critical needs and to planning for the future of the Vincentian charism. "Listening to individual and group needs is a key component of this journey," Sharon emphasized.

Focusing on the organization of resources to support the SCL mission in a changing environment, Larry stated, "My role will evolve as the Community does." He aims to set goals that bring the community together and support both the mission and communal life.

Final Thoughts

Advancing the mission of the larger community through collaboration, engagement, and a shared commitment to service is the dedication of the executive directors of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. John Shively, Sharon Kibbe, and Larry Wilkus bring diverse experiences and perspectives, but they are united by their passion for the SCL mission. As they step into their roles, they are eager to support the Sisters and staff, foster a positive and inclusive environment, and walk with the larger SCL community into a future filled with hope and purpose.



Lloyd Hale, facilities director, and Larry Wilkus



Photo credit: Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, https://www.cooperhewitt.org/

In Piura, Peru, Ana Sulma Calle Garcia, Director of San Vicente Pastoral Center, and Rosario de Pilar Valdivieso Morales, Integral Ecology Initiative Director, have stepped into new leadership roles at San Vicente Pastoral Center, a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (SCL). The center focuses on integral health, employment skills, community education, and the development and defense of human rights.

Ana and Rosario's commitment to the SCL mission embodies the values of service, compassion, and community. Through their respective roles, Ana and Rosario work to support the poor and promote ecological sustainability, spreading the SCL mission.



Shared Vision and Mission

Both Ana and Rosario share a deep connection to the mission of the SCLs, which drew them to their current positions. With her business administration background, Ana was attracted by the Sisters' dedication to serving the poor. "The mission of the Sisters, their service to the poor, and my position in particular allow me to manage projects for their benefit," she explains. Rosario, whose career spans agro-industry, microfinance, and real estate, was similarly inspired. "I was attracted by the vocation of service and vision to contribute to the conservation of the planet," she says, emphasizing the Sisters' commitment to social, economic, and emotional welfare.

Vision for the Future

As they settle into their roles, they have been taking stock of the center's activities. Ana, having worked at the center for three years, recognizes the challenges they face as a small organization. "My priorities in these first months is to overcome limitations with the help of our existing organization and support from the SCLs." Similarly, Rosario is evaluating each component, its direction, and function. She hopes to establish which approaches have the greatest impact and contribution to the community.

Engaging and Supporting the Community

Engagement and support for the Sisters and their staff are priorities for both Ana and Rosario. Ana was first attracted to working at the center because of the Sisters' commitment to service to the poor. She values that in her current position, she can manage projects that benefit the poorest in Piura. Rosario wants to work to ensure the mission of the SCLs continues to be fulfilled through the center and, directly and indirectly, "teach those that come after me to love and respect the legacy left by the Sisters."

Personal Influences and Values

Their personal influences and values deeply inform Ana and Rosario's professional lives. Ana cites her faith as her greatest influence, inspiring her to be the best leader and person she can be. Her guiding values include gratitude, empathy, humility, and solidarity. For Rosario, who has a varied and expansive work experience, being exposed to many different people has given her the "ability to see the essence of the human being," going on to say, "It has formed in me a better character...and strengthened the fundamental principles in my life." Those principles are honesty, loyalty, respect, responsibility, empathy, and kindness.

Final Thoughts and Messages

As they assume their positions, both leaders have heartfelt messages for the Sisters and staff. Ana emphasizes teamwork and commitment. "We are a team all working for a single objective, and we will give the best of us," she affirms. Rosario expresses gratitude for the opportunity to grow professionally and personally within the SCL Community. "I am very happy to belong to your team of collaborators and help evangelize more people under the Vincentian charism," she says. 🔊

Today, San Vicente Pastoral Center has four areas of activity: integral health, employability promotion, community education, and development and defense of human rights.

Examples of Center Activities

- The center hosts craft workshops to teach women to make small items to be sold and bring income into their homes.
- Workshops for the elderly with physical exercises, painting, and craft activities are designed to keep them active in society.
- The center also has agreements with Catholic University Sedes Sapientiae and Cesar Vallejo University to train people in phytotherapy (plant-based medicine) and psychology.
- · A volunteer group, Voluvicen de la Caridad de Leavenworth is linked to the center and developing a hanginggardens project for homes that will be taught to the center's clientele.



Ana Sulma Calle Garcia

Director of San Vincente Pastoral Center Ana Sulma, with a degree in business administration and eight years of professional experience in both public and private sectors, brings a wealth of knowledge and dedication to her role. She has spent nearly three years managing the Pastoral Center, focusing on organizing projects that benefit the poor. Outside of work, Ana is an active church member, passionate about preaching and sharing her faith, and is a devoted mother to her three-year-old daughter.



Rosario del Pilar Valdivieso Morales

Integral Ecology Initiative Director at San Vicente Pastoral Center Rosario del Pilar Valdivieso Morales has a diverse professional background, including experience in agro-industrial development, microfinance, and real estate. Rosario is driven by a commitment to environmental conservation and social welfare, inspired by the charism and spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul. She and her husband, Boris, have two children, with whom she enjoys traveling, gardening, and organizing social events. She finds joy in creating lasting memories with her family.

SCL Associates Reconnect and Reflect at Colorado Associate Days 2024

From July 19 to 21, SCL Associates gathered for their Associate Days at The Gardens at St. Elizabeth in Denver, Colorado. This meaningful event offered the Associates a chance to reflect on the SCL mission, learn from the SCL Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office (JPIC), renew their SCLA commitments, and enjoy enriching fellowship.

Reconnection and Reflection

The event began with participants reuniting after separation due to COVID-19. They shared personal updates, rekindled old friendships, and enjoyed the Denver skyline, reminiscing about the Sisters' pioneering spirit and dedication to those in need.

Saturday was a day of learning and deep conversations. Guided by Rebecca Metz and Nick Keehler from the JPIC Office and Executive Director of Mission John Shively, SCLA, Associates explored their personal journeys and roles within the SCL Community. Throughout the day the team offered helpful information on how to embody integral ecology, a concept that recognizes the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental issues.

John Shively opened the day by encouraging transparency, open conversation, and authenticity. He posed thought-provoking questions: "What does it mean to be an SCLA? What does it mean to be here?" John also read the poem "Like Gardening" by Jay Hulme,



Joking abounded with this Friday evening group. Front row I-r: Julie Ann Lay, Sister Renèe Washut, Sister Carol Depner, Megan Blalock, Dana Glade-Yaussy, Ron Cox, Rebecca Metz. Back row I-r: Nick Keehler, Debra Beeson, John Beeson, Mary Maher, Steven Blalock, Father John Costanzo, Patricia Dore, John Shively.

emphasizing the evolving nature of religious life and the collective role in this change. The poem beautifully illustrated themes of continuity, growth, and hope:

There is nothing to do but continue. Place your hands in the grip of a stranger, and guide them on.

In the future we will place life into this Earth, place the goodness we have found here deep into the soil.

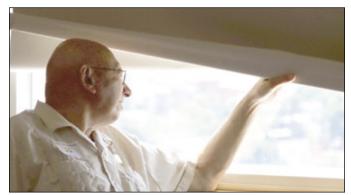
With gentle hands, we will bring all that is lost back into the world.

Green shoots uncoil from the darkness.

We will plant this grief, root it deep into the ground, treat it with wary respect, and see if it flowers.

Though the petals choose their own colours, let us tend them anyway, and hope that they bloom.

John connected this message with chapter four of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*', highlighting that the "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are inseparable. Through the lens of integral ecology, all of life is parallel. Without this lens, we will never get to the root of the problem." This insight set the stage for a day of meaningful dialogue.



Father John Costanzo, SCLA, reflecting on the Denver skyline.

John Shively, executive director of mission, discusses the relationship between Earth and humanity.





John Beeson, SCLA, offers his thoughts during a group discussion.



Rebecca Metz, Lead Coordinator of JPIC, discusses the many resources available in the JPIC office.



Nick Keehler, Community Engagement Coordinator, speaks about his role in the JPIC office.

Associates were asked, "What does it mean to be here?" Margaret Faciszewski, SCLA, shared that for her, "being here" signifies a source of hope for the future. John added that it is important to embody hope: "We have to be hope; we have to foster and create hope in the places we are." This sentiment resonated with the Associates, and they expressed their willingness to join their efforts locally to move these initiatives forward.

Lead Coordinator of JPIC Rebecca Metz and Community Engagement Coordinator Nick Keehler, shared insights about their roles and their department's future vision. Their mission is to deliver comprehensive content to the SCL Community, empowering individuals to advocate for systemic change. They conveyed their honor in serving the SCLs and their dedication to promoting systemic transformation.

Commitment Renewal and Reflection

On Sunday morning, participants gathered at the historic Christ the King Chapel within The Gardens at St. Elizabeth for Mass, with Father John Costanzo presiding. Fellow Associate Ron Cox served as the altar server. After Mass, the Associates renewed their commitments and shared lunch. The afternoon was dedicated to reflecting on the care of creation in all aspects of life.



Bridget Forsmark-Edelstein. SCLA, talks during a group discussion.

As the event concluded, the Associates felt reinvigorated and inspired to continue their work. They discussed advocacy for the unjust, the importance of taking action, and the need to remain open to joy and gratitude. Jeanette Hartman, SCLA, encapsulated this sentiment: "Gratitude is so important, it's like a giant eraser." The 2024 Colorado Associate Days were a testament to the enduring spirit and commitment of the SCL Associates. Through reflection, learning, and fellowship, they renewed their dedication to the SCL mission and prepared to move forward with hope and purpose.



Nick Keehler, Rebecca Metz, and John Shively listen as Don Stubbings, Director of Associates, shares comments during the Saturday session.

TAKE NOTE

Director of Associates Don Stubbings plans to hold Associate Days annually with each region, Kansas/Missouri, Colorado, and Montana.

Kansas Associates participated in Kansas Associate Days from April 19-21, 2024, at Marillac Center in Leavenworth. Their weekend offered fellowship, Earth Day activities, connections, and a retreat facilitated by Father Kevin Cullen, S.J. The Montana Associates Days will be at a later date.



Saturday, participants gathered for a group photo. First-row I-r: Julie Ann Lay, Ron Cox, Margaret Faciszewski. Second-row I-r: Stephanie Nash, Don Stubbings, Vie Thorgren, Dana Glade-Yaussy, Debra Beeson, John Beeson. Third-row I-r: Rebecca Metz, Steven Blalock, John Shively, Bridget Forsmark-Edelstein, Father John Costanzo.



Among the Associate recommitment ceremony were Steven and Megan Blalock and Bill and Deborah Roth.



Madeline Gore, daughter of Colorado Associates Gretchen and Warren Gore, attended the Mass and recommitted in honor of her parents, who could not be present. Father John Costanzo married Gretchen and Warren and baptized Maddie.



SCL Associates gathered for a photo after their recommitment ceremony. First-row I-r: Father John Costanzo, Don Stubbings, Margaret Faciszewski, Dana Glade-Yaussy, Vie Thorgren, Ron Cox, Julie Ann Lay. Second-row I-r: Jim Paquette, Patte Paquette, Bridget Forsmark-Edelstein, Megan Blalock, John Shively. Third-row I-r: Bill Roth, Deborah Roth, Steven Blalock, Mary Maher, Stephanie Nash.

Associate Spotlight – Pete Zarlengo, SCLA

By Don Stubbings, Director of Associates



Don Stubbings (left) with Pete Zarlengo.

As I settled into my role as the Director of Associates, I started reading more about each Associate. Many files contain highlights of ministries and short notes about faith, and one file contains the incredible journey of Pete Zarlengo, SCLA.

Pete's journey to becoming an Associate was not typical because most Associates did not start their journey at only two years old. Pete and his siblings lost their mother early in life when Pete was only six months old, and his father just could not raise the children and have a career. In 1927, Pete's father entrusted the SCL Community at Mount Saint Vincent Home (now called Mount Saint Vincent) in Denver, Colorado, to raise Pete and his brother, while his sister went to another orphanage designated to raise young girls.

The Sisters of Charity founded Mount Saint Vincent Home in 1883, and in 1909, it became exclusively a home for boys. In true SCL fashion, the home was built with a forward-thinking spirit, and the Sisters wanted to provide better medical and mental health care as well as a traditional education for those in their care.

In a 2012 United Way video, Pete recalled there were not many amenities, such as gyms or swimming pools, but what they did have was fun. Pete recalled that all the boys had to learn tap dancing, and the "Nuns" made it fun!

A Life of Service

At only 17 years old, Pete joined the United States Navy, serving during World War II. The service-centered mindset was present at an early age, as most men his age were drafted. While Pete did receive the draft papers, he had already volunteered after his brother joined.

Pete's three years in the Navy included being a landing craft operator on D-Day at Omaha Beach. Pete's boat made several trips, dropping men and equipment off on

the beach on this infamous day. One of the primary missions in his time during the war was taking the wounded from Normandy back to England 28 times more than any other ship during the war.

After serving in the war, Pete continued in the Navy, building an airbase at the North Pole. During the summer, several thousand workers were present, but in the winter, when the temperatures were 50 below zero, Pete volunteered to help complete the job!

After living in Chicago for a while, Pete moved back to Colorado, where he raised his seven children and fostered 14 more. At one time, 20 people lived in a two-story farm home. Through World Vision, he sponsored 36 children worldwide. In an interview, Pete said he would ask the agency for the youngest and poorest children to sponsor. He sponsored a child at \$30 monthly with up to 10 children at a time. Pete has also traveled to Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru with his family to visit his sponsored children. While most may feel this is above and beyond, Pete takes it a step further and pays for a better education for the children he sponsors. Even extending an offer to help pay for college. Today, at 99 years old, Pete continues this incredible ministry!

Pete always remembers his time at Mount Saint Vincent Home and how the Sisters cared for him. Pete used the skills he learned in the Navy to volunteer at Mount Saint Vincent Home for 53 years, taking care of the property's boilers, plumbing, and electrical until he was 90. Pete says, "I'm thankful for three things: God, the Sisters of Charity, and my family. Those three things shaped my life."

Pete's life of service is inspiring. Although he officially became an Associate in 2010, sponsored by Sister Roberta Furey, Pete has stated that the Sisters were central in forming him in childhood into who he became and how his life was lived. "I hope I will always be near to them so that I can help return to them what they have given me." Today, Pete spends his days amongst fellow veterans at the Veterans Community Living Center in Aurora, Colorado, still talking about his faith, family, and his children all over the world!

Note: Pete's incredible life and work were featured in a Library of Congress documentary in 2017. Some of the quotes and information cited in this article were from various interviews Pete participated in.





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