

Vision

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NEW YORK

VOL. 26, ISSUE 1 *Now in Our Third Century of Living Lives of Love* WINTER 2022



Profile: Sister Andrea Dixon



New Leader at The Foundling



Vincent's Table



From the President

Dear Friends,

I recognize that we are several weeks past Christmas and into Ordinary Time in the Church calendar. Even so, a phrase from one of our Christmas hymns has stayed with me even until now. It is from the hymn, *O Holy Night*:

*A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;*

And what a weary world we have lived through during 2021. The COVID and Omicron variant viruses, the political factions in our nation, the senseless gun violence, blatant racism, the fires, floods, tornados, and other natural disasters around our world have made us very weary. Fortunately, at Christmas we were reminded that there is hope in Christ; the new and glorious morn has dawned. Yes, Christmas has come and gone. But Emmanuel, God with us, is ever present as each new day breaks through the darkness. If we can remember this promise, 2022 can be very different for us.

I am confident that you will find nothing weary within this exciting and informative issue of *Vision*. I hope you will enjoy it.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your ongoing support through your prayer and through the sharing of your resources. We could not continue our ministries without you.

May God continue to bless you and your loved ones.

Blessings,



Sr. Donna Dodge, SC



VISION enables the Sisters of Charity of New York to make a cohesive statement about how we reveal God's love in our lives and the many and varied ways in which we respond to the signs of the times.



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VISION is a publication of the External Communications Department of the Sisters of Charity of New York.

With this issue of *Vision*, we begin a new production schedule. *Vision* will now be published three times a year, mailed in February, June and October. The change is primarily due to mailing costs, which have increased substantially over the past ten years. On the bright side, you will notice that this issue is 20 pages instead of the usual 16. We hope to repeat the 20-page format whenever possible.

We thank you for your ongoing support and look forward to continuing our tradition of providing our readers with informative and entertaining articles about the mission of the Sisters of Charity.

Elena Miranda
Editor



Just Off the Press... Volume VI Update *The History of the Sisters of Charity of New York, 1997 ~ 2020*

By Mindy Gordon, Archivist

It takes a community to author the modern history of the Sisters of Charity of New York. Just off the press, the sixth volume in this narrative, *The Sisters of Charity of New York, 1997 ~ 2020*, used personal interviews and the archive's resources to produce a detailed treatise on recent events. The Sisters of Charity were determined to author a contemporary written history about their ministries and hallmark philanthropy.

The previously published five volumes of the history were authored individually by two Sisters of Charity, Sr. Marjorie Walsh, who wrote the history of the founding of the Community until its sesquicentennial celebration (1809–1959), and Sr. Mary Elizabeth Earley, who chronicled the subsequent years, 1960–1996. The new volume updates the over 200-year history, from 1997 to 2020. Its perspective offers a genuine re-telling of contemporary events written by those who witnessed them.

The project to continue the written narrative was initiated during the

presidency of Sr. Jane Iannucelli in 2014 and directed throughout by volume editor Sr. Patricia Noone. Committee members and authors also included Sisters Janet Baxendale, Regina Bechtle, Maryellen Blumlein, Constance Brennan, Margaret Donegan, Mary McCormick, Patricia McGowan and Miriam Kevin Phillips. Unfortunately, “finishing up in the pandemic year of 2020 brought its losses” according to Sr. Pat Noone. “Sisters Janet, Pat McGowan and Connie Brennan did not live to see the results of all their hard work.”

Committee meetings held throughout a five-year period determined the history's broad themes: sponsored ministries, spirituality, the Congregation's bicentennial, and Church and world events. The minutes of these meetings are held at the archives for reference.

The entire process of composition, editing and production was a monumental task. The book includes 16 chapters, a 28-page display of color photographs and a 26-page index. Pre-production of the book was managed by Director of

Above: Minutes after the shipment arrived on December 22, 2021, Sr. Donna Dodge, left, presented Sr. Jane Iannucelli with the new Congregation history book.

Communications Elena Miranda, who typeset and contributed to editing chapters. “Without Elena, the book simply doesn't exist,” said Sr. Patricia. Elena and Communications Assistant Teri Tynes created the index from material provided by Sr. Patricia. Several reviewers assisted in verifying the accuracy of information and citations. The book will also be available online at the Congregation's website, scny.org.

The book's dedication illustrates the appreciation the sisters maintain for those who have shared their mission of charity through the years:

This history is lovingly dedicated to all Sisters of Charity, living and deceased, and to those who have joined us in our mission of service—Associates, Companions in Charity, and our dedicated, irreplaceable lay colleagues.

Profile

Sister Andrea Dixon

By Elena Miranda



Above: Miss Dixon, as postulants were known, on entrance day with sponsor Sr. Jane Carmel, who encouraged her to consider life as a Sister of Charity.

Right: Sr. Andrea and a little boy happy to start his play therapy.

I left my island of the Bahamas at the age of 19 and traveled to New York. This little young girl came to New York without the slightest idea of what this was, what I was going to meet here,” recalls Sr. Andrea. “I liked the way the sisters worked together. Something about the life made me want to know, to explore this; some-

thing about the feeling that I got from their working together.”

When she entered in 1963, Sr. Andrea was the second Bahamian to join the Congregation and the fifth black woman in the Community. She was educated by the Sisters of Charity in Nassau, where she lived across the street from Our Lady Church and School. As an elementary

and high school student, young Andrea enjoyed spending extra time at school to help the sisters at fund raising events or deliver food and clothing in her neighborhood. She laughs when she recalls her mother saying, “I don’t know why you’re hanging around with nuns.”

Neighbors caring for each other was typical in her Bahamian community, but young Andrea was intrigued by the sisters who came to her country to help and serve her people. She began contemplating life as a Sister of Charity at the age of 16 when a sister-friend encouraged her to consider the possibility. Thinking back on her decision, she said, “The desire to serve with a group of women who appeared to have a good community spirit—that seems to have been my motivation.”

Sr. Joan Burbage, who taught Sr. Andrea in high school, remembers her as “a great kid.” She still marvels at how, as a teenager, she was able to leave her home and family and assume a new life in New York. “I thought she was tremendously courageous,” said Sr. Joan.

After earning a bachelor’s degree from the College of Mount Saint Vincent, Sr. Andrea applied for and accepted a first-grade teaching assignment at St. Paul School in East Harlem. “I remember sitting and thinking and looking at these little kids. They were mostly Hispanic, spoke Spanish, and a couple of black kids,”





Sr. Andrea visited site of the old St. Francis Church in Nassau, where the Sisters of Charity began their mission in 1889. A replica of the *St. Elizabeth Seton and Children* statue by Margaret Beaudette, SC, stands on the property. Ca. 2012

she said. “And I remember just looking out at them; it was my class, my kids, and wondering, ‘What have I done?’” Being a schoolteacher suddenly seemed daunting and overwhelming, but Sr. Andrea grew into the role and enjoyed teaching her first graders how to read and learn. She later earned a master’s degree at Bank Street, a progressive educational institution in New York City specializing in early childhood development that focused on the whole child, including their culture, language, and individual abilities. Her dedication and care for her students led to lifelong connections that she continues to enjoy today.

Sr. Andrea began visiting families after school—and sometimes in the morning before school—to get a handle on the issues affecting her students. It was during the home visits that she was confronted with the many conflicts plaguing her young charges. She gradually recognized in herself a desire to help the families deal with their

struggles, and to do so she needed proper training. Sr. Andrea, then 40, remembers thinking, “I was really spending a lot of time with parents. And that was about the time that I realized, ‘I need to know what I’m doing; maybe I should begin to get some education.’”

After 16 years as a first-grade teacher, Sr. Andrea resigned her position to study for a master’s degree in social work at Hunter College. While attending school, she worked with Sr. Mary Nerney, a Sister of Notre Dame and social worker, to address the children’s needs in the Incarcerated Mother’s Program. Sr. Mary (deceased, 2013) was quoted in the *New York Daily News* in 1994: “She

[Sr. Andrea] kept saying, ‘We’ve got to do something about the children. They would come here with the parents and you just knew the abuse had been felt by them. We want to stop the cycle.’”

Sr. Andrea began her regular visits to the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women, Taconic Correctional Facility, and Rikers Island in 1985. She brought kids as young as three and into their teen years to the prisons to visit their mothers. “We brought the children up there for visits to connect, make sure the families kept in touch,” she said. In the office, Sr. Andrea provided counseling and group therapy for the guardians caring for the children and play therapy for the children.

Sr. Andrea later worked as a trauma specialist in the Crime Victim Treatment Center at St. Luke-Roosevelt Hospital in Manhattan. For 16 years, she provided trauma treatment for survivors of rape, incest, battering, and other violent crimes, as well as play therapy for children who had witnessed domestic violence. From 1991 to 2018, Sr. Andrea lived and volunteered at Fox House, the Sisters of Charity ministry for homeless women with children.

Today Sr. Andrea continues her ministry of healing as a practicing psychotherapist and continues to engage in community life as a Sister of Charity. She is a member of the Sisters of Charity Ministry Network Board; the Saint Joseph Hospital Housing Board; and the Board of the Harlem Family Institute,

Continued, see page 12, bottom



Representing the SC mission in The Bahamas at the 200th Anniversary celebration closing Mass, Sr. Andrea offered the Prayer of the Faithful. Friend and former SC student Archbishop Patrick Pinder of The Bahamas joined the Congregation for the historic occasion.

Connections—

Religious Women, Nassau and New York

By Mary E. Mc Cormick, SC

The Sisters of Charity of New York responded to requests for sisters to be sent to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1849, and to Convent Station, N.J., in 1859. The understanding was that once a stable community was formed, it would become an independent congregation in the Charity tradition. A different response was needed when the Congregation was asked to help create a native community in Nassau, Bahamas.



Sr. Elizabeth Claridge joined the Sisters of Charity in 1963.

In the late 1920s, Bernard Kevenhoerster, OSB, Bishop of the Bahamas, dreamed of a community composed of young Bahamian women who would minister to the needs of their people. He asked the Sisters of Charity, who had opened a mission in Nassau in 1889, to help him with the initial formation of the community.

It took over a decade for his dream to become a reality. In September 1936, Sr. Marie Agatha Sissler, SC, headmistress of St. Francis Xavier School, Nassau, began weekly meetings with Winifred Claridge (Sr. Mary Elizabeth), Avis Symonette (Sr. Marie Teresa), and Lazaretta Rahming (Sr. Maria) to introduce them to the ideas and ideals of religious life.

Sr. Agatha wrote a constitution embracing elements of her own Charity rule and that of the Sisters of Service of Canada.

Beginning in 1937, Sisters of Charity Agatha Sissler, Josephine Rea, Anacleta Jennings and Mary Reine Kelly lived with the first members of the new community. They helped form the women as an apostolic congregation of diocesan rite by word and example.

On October 11, 1937, Fr. Bonaventure Hanson, OSB, placed the community under the patronage of Blessed Martin de Porres.

Sr. Agatha served as superior of the community until 1951, when Sr. Mary Elizabeth Claridge was chosen as the

first Bahamian-born superior of the community, followed by Sr. Maria Rahming (1952–1957) and Sr. Marie Agnes Rolle (1957–1962.)

By 1962 the community had been self-governing for over ten years. Their membership included 24 professed sisters as well as postulants and novices. They had taken charge of several schools in Nassau and established missions on three Out Islands: Bimini, Cat and Grand Bahama.

*Happy 80th
Birthday*



Sister Teresa Symonette

Sr. Teresa Mary Symonette, who joined the Congregation in 1963, celebrated her 80th birthday in 1998.

Concerned that the community was not growing quickly enough, in that same year, the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, DC, mandated that the community affiliate with a religious congregation of pontifical status. Because of historic clerical ties with American Benedictines, the community amalgamated with the Benedictine Sisters of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota, a monastic community.

In 1963 the amalgamation became permanent when the St. Martin Sisters transferred their vows to the Community of

Continued, see page 18, bottom

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

— *Listening the Words into Life*

By Regina Bechtle, SC

"We are called...to be women of healing, sensitive to the wounds of persons and to the systemic evils of our times."

(Sisters of Charity Constitution, 1.4)

To heal the deep racial divisions so painfully evident in our society, each person and organization has work to do. Deep listening is a necessary part of that work, as shown by the ongoing efforts of The New York Foundling, a significant and noted SC-sponsored ministry.

In June 2020, a month after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Bill Baccaglini, CEO, convened a "town hall" gathering for the agency's senior managers and employees. The meeting allowed everyone to express their feelings and voice concerns regarding this most recent incident that led to the death of an unarmed minority man. The conversation about the social injustices allowed the work force to talk about their own lived experiences.

(The Foundling, over 150 years old, is a multifaceted agency that provides a wide range of services to 30,000 children, adults and families in need at sites in every borough of New York City and Puerto Rico.)

Following that town hall, a series of open conversations led to The Foundling's first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. This committee's makeup was "as diverse as possible," said Carmen Jirau-Rivera, Executive Vice President, who led the initial effort along with Co-chair Karen Reid, Vice President with the Developmental Disabilities Division. Over the first six months, Carmen, Karen and the committee members convened focus sessions with leaders of The Foundling's various divisions and then with their staff members. The committee held weekly 90-minute sessions and invited feedback from everyone in the work force. Careful to ensure that no one was excluded, the committee wanted to hear from as many employees as possible, representing every ethnicity and race.

Deeply affected by the experience of listening, Carmen recalled, "My heart was racing" as she heard members of the work force speak about the "trauma they experienced ... at this time of the height of social unrest, ... the fear ... as they tried to protect family members, the trauma they were dealing with every day while going about their business...." During the next phase, this DEI committee of seven employees summarized the information collected during the interviews;



DEI committee members Reina Batrony Cine, Estelle McIntosh, Viviane Ouedraogo, and Caroline Bear

this was shared with The Foundling's Senior Cabinet and its Board. The Committee embarked on an Extended Learning Experience focused on educating the work force on the experiences of others and expanding their awareness and encouraging support for diversity, equity, and inclusion in its service practices. A professional consultant worked with the committee as needed and helped them to identify issues affecting their work force and to make recommendations for change. The result: a 14-member Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Council.

The DEI Advisory Council's work has been guided by three mandates initially laid out by CEO Bill Baccaglini:

1. ensure that every employee/person served by The Foundling has a voice and a sense of ownership in the process;
2. make sure that the importance of DEI is embedded in recruitment, hiring, training and extended career development;
3. assess and improve professional development practices to give everyone the opportunity for a career path.

Interviewed in May 2021 about her ongoing experience, Karen reflected, "We spend a lot of time listening. [That's] important for change to happen." Deep listening can bring its own pain, she noted; "I experience some of the trauma as I hear about someone else's." In listening sessions after the killings of George Floyd and others, she had colleagues say to her, "We never knew that this is how this affects you."

Continued, see page 14, top left

SPOTLIGHT: Partners in Ministry

John F. Caruso, Trustee



My first experience with the Sisters of Charity was when I was a student at the College of Mount Saint Vincent (CMSV). My sister had also studied at CMSV, and we both became fond of the sisters and their work. My sister went on to become an Associate of the Sisters of Charity.

My wife and I became more aware of the sisters' work through their other ministries, specifically The New York Foundling, Elizabeth Seton Children's and Seton Ministries. I remember a significant moment when my wife and I went to the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center a

few years ago. We got to see the mission firsthand and how the children were cared for so well. Sr. Carol Barnes was instrumental in encouraging me to serve on the board.

I spent my entire career with the Walt Disney Company/ABC in sales. My sales experience helped clients understand their problems, and I now have many tools and resources to help others.

It truly is an honor to be a Trustee on three Sisters of Charity ministries (CMSV since 2014, ESC since 2018 and now SCMN 2020). I strongly believe in their mission of charity, compassionate care, education and social programs in service of others. As a Trustee, I believe I am being called to help the sisters serve people in society who are on the margins. I often think that the Trustees are assisting the sisters in living out the mission set out by Saints Vincent de Paul and Elizabeth Seton. My involvement as a Trustee has inspired my family and me to help ensure the over 200-year legacy of the Sisters of Charity for many more years to come.

Having spent time with the sisters, I am in awe of their charism and their dedication to serving others, all while being led by a strong leadership team guiding them into the future.



Colegio de Santa Elizabeth Seton

Education was dear to the heart of the teacher in St. Elizabeth Seton. Following her tradition of initiating Catholic schools, the Sisters of Charity hope to open a "colegio" in Nebaj, Quiché in Guatemala in January of 2023 in collaboration with the diocese of Quiché.

This junior high school (grades 7, 8 and 9), called "basico" in Guatemala, will welcome the first-year students with the goal of integrated quality education, especially for those living in the poorer areas.



Blessing of the beginning of the construction of school buildings in Nebaj, Quiché, Guatemala



On December 10, 2021 in Nebaj, three Sisters of Charity and Fr. Juan Álvarez blessed the land, the architect and the construction personnel. The latter will do the work of building the office, library, computer classroom and sports field, all necessary to meet the educational needs of the students.

We are grateful to all who have contributed to this effort and we depend on your continued prayers.

By Nora Cunningham, SC

A Double Celebration in Quiché

The Feast of St. Elizabeth Seton was celebrated with much joy in Guatemala on January 4, 2022. It was a doubly happy and blessed occasion as we welcomed our new postulant, Mayda Alicia Pérez Fernández. Fr. Santiago celebrated Mass in the chapel of the House of Formation followed by a simple ceremony of welcome from Sr. Donna Dodge and the Council (via Zoom). All the Sisters of Charity gathered in Guatemala for the celebrations.

Mayda begins her postulancy with ministry in the Barbara Ford Peacebuilding Center. She will be part of a team that works with the development of women, something she has desired to do.

She will have courses and conferences in the House of Formation. An essential part of her formation, however, is the experience of community living and communal prayer and time for personal prayer.

Mayda received our “bienvenida” and pledge of our prayerful support with a grateful heart united with Mary in her Magnificat.



Above: With Sr. Nora Cunningham by her side, Mayda Alicia Pérez was welcomed to the House of Formation, where she will begin her postulancy.



Left: On left side, Sr. Nora, Mayda, Postulant Margarita Choc and her sister; on right, Srs. Maria Pablo Andres and Margarita Tax (both temporary professed), Sr. Virginia Searing and Sr. Rosita Tzul at the Mass celebrated by Fr. Santiago.

By Nora Cunningham, SC

Associate Helen Mack Invited to Meeting with Vice President Harris

By Lisa Shay, Associate

Helen Mack, an SC Associate since 2014, attended a meeting of civil society leaders with Vice President Kamala Harris during her visit to Guatemala in June 2021. Helen is a leading human-rights activist in Guatemala. She became a crusader for human rights after the Guatemalan military murdered her sister, Myrna Mack, an anthropologist investigating the genocide perpetrated against the indigenous people, on September 11, 1990. Fourteen years later, the Guatemalan government finally admitted responsibility and brought some of the perpetrators to justice.

Helen is executive director of the Myrna Mack Foundation, which promotes human rights in Guatemala. She has received numerous awards for her work, including the Right Livelihood award in 1992, the Notre Dame University Prize for Distinguished Public Service in Latin America in 2005, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Guelph in Canada in 2014.



Helen Mack, (back row at left in the beige jacket), attended the meeting with Vice President Kamala Harris in June 2021.

Photo source: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?512372-1/vice-president-harris-holds-roundtable-guatemala-migration>



From left: Sisters Mary Lou McGrath and Maryellen Blumlein and Associate Diane Dowling packed the car with food and tables for the inaugural Vincent's Table distribution. The ministry operates out of Rosary Hall in Mount Saint Vincent.



Associate Nizarys Vargas, left, and Jordan Douglas, right, with CMSV Nursing student volunteers on November 5, 2021, the first distribution day.



From left: Sr. Margaret Kelly; Matt Shields, CMSV Dir. for Mission & Ministry; Douglas Jordan and Sr. Mary Lou McGrath at the pre-Christmas distribution.



Associate Bobby Soto (left) Vincent's Table's Jordan Douglas and Sr. Mary Lou McGrath (center) and Matt Shields (second from right) were assisted by volunteers from CMSV and high school students from Fordham Prep.



Michael Spicer Elected Chairman of Healthcare Association of New York State



In January 2022, Saint Joseph's Medical Center (SJMC) announced that Michael Spicer, President and CEO, had been elected Chair of the Hospital Association of New York State (HANYS) for 2022.

HANYS is New York's statewide hospital and continuing care association, representing nonprofit and public hospitals, nursing homes, home care agencies and other healthcare organizations. The election signifies a recognition

of Mike's leadership and stewardship at Saint Joseph's in expanding and providing state-of-the-art care in numerous disciplines and areas.

A health care executive with more than 35 years of hospital and long-term care experience, Mike began his career with SJMC in 1984. The longest serving hospital president in Westchester County, he is the first male and first lay president of Saint Joseph's, founded by the Sisters of Charity in 1888.



Above: Early in the day, Sr. Mary Mc Cormick, SC-NY, and S. Noreen Holly, SC-NJ, told the story of Vincentian virtues through the personae of Mother Elizabeth Boyle, the first Mother General of SCNY, and Mother Mary Xavier Mehegan, founder of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth.

Above right: NY Associate Nicole Quaranto carried the "flame of charity," NJ Associate Patty Desmond and NY Associate Bobby Soto carried the candles during the entrance procession.

Below: New Jersey sisters renewed their vows.

Bottom left: New York sisters renewed their vows.

Bottom right: (left) S. Maureen Shaughnessy, General Superior of the New Jersey community, and (right) Sr. Donna Dodge at the conclusion of the Mass celebrating the feast day and the historic gathering at Mount Saint Vincent.

New Jersey Congregation Joins New York for Joint Congregation Day

The Sisters of Charity of New York, the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, N.J., and their associates met at Mount Saint Vincent on Saturday, December 11, for a joyous day of prayer, reflection, and fellowship. The meeting highlighted "Humility, Simplicity, and Charity," the Vincentian virtues that were planted in the two congregations from the earliest days.

Following the meeting, over 180 attended the music-filled celebration of the Eucharist in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. As is tradition near the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, sisters and associates renewed their vows and commitments. The day concluded with a festive luncheon, after which the New Jersey visitors headed home across the Hudson River.





LAUDATO SI' ACTION PLATFORM

Moving Forward

The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform Committee (LSAP) has begun its “year of engagement,” as announced at the ceremony in the Immaculate Conception Chapel on September 27. Members include Sisters Margaret O’Brien, Claire Regan, Carol De Angelo, Mary Ann D’Antonio, Jean Flannelly, Mary T. Higgins, and Mary Ann Garisto and Associates Bill Hurley and Maureen Reiser. Similar groups around the globe are addressing seven overriding goals.

During the public commitment ceremony, many pledged to learn, pray, and act on one of the seven goals each month. Others have joined this pledge in subsequent weeks. Each month a reflection guide is published, offering some quotes and short videos to help members learn more about the specific goal. A prayer and suggestions for action during the month are included. The first three monthly reflections were on the cry of the earth, the cry of the poor and ecological economics.

The committee distributed statement and pledge cards to all sisters and associates in late December, hoping that they would return the pledge card in the spirit of a “New Year’s resolution.”

In this first year, the Congregation is engaging members in education and planning. Educational efforts include a monthly video series launched collaboratively with the Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity Office of the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth in Convent Station, N.J. Each month the

focus is one of the seven goals, with the presentations then made available on YouTube. In addition, the SCNY Mission Advancement Department used a grant to create a video about specific actions people are doing to promote LSAP.

As part of their orientation, Board members of some SC ministries heard a presentation by Sr. Carol De Angelo about the Congregation’s commitment to LSAP. Her presentation emphasized living in right relationship with Earth and how our various ministries promote sustainability.

Much of the LSAP work will focus on two goals: Care for Creation and Care for the Poor. It will include our current works on human trafficking, overcoming racism, and environmental justice for immigrants, and support for refugees. Locally, the matters of homelessness and our ministry responses will also be included in these two primary goals in this early rollout phase.

As we take this opportunity to act for our Earth and care for our common home, we will see new ways to understand and interpret our current ministries with a different lens. Even long-standing ministries will recognize new approaches to pursue in light of this call. Ultimately, we hope to respond effectively to the consequences of climate change, dependence on fossil fuels, overcoming urban “deserts,” and the global migration pattern movements. We pray that we may be open. We pray that we may be bold.

LSAP Committee

Profile: Sister Andrea Dixon

Continued from page 5

from which she graduated in 1994. “As a board member I bring another dimension of diversity and a broader perspective, particularly related to the areas of work I have engaged in throughout my life.”

Several organizations have recognized Sr. Andrea for her groundbreaking work. She received the Harlem Family Institute Margaret Morgan Lawrence Award (June 2000); the College of

Mount Saint Vincent’s Elizabeth Seton Medal (May 2001); and the Archdiocese of New York Bakhita Woman of Faith and Service Award (February 2020), which acknowledged her “extraordinary work with survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and other violent crimes.” She is presently a Commissioner of the Office of Black Ministry for the Archdiocese of New York.

Sr. Andrea experienced the kindness

of sisters to people in need in her home country and came to New York as a young woman eager to do the same. For 59 years, she has selflessly served in ministries that drew on her incredible capacity for empathy to help bring healing to countless women and children. And her work continues. “My ministry with people on the margins is both a blessing and a sadness,” she said. “I continue to be sustained by my faith and by what I call my ‘God Place’—where I find goodness, light and hope.”

Caring for our Common Home

With Sister Mary Ann Garisto

The main goal of the fall 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland, commonly known as COP26, was to avert the most catastrophic consequences of climate change by limiting the planet's warming. By holding the temperature rise to no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial times (1850–1890) by 2040 or sooner, we could collectively escape severe climate change. Scientists say that not doing so will put millions at risk of extreme weather conditions and numerous health issues.

Another goal of the conference was to hold countries accountable for their pledges to the Paris Agreement in 2015. Wealthier countries pledged to give \$100 billion annually to developing nations to cover losses and damage already caused by climate change. Wealthier nations failed to fulfill their pledges.

The average global temperature has already risen 1.1°C, resulting in rising sea levels, declining sea ice and more extreme weather conditions. Projections of present global actions may result in an increase of 2.7°C. Scientists have warned that to maintain the 1.5° C goal, countries must cut emissions by at least 45 percent by 2030.

Warming does not occur uniformly. Some regions have already experienced temperature rises above 1.5°C. Risks from climate change become worse for vulnerable populations, especially those dependent upon agricultural and coastal livelihoods. Those who suffer most from climate change have done the least to cause it.

The results of the conference have been disappointing. Critics say that although some progress was made, it is not enough.

The final agreement is called the Glasgow Climate Pact. Some of the provisions are:

- » Countries are required to deliver new plans to cut emissions annually.
- » Countries must provide financial assistance to the most vulnerable countries.
- » Countries are accountable for reducing methane, ending deforestation, accelerating the phaseout of coal, speeding up the switch to electric vehicles and encouraging investment in renewable energy.



What happens next will determine the actual outcome of COP26.

The United Nations highlighted the importance of religious organizations and faith groups in following the agreement.

What will you do?

- » Keep informed.
- » Hold our elected leaders and policy makers accountable for the pledges that have been made.
- » Urge your pastors who have authority over parish physical plants to take every action they can to reduce emissions and transition to clean energy now.
- » Join organizations and visit websites that are committed to integral ecology actions such as:
 - » *Laudato Si'* Action Platform: <https://laudatosi-action-platform.org>
 - » Riverkeeper: <https://www.riverkeeper.org>
 - » Food & Water Watch: <https://www.foodandwater-watch.org>
- » Consider giving alternative gifts from non-profit organizations such as:
 - » Heifer International: <https://www.heifer.org>
 - » World Wildlife Fund: <https://gifts.worldwildlife.org>
- » Continue to reduce your carbon footprint.

As with any major change—whether in one person's thinking and acting, an organization's culture and practices or a society's structure—time must be spent laying a solid groundwork. Carmen and Karen acknowledged that they and their colleagues in The Foundling's DEI effort “have learned as a group,” even as they recognize that their work force is anxious to see changes.

Asked how they would define “success,” Karen replied that it would be marked by “systems ... in place that are fair and equitable for everyone, no matter the race.” She added, “It will take all of us to participate to make this needed change happen.” Carmen noted the “evolving” nature of the process. Success, she said, will be “when the agency gets to the position that change is ongoing to us, [when we] continue to listen to what staff and those we serve are saying to us.”

In the Advisory Council's second year of implementation, it is focused on listening and learning from those served in the organization. This will enable the NYF to incorporate its voice in the advocacy processes and continue to advance recommendations for equity and consistency in employment and professional development practices with the work force. They also continue to plan for and support the Extended Learning Experience for the entire work force.

(With special thanks to Carmen Jirau-Rivera and Karen Reid.)

Support of the Ministry Network

During their annual meeting in June 2021, the Board of the Sisters of Charity Ministry Network passed the following resolutions in support of DEI initiatives by their member organizations and administrators.

Sr. Karen Helfenstein, Director of Sponsorship Services, said “We’ve come far, and we have a responsibility to reflect diversity.”

RESOLUTIONS OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY MINISTRY NETWORK

The Board of Directors of the Sisters of Charity Ministry Network... do hereby adopt the following resolutions:

WHEREAS every human being is created in God's image and

WHEREAS this fundamental belief has animated the Sisters of Charity ministries through their history and

WHEREAS sadly, persistent, even increasing instances of exclusion, inequality and systemic injustice wound humanity and bring expanding challenges in the work of the ministries to bring healing and restore right relationships,

BE IT RESOLVED, that we stand united with our Ministries in eradicating all forms of racism and inequality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we commend our Ministries in their call to end systemic racism and inequity in our communities by focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion in their provision of services to those most in need; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we support our Ministries in their quest to bring about changes to ensure that there is justice, equity and inclusion in our communities.

June 23, 2021

Sr. Donna Dodge

President

Chair, Ministry Network Board



Hats, scarves and gloves *save lives!*

You can be a life-saver by getting your friends, family, co-workers, church group, or club to donate warm **hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and earmuffs** to LEFSA, so we can distribute them to people living on the streets and in shelters. These items should be new and in their original packaging.

You can also order these items from our Amazon Wish List and have them shipped directly to us, often with no shipping charge if you have Prime: [tinyurl.com/sl5thaw](https://www.amazon.com/wishlist/ref=ast_wishlist_page_1?pf_rd_p=8b1e1e1e-1e1e-1e1e-1e1e-1e1e1e1e1e1e)



Sponsored by the Sisters of Charity Ministry Network

You can drop these items off at our office or ship them to us at:

**1991A Lexington Avenue,
New York, NY 10035**

If you have questions, please contact us by e-mail at cpetrus@scny.org or call us at **212-987-0959**.

A Warm Welcome to Melanie Hartzog As President & CEO



The New York Foundling welcomed Melanie Hartzog as the organization's new President and CEO on January 18. Hartzog will succeed long-time leader, Bill Baccaglini, who is retiring. Hartzog, who recently completed her term as New York City's Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, assumed the role of President of The Foundling while Baccaglini will continue as CEO. After an appropriate period of transition, Baccaglini will step down and Hartzog will assume the title of President and CEO.

"The Board of Trustees is very excited to have Melanie join The Foundling — with her remarkable depth of knowledge and experience, we have no doubt that she is the perfect person to lead us to greater levels of success, positively impacting all those who we serve," said Robert E. King, Chairman of the Board of The New York Foundling.

Hartzog has spent her career uplifting the city's most vulnerable. In her recent role as Deputy Mayor, she was responsible for guiding the city's response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and oversees the social services agencies that deliver care and assistance to New York's vulnerable populations, including seniors, the homeless, children, and victims of domestic violence.

"Advocating to improve the lives of children and families in underserved and underrepresented communities in New York City has been the focus of my work for many years. I've dedicated my entire career to ensuring that every person, no matter their circumstance or zip code, has the resources and tools to thrive. This is at the center of The Foundling's mission, and I am humbled to have the opportunity to add to the rich history and deep impact of this change-making organization," said Melanie. "I want to thank Bill for his tremendous leadership and Bob and the entire Board of



Bill Baccaglini welcomed Melanie Hartzog to The Foundling, saying, "I am honored and excited for Melanie to join our team."

Trustees for their confidence and faith in me."

Bill Baccaglini, retiring President and CEO of The Foundling, said, "It has been a great pleasure to have been at The Foundling for nearly 20 years, and I know that in Melanie's incredibly capable hands, The Foundling will continue to drive change and improve the lives of those we have the privilege to serve. Melanie comes to The Foundling with the stature, vision, and experience that will enable this great institution to continue to be responsive, innovative, and forward thinking. I am honored and excited for Melanie to join our team and

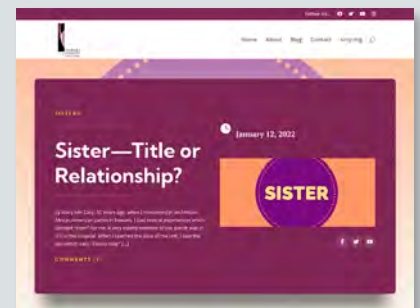
can't wait to see the great things that I'm sure our future holds."

Founded by the Sisters of Charity in 1869, The Foundling is the oldest ministry of the Sisters of Charity Ministry Network. Sr. Donna Dodge, President of the Congregation, said, "I have had the opportunity of spending some time speaking with Melanie, and I am confident that the mission of The Foundling is in great hands. I don't think there could be a better successor to Bill. On behalf of the Sisters of Charity, welcome to the family, Mel."

Courtesy of The New York Foundling

Congregation Launches New Blog

Sisters of Charity Mission Advancement has launched a new blog highlighting individual perspectives on topics relating to the Congregation. The blog will feature short, informal essays from sisters, associates and colleagues that touch upon matters about SCNY ministries, the mission of charity, or spirituality. While the main website will continue to feature news and the reflections of sisters, the blog aims to share personal perspectives on social justice, housing and food insecurity, *Laudato Si'*, immigration, gun violence, access



to health care, and more. We hope you will stop by!

www.blog.scny.org

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton — *Speaking the Language of Tenderness*

By Regina Bechtle, SC

After Pope Francis' July 2021 hospital stay, a headline in *Catholic New York* read: "Pope, recuperating from surgery, shows tenderness to fellow patients." (*Catholic New York*, 7/15/21). In April 2021, the Pope urged priests whom he had just ordained to imitate "God's style—closeness, compassion, and tenderness."¹

Tenderness—it's not a word one hears much in casual conversation today, much less on cable networks, Twitter feeds or in the halls of Congress. Elders may remember Bing Crosby's 1933 recording of "Try a Little Tenderness." More recently, Tim McGraw's "Humble and Kind" won a Grammy in 2017. No matter our age, we probably all agree: tenderness is easier to sing about than to put into practice.

Life experiences shaped Elizabeth Ann Seton into a strong, intrepid woman who made her opinions known and set high standards for herself and others. Those same experiences also opened her heart and deepened her capacity for tenderness.

To a friend Elizabeth wrote: "*How much my heart prays for you and how tenderly it is attached to you, you can never know.*" And to another she confided:

"I find in proportion as my heart is more drawn towards the summit, it looks back with added tenderness to everyone I have ever loved..."

At her father's Staten Island quarantine station, the sight of dying immigrant mothers and their sick babies moved Elizabeth to wish that she could share some of her own milk with them. Her heart drew her to the seriously ill person, the grieving friend, the troubled, homesick student. After she became a Catholic, the Rule that she adapted for her new Sisters of Charity committed them to honor Jesus Christ by providing "*every service in their power*" to young and old, whatever their needs, including "*those who through shame would conceal their necessities.*" Her heart went out to others, whether their pain was hidden or obvious.

The contemporary statues of Mother Seton and other religious figures sculpted by Sr. Margaret (Peggie) Beaudette, SC, radiate tenderness. In one, a child clutches Elizabeth's dress



while she holds another in her arms; in another, Elizabeth sits on a rock, bending to teach two eager youngsters.

Several years ago, Sr. Maria Iglesias, SC, pastoral care director at Elizabeth Seton Children's Center in Yonkers, invited staff members to imagine what Mother Seton would say to them as they served children with multiple needs. From a list of Seton quotes, they chose, "*Tenderness is the language children best understand.*" Elizabeth's words echo those of St. Vincent de Paul, centuries before: "Kindness is the key to hearts."

Tenderness: a gift to pray for during these long months of COVID restrictions when many of us have felt the rub of constant "up-close" living with family or community members, or the profound loneliness of isolation. It is a gift to cultivate for ourselves, too, when our growing edges seem more jagged than usual and our vulnerabilities are all too evident. Practicing tenderness can be as simple as consciously choosing not to label another person or group, or remembering that, as the saying goes, "*An enemy is one who has wounded me, but whose wounds I do not know.*"

"Tenderness," says writer and retreat director Sharon Browning, "*has a role in politics and playgrounds, boardrooms and bedrooms, churches and community rooms. Imagine if we seasoned our mealtimes and meetings with it, imagine those who make and enforce law, and lawmakers making room for it.*" Imagine, indeed!²

May we learn from St. Elizabeth Ann to follow the example of our God, who is rich in compassion; may she and wisdom figures past and present make us fluent in the language and living of tenderness.

Sculpture: *Elizabeth Ann Seton, Wife and Mother* by Margaret Beaudette, SC

1. <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2021/04/25/you-will-be-shepherds-like-him-pope-francis-ordains-nine-new-priests-in-st-peters-basilica/>

2. <https://justlistening.net/tenderness-a-spiritual-practice-for-activists/>

Sister Noreen Sugrue

First Congregation Archivist at Mount Saint Vincent

By Mindy Gordon, Archivist

As a Sister of Charity of New York, Sr. Noreen Sugrue has shared her creative skills as a teacher, artist and archivist throughout her endeavors. Born in New York City in 1942, she entered the Sisters of Charity on September 8, 1959, joining her sister Mary, Sr. Ellen Maria, who entered in 1955. She earned a bachelor's degree in art from the College of Mount Saint Vincent and a master's degree in education from Columbia University.

Sr. Noreen taught elementary grades from 1962 to 1968 and art classes from 1969 to 1973, including one summer term in Appalachia. For more than ten summers, she was an art teacher at the New York Foundling, and at St. Vincent's Hospital, Manhattan, she taught sculpture to nurses as a form of relaxation, and craft courses to patients. Sr. Noreen illustrated note cards representing the Congregation's virtues of humility, simplicity and charity for use by the Community.

In 1973 Sr. Noreen became the assistant archivist for the Congregation at Mount Saint Vincent and worked with Community historian Sr. Marjorie Walsh, the author of the three-volume *Sisters of Charity of New York, 1809–1959*. When Sr. Marjorie retired in 1975, Sr. Margaret Dowling, then president of the Congregation, appointed Sr. Noreen as archivist. For her first assignment, she was asked to recommend a new storage location for the Community records. Sr. Noreen enthusiastically suggested the empty carriage house, now Boyle Hall, one of the three original stone buildings on the Mount Saint Vincent campus. Employing her artistic skills, she became architect and general contractor during the renovation. She contributed the final



When asked to recommend a new storage location for the Community records by then-president Sr. Margaret Dowling, Sr. Noreen enthusiastically suggested the newly renovated and designated Elizabeth Boyle Hall. Ca. 1982



Sr. Noreen Sugrue describes oil painting of Marguerite Jevons, from the Bayley-Seton-Jevons collection, 1982. The painting was donated to the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton in 2021.

blueprint for the new archives and museum, including temperature control in the storage room and museum, and handicap access to the building's first floor and lower level.

Sr. Noreen was then tasked with centralizing the archival materials stored in Founder's Hall and the

Le Gras administration building on the campus in the newly renovated space. Gathering over 175 years of Congregation history, she created an inventory of the many documents—bound volumes and photographs—and placed the materials into new acid-free folders and boxes. Simultaneously, she produced a subject index card system that included the locations of the boxed materials. Sr. Noreen relied upon the assistance of Sr. Olive Marie Hickey, who typed the subject index cards that became the foundation of the organization of the materials.

At the beginning of her term as archivist, Sr. Noreen attended training sessions at the Historical Institute in Ohio. She later recalled, "I enjoyed this because they were very strict about how to do things, and I appreciated it; you worked hard to achieve new skills." Sr. Margaret Dowling expressed her appreciation to Sr. Noreen by sending her a card each year during her Presidency until 1979, thanking her for her dedication to successfully completing the project.

During this time, Sr. Noreen started a group with Brother Dennis Sennett, SA, to focus on archival procedures for

Catholic communities in the metropolitan area. She also provided consultation to assist new archivists. In gratitude for her time, the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement at Graymoor donated and installed the metal shelving in the new archives at Boyle Hall.

At an archives workshop she attended at the New York Monastery of the Holy Name Federation of Poor Clares in 1980, Sr. Noreen shared her thoughts on maintaining the archives. She stated, "The people are the riches. You have remains of a relationship with God; you are going to be dealing with what is holy, and it's up to you to make it a living word. It is a privilege to be an archivist; you have been entrusted with the holiness of your community and must find the best ways of sharing it with your sisters."

Sr. Noreen presented original papers at several annual meetings of the Society of American Archivists, wrote a monthly history column for the Congregation's in-house newsletter, and taught the spirituality of Elizabeth Ann Seton and Vincent de Paul to novices. Sr. Noreen continued as archivist until 1986. She then transitioned to providing services to the retired Sisters at Mount Saint Vincent Convent and at Convent of Mary the Queen, Yonkers.

During her tenure as custodian of the past, Sr. Noreen was an agent of the future, laying the foundational organization for the continued development and preservation of the Archives of the Sisters of Charity of New York.



Save the Date!

Thursday, May 19, 2022 • 6-9 PM

Sisters of Charity *Spring Benefit*

Cocktail hour and dinner at **The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers**, honoring **Mr. Jerry Costello and Family** and the late **Dr. Christopher Mills**.

For more information please contact Anne Marie Gardiner
Phone: 718-549-9200 Ext. 239



Connections—New York–Nassau *Cont'd from page 6*

St. Benedict. Sr. Harvette Hockkert, OSB, became superior of the new Bahamian Benedictine community. It was not until 1967 that a Bahamian, Sr. Mary Patricia Russell, again became the superior of the St. Martin's community.

The suppression of the native community was initially a devastating experience for the sisters involved.

Its transfer to a community whose charism and culture was radically different presented challenges for all concerned. It also went against the winds of change blowing in the country, which would, in 1973, achieve independence from Great Britain.

Three sisters chose not to cast their lot with the new community. One was accepted by the Franciscan Sisters of Clinton, Iowa. And two of the original founding members, Sisters Elizabeth Claridge and Teresa Symonette, joined the Sisters of Charity of New York. After professing vows as Sisters of Charity, they returned to Nassau, joined the sisters at St. Francis Convent, West Hill Street, and engaged in active ministry in education and administration.

Today there are ten Sisters of St. Martin's, which has become an independent member of the Benedictine Federation of St. Benedict. Our communities continue to maintain ties of love and friendship with one another, mindful of our early historical connection.

With Love and Appreciation We Remember...

Visit www.scny.org for complete biographies

Sister Maria Louis Octavio, SC

Entered: 1951 + Date of Death: September 29, 2021 + Age: 103

Sr. Louis worked at The New York Foundling before entering the Sisters of Charity, and would return there as Assistant to the Director of the School of Child Care for 13 years. For the next 28 years, she devoted her ministry to elementary education, first in Poughkeepsie and then in Staten Island. During the summer months for 20 years, Sr. Louis worked as a docent at the Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Seton in Emmitsburg, Md. Upon retirement, she lived at Mount Saint Vincent Convent and continued her volunteer service at the Elizabeth Seton Library of the College of Mount Saint Vincent for several years.



Sister Rose Frederick Jones, SC

Entered: 1957 + Date of Death: October 28, 2021 + Age: 85

After spending her early years in education, Sr. Rose spent much of her ministry as a social worker and therapist, a profession she considered sacred. She devoted four years in the Guidance Clinic at The New York Foundling and, for 34 years, as a social worker and therapist at the Mental Health Clinic of Saint Joseph's Medical Center. In 1968, Sr. Rose served as the first chairperson of the Committee of Sisters of Charity for Race Relations. In the mid-1970s, she joined the Board of Trustees of the Riverdale Mental Health Clinic. She also served on the boards of Elizabeth Seton College and the College of Mount Saint Vincent.



Sister Muriel Long, SC (Sister Maria Daniel)

Entered: 1947 + Date of Death: December 2, 2021 + Age: 92

Sr. Muriel devoted almost half of her 50 years of active ministry to elementary and high school education. She taught upper elementary grades in Manhattan and Brooklyn, and Math and Religion at All Saints Branch of Cathedral High School. In early 1970s, she began her years of pastoral ministry in religious adult education. She co-founded the South Bronx Pastoral Center, serving as teacher and Program Director, and later became teacher and Director of Religious Formation at St. Mary Parish, Yonkers. She became fluent in Spanish, participating in programs offered by the Archdiocese of New York in Puerto Rico, and in Mexico and Spain.



Sister Mary Kieran Mulligan, SC

Entered: 1957 + Date of Death: December 29, 2021 + Age: 83

Upon completion of a BA in History from the College of Mount Saint Vincent and New York certification in Elementary Education, Sr. Kieran dedicated her 52 years of ministry to the education of elementary school students. She taught first grade for ten years at St. Joseph in Yonkers, followed by 30 years at St. Mary in Wappingers Falls, where she taught first and third grades. Her last twelve years of active ministry were at St. Anthony in Yonkers, teaching in the Individualized Academic Program. In 2012, she joined the retired community at Mount Saint Vincent Convent where she provided support to older sisters.



A message from the
Development Office

Donor Advised Funds

A Donor Advised Fund (DAF) is an investment account for philanthropic giving that offers an immediate tax benefit and the flexibility to support your preferred charities right away or over time.

The advantages of giving through your DAF

- **Simplicity** Your sponsoring organization handles all record-keeping and tax receipts and provides you with a single document at tax time.
- **Timing** You can request that a donation be made at any time or make automatic recurring gifts on a schedule of your choice.
- **Open to all** Individuals, families, companies, foundations and other entities can start a DAF.
- **Increase your philanthropic capital** With varying investment strategies available, the funds in your DAF have the potential to grow tax-free.
- **Flexible funding options** Fund your DAF with the assets of your choice, including cash, stock, securities, and even real estate.

Why recommend a grant from your DAF to the Sisters of Charity of New York?

Our Sisters are passionate about serving others. We don't shy away from tackling society's toughest issues including homelessness, poverty, and human trafficking. We commit ourselves to inclusiveness and community with all people. Your gift will support our ministries and more:

- LEFSA
- Sisters Hill Farm
- Vincent's Table
- Elizabeth Seton Women's Center
- Sisters of Charity Housing Corporation

Questions?

Please call Anne Marie Gardiner, Director of Development at: 718-879-5262 or e-mail amgardiner@scny.org. Visit our website at scny.org/about-us/sisters-of-charity-ministry-network/

Are you a financial advisor?

If your clients are looking to make a gift through their DAF, please note the Sisters of Charity of New York's tax ID number is 13-1740394.



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POTS Celebrates Forty Years of Service in the Bronx



Sr. Jane making soup at the original Fordham Road POTS location

On January 6, 2022, POTS (Part of the Solution) marked its 40th anniversary. The program began in 1982, when Sr. Jane Iannucelli joined with Tim Boon and Fr. Ned Murphy, SJ, in offering hot soup and conversation to people living in poverty in their midst on Fordham Road. Over the years, many Sisters of Charity and others devoted time, energy and prayer to help the mission grow. The program has expanded to

offer multiple services, including hot meals and a host of social services. During the past two years, POTS has responded to the pandemic crisis by providing critical services for those in need.

Sr. Jane reflects on the important role that the Sisters of Charity played in the beginning:

So many images and memories come to mind as I recall POTS' beginnings. It is important to remember how significant we, the Sisters of Charity, were in laying POTS' foundation.

The Congregation paid my stipend while serving at POTS, sisters volunteered, sent monthly donations and canned goods. Turkeys and stuffing were cooked for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. So many sisters came at these holiday times to serve food and distribute gifts to the children. Many came for Eucharist and the reflections on our work and gospel witness for peace and justice.

Our mission is in the foundation that enables POTS to be what it is today. We still are part of this ministry. We serve on the board and in simple ways stay connected to this work

I know Tim Boon, Father Ned and I were so grateful for all the support and presence the Congregation offered us and our guests over the years.

We have helped POTS continue to be a community of service. Our mission continues to be part of the spirit, heart and soul of POTS.

40th
(POTS)
ANNIVERSARY