

# Vision

Sisters of Charity of New York • Now in Our Third Century of Living Lives of Love • Vol. 28 ISSUE 1

Vincent's  
CMSV



Table  
SCNY

TAKE WHAT YOU NEED  
GIVE WHAT YOU CAN!

Yes, it is Bread  
we fight for  
— but we fight  
for Roses, too.

WINTER 2024





## From the President

Dear *Vision* Readers,

Happy New Year!

As we step into a new year, I am filled with gratitude for the many blessings that have graced our Congregation in the past months. Following our decision to formally conclude new memberships, there may have been misconceptions about the future of the Sisters of Charity of New York. Let me assure you, our doors remain wide open, embracing the spirit of Charity.

Within the pages of this edition of *Vision*, we hope to offer you a glimpse into the vibrant vitality of our mission, a mission that thrives and will endure for years to come. The profound impact of our sponsored ministries, led by devoted lay individuals, is a testament to the enduring flame of Charity that burns brightly throughout New York City today. This is thanks in part to the spark of Charity that was ignited by our Foundress, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, more than two centuries ago.

Charity is not confined to the walls of our institutions. It echoes in the heart of Broadway, as the Oscar, Pulitzer, and Tony Award winning production, *DOUBT: A Parable*, returns to 42nd Street for a limited run revival in February. It is a poignant reminder of the inspiration drawn from Sr. Peggy McEntee, formerly known as Sr. James, whose legacy lives on through this powerful play and film.

Moreover, within this issue you will witness the enduring strength of Charity in the reunions between our Sisters and their former students, as well as Sisters and their cherished classmates.

The transformative news from the College of Mount Saint Vincent, regarding significant developments slated for the “Right Place on the River” in 2024, further attests to our Congregation’s unwavering dedication to education for all. It reaffirms our commitment to a mission that will shape lives for generations to come.

We extend our deepest gratitude to each of you for walking alongside us on this journey of Charity and wish you peace and blessings for the New Year.

Sr. Donna Dodge  
Sisters of Charity of New York

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## Bread and Roses

*As we go marching, marching, unnumbered women dead  
Go crying through our singing their ancient call for bread.  
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.  
Yes, it is bread we fight for, but we fight for roses too.*

The enduring words of the poem “Bread and Roses” resonate deeply with the historical textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts, now commonly referred to as the “Bread and Roses strike.” This pivotal event, led largely by women under the banner of the Industrial Workers of the World, emphasized that survival requires more than just sustenance; it demands dignity and respect. The recent transformation of Vincent’s Table’s community food pantry and refrigerator, at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, now stands as a vivid embodiment of this principle.

As Summer 2023 approached, the coordinators of Vincent’s Table, in partnership with the College of Mount Saint Vincent’s Division of Communications, Art and Media, opened a unique opportunity for creative expression to CMSV students. The objective was to imagine a new way to welcome those in need to the Vincent’s Table community pantry and refrigerator on campus. After reviewing several submissions, Analydia Camacho, a talented visual artist skilled in illustration, painting, and mixed-media, was chosen to undertake this special project. Having faced food insecurity herself, the pantry and refrigerator provided Analydia with a meaningful canvas to convey her personal connection to this vital issue.

The endeavor commenced in August with Analydia applying the initial layer of purple paint, followed by the creation of her winning design. It was completed in November. Throughout the process, Professor Thomas Ray Willis, her teacher, collaborated with Analydia on the finishing touches, marking a unique artistic partnership for her. Reflecting on this experience, Analydia expressed a newfound enthusiasm for collaborative art and plans to pursue more such projects in the future. With past exhibitions including her piece “Big Eyes” in a Brooklyn Museum during middle school, Analydia’s talent has consistently resonated with the public.

Sharon L. Dosing, one of the coordinators of Vincent’s Table and the driving force behind the idea of the mural, was definitely delighted with the artwork. “It’s all there; The story of the Mount, the campus, the College, the kids, food insecurity, the River, our faith-based feeling about how we fill it—painted on three sides. It tells a story without reading words.”

A native of Brooklyn and the Bronx, Analydia Camacho holds the distinction of being the first in her immediate family to achieve a four-year degree, preparing to graduate



*Before, during, and after.*



*Winning artist Analydia Camacho prepares to complete the final details on her latest masterpiece.*

with a BA in studio art from Mount Saint Vincent in 2024. Professor Willis aptly notes, “Analydia’s artwork mirrors the Mount’s mission, aiming to inspire individuals and foster a more interconnected community.”



## Life Experience and Faith Sharing Associates (LEFSA)

Through the generosity of Barry Markman, his wife Golda and their children, members of the LEFSA community boarded the Dixie II for their annual chartered fishing trip. Guests enjoyed a beautiful sunny day fishing on the open sea, their first opportunity to enjoy the yearly event since the pandemic. Sr. Karen Helfenstein, Sr. Kathy Byrnes, and SCNY Assistant Development Director Rosana Fernandez were also on board.

LEFSA held another popular event; their annual summertime picnic, which took place in Central Park traditionally. This year the gathering was in Marcus Garvey Park, where members enjoyed beautiful weather and a delicious barbeque meal together.

When the summer concluded, however, the LEFSA community was devastated by the sudden passing of Mario Pimentel. Sr. Mary Sugrue and SCNY staff joined the LEFSA community for a special Leadership Study Day to celebrate his life. Mario passed away unexpectedly at the end of September, having served as a vital part of the LEFSA team since 2016, doing shelter outreach and recently coordinating their Creativity Program. The LEFSA team, members and family shared many heartfelt words for Mario, whose impact on and in the community was undeniable. Through his own vulnerability he was able to help inspire others to let their light shine, too. Artwork from several participants of Mario's Tuesday creativity class were also on display for everyone to enjoy.



All aboard the DIXIE II for LEFSA's Annual Fishing Trip.



Summertime was easy, and the fish were biting on the DIXIE II.



A picture of Mario Pimentel from this year's annual fishing trip is featured at his remembrance gathering.



Lots of smiling faces.



Sr. Kathy Byrnes making sure the grill is ready to go for hungry guests attending LEFSA's Annual Picnic.



A member, Francina, and Sr. Mary Sugrue, in front of art display at Mario Pimentel's celebration of life gathering.

## A Beacon of Hope: Saint Michael's House Welcomes its First Residents

The dedication of Saint Michael's House marked a momentous occasion, leaving a lasting impression on all who were present. This event not only celebrated the establishment of a new home, but also exemplified the power of generosity and compassion in action.

The inaugural occupants of Saint Michael's House, a family of four, had recently fled Ukraine, arriving in America with little more than hope. The purchase of this refuge was made possible through an extraordinary donation by Sisters of Charity Housing, signifying a pioneering step for the organization. Matthew Janeczko, President & CEO of Sisters of Charity Housing, emphasized the ongoing need for such initiatives, expressing his hope that this act of benevolence would inspire others.

In a poignant moment, Zinaida Tkachenko, accompanied by her husband Serhii and their daughter Mia, received the keys to their new abode from Matthew Janeczko. This symbolic gesture marked the beginning of a fresh chapter for the Tkachenko family, who will be supported by Depaul USA with resources, including employment assistance and language classes, until they can secure a home of their own.

As the Tkachenkos work towards self-sufficiency and embark on their journey to find a permanent residence, another refugee family stands poised to move in. This cycle of support and empowerment lies at the heart of Saint Michael's House's mission.

Approximately 25 dedicated volunteers, who contributed to the refurbishment and furnishing of the house in the Carondelet neighborhood, bore witness to this significant milestone. Their efforts were solemnly blessed by a priest, underscoring the spiritual significance of this act of kindness.

Matt Janeczko reminded those in attendance that the fabric of our nation, and indeed our shared faith, is intricately woven with the narratives of individuals hailing from diverse corners of the world. This sentiment encapsulated the essence of Saint Michael's House—a sanctuary for those seeking solace and a fresh start.

Depaul USA, in collaboration with Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corp., the Congregation of the Mission, and private benefactors, played a pivotal role in not only procuring but also outfitting Saint Michael's House. This collective effort reflects the potency of communal action in bringing about positive change.

Saint Michael's House stands as a testament to the remarkable impact that compassionate initiatives can have on the lives of those in need. With the support of Sisters of Charity Housing, Depaul USA, and a host of dedicated volunteers and donors, this sanctuary will continue to serve as a beacon of hope for generations to come.



St. Michael's House, St. Louis, MO.



Serhii and Zina Tkachenko, along with their 7-month-old daughter, Mia.



Matthew Janeczko, President and CEO of the Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation and SCOPE, and Don Zachritz, a member of the Holy Haulers group.



## Saint Elizabeth Seton School Under the Protection of the Martyrs of Quiché

The Sisters of Charity of New York are excited to announce that we are, once again, part of a new educational ministry—this time in Guatemala.

The Saint Elizabeth Seton School Under the Protection of the Martyrs of Quiché in Nebaj, Guatemala, opened in January 2023. The Diocese of Quiché donated the property and building to the Sisters of Charity, and we raised over \$165,000 toward the renovations needed to provide a safe and stable environment for indigenous children in grades 7-9. One of our young sisters in Guatemala is the Assistant Director of the new Catholic school, where she collaborates with a lay Director and lay teachers from the local area.

The month after the opening, local residents gathered for a special blessing of the new school, which commenced in the plaza of the Church of Santa Maria de Nebaj in Guatemala. Everyone was welcomed by Bishop Francisco Montecillo (Nuncio to Guatemala) and Bishop Rosolino Bianchetti (Bishop of Quiché). Following the opening was the *caminata*, the ten-minute walk to the “Colegio Santa Elizabeth Seton,” the first Catholic junior high school in the area.

The Liturgy was held in the large sports arena as people from the parish and its outlying communities, the faculty and students of the school, and parents and religious from other congregations filled the space.

Along with the bishops, Father Juan Alvarez, Pastor of the parish, and other priests celebrated the Eucharist after many welcomes. At the conclusion of the celebration Sister Nora Cunningham, SC read a letter from Sister Donna Dodge, SC, President, which expressed the Leadership’s joy on this special occasion and gratitude for the many people who collaborated with the Sisters of Charity to bring this project to fruition. Sister Nora Cunningham, SC continues to bring opportunities for education to the Mayan indigenous people of the area, who for years have lacked the option to continue their education beyond the 6th grade.

Sister Maria Pablo Andres, SC, Assistant Director and teacher, enthusiastically expressed the hope for the school to provide an excellent academic and spiritual education, which will prepare the students for life, using their gifts for the betterment of the world.

As the school is under the protection of the Martyrs of Quiché, she mentioned the adolescent martyr, Beato Juanito Barrera Méndez (1967-1980), who as a catechist taught and lived God’s reign of peace, justice and love, and who is an inspiration to young people.

The Director, Licenciada Maria Guadalupe Gatica Canté de Brito, introduced the seven-member faculty, whom the Bishop blessed individually.

The Nuncio then gave special recognition and gratitude to the Sisters of Charity for their efforts to initiate a Catholic school (Basico—grades 7-9 with 78 students) in the area of Ixil, where none exist, and the important contribution it will make in the lives of the students. Bishop Bianchetti followed suit with heartfelt gratitude to the Congregation.



Sr. Nora Cunningham extends greetings of appreciation from Sr. Donna Dodge and the Leadership Team.



“Caminata” to the Colegio Santa Elizabeth Seton.



Attendees came from near and far to attend the special blessing.



Classes have begun at The Saint Elizabeth Seton School Under the Protection of the Martyrs of Quiche.

### PEACE, JUSTICE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION & POTS

## Sisters of Charity Advocate for Climate Action

Sisters and devoted Catholic environmental activists are resolute in their mission to amplify the urgency of climate action and expand their efforts to mobilize public support for change. Among them stands Sr. Claire Regan, a dedicated member of the Sisters of Charity of New York, who recently took part in the “March to End Fossil Fuels” press conference at St. Paul the Apostle Church. The event served as a platform to amplify the voices of Catholic youth and their impassioned plea for Climate Justice, kick-starting the Catholic community’s involvement in the march.

Despite a robust Catholic presence at the event and a subsequent one-day United Nations “Climate Ambition Summit,” there remains a pervasive frustration among marchers and activists. They observe that their message has yet to resonate with a significant portion of the congregational community. Sr. Claire Regan, reflecting on her own experience, expressed a deep sorrow over a close relative’s denial of climate change. She emphasizes the collective responsibility we hold towards our environment and the planet we all share.

Sr. Claire believes that, regrettably, many have compartmentalized religion from worldly concerns. She notes a disconnect between attending church and partaking in Communion, and the broader social and environmental issues. Regrettably, the discussions around Pope Francis’ influential encyclical “Laudato Si’, On Care for Our Common Home” are scarce in her Bronx parish.

For activists like Sr. Claire, the significance of climate change and the safeguarding of our Earth cannot be overstated. “Laudato Si” and “Laudate Deum” serve as guiding principles, offering a framework and unwavering inspiration. According to Sr. Claire, everything converges under the profound words of the encyclical, connecting pressing social issues and the imperative to protect our planet.

The Catholic contingent, orchestrated by the Metro New York Catholic Climate Movement, included passionate organizations like Pax Christi, Franciscan Action Network, and the Sisters of Mercy. Their collective voices joined tens of thousands in Times Square, demanding climate justice and advocating for a more sustainable future for all.

### POTS (Part of the Solution)

POTS is a program widely recognized for its unwavering commitment to addressing root causes of poverty, always in an atmosphere of respect and compassion. Its mission is to be a loving community that nourishes the basic needs and hungers of all who seek assistance.

The program began in 1982, when Sr. Jane Iannucelli, SC, joined with Tim Boon and Fr. Ned Murphy, SJ, in simply offering hot soup to the desperately poor on Fordham Road. With a growing realization of the complexity of forces that keep people in poverty, POTS has expanded to offer multiple services, making it a powerful catalyst for change in people’s lives.

40 years later and the impact of POTS’s commitment to ending hunger has only grown, serving an astounding 3,203,000 meals, via lunch service and pantry, in 2022.



Sr. Claire Regan and Joan Woods join the March to End Fossil Fuels press conference at St. Paul the Apostle Church, highlighting the voices of Catholic youth and their cries for Climate Justice.



Catholic contingent marches to Times Square to join other faith participants at the New York City Climate Justice March.



POTS, City Harvest, Food Bank for NYC and the United Way in Washington, DC elevate the voices of those experiencing hunger and food insecurity in their communities.



## NY Foundling Leadership Retreat

The Sisters of Charity of New York gathered at the College of Mount Saint Vincent for a heartwarming day at the New York Foundling's leadership retreat. Sr. Jean Iannone ensured smooth check-in, while the beloved Sr. Carol Barnes extended a warm welcome to all the guests. The event commenced with stellar performances by Sr. Virginia Searing and Sr. Mary Mc Cormick, portraying Sr. Mary Irene Fitzgibbon, the visionary founder of the New York Foundling. Through Broadway-worthy storytelling, they illuminated the rich history of the Sisters of Charity's involvement with this vital ministry.

Amidst the spirited atmosphere, the Leadership Team, accompanied by members of the Congregation like Sr. Charlotte Raftery, Sr. Eileen McGrory, Sr. Dorothy Metz, and Sr. Gabriel Obraz, came together for a meaningful lunch. This gathering marked a special moment for all the retreat attendees, forging connections and renewing bonds. The sense of camaraderie and shared purpose was palpable, underscoring the enduring commitment of the Sisters of Charity to their ministry and the New York Foundling.

After the enriching lunch, the group embarked on a visit to the historic Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, guided by Sr. Regina Bechtle. Here, attendees were treated to a fascinating journey through the chapel's long and storied history. This sacred space, steeped in tradition and significance, provided a fitting backdrop for reflection and gratitude. The day's events at the leadership retreat exemplified the unwavering dedication of the Sisters of Charity, leaving all involved with a deep sense of purpose and connection to their shared mission.



Sr. Jean Iannone is ready to check you in.



Sr. Mary Mc Cormick and Sr. Virginia Searing perform short skit for NY Foundling guests.



Sr. Carol Barnes enjoys lunch with retreat participants from the NY Foundling.



Sr. Regina Bechtle shares stories and answers questions on the history of the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception.

### ELIZABETH SETON CHILDREN'S CENTER

## "Mary as a Child" Statue Finds a New Home

The Congregation's "Mary as a Child" statue, which graced our Motherhouse back in 1847 at McGowans Pass, before relocating with the Sisters to Mount Saint Vincent in 1859, has found a new home following its recent restoration. Several of our Sisters traveled to the Elizabeth Seton Children's Center to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption and attend the unveiling of the statue in her new home in the St. Elizabeth Ann Chapel during Mass, celebrated by Bishop Gerald T. Walsh.

**"We are immensely grateful to the Sisters for the gift of 'Mary as a Child' and look forward to her spiritual inspiration in the decades to come!"**

— Elizabeth Seton Children's Center



"Mary as a Child" statue in her new home.



Sisters, Associates and Elizabeth Seton Children's Center staff gathered in front of Elizabeth Seton's statue following the presentation of "Mary the Child."

## The College of Mount Saint Vincent Makes Major Announcements

It was a blessed day on the College of Mount Saint Vincent campus as President Dr. Susan R. Burns announced the launch of Seton College, a new two-year college on its campus, in partnership with the Come to Believe Network (CTB). CTB is a nonprofit that assists higher education institutions in developing and launching two or four-year programs that provide pathways for underserved students to receive four-year degrees. This life-changing news was just one of several exciting announcements made to guests during CMSV's Alumni weekend about the future of the College.

As stated on the college website: "Inspired by the charism of the Sisters of Charity of New York and their two centuries-long mission of providing transformational educational experiences to all students—regardless of family and financial means—Seton College will be a two-year junior college that will educate students in the Vincentian/Setonian tradition and enable them to either enter the workforce or transfer to a four-year college or university at the conclusion of their studies."



Sr. Sheila Brosnan, Sr. Mary Mc Cormick, Sr. Margaret Egan, Sr. Mary Ann Daly, Rose McTague, Class of 1968, Sr. Margaret O'Brien, Sr. Donna Dodge, Dr. Susan R. Burns, and Michelle Mally, Class of 1970, following award presentation to the Sisters of Charity of New York.

The Sisters of Charity of New York were also presented with an award from the College in recognition of our lifetime commitment to education.

**"I could not think of a better way to deepen our legacy at Mount Saint Vincent than with the sponsorship and naming of Seton College. The Sisters of Charity are confident that our mission and charism will continue to thrive at Mount Saint Vincent in the future. We are eager to see all the good work that will develop as Seton College welcomes its first class of students."**

—Sr. Donna Dodge



Coming soon: The University of Mount Saint Vincent!

And that's not all. After years in the making, the College of Mount Saint Vincent is on its way to University status, in 2024.



Sr. Donna Dodge offers words of gratitude on behalf of the Congregation to press conference attendees.

## But wait, there's more...

The College of Mount Saint Vincent and Saint Joseph's Hospital announced the naming of the Saint Joseph's School of Nursing at Mount Saint Vincent, supported by a \$2.5 million donation from the hospital. This new partnership will help develop several modern nursing education initiatives at the Mount, including expanded research and clinical opportunities, student scholarships, and support for faculty—all in recognition of the shared charism instilled in us by our mutual foundresses.

**"Mount Saint Vincent has been training caring, competent nurses for decades. We are so grateful for the support of Saint Joseph's and their commitment to ensuring skilled nurses will be available when and where we need them—today, tomorrow, and in the years to come."**

—Dr. Susan R. Burns



The signing ceremony was attended by local community and political leaders. From left to right: Lisa Reyes, Deputy Director of Communications for the City of Yonkers; Jim Landy, Chair of the SJMC's Board of Trustees; Michael J. Spicer, President and CEO of SJMC; Susan R. Burns, PhD, President of CMSV; Andrea Stewart-Cousins, President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader of the New York State Senate; Catherine Healy-Sharbaugh, Dean of Nursing and Chief Nursing Officer for t CMSV; and Donna Dodge, SC, President of SCNY.



## Sr. James is Coming Back to Broadway

For over two centuries, the Sisters of Charity of New York have tirelessly dedicated themselves to healthcare, childcare, social services, and education across the five boroughs, profoundly impacting the lives of countless New Yorkers through the generations. Founded by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American-born saint, this pioneering Congregation embarked on their journey by tending to orphaned children, subsequently establishing hospitals and schools to meet the escalating needs as waves of immigrants from Ireland, Italy, and other nations arrived in Manhattan.

Through the years, they founded schools, colleges, and hospitals, initiated missions in the Bahamas and Guatemala, protested against the Vietnam War, and were even arrested for their convictions during a Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1972. They steadfastly continued to serve marginalized individuals, including immigrants, people experiencing homelessness, and the elderly.

The Sisters of Charity of New York have also played crucial roles in pivotal moments in our country's history. They served as dedicated nurses to wounded Civil War soldiers in an improvised hospital. When the AIDS pandemic emerged, they immediately offered both health and spiritual care to afflicted and dying patients at Saint Vincent's Hospital when other institutions turned them away.

Given their remarkable history, it's no surprise that one of the Sisters would inspire a future playwright to craft a play and movie about them. This is precisely what occurred to Sr. Margaret (Peggy) McEntee (formerly Sr. James) in 2005 when John Patrick Shanley penned his Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play, *DOUBT: A Parable*, which later received an Oscar as a film adaptation.

John Patrick reached out to Sr. Peggy while the play was still Off-Broadway, making her an integral part of the production process from its inception. She later served as a technical advisor for the film and was duly credited for her contributions. The concluding frame of the movie reads: This film is dedicated to Sister Margaret McEntee, S.C., formerly known as Sister James.

More than a decade later, *DOUBT: A Parable* returns to Broadway, and the Sister who inspired it all, who happens to be celebrating her 70th year as a Sister of Charity of New York, couldn't be more thrilled:

**"I just can't believe *DOUBT* is coming back to Broadway. This is so exciting for me and for the Congregation. I can't wait to see Tyne Daly as Sr. Aloysius and Zoe Kazan as myself. They're both going to be wonderful."**

— Sr. Peggy McEntee

The Broadway Revival is set to premiere at The Roundabout Theater in February and will run from February 2 to April 14. The play is under the direction of Tony Award winner Scott Ellis, and it stars Tyne Daly, Liev Schreiber, Zoe Kazan, and Quincy Tyler Bernstine.



Zoe Kazan and Sr. Margaret (Peggy) McEntee.



*DOUBT* promotional photo courtesy of the Roundabout Theater.



Sr. Margaret (Peggy) McEntee's entrance picture, 1953.

## Broadway Comes to Mount Saint Vincent

Over the span of several months, the Leadership Team of the Sisters of Charity of New York, along with Sr. Peggy McEntee, SCNY staff, and other members, had the delightful opportunity to host the director and cast of the forthcoming Broadway revival of *DOUBT: A Parable* at Mount Saint Vincent. These visits allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of our Sisters, and their ministries.

Tyne Daly, Liev Schreiber, Zoe Kazan, and Quincy Tyler Bernstine, in their preparations for their respective roles, made multiple enthusiastic visits, brimming with insightful questions. We eagerly anticipate arranging for as many Sisters as possible to attend the production. Stay tuned for more details in our upcoming edition of *Vision*. Here are some special moments from these memorable encounters:



Dr. Susan R. Burns shares details about Mount Saint Vincent's Chapel of the Immaculate Conception with Tyne Daly. The Chapel also served as the set for the movie *DOUBT*.



Scott Ellis, Liev Schreiber and Sr. Mary Mc Cormick discuss the history of the Congregation.



There's no doubt, Tyne Daly looks just like a Sister of Charity of New York in her early costume fittings.



Tyne Daly, Sr. Donna Dodge, John Fahey, and Zoe Kazan tour Mount Saint Vincent.



Zoe Kazan meets Sr. Peggy for the first time at Le Gras.



Quincy Tyler Bernstine, Dr. Susan R. Burns and Sr. Donna Dodge enjoy a quick visit to the Chapel while touring the campus of Mount Saint Vincent.



Fr. Chris Keenan, SCNY Associate, explains to Scott Ellis the different moments during mass that take place at the altar.



Sr. Peggy McEntee and Liev Schreiber were all smiles getting to know each other.



# Professor Darrin Pufall Purdy Documents the Traditional Habit of the Sisters of Charity of New York

by Mindy Gordon, Director, Archives

The Sisters of Charity of New York (SCNY) were fortunate to host Professor Darrin Pufall Purdy, MFA, Director of Theater and Costume Design at Boise State University, during his initial research to document how the individualized habits of orders of women religious were patterned and sewn, worn, and maintained. Due to a lack of available resources for costume designers when creating clothing for characters within religious communities, Prof. Pufall Purdy's ambitious project is to create a text to provide accurate resources for costume designers in theatrical productions to represent women and men in religious communities. He holds a Master of Fine Arts in Costume Design and Technology from the University of Florida and received a grant from Boise State University's School of the Arts for this project.

During several visits to the archive, Prof. Pufall Purdy documented habit styles for postulants and novices, regulations for type and weight of fabric, and maintenance and mending practices used between 1809 and 1968, the last year that the New York sisters were required to wear the habit. The textile components preserved at the archives comprise one full traditional habit, including tunic, cape, apron, high collar, cuffs, cap, outer cloak, and outer bonnets. Prof. Pufall Purdy stated, "The Sisters' habit bore an excellent design in every detail from proportion to the pleats in the cape and folds in the apron."

Sr. Elizabeth Vermaelen, President of the New York Congregation from 1995-2003, wore the traditional habit for nearly two decades, and worked directly with Prof. Pufall Purdy during his research visits. She detailed information about fabric, tailoring, and maintenance employed, such as, "Each sister was responsible to sew and repair their own habit." She recalled the Sisters' use of recycled materials to create patterns, such as cereal box cardboard for cap brims and plastic bleach bottles for collars and cuffs, and how to press the crisp pleats of the cape by placing the folded fabric under the mattress. Sr. Elizabeth described an unusual feature of the tunic known as a 'death tuck,' a six-inch tuck sewn an inch-and-a-half above the hem of the skirt, released after the death of a Sister to cover the feet before burial. Her continued contribution to this project was significant. "I enjoyed working with Darrin," stated Sr. Elizabeth, "his expertise at pattern making will replicate the style of habit worn by the Community."

In August 2023, Prof. Pufall Purdy presented the results of his research to the Sisters at the Mount Saint Vincent Convent. With a mannequin wearing the 'new' habit on view, he described the process and precision of producing the replica, as the Sisters shared their reminiscences in a lively interchange. We are thankful to Prof. Pufall Purdy for the donation of the re-created habit with cap and outer cape, and the paper and digital patterns derived, to the archives. These will be preserved for further research and reference, and as a testament to the many women who served as Sisters of Charity of New York.



Professor Darrin Pufall Purdy poses with his completed reproduction of the traditional Sisters of Charity of New York habit.



Professor Pufall Purdy presents his journey of creation to the Congregation at Mount Saint Vincent Convent.



Some of the last remaining pieces of the original habit housed in the SCNY Archive. Presentation slide of remaining original pieces of the habit located in the SCNY archives.



Sr. Vivienne Joyce and Sr. Mary Ellen O'Boyle take a moment to pose with 'Sr. Mannequin' after sharing their own memories of the days wearing the SCNY habit.



SCNY Archivist, Mindy Gordon, answers questions following habit presentation.



Sisters enjoy a closer look at all the details and accessories.



Professor Pufall Purdy explains the many specifics of the habit's collar and cuffs.



It was a full room of interested Sisters for the presentation.



## Learning Is Lifelong

by Sr. Ellen Rose O'Connell

We often hear expressed the belief, "Learning is life-long." While our early years are spent in formal educational settings and long hours of study, this process usually comes to an end in early adulthood. If we stop the inquiry and learning process simply because our early years in school are completed, we will be at risk of failing to absorb all the new information and insights we need to live safe, productive and interesting lives.

As educated women, the Sisters of Charity believe in life-long learning for the students they taught and for themselves. Whether it was a course to become certified in a career choice or a formal Masters degree, PhD doctoral program or just reading a newspaper, Sisters took advantage of many ways to learn about the world around them. It is no different in their senior years. Through reading, viewing programs by noted speakers, podcasts and PBS, they are learning about the brave new world of 2024.

At Kittay Senior Apartments in the Bronx, Sisters have made ongoing learning a priority. Whether it is yoga class or National Geographic movies, zoom presentations about climate change or the plight of immigrants at the border, Sisters are eager to stay informed about our changing world. One of the ways they have pursued learning is to gather weekly to view a DVD program by a noted theologian. This is followed by a discussion about the meaning it holds for themselves and for the world around them. The topics each week are mainly theological or justice directed, but they often contain their personal stories. Insights arise as they share their life experiences including ideas about God, prayer, community, ecology, racial justice, events in the world, and how to minister to others in an aging community.

God is found in the most personal of our human experiences. We touch God in our human experiences with people, in chance meetings or when we pray with the believing community. We recognize God when we read and contemplate the scriptures. As we ponder, remember and share, we learn from each other. We become a learning community for ourselves and for the people we encounter every day.



Sr. Ellen Rose holds a copy of Henri Nouwen's "The Prodigal Son," part of the collection of Henri's books donated from the library at Mount Saint Vincent Convent.



A packed room of captivated Sisters enjoy a brief DVD on the life of Henri Nouwen.



Sisters explore moments in their own lives that might be similar to Henri Nouwen's experiences.

## Sisters of Charity Embrace Season of Creation with Prayer and Reflection

The Sisters of Charity of New York convened at Le Gras, Mount Saint Vincent Convent, St. Patrick Villa, and Kittay to engage in prayerful reflection and celebrate the theme of "The Mighty River" for the Season of Creation in 2023.

Throughout this Season of Creation, Sr. Carol De Angelo has taken the lead in guiding the Sisters of Charity of New York in communal prayer across our community. Sisters were encouraged to articulate their aspirations on blue ribbons, a tangible representation of their heartfelt desires. These ribbons were then thoughtfully placed into the flowing current of the mighty river, creating a collective symbol of the pursuit of justice and harmony.

The messages conveyed by the Sisters through this ritual were powerful and profound. Themes of forgiveness, the universal right to clean drinking water, and the restoration of fractured relationships were prominent among the aspirations shared. Above all, a resounding call for kindness echoed through their intentions, reinforcing the Sisters' dedication to compassion and empathy in their mission.

This poignant gathering exemplified the Sisters of Charity of New York's unwavering commitment to fostering a world of equity, reconciliation and benevolence. The act of inscribing and offering their dreams and hopes to the river serves as a testament to their enduring dedication to the causes of justice and peace, illuminating a path forward towards a more compassionate and harmonious future.



Sr. Carol De Angelo leads the Season of Creation prayer service and reflection for staff and Sisters at Le Gras.



The Sisters of Charity of New York celebrate the Season of Creation.

**SEASON OF CREATION INTENTIONS:** Good natural drinking water for all people, Blessings here at Kittay, May our hearts beat in unison, Peace, Let my heart throb with your holy heart, Jesus, For peace in the countries of Cuba and Haiti, Cuba is yearning for democracy, Let peace and justice flow, For healing in governments so we can truly work together for healing in creation, Holy Spirit hover over and guide our efforts to renew peace on earth, That all women and men join together to "renew the face of our earth," Protect children of the world, Gratitude for the gift of creation, May all approach others with love and compassion, That we realize we are one, Let justice flow like a river, Forgiveness, May we learn to love and respect all of God's Creations, I support Laudato Si and I'm trying to be very conscious of recycling and all recyclables, Peace in Guatemala, Pure water to drink, I pray for the grace to have less so others can have more, Healing of the Planet Earth, Holy holy holy, Peace continue like a river always, May all God's animals and creations live without pain and suffering, Trust, That we will use wisely the beautiful gifts of God's creation, Above all else, be kind, Read Pope's message about creation, Amazing Grace! Breathe through me! A kidney for Philip, Compassion for one another (Over and over again), Thanksgiving, May broken relationships be repaired and embraced, Let justice and peace come to us...



## Associates 2023

Congratulations to our New, Renewing and Lifetime Associates who after prayerful preparation have committed to living the charism of Charity:

### NEW

Deanne May  
Dr. Leonard Nalencz  
Dr. Ana Ribeiro  
Sheila Simmons

### RENEWING

Joann Galley  
Christopher Gray  
Nicholas Malizia  
Gillian May  
Stephanie Rodway

### LIFETIME

Todd Gable  
Nicole Quaranto  
Maureen Reiser  
Dr. Lynne Bongiovanni Twomey



Maureen Reiser, Director of Associates, Dr. Ana Ribeiro, Joann Galley, Dr. Lynne Bongiovanni Twomey, Nicholas Malizia, Dr. Leonard Nalencz, Todd Gable, Sheila Simmons, Deanne May, Gillian May, and Sr. Mary Mc Cormick.

Associate Relationship allows men and women to share in the charism of the Sisters of Charity of New York, carrying out the mission of the Sisters of Charity: to respond to the signs of the times by revealing God's love for all in need, especially for those in poverty. Associates do this while maintaining their own living and working arrangements and are financially independent of the Congregation.

## Sisters and Associates Cookie Social



Associates Sheila Simmons, Maureen Reiser, and Dr. Lynne Bongiovanni Twomey join Sr. Genevieve Wetmore.



Sr. Lorraine Cooper and Sr. Elizabeth Vermaelen enjoy the afternoon getting to know our newest Associates.



Sr. Wilda Asfour, Sr. Barbara Srozenski and Associate, Sue Porcelli all agreed, we had them at cookies.

## Jubilee 2023

### 75th Anniversary 1948

Sister Gloria Degnan  
Sister Rita King

### 70th Anniversary 1953

Sister Monica Griffin  
Sister Kathleen McAvoy  
Sister Theresa Rybarik  
Sister Madeleine Maria Mahoney  
Sister Margaret C. McEntee  
Sister Katherine Seibert  
Sister Eileen Martin  
Sister Gabriel Miriam Obraz  
Sister Helen Maureen Wade

### 65th Anniversary 1958

Sister Eileen Gallagher  
Sister Mary Lou McGrath  
Sister Margaret Dennehy  
Sister Kathleen McHugh  
Sister Margaret Mary Kelly  
Sister Inez Mela

### 60th Anniversary 1963

Sister Lynn Ann Dalton  
Sister Michelle McKeon  
Sister Andrea Dixon  
Sister Patricia Quinn

### 40th Anniversary 1983

Sister Maryellen Blumlein  
Sister Rosa Florinda Tzul Say



## In Memory Of



Sr. Patricia Morgan

**SISTER PATRICIA ANN MORGAN**, known as Sister Marie Ursula, was born on January 17, 1935, in Manhattan. She was one of three children of Everett and Julia Harley Morgan. Patricia attended schools in Manhattan before joining the Sisters of Charity of New York in 1955. She earned a BA in English from the College of Mount Saint Vincent and an MSLS in Library Science from Villanova University. Sister Patricia served for forty-one years as a teacher and librarian in various schools. Her love for books was evident, often seen with one in hand or on her iPad. She was known for her warm Irish wit and bright smile. Sister Patricia passed away on August 13, 2023, in her sixty-eighth year as a Sister of Charity of New York, having brought her kindness and love of literature to all she met.



Sr. Mary Lou Steele

**SISTER MARY LOU STEELE**, born December 21, 1925, in Manhattan, was the only child of Warren and Elizabeth Smith Steele. She earned a BA in English from the College of Mount Saint Vincent and entered the Sisters of Charity of New York in 1949. With an MA in English from Saint John's University, she taught various subjects in Manhattan and the Bronx. In 1970, she shifted to full-time advocacy for marginalized communities, serving at organizations like Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Home and Catholic Peace Fellowship. Amid the AIDS epidemic, she spent a decade at Bellevue Hospital, educating and supporting patients. After retirement, she volunteered at Elizabeth Seton Women's Center and the Convent of Mary the Queen. She passed away on August 23, 2023, in her 74th year of service as a Sister of Charity of New York. Sister Mary Lou was also known for her organ-playing talent, unwavering convictions, genuine friendship, and warm hospitality.



# National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton



In a momentous event, the Sisters of Charity of New York embarked on a journey to Emmitsburg, MD for the grand opening of the museum and visitor center at the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori presided over the blessing and dedication of the impressive \$4 million facility on September 22. The occasion marked a celebration of the extraordinary life and enduring influence of the first native-born American saint.

Years in the making, the museum employs a blend of rarely-seen artifacts and cutting-edge interactive exhibits to narrate the remarkable story of Elizabeth Ann Seton. Once a widowed socialite and mother, Seton's conversion to Catholicism in Revolutionary-era America led her to establish one of the earliest free Catholic schools for girls in the United States. Additionally, she founded the first order of women religious in the country, the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's, on the very grounds where the shrine and museum now stand.

The Sisters of Charity of New York's archives proudly contributed several items to the museum and assumed sponsorship of the Seeker Gallery (1774-1805). The museum welcomes visitors seven days a week, offering a profound glimpse into the life of a remarkable figure in American Catholic history. It stands as a testament to devotion, resilience, and enduring impact.



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's new gallery entitled "The Seeker" focusing on the history between 1774-1805, was proudly sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of New York.



Sr. Regina Bechtle, Sr. Mary Ann Daly, Sr. Mary Mc Cormick, Sr. Margaret O'Brien, Sr. Donna Dodge and Sr. Sheila Brosnan take a tour of the new Seton Shrine Museum.

Save the Date **MAY 16, 2024**

**SPRING BENEFIT HONORING**

Niall Murray  
Christine Ackert & Eileen Alexanderson

## Reunited

Teacher-student reunions hold a unique charm, rekindling memories of mentorship and growth. The exchange of experiences and gratitude is palpable, reminding both parties of the impact they've had on each other's lives. Classmate reunions, on the other hand, evoke a sense of camaraderie and shared history. Laughter and stories flow freely, bridging the years that may have separated them. These gatherings serve as a testament to the enduring bonds forged in the crucible of education, celebrating the past while looking forward to the future.



Happy 60th Anniversary to the Academy of Mount Saint Vincent's, Tuxedo Park, NY, Class of 1963: L-R Jo-Anne Provenzano Olszewski, Leah McBride Cherry, Mary Sullivan, Sr. Karen Helfenstein, Patricia Harding Hallowell, Rosette Lenti & Patricia McCarthy Inserillo.



Farmer Dave reunited with Maureen (apprentice 2009, assistant farm manager 2010) on Sisters Hill Farm. Maureen has been teaching new farmers at a farm school in California for the last decade and now helps farmers to prevent and reduce groundwater pollution from fertilizer use. It's wonderful to see them together again and witness the webs of connection the small farm has woven in the world over the past 25 years. Photo credit: Sisters Hill Farm



Maria Bediako from the New York Foundling catches up with Sr. Gabriel Obraz, her former principal at St. Elizabeth Seton, in Shrub Oak, NY, during lunch at the Foundling's retreat.



Former Elizabeth Seton Academy teachers, Sr. Margaret Egan & Sr. Teresa A. McElroy enjoy a delightful reunion with one of their students, Dr. Mary Ann LoFromento, at the College of Mount Saint Vincent's Feast of St. Vincent de Paul celebration.





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*Happy Second  
Anniversary  
Vincent's Village,  
part of the Sisters  
of Charity Housing  
Development Corp.*



*You're never too young to get to know St. Vincent de Paul.*