

# Vision



Sisters of Charity of New York • Now in Our Third Century of Living Lives of Love • Vol 30 ISSUE 1

## HOLY TROUBLE



WINTER 2026



## From the President



Dear Friends,

In these pages of *Vision*, I see what has always defined us as Sisters of Charity of New York: a living, breathing faith—one that learns, serves, and loves in every corner of our world.

From Guatemala's mountain villages to the Bronx, from a groundbreaking in White Plains to prayer circles in Yonkers and Harlem, we witness the Gospel unfolding in daily acts of care. Our nursing students who traveled to the Barbara Ford Peace Center remind us that mission is mutual—we go to give and return having received even more. Sister Maria Pablo's profession of final vows fills us with joy, her journey rooted in Mayan soil and Vincentian spirit, proving that our charism knows no borders.

We also celebrate a milestone of hope at Elizabeth Seton Children's: the blessing of land where young adults with complex medical needs will find home and belonging. It is love made visible—the kind of holy trouble our foundress, Elizabeth Seton, would recognize as Gospel courage.

Everywhere we turn—in LEFSA's pop-up pantry, at Vincent's Table, among volunteers and Associates, and in our Jubilee celebrations—we see the same truth: the charism of charity is alive and evolving. It continues through those who pray with us, serve beside us, and carry forward the light of our mission.

As we remember our Sisters and Associates who have gone home to God, may their faith inspire our own. They leave us a legacy not of buildings or programs alone, but of hearts stretched wide in love.

In this moment, what was once unthinkable is now openly proposed—or enacted—challenging us to respond with courage, clarity, and faith. This is not a time for silence or retreat. It is a time to show up—publicly and faithfully—for human dignity, for justice, and for the integrity of creation: the people and the planet entrusted to our care.

This is who we have always been—and who we choose to be now.

With gratitude and hope,

Sister Donna Dodge, SC  
President, Sisters of Charity of New York

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**Cover photo caption:** Sisters Eileen McGrory, Margaret Egan, Terese McElroy, Regina Bechtle, Mary Ann Daly, Donna Dodge (seated), Karen Helfenstein (standing), Claire E. Regan, Mary Mc Cormick and Virginia Searing at the No Kings rally in Yonkers

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# Guatemala Mission Trip

By UMSV St. Joseph's School of Nursing



Last summer, Dean Catherine Healy-Sharbaugh, Sister Virginia (Ginny) Searing, and University of Mount Saint Vincent St. Joseph's School of Nursing students traveled to Guatemala to participate in a mission trip at Barbara Ford Peace Center.



Throughout the trip, students provided health education on nutrition, first aid, choking prevention through instruction in the Heimlich maneuver, and blood pressure monitoring. The experience offered students a new perspective on global nursing, health promotion, and humanistic care in a developing country.

Nursing students also engaged in hands-on humanitarian care, learned about Mayan culture, and visited Sisters of Charity health clinics and other public health centers serving the Guatemalan community—especially children.

A special thank you to Sister Ginny, who led the mission, and Sister Donna Dodge, President of the Sisters of Charity of New York, for their generous support of the UMSV Student Nursing Mission!

# Sister Maria Pablo Santos Professes Final Vows

By Sr. Sheila Brosnan

As high-spirited pilgrims, a contingent of twelve people, consisting of Sisters of Charity, young students, and representatives from the Barbara Ford Peace Center, set out on the five-hour journey from Quiché to the northern border between Guatemala and Mexico. Paved roads provided smooth rides through high mountain ranges with dangerous “hair-pin” curves and breathtaking views. Some unpaved areas of the road, replete with bumps, ruts, and billowing dust, reminded us that the pilgrim journey is never smooth.

In Mayan Christian tradition, major celebrations often begin the prior evening. Hence, our first destination on Friday, July 4, 2025, was a small hamlet near Soloma where Sister Maria Pablo Santos spent her growing-up years. Women of all ages, holding candles and dressed in the ancient garb of woven fabrics and white lace, accompanied Maria Pablo in procession into the tiny chapel.



*In her native Joyab'al, Sister Maria Pablo gives voice to gratitude, culture, and the faith that shaped her vocation.*

During the homily, Maria Pablo spoke in Joyab'al, her first language, praising God and thanking the community for their faith and encouragement. When the liturgy ended, the celebration continued as everyone shared in an abundance of tamales and a delicious beverage.

After an outdoor barbeque supper, Sisters Donna, Nora, Maria Pablo, Sheila, choir members, lectors and altar servers went to the magnificent church of San Pedro Soloma for rehearsal. The lengthy practice continued until every ceremonial detail was perfectly orchestrated.



*Sister Maria Pablo Santos (at right) professes her final vows in the presence of Cardinal Ramazzini, Sister Donna Dodge, and Sister Sheila Brosnan.*

Early in the morning of July 5, the massive church was already filled in anticipation of the arrival of their beloved Cardinal Ramazzini.

The solemn liturgy and Vow Commitment Ceremony of Sister Maria Pablo was followed by a festive dinner and an afternoon of marimba music and dancing.

The pilgrims returned to the House of Formation in Quiché, with deep gratitude for the life and witness of Sister Maria Pablo, her family, and the community of San Pedro Soloma.

The parish of San Pedro continues to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.



*Sister Maria Pablo Santos celebrates her final vows with Sisters Nora, Rosenda, Rosita, Donna, and Sheila, surrounded by her community in San Pedro Soloma.*

# Elizabeth Seton Children's Young Adult Center Ground Blessing

By Lisa Shay, Associate



*A historic moment of hope: future residents and partners cut the ribbon on the new Elizabeth Seton Young Adult Center — a home built on love, dignity, and justice.*



*Sisters Jean Iannone, Dorothy Metz, and Virginia Searing share a joyful moment with Stephanie, a future resident of the Elizabeth Seton Young Adult Center*

On August 15, 2025, I witnessed an historic event: the ground blessing for a new Young Adult Center in White Plains to care for medically complex young people who age out of the Elizabeth Seton Children's Center in Yonkers. With 169 children, the Center is the largest provider of pediatric post-acute care nationwide. However, once the residents turn 22, they "age out" of the Center and approximately 30% of residents died within 12 to 18 months after being discharged.

To prevent residents' untimely deaths, CEO Patricia (Pat) Tursi, an Associate of the Sisters of Charity of NY, and her staff began a journey to build a new Center for young adults. The ground blessing was the culmination of years of hard work and prayer: to find a suitable plot, obtain permission from local, state and national government agencies to build the facility and secure funds to turn their idea into reality. This project is evidence that government officials across all parties can work together for a sufficiently compelling cause. Pat and her staff intentionally chose the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, in thanksgiving and petition for Our Lady's continued support.

The 15 speakers at the ground blessing reflected the cast of hundreds, if not thousands, who worked and prayed tirelessly for this project. Frank Oswald,

Chair of the Board of Directors, and Sr. Donna Dodge welcomed guests before Cardinal Dolan offered an address. Pat Tursi thanked everyone who made this day possible. Keynote speakers Andrea Stewart-Cousins, NY State Senate Majority Leader, and Dr. James McDonald, NY State Commissioner of Health, gave keynote addresses. Stephanie and Kevin, future residents of the Young Adult Center, performed "Go the Distance" to the delight of all. Local, state, and national government officials celebrated their bi-partisan commitment to this project. Chang Suh, the CEO of the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust, demonstrated his organization's commitment to providing financial support, and Jeff Loughlin, President of Westchester & Putnam Building Trades Council and Business Manager of Operating Engineers Local 137, gave witness to the support of skilled tradespeople who will construct and maintain the facility.

The ceremony concluded with a benediction from His Excellency Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, and the ground blessing by the Vicar General, Monsignor Joseph P. LaMorte, as Cardinal Dolan had to leave early. May this project proceed swiftly and smoothly to completion!

## Partners in Love and Service

### Celebrating Volunteers Who Carry the Charism of Charity Forward

Across our ministries, the heart of our mission beats through the hands, compassion, and generosity of volunteers. Their steady presence—serving meals, mentoring students, packing bags, listening with love—ensures that the charism of the Sisters of Charity continues to live and grow. **We could never do what we do without them.**

### UMSV CAMPUS MINISTRY

Faith finds its fullest expression in action. At the University of Mount Saint Vincent, students in Campus Ministry live that truth daily—serving the poor, comforting the lonely, and learning the Gospel lesson that love and justice belong together.

Whether preparing sandwiches for the hungry, joining the No Kings vigils for justice, or traveling to serve with the Barbara Ford Peace Center in Guatemala, their service becomes formation. Each experience plants seeds of empathy and hope.

Through their work and prayer, these students remind us that the spirit of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and St. Vincent de Paul is very much alive—inspiring new generations to see Christ in every person and to respond with courage, compassion, and justice.



*Grateful for these students who spent their night showing what Gospel love looks like in action.*



*In a city where too many go without, these students joined with Friendly Fridge to help make sure our neighbors didn't.*

### POTS — Part of the Solution



*Huge thanks to NYPA Energy's Customer Energy Solutions team for spending the day at POTS, helping fight food insecurity and uplift local families.*

At POTS in the Bronx, volunteers embody the Gospel of compassion in motion. From sorting donations to serving hot meals, they create a space where dignity and care are never rationed.

Students, parish groups, and individuals of all ages come together in solidarity with neighbors who struggle to meet basic needs.

Each gesture—a meal served, a smile shared, a listening ear—becomes an act of grace.

Their hands extend the love of the Sisters of Charity, making visible what our foundress, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, taught: “The love of Christ impels us to do great things.”



*Food justice is a team effort. Grateful for the volunteers from Da People's Assembly and Democracy Prep who brought hands, heart, and hope to POTS.*

# ELIZABETH SETON WOMEN'S CENTER

On a crisp October morning, the Elizabeth Seton Women's Center saw its busiest day ever—serving 75 breakfast sandwiches, 150 lunches prepared by Don Bosco Prep students, and every last bag of clothing and toiletries brought along.

“It's pretty rough circumstances out there for many people,” shared Executive Director Ellen Mihovics. “But the goodness and generosity of our volunteers keep us going.”

High school students, parishioners, and longtime volunteers come together week after week, proving that community and compassion can still thrive in a city too often marked by isolation. Their work echoes Elizabeth Seton's enduring conviction: “We must speak to them with our hands—by giving, before we try to speak to them with our lips.”



## LEFSA — Life Experience and Faith Sharing Associates

In early autumn, LEFSA partnered with Philoxenia for a Pop-Up Pantry event outside the LEFSA office in Harlem. Together, they served 163 community participants with vegetables, canned goods, beans, pasta, toiletries, and socks—simple gifts that carry profound dignity.



Events like these are made possible through the generous hands of local volunteers who, side by side with LEFSA team members, meet people where they are—with no judgment, only love.



For more than 35 years, LEFSA has walked with women and men who have experienced homelessness, helping them rebuild their lives through community, reflection, and service. Every shared bag of food, every prayer circle, and every word of encouragement is an act of resurrection—proof that love still has the power to heal and transform.

## VINCENT'S TABLE

In Yonkers and the Bronx, Vincent's Table brings together neighbors, families, and faith communities to feed both body and spirit.

Volunteers like Stephanie, who has been part of Vincent's Table since the beginning, and Yvette, who joined in 2022, know every face and every story.

And Adeline, once a guest herself, now serves as a volunteer—her life a living testimony that love multiplies when it is shared.

Each bag of food given, each prayer offered, each word of encouragement builds a table where all are welcome.





## A Living Charism

Through every act of service, volunteers across our ministries continue what began more than two centuries ago with St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and the first Sisters of Charity in New York: seeing Christ in those most in need and responding with love. Their work reminds us that the charism of charity is not bound to history—it lives in every heart that serves.



*The Elizabeth Seton Women's Center hosted its biggest Breakfast Run yet—serving more meals, more care, and more neighbors than ever.*



*Sarah Lawrence Women's Soccer brought heart, hustle, and solidarity to POTS.*



*Outside the LEFSA office, Director Carl Petrus talks with Pop-Up Pantry co-directors as they prepare to serve neighbors with free groceries and compassion.*



*"Be part of the solution." UMSV students lived that message at POTS—honoring dignity, offering hope, and building community.*

## The Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation

By Matthew Janeczko, *President & CEO*

The Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation recently purchased a five-family home in Kingston, NY, marking the organization's expansion into Ulster County. The house will be fully rehabbed, and the current tenants will enjoy the benefits of renovated apartments.

SCHDC is also in the process of installing a solar array at Joseph House in Staten Island, which will produce enough electricity to offset both the common area uses as well as up to ten tenant units. Plans are in the works to create a similar solar array at Vincent's Village, Nanuet, in the new year.

Over the last six months, SCDHC also closed on a \$22 million renovation at Saint Elizabeth's Manor in Staten Island, which will allow for rehabilitation of all tenant units as well as the total electrification of the building, including heating, cooling, and domestic hot water.



*Grateful to the Rosary Hall Dax Program students and to Barbara Burke for a spa day filled with laughter, gentle care, and stories shared across generations. The Sisters at Kittay felt truly cherished—come back soon!*

# Inspirators for the Faith, Guides for Service

By Sr. Mary Mc Cormick & Sr. Virginia Searing

In 1973 The New York Foundling began a Head Start Program in Puerto Rico for children from new-born to five. Sister Jane Hoehn, SC, was a founding member of the program, which this year celebrates its 54th year of providing quality pre-school education for the Island's children, most of them at or below the poverty level.

Today's Puerto Rican Head Start program has a staff of five hundred teachers, administrators and volunteer personnel in five locations in five municipalities. Sister Virginia Searing, Director of the Sisters of Charity Ministry Relationships Program, and Sister Mary Mc Cormick were invited to give them a four-day workshop using material from a slightly adapted version of the Keepers of the Flame program.

This program originated as a means of bringing Boards of Trustees of the Sisters of Charity Sponsored Ministries into a deeper understanding of the Sisters of Charity Charism and Mission as they are lived out today.

The Program in Puerto Rico included input, reflection and discussions of the following:

1. a brief life of the Sisters of Charity foundress Elizabeth Seton and of Mary Irene Fitzgibbon, SC, who in 1869 was asked to start The New York Foundling Hospital.
2. the mission of the Sisters of Charity as it is found in the gospel of Luke (Luke 4:16-20) with its challenge to live lives of service and love.
3. the vocation or calling of those who work in Sisters of Charity ministries, reaching out to all in need, especially the poor.
4. a way of looking at a possible future of Head Start as it charts its course in these challenging times.

The program was well received by the participants. Many expressed their delight in learning the stories of the origins of The New York Foundling and its multi-faceted outreach.

Although the time was all too brief, Sisters Virginia and Mary were happy with what was shared. The pictures taken speak for themselves!



*Sr. Mary Mc Cormick and Sr. Virginia Searing join The Foundling's Head Start Team in Puerto Rico.*



*Ribbon cutting ceremony for the newest Head Start location in Puerto Rico.*



*Leaders and staff gather outside The New York Foundling's newest Head Start and Early Head Start center in Las Flores, Puerto Rico.*

# “Partner of my cares and bearer of my burdens”

By Sr. Regina Bechtle

Long before the digital age brought us news in nanoseconds, handwritten letters conveyed family news, business dealings and deep emotions. Probably many of us still treasure a scribbled note from a parent, mentor or friend.

In her 47 years, Elizabeth Bayley Seton wrote hundreds of letters, most of which have been preserved and printed. One of the most precious for the Sisters of Charity of New York is the letter she sent to Sr. Elizabeth Boyle on October 25, 1820. It was among the last letters Mother Seton wrote. Her health was declining rapidly; she would soon die of tuberculosis on January 4, 1821.

Earlier in 1820, Mother Seton had sent Sr. Elizabeth to oversee St. Joseph’s Asylum, an orphanage in Philadelphia and the community’s first mission outside Emmitsburg. The two Elizabeths had worked closely together; from 1813 to 1820, Boyle served as the new community’s Assistant Mother and novice director.

In the 1820 letter Mother Seton addressed Boyle as “partner of my cares and bearer of my burdens.” Those tender words mask a multitude of tears and joys, struggles and stories.

Christmas Eve 1822 found Sr. Elizabeth in a carriage bound for New York, 100 miles away, where she had been assigned as Sister Servant (Superior) at St. Patrick’s Asylum.

Among her few possessions she carried the precious letter. She must have re-read it often during the next tumultuous decades, as thousands of Irish and German immigrants fled famine and persecution, only to die on New York’s shores.

Sister Elizabeth led the Sisters as they housed, taught and loved the children left behind, as the charity of Christ impelled.

In 1846, disagreements between New York’s Bishop John Hughes and community superiors in Emmitsburg came to a head. The Sisters in New York were given the choice of leaving those in their care and returning to the Maryland motherhouse or beginning a separate community in New York.

About half made the wrenching choice to remain in New York. On December 31, 1846, they chose as their first leader the one whom they knew as the close partner of Mother Seton’s cares and bearer of her burdens, Sr Elizabeth Boyle.

Fast forward almost 180 years. The SCNY Archives recently donated this precious letter to the Archives of the Daughters of Charity in Emmitsburg, MD, where it joins our previous donations of Mother Seton’s writings, articles of clothing and other treasures. Mother Seton’s letter to Sister Elizabeth Boyle, provided by SCNY’s Archivist Mindy Gordon, rested safely in the back seat of a Subaru Forester, under the watchful care of three Sisters of Charity—Srs. Regina Bechtle, Margaret Egan, and Claire E. Regan.

They were en route to Emmitsburg on September 12, 2025, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Mother Seton’s canonization as the first American-born saint. Scott Keefer, Archivist for the Daughters of Charity, Province of St. Louise, gratefully received the precious letter. The circle was complete.



Words across two centuries: a copy of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton’s 1820 letter to Sr. Elizabeth Boyle.

# Highlights from the National Shrine's 50th Anniversary of Elizabeth Ann Seton's Canonization



*Sister Regina Bechtle carries the Sisters of Charity of New York banner during the Federation procession at the Vincentian Mass.*



*Following the Canonization Anniversary Mass, Sr. Terese McElroy and Sr. Eileen McGrory greet Archbishop William E. Lori, of Baltimore.*



*The Basilica fills with the Vincentian Family, Sisters, Associates, and pilgrims for the 50th Anniversary Canonization Mass of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.*



*Banners representing the Sisters of Charity Federation stand in honor at the Vincentian Mass for the 50th Anniversary of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's canonization.*



*Tomaž Mavrič, CM, superior general of the Congregation of the Mission, and other priests from the Vincentian Family, gather in celebration of the Eucharist.*



*The altar marking the resting place of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton at the Basilica in Emmitsburg, a sacred site of prayer and pilgrimage*

# Peace, Justice & Integrity of Creation

Across the Bronx, Yonkers, and beyond, Sisters of Charity, along with our ministries and partners, have carried the charism of love-in-action into the streets, campuses, and digital spaces of our time. Whether standing for migrants, protecting creation, or speaking truth to power, these moments of “holy trouble” witness to the Gospel alive in our world today.

## 100 Days of Prayer, Fasting and Advocacy



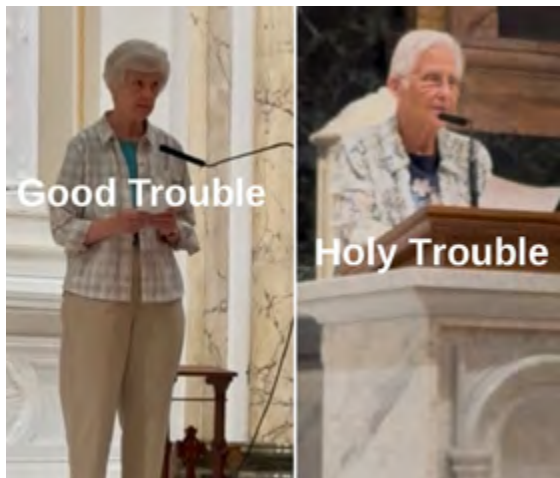
On Elizabeth Ann Seton’s birthday, August 28, Sisters, Associates, and friends prayed the Rosary at the grotto, lifting immigrants as well as their families and advocates in heartfelt prayer.



Sisters, Associates and staff came together for a silent witness on Riverdale.

## Community Solidarity

Sr. Carol De Angelo joins neighbors at the “Free Dylan” rally, calling for the release of a local teen taken by ICE.



At the final event of the day, Sisters Terese McElroy and Kathleen Byrnes led a prayer service reflecting on “Good Trouble” and “Holy Trouble” as part of the 100 Days of Prayer, Fasting & Advocacy.



## Sisters Speak Out

Sisters of Charity of New York and Ministry Representatives joined women religious across the country for Sisters Speak Out, a national day of advocacy for immigrant and economic justice. Rooted in prayer and the Gospel call to welcome the stranger, Sisters gathered to stand with those most marginalized—immigrants, refugees, and communities increasingly targeted by punitive legislation. Together, they raised a collective, compassionate voice for dignity, humane policies, and a future where every person is safeguarded by justice.

## No Kings



### Times Square

In the heart of Times Square, the message was unmistakable: There are no kings in a democracy—and no outsiders in the Reign of God.

Standing alongside other people of faith, the Sisters of Charity of New York lifted up the Gospel truth that every person deserves safety, dignity, and belonging.

From the crossroads of the world, we proclaimed what Jesus lived: No one is disposable. No one is illegal. All are our neighbors. When power threatens the vulnerable, disciples don't stay silent.

They stand where Jesus stands.



### Kittay

Even if they cannot march, they can stand in solidarity. At Kittay Senior Apartments, our Sisters lifted their voices and prayers with today's No Kings actions—proclaiming that God's Kingdom has no billionaires and no borders, only love of neighbor.



### Yonkers

"We the People" means all of us.

The Sisters of Charity of New York joined the No Kings rally in Yonkers to affirm that both faith and democracy call us to protect human dignity—not privilege or power.

Loving our neighbor is the most patriotic act of all. As Vatican II reminded us, the Church must "read the signs of the times."

If we are reading them and still not speaking out—about poverty, racism, war, and injustice—then we are not reading with the eyes of Christ.

## Catholic Sisters Sail the Hudson to Raise Awareness about Water Pollution



On September 5, 2025, fifty Catholic Sisters and people of faith sailed the Hudson on a Pilgrimage of Hope for Creation—a public witness calling attention to the pollution threatening one of our region's most vital waterways. Led by ROAR—Responsibility, Ownership, Accountability and Reward—and the Metro New York Catholic Climate Movement, the pilgrimage reminded us that healing Earth is holy work.

Sr. Carol De Angelo and Diandra Garcia represented the Sisters of Charity.

God of justice, may our prayers rise with those in the streets — until every person has bread, care, and dignity.

Liberate those held in detention and free all who are captive to fear or greed.

Let Your Kingdom come — where love rules, and none are left behind.

Amen.

## One Church, One Family — Catholic Public Witness for Immigrants



**Delaney Hall, Newark, NJ**

Outside Delaney Hall, Catholic Sisters, clergy, students, and lay Catholics gathered with One Church, One Family for a national witness on behalf of immigrant families. In prayer, song, and solidarity, we stood for the dignity of every person behind these walls—calling for their freedom, reunification, and the protection of all who migrate seeking safety.



**Federal Plaza, New York City**

At Federal Plaza, the Church of St. Francis Xavier, the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, and the New Sanctuary Coalition joined the weekly Jericho Walk—circling the building in prayerful silence to confront the suffering caused by detention and deportation. A Catholic public witness for Immigrants, steadfast and unbroken.



**Rosary Hall Patio, Bronx, NY**

During *Proclaim Jubilee*, an event hosted by the Global Poverty Committee, attendees took time to honor a legacy of justice. Sr. Mary Donagher accepted a PJIIC Certificate of Recognition for herself and the late Sr. Regina Murphy, celebrating their faithful work for global debt relief and the dignity of vulnerable communities.



**Xavier High School – Young Voices of Charity**

Young people from Xavier High School walked from their campus to Federal Plaza carrying signs for immigrant justice. There, they heard from Rosa Santana, an immigrants’ rights advocate, whose testimony challenged all of us to keep showing up, keep speaking out, and keep choosing solidarity over silence.

# Season of Creation: Sowing Peace with the Earth

By Diandra Garcia-Heredia, Advocacy and Program Coordinator at PJIC Office

Each year from September 1 to October 4, Christians around the world enter the Season of Creation—a time to pray and act for our common home. This year’s theme, “Peace with Creation,” was symbolized by a Garden of Peace, inviting us to imagine a world where people, animals, trees, and rivers flourish side by side.

## Prayer, Reflection, and Planting Seeds of Advocacy

At both the Kittay and Mount Saint Vincent Convent Retirement Homes, I led the Sisters in a contemplative exercise using a vision board that highlighted this year’s theme through images, prayers, and simple advocacy actions—“pray for farmers,” “use a reusable bag,” “choose one FOCUS issue to act on.” The Sisters symbolically “planted” seeds for the causes they felt called to support, alongside real produce from Sisters Hill Farm.

We prayed with the Season of Creation and Jubilee Year of Hope prayers, and reflected on Pope Leo XIV’s words for the World Day of Prayer for Creation:

“We are sowers of seeds for a harvest that others may reap.”

We also drew on the poetry of Sr. Regina Bechtle, whose verses capture the rhythm of renewal woven through creation.

## Sisters Hill Farm: A Living Garden of Peace

Memories of Sisters Hill Farm surfaced quickly. The Sisters recalled its beginnings with Sr. Mary Ann Garisto, Farmer Dave Hambleton’s faithful care for the land, and the hundreds of families nourished each season—including neighbors most in need. The farm is more than a ministry; it is a lived reminder that our charism of charity extends to Earth itself.

## Lessons from the Garden

The Sisters reflected on how the garden mirrors the spiritual life:

- Sowing is hope—trusting God with small beginnings.
- Growing takes patience—sometimes with disappointment.
- Harvesting is gratitude—receiving and sharing God’s gifts.

Stories of childhood potatoes and carrot experiments reminded us how life springs from the ordinary. Reflections on “Mother” Earth led us to honor our own mothers, our Holy Mother, and the Earth who sustains us.

## What Peace Looks Like

When asked what “peace with creation” evokes, the Sisters offered images of:

- The Hudson River and the Palisades
- Changing seasons



*Sisters at Kittay taking part in Season of Creation 2025.*

- Quiet moments when the city opens its windows to birdsong
- Joy and harmony shared in community

Some connected this peace to global longing, praying for Gaza and for all places where creation—and humanity—cry out.

## Faith Becoming Action

Both communities committed to small daily practices: spending time outdoors, composting, sharing produce with neighbors. We prayed for farmers—“Bless the hands that till the soil”—and signed advocacy letters supporting Bread for the World’s Nourish Our Future campaign. Nearly 20 signatures were gathered for each legislator.

## Closing in Hope

As the season ended, the Sisters reflected on the spiritual harvest they continue to offer the world. Sister Lorraine Cooper connected it to the recent celebration of our Associates, who carry the charism forward. Sister Carmel Craig reminded us that even in later years, we plant seeds that will bear fruit long after.

This season calls us not only to pray, but to live differently—

- Praying for those who care for the Earth
- Advocating for policies that protect creation and feed the hungry
- Recognizing every garden, meal, and breath as part of God’s Garden of Peace

As one Sister summed it up: Peace with creation is “spring...fall... joy...harmony...quiet—even in the noise of the city...hope for what we leave behind.”

# 2025 Jubilarians

## SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY 1950

Sister Anita Miriam Lavelle  
Sister Rita Nowatzki  
Sister Mary O'Brien  
Sister Miriam Kevin Phillips  
Sister Rosemary Petrucelli  
Sister T. Marie Tolle

## SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY 1955

Sister Helen Bryant  
Sister A. Jean Iannone  
Sister Margaret Ellen Burke  
Sister Kathryn E. McDermott  
Sister Doris Heinlein  
Sister Sheila Normoyle  
Sister Mary Sugrue

## SIXTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY 1960

Sister Eileen Fagan  
Sister Maria Iglesias  
Sister Frances T Keegan  
Sister Nancy Kellar  
Sister Florence Mallon  
Sister Terese A. McElroy  
Sister Marie Morris  
Sister Margaret M. O'Brien  
Sister Anna Roche  
Sister Carol Ann Ruf  
Sister Virginia Searing  
Sister Mary Tommasino

## SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY 1965

Sister Ann Costello  
Sister Mary Ann Daly

## TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY 2000

Sister Kathleen Aucoin



*Sr. Margaret Ellen Burke was all smiles at St. Patrick Villa, while celebrating her 70th jubilee.*



*Sisters at Kittay celebrate Jubilee morning with coffee, doughnuts and New York Times photographer Michelle Agins.*



*During a delicious Jubilee Luncheon at Mount Saint Vincent Convent, Sr. Anita Miriam Lavelle and Sr. Jeanne Delaney share some laughs while celebrating sisters' anniversaries.*

# 2025 Sisters of Charity of New York Associates Commitment Ceremony

By Lisa Shay, *Associate*

On September 27, 2025, Sisters and Associates welcomed two new Associates and celebrated the renewals of five Associates and the lifetime commitments of two more. The glorious fall weather, unseasonably warm with a beautiful blue sky, felt as if all Creation was celebrating with us. Deanne May, her daughter Gillian May, Kathleen Mayer, Dr. Ana Ribeiro and Sheila Simmons signed renewed commitments on the altar at the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, formally witnessed by Sr. Donna Dodge and in the presence of all of us gathered in assembly.

Lynn Christopher, an Associate since 2013, and Anne Marie Gardiner made lifetime commitments, receiving their gold Associates pins from Sr. Donna. For Anne Marie, this was a combination of initial and lifetime commitment. In her remarks, she noted that Elizabeth Ann Seton has always been a part of her life, since attending 1st grade taught by the Sisters of Charity of New York and, after moving to New Jersey, in schools taught by Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth. In 1997 she began working with the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth and more recently as the Executive Director of Mission Advancement for the Sisters of Charity of NY. She added that becoming a lifetime Associate of the Sisters of Charity of NY was “a natural step in [her] spiritual journey.”

Dr. Luz Marina Díaz was teaching a Spiritual Direction Practicum I session at Fordham University, Rose Hill Campus that Saturday, so we celebrated her initial commitment in a separate ceremony at the Spirituality Center on October 16. Luz, the Director of Religious Education at the



*Associates being introduced to the Congregation and guests. Front: Lynn Christopher. First pew (L-R) Kathleen Mayer, Gillian May and Deanne May. Second pew (L-R): Sheila Simmons and Dr. Ana Ribeiro, Third pew (first seat inside aisle): Anne Marie Gardiner.*

parish of St. Francis Xavier in Manhattan and a member of the Fordham faculty, was accompanied by the SC Council, other Sisters and Associates who know her well, and a friend from the parish. Her decision to become an Associate is the culmination of nearly 25 years of “knowing and working alongside many Sisters of Charity. Their example of humility, compassion, and unwavering dedication to the poor and vulnerable has profoundly shaped my own understanding of what it means to live a life of faith.”



*Unable to attend the Associates’ Ceremony, Dr. Luz Marina Diaz was welcomed as an Associate by the Leadership Team and a full gathering of Sisters at the Spirituality Center.*

# Mass of Remembrance

*The Annual Mass for our Deceased Sisters, Associates, and Former Members*



## October 2024 – October 2025

On Saturday, November 8, 2025, the Sisters of Charity of New York gathered in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, Founders' Hall at Mount Saint Vincent, for our annual Mass of Remembrance. Family members and friends of our deceased Sisters, Associates, and former members joined us in prayer, gratitude, and celebration of lives lived in faith and service. A luncheon followed the liturgy, continuing the spirit of shared remembrance and love.

In her letter to the congregation, Sister Donna Dodge, SC, reflected:

*“The spirit of these women lives on in each of us. In taking time to remember them, we strengthen the bonds among us. Their faith, their generosity, and their charity continue to inspire the life and mission of our community.”*

As we gather each year in prayer and remembrance, we give thanks for the enduring light of their example and the countless ways their lives of charity continue to bless our world.

You can view the 2025 Mass of Remembrance on our YouTube channel.

**We remember with deep affection and gratitude the following:**

### **Our Deceased Sisters**

Sister Theresa Capria  
 Sister Theresa Courtney  
 Sister Theresa Gravino  
 Sister Monica Griffin  
 Sister Mary A. Jordan  
 Sister Anna Marian Lascell  
 Sister Eileen Martin  
 Sister Regina Murphy  
 Sister Cecilia (Ceil) Reeves  
 Sister Dominica Rocchio

### **Our Former Members**

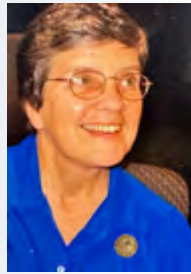
Ms. Kathryn L. Gleeson (Sr. Grace Joseph) – 1961  
 Mrs. Marion Hughes Gersitz (Sr. Francis Marie) – 1956  
 Ms. Joan Ann Fitzpatrick McInerney (Sr. Bernadette Maureen) – 1963

### **Our Associate**

Ms. Helen Montaigne Flatley – Associate since 1987

# In Remembrance May - October 2025

Born November 2, 1939, in the Bronx, **Sister Regina Murphy, SC** (Thomas Marilda) entered the Sisters of Charity of New York on September 8, 1959. She earned a BA in English from the College of Mount Saint Vincent, an MA in English from Saint Louis University, and an MA in Religious Studies from Fordham University.



Sister Regina taught in White Plains, Yonkers, the Bronx, and the Bahamas before serving in religious education at Holy Family Parish, Staten Island. Deeply committed to justice, she was Coordinator of Corporate Responsibility, Director of Social Concerns, Co-Founder of the Intercommunity Center for Justice and Peace, and Director of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility.

Twice elected to the Congregation's Leadership Council, Sister Regina was honored by the New York State Senate and NETWORK for her tireless advocacy. She died June 12, 2025, at Cabrini of Westchester, in her sixty-sixth year as a Sister of Charity of New York.

Born December 20, 1932, in Manhattan, **Sister Mary A. Jordan, SC** (Mary Alexander) entered the Sisters of Charity of New York on September 8, 1950. She earned a BA in History from the College of Mount Saint Vincent and an MSW from Catholic University, later receiving professional certification in social work and pupil personnel services.



Sister Mary served seventeen years at Saint Agatha Home in Nanuet as Group Mother, Childcare Supervisor, and Assistant Director. She then ministered for over three decades in Montgomery County, Maryland, as a school social worker and Pupil Personnel Worker, guiding and supporting countless students and families.

In 2017, she retired to Mount Saint Vincent Convent and later Cabrini of Westchester, where she died on June 25, 2025, in her 74th year of commitment as a Sister of Charity.

Remembered for her humor, warmth, and compassion, Sister Mary built lasting bonds through faith and service.

Born February 1, 1927, in the Bronx, **Sr. Anna Marian Lascell, SC** (Anna Marie) entered the Sisters of Charity of New York on February 1, 1947. She earned a BS in Education from Fordham University and taught for forty years in elementary schools across New York City, Yonkers, Staten Island, Southampton, Rye, and Beacon, serving as principal of St. Ann School in Yonkers. For fifteen years, she ministered in the office of the Salesian Missions, New Rochelle.



Retiring in 2003, Sister Anna later moved to The New Jewish Home and then Kittay Senior Apartments, Bronx, where she died on July 26, 2025, in her 78th year as a Sister of Charity.

Remembered for her kindness, humor, and deep prayer life, she brought joy to her students and community alike. A "no-fuss" woman of faith, her rosary was never far from her hands.

## SAVE THE DATE

**Sisters of Charity of New York Spring Benefit 2026**  
The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers, April 17, 2026

### Honoring:

Eugene C. Rainis, Dominick Reda, MD,  
and Bernadette Kingham-Bez



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“Look who decided to chill with me in Harlem.”

Sometimes grace just lands right where you are.

*James Butler (JB) Life  
Experience and Faith  
Sharing Associates  
(LEFSA) Team Member*