Faith Afire is printed with the environment in mind. In addition to domestic made recycled paper, the energy used to produce this magazine has been offset 100 percent with Missouri wind energy credits procured from the Ameren Missouri Pure Power program. The print facility is one of fewer than 50 SGP certified printers in the US and uses only printing inks that are solvent-free, low V.O.C. and soy based.

Daughters of Charity from the Province of St. Louise who are “Under 10” years in Community recently gathered with “Under 10” Daughters from the Province of the West in Los Altos Hills, CA. The Sisters focused on Community life during their time together. Pictured are, Sisters Meg Kymes, Liz Sjoberg, Ellen Reilly, Cecillia Tsao, Mary Ellen Lacy, Roberta Treppa, and Salvatrice Murphy.
Dear friends in Christ,

As you may know, for the past few years the Daughters of the Province of St. Louise have been in the midst of a reorganization so they may become still more available for the service of people who are poor. In its present phase, this means not only reterritoring from some ministries and repositioning in others, but also the more personal challenges that come with adapting to a new culture born of four formerly independent Provinces now melding into one.

I’ve been struck by the amount of effort and imagination that has gone into addressing the longer term issues of melding the four previous Provinces into one. As with the Biblical truth that creation doesn’t end with the first day but goes on every day after, the Daughters of the Province of St. Louise have attended to the lights and shadows of that much cloudier time between ‘opening day’ and the end of the season.

There have been the common activities. Certainly there were the normal yearly gatherings, but much reinforcement came from the many formation days and retreats held in different locations. Sisters were asked to travel outside their old territories to get to know new faces and see other ministries. While some questioned the costs in dollars and work time, the truth is that these frequent mixings spelled the difference between a mere concept of amalgamation and the lived experience of it.

Another ingredient has been the amount of “face-time” between Province and leadership. To some, even people around the Council table seemed excessive, but the payoff has come in terms of a quicker building up of the connection between center and hub; i.e., for the Sisters on mission, that all important sense of belonging. Some have felt that this has been an unrealistic ideal, but the payoff has come in terms of a quicker building up of the connection between center and hub; i.e., for the Sisters on mission, that all important sense of belonging.

There were other ingredients, such as the effort spent trying to appreciate the pains of dislocation and to come up with the best ways to sound that hard call for mobility. But the instinct to attend to the between-time has proven crucial. With all the energy needed just to begin, the temptation is to think that reconfiguring will happen of itself. In truth, another kind of determination and imagination is needed to make that first day of creation happen every day after.

Please join me in prayer for the Daughters of the Province as they move into 2014 focused on the future needs of those who live in poverty.

In Vincent and Louise,

Faith Afire

Dear friends,

We near the end of 2013 in a spirit of true thanksgiving and gratitude. During the past 12 months, the Daughters of Charity in the Province of St. Louise have been focused in prayer and planning on our future direction. Where are the needs greatest? Where are resources least available? Are there areas of great need where there is no or little Catholic presence?

In early September, we gathered for our Provincial Meeting. The meeting theme, Bearing Fruit for the Mission, helped to focus the presentations and ensuing discussions that took place. We had opportunities for prayer and sharing. The Council, following the Provincial Meeting, gathered to reflect on all that was presented and considered. Then, in late September, we began action steps. In order to serve in areas of great need and few resources, we will withdraw from 10 cities in the United States by the fall of 2014. Perhaps, in your local Catholic newspaper, you have read about the withdrawals. In each of these locations, there are strong Catholic lay leaders and staff members at hospitals and organizations who we can entrust with the ministries.

We have absolute confidence that the works of the Church, some of which the Daughters began in these areas more than 100 years ago, will continue. Entrusting these ministries to others will give us the opportunity to place our Sisters where they can be in direct service of those living in great poverty as well as provide sufficient numbers for our life together in each local community. The withdrawals and partial withdrawals will, in the next year, “free up” nearly 50 Daughters of the Province who will be missioned to these areas. Where those areas are is under current assessment by the Province’s leadership and members.

Daughters of the Province will continue to serve in 18 US States, the District of Columbia, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and in foreign missions on every continent except Antarctica. Many of our current ministries—both here and abroad—are highlighted in this issue. I encourage you to pray for the Daughters who serve in these works, those with whom they serve, and most importantly for those they serve.

St. Vincent de Paul reminded the Daughters of the 17th Century just as he reminds us today in the 21st century, “You have to be ready to go wherever you are told to go, and even to request this saying, ‘I belong neither here nor there, but wherever God wants me to be.’ You are chosen to be at the disposition of Divine Providence.” (St. Vincent de Paul, July 31, 1634)

Blessings to you and yours,

Sister Louise Gallahue, D.C.
Provincial

Faith Afire • Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2013

Cover: The Daughters of Charity serve in Kenya in a variety of ministries. Sister Ellis O’Kelley cares for the health of the elderly. Please read more beginning on page 6.

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Graphic Designer: Katie Zeller; Advisors: Province Communications Committee
Daughters Care for Health of Many in Many Locations—Part 2

In the last issue of *Faith Afire*, Daughters of Charity who serve in El Paso, New Orleans, and rural Arkansas were featured. This issue, we look at three urban areas where Daughters serve in primary care clinics.

**Nashville**
Sister Doris Clippard, Family Nurse Practitioner, cares for patients at Saint Thomas Family Health Center South in Nashville, TN. “We serve a diverse patient population of mostly immigrants,” says Sister Doris. “Because over 75 percent of our patients speak Spanish, we have a bilingual staff. We have been at the Edmondson Pike location for eight years and in South Nashville for more than 10 years. During this past year, we had 22,000 patient encounters. Most of our patients are uninsured or under-insured. Our providers include nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, and a physician. The other team members are a social worker, pharmacist, and dietician. We are funded through sliding scale fees and local grants and provide care regardless of ability to pay. Our current new projects are called ‘centering groups.’ For a year and a half we have been gathering groups of pregnant women to do their pre-natal care together. It has been well-received by our patients and the providers. The women learn from each other, support each other, and participate in their care more actively. This method has been shown to reduce peri-natal complications, increase breast feeding success rates, and build small communities in many locations nationally.

**Washington, D.C.**
Perry Family Clinic in Washington, D.C., located on the lower level of the former M Street High School, is where you will find Sister Mary Vincent Haggerty and Sister Mary Jo Stein. The former school, founded in 1870 as a preparatory high school for African-American youth, is today home of the Clinic and other social service agencies. Sister Mary Vincent, RN, works with clinic patients by administering flu shots and checking on patients by telephone. Sister Mary Jo, a Family Nurse Practitioner, sees patients who range in age from newborns to seniors. “This is a very busy clinic, from opening to closing,” explains Sister Mary Vincent. “We average 70 visits a day. Our team includes internal medicine, pediatrics, family practice, mental health, nurse practitioners, students and medical residents. Nurses, doctors, and office staff meet in a brief huddle daily to arrange work and address issues.”

**Jacksonville**
Sister Cora Anne Signaigo serves at the primary care clinics of St. Vincent’s HealthCare in Jacksonville. A nurse for many years, Sister Cora Anne is now part of Mission Integration and visits with patients, waits with families, and also provides spiritual support to staff members. “It has been a real privilege for me to work with our staff in the clinics,” Sister Cora Anne shares. “Every day I see God at work through them in their persistence to obtain care for those unable to afford it, whether it is medicine, transportation to the hospital for X-rays, admission to a hospital because their insurance won’t cover it, or provision for the illiterate to receive education on their medical conditions. Some have even picked up on situations with children being seen in the clinic and bullying in the schools. This staff took it upon themselves to reach out to the local schools and have worked with them on this issue. These are truly examples to me of God’s love and care for those who are poor.”

(In the next issue of *Faith Afire*, we will meet Daughters who serve in clinics in Albany, Niagara Falls and St. Louis.)
For more than 11 years, Daughters of Charity from the Province of St. Louise have served in Kenya with other Daughters from Great Britain, Ireland, the Province of the West (Los Altos Hills, California, USA), Nigeria, and Ethiopia. The formation of native Kenyan Sisters and outreach in the areas of education, social ministry, and health are their main focuses. Missions were established first in Chepnyal and Thigio, next in Nairobi, then Kitale and most recently in Kiio. Presently, Sisters from the Province of St. Louise serve in four of the five sites: Chepnyal (Sisters Patricia Beyrau and Mary Shea), Kitale (Sister Karen Flaherty), Nairobi (Sister Jocelyne Joly), and Thigio (Sisters Catherine Madigan and Deborah Mallott). Daughters from each mission share news of their ministries.

**CHEPNYAL:** We began one of our newest works two years ago by teaching women how to bake bread. Interest in starting their own businesses grew so we met with about 13 women who were interested in doing this. They requested that we offer baking classes. They would provide the ingredients; we would provide the instruction. Thirty-six women came to learn; now 23 are making money through a business in which they sell bread, eggs, maize, and beans. These women want to become more independent in paying for food, school fees, and other basic family necessities. We have also been busy working with 10 women who sew at our Women’s Center; all of them are graduates of our Polytechnic School. Some of the Polytechnic School students have been earning some of their school fees through sewing. We are happy to see so many women have gained confidence in themselves! Teaching in the primary school began in 2002 and our own nursery school started a few years later, presently we are trying to support nursery schools in about five remote areas. The wells we helped to dig now provide water for many of our residents.

**KITALE:** The six of us serving in Mitisi, Kitale, begin our day by praying with the staff and then scattering in many different directions. Two Sisters teach at St. Emmanuel School which has an enrollment of more than 1,000 students. Up until about six months ago, first graders had no desks and had to sit on the floor while learning. Now, desks are provided with two or three students sitting in each one. Another Sister supervises the athletic program, a drama and music group, and the Vincentian Marian Youth. She always keeps her eyes out for street children and recommends some of them for the Mwanzo Mpya (New Beginnings) Program for children who have either dropped out of school or who have never gone there before. At this school, students strive to improve their grades or to prepare for the Kenyan Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) that allows them to continue their education in secondary school. A fourth Sister, a social worker, collaborates with the head teacher of Mwanzo Mpya to determine which street children qualify for school. Sister also helps people access a variety of services including nutrition programs and medical assistance. She supervises the income-generating programs through Women and Men Empowerment and teaches one class in the Mwanzo Mpya Program. A fifth Sister administers all the programs in Kitale; another of her responsibilities is the Child Protection Program. The sixth Sister remains at the home campus, a former dairy, and teaches English and art. Recently she established a small library for the neighborhood children.

Empowering young people through sports helps to keep them away from alcohol and drugs.
NAIROBI: We minister in two main initiatives in Nairobi. The first is the Education and Empowerment Project that includes St. Justin de Jacobis and St. John Centers along with the Peace School. The second is the DREAM Center (Drug Resource Enhancement Against HIV/AIDS and Malnutrition). St. Justin de Jacobis and St. John Centers are located within walking distance of each other. The 500 clients served in these centers come from a variety of poor communities scattered in and around Nairobi. Three Sisters work in various capacities in this project. As team members, they take a holistic approach to helping their clients live healthier, happier, more independent lives. Both St. John and St. Justin have educational, vocation and human development components that serve as spring boards for helping people make their dreams come true. Dress-making, tailoring, and business seminars are offered at St. John while St. Justin students participate in introductory baking and sewing. The Sisters and their team members also provide counseling, nutrition support, medical referrals, and home follow-up visits. The Peace School reaches out to children and youth from a nearby community that lacks the basic necessities of life. Through a Saturday mentoring program based on Gospel values, students are able to have some time to just be children—away from the stresses of their addicted families, violence, and lack of education. This year, parents have worked along side staff members and college student volunteers to experience their own and their children’s giftedness.

When Margaret came to the clinic, she was three years old and unable to stand or walk; she had HIV, TB, and was malnourished. Two years later, following intense therapy and nutrition supplements, Sister Celestine surprised her with a dress at the DREAM Center.

THIGIO: Forty minutes northeast of the capital city of Nairobi, in a semi-arid area, is Thigio. The first two Daughters of Charity arrived here in 2002 to open the first mission in Kenya. In the following few months, two more came from Ireland and England to Holy Cross Parish. Initially the Sisters worked in the dispensary and training center to teach dress-making. Much of the first few months were spent visiting and getting to know the people and the area. After scouting the area and ascertaining the needs from the people, the Sisters became aware of the great need for a nursery school for poor and vulnerable children, a physical therapy program for handicapped children, and a class for special needs children. Over time, other needs surfaced: a program for the elderly, women’s development, a youth program including sports and empowerment, a library for all ages, a hospice for the dying, and outreach to the HIV/AIDS patients and the handicapped. The ministries have developed and adapted to respond to the needs of the people. The nine-bed Our Lady’s Hospice became a reality when the Sisters found many people dying from cancer and HIV/AIDS at home without pain medicine and appropriate care. Youth Empowerment Support (YES) is a loan program that evolved from the belief that youth required financial assistance to expand a small business. Daughters riding motorbikes go out to the homes of handicapped children, adults, and HIV patients. The newest venture is the Daily Bread Bakery; the staff members include bread-makers from the special needs group who are now ready for employment. In addition to these ministries, there is a Formation House for postulants and a place for aspirants. The Sisters do not walk alone; we walk with a committed staff, a development committee, volunteers, and generous supporters. All are welcome in Thigio.
Serving the Elderly, Disabled, Imprisoned and Abandoned in the Cook Islands

The Daughters of Charity who serve in the Cook Islands include Sister My-Hanh Cao, Province of the West; Sister Madeline Kavanagh, Province of St. Louise; Sister Lucia Lam, Province of the West; and Sister Patricia Huffman and Sister Margaret O’Dwyer, both from the Province of St. Louise.

Three Daughters of Charity from the Province of St. Louise join two Daughters of Charity from the Province of the West to serve in the Cook Islands. The Daughters began serving in the Cook Islands, known to locals as “The Cooks,” in 2005. The Cooks are comprised of 16 small volcanic islands. The Daughters minister on the Island of Mauke (11 miles around) and the Island of Rarotonga (the capital, which is 18 miles end to end). There is no boat transportation between the islands, and it is a 50 minute air plane ride between them. Flights from Rarotonga to Mauke are scheduled two or three a week.

On Mauke, Sister Madeline Kavanagh, Province of St. Louise, and Sister My-Hanh Cao, Province of the West, realize the great needs of handicapped people with multiple forms of disability such as autism, trauma, mental retardation, epilepsy, stroke, mental illness, and undiagnosed conditions. Many of the elderly suffer from a lack of social stimulation, and show signs of insufficient personal care. The Disability Center, known as Te Ata O Te Ra, founded by Sister Emma Kaitara of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, is where they minister. The Center aims to support the persons of Mauke with disabilities and their families through family and community involvement. It utilizes local resources and works in coordination with different organizations to develop their potential in order to increase their level of independence, improve their quality of life and integrate them into society.

Outreach to the elderly was formalized around 2005 and has since been a growing concern as the Mauke population continues to diminish (from 470 residents in 2001 to 307 residents in 2011), causing a rift in the safety net formerly provided by the extended family. High among the reasons for the diminishing population is the need for employment, which causes the working age residents to leave the island, and often the country, in search of a steady income. Those left behind tend to be the elderly and small children. Meanwhile those who are of working age and remain on the island are called upon to fulfill many responsibilities: care for aging parents, land and garden upkeep, participation in Church, community activities, and, possibly hold a local job.

On Rarotonga, Sister Patricia Huffman and Sister Margaret O’Dwyer,Province of St. Louise, minister with Sister Lucia Lam, Province of the West. Sister Margaret works to train library staff, at all levels, to assure its continuation. The Sisters in Rarotonga also assist people to continue that type of service on both islands and helps out at Te Kainga Mental Health Center. She also teaches individual music classes.

Sister Lucia uses her art and music skills to train students to continue that type of service on both islands and helps out at Te Kainga Mental Health Center. She also teaches individual music classes.

Sister Patricia has assumed direction of the Nuketere Library (which Sisters Mary Ann Szydlowski—who served in the Cooks from 2005 to _____—and Margaret O’Dwyer, helped to establish). Sister works to train library staff, at all levels, to assure its continuation. The Sisters in Rarotonga also assist with spiritual formation of students and staff at the Catholic High School and run an after-school program one day a week.

“Sister Lucia teaches high school students.

“Sister Margaret has taken steps to demonstrate that support. We now have a two pronged service for the Center: one being the work with the disabled and elderly on a social level, and the other being home and health care offered in the homes of the frail elderly and disabled. Many of the locals have acknowledged they can see a change in attitude toward those who are disabled as well as to their families who frequently were blamed for the disability.”

On Mauke, Sister My-Hanh Cao, and Sister Margaret O’Dwyer, Province of St. Louise, minister to the disabled on Mauke. Her work there was recognized by not only the Mauke community, but by the prisoners themselves, when she was named “Woman of the Month” in 2013. The prisoners crafted, for this occasion, a ukulele, a commemorative paddle, a decorative bowl, and a statue of a Daughter of Charity. Sisters Lucia and Patricia also contribute to this ministry.

“Our goal is to support the local community as it prepares to assume full responsibility for the well-being of the disabled and elderly,” explains Sister Madeline. “Our ministry here as Daughters of Charity focuses on responding to immediate needs of those who are disabled while at the same time seeking ways to educate the islanders in the importance of supporting those who suffer from disabilities. We have also concentrated on organizing training programs for caregivers while supporting leaders in their attempts to respond to the needs of the frail and disabled. The Cook Islands is the first nation in this part of the world to sign on to the UN declaration in support of the rights of the disabled and just recently we are seeing that the government is taking steps to demonstrate that support. We now have a two pronged service for the Center: one being the work with the disabled and elderly on a social level, and the other being home and health care offered in the homes of the frail elderly and disabled. Many of the locals have acknowledged they can see a change in attitude toward those who are disabled as well as to their families who frequently were blamed for the disability.”

Sister Margaret O’Dwyer, Province of St. Louise, minister with Sister Lucia Lam, Province of the West. Sister Margaret works to connect various government, Church, and volunteer groups to support the needs of the prison and prisoners. Sister Margaret has established education classes and a library within the local prison. Her work there was recognized by not only the Mauke community, but by the prisoners themselves, when she was named “Woman of the Month.” In May of 2013. The prisoners crafted, for this occasion, a ukulele, a commemorative paddle, a decorative bowl, and a statue of a Daughter of Charity.

“Sister My-Hanh Cao, Province of the West; Sister Madeline Kavanagh, Province of St. Louise; Sister Lucia Lam, Province of the West; and Sister Patricia Huffman and Sister Margaret O’Dwyer, both from the Province of St. Louise.”
Seton Harvest—Farming and Sharing

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, recently shared thoughts about God’s gift of creation during his weekly audience in recognition of World Environment Day. In his address, Pope Francis reflected on Genesis 2:15 and discussed with the faithful in attendance the importance for us to “cultivate and care for” creation. He shared his thoughts about how our “culture of waste” harms both “environmental ecology” and “human ecology.”

Although envisioned and planted several years before Pope Francis was elected, the Daughters of Charity followed the call of the United Nations, their new Constitution, and the concerns expressed by the Holy Father at their Evansville, IN farm—Seton Harvest. Established in 2005, the farm is a sponsored ministry of the Province of St. Louise. Seton Harvest’s mission is to use the land in a just and environmentally conscious way by sharing locally grown food with shareholders, as well as persons who are poor and homeless, and by providing educational opportunities around sustainable agriculture.

A certified naturally-grown produce farm, Seton Harvest is a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm. A CSA farm divides its produce among a committed group of supporters who share with the farmer the risks and benefits of farming. Throughout the growing season, the farm harvests fresh, ripe crops that are divided among the shareholders. The shareholders are community members who pay the farmer an annual membership fee to cover production costs of the farm. In turn, shareholders receive a weekly “share” of the harvest. A share is generally enough for a family of four.

What sets Seton Harvest apart from other CSAs is that the shareholders, along with the Daughters of Charity and other fundraising efforts, support the donation of at least 10,000 pounds of fresh produce (about 20 to 23 percent) a year to Evansville area homeless shelters and food pantries. Joe Schalsky, Farmer, shares, “If I could, I would love to be able to grow it all for charity.”

The price of a share for a season varies depending on each farm’s cost of operation, total months of a growing season, variety of crops and the productivity of the soil. Most fall within the range of $300 to $600 for a full share.

There are many benefits for the shareholders:

- They receive fresh vegetables and herbs on the day of harvest.
- They pay close to supermarket prices for fresher produce.
- They know where and how their food is grown and who grows it.
- They become more aware of their relationship to the land, farming, and the process that makes their lives possible.

“The Seton Harvest farm also protects and develops healthy earth for generations to come,” explains Sister Theresa Peck, Evansville Campus Administrator and member of Seton Harvest’s Core Group. “The earth is protected from environmental costs associated with the transport, processing, and distribution of food because the consumption of fossil fuels is significantly reduced. The land also is chemical-free and kept free from development.” Outreach Coordinator, Julie Dietz, arranges sessions with school children and various educational days in the city. She also serves as coordinator of the farm picnic and other Shareholder activities.

Website: setonharvest.org

Meet Farmer Joe

Joe Schalsky grew up in a family of 13, making it essential for his family to grow vegetables. Each year, the family would plant a large garden and harvest all the vegetables needed for the year ahead. From this foundation, Joe developed his love for gardening and the benefits of fresh grown produce. Wherever he’s lived, Joe has continued the annual practice of growing a large vegetable garden. His background includes a degree in Parks Management and Landscaping from Wabash Valley College in Mt. Carmel, IL, an extensive background in commercial landscaping, as well as experience in irrigation methods and alternative farming practices.

In 2006, Joe came to Seton Harvest as the Assistant Farmer. During the first two seasons, he proved himself by demonstrating an insatiable desire for learning different growing methods and through a work ethic that cannot be matched. As a result, he was promoted to Farm Manager in 2008. His commitment to Seton Harvest has been steadfast.

Joe has also served as a member of the farm’s Core Group. In this role, he and approximately 12 others have worked diligently to define the identity of the farm and meet the expectations of the shareholder families. Under Joe’s leadership, Seton Harvest is growing and becoming an even greater model of sustainable agriculture. When you make your visit to Seton Harvest, be sure to ask for Farmer Joe. He will be the first one to tell you, “The success of the Farm is really in the hands of God; all I do is just help manage the chaos on the ground!”
2013 October - December Jubilarians

From Left to Right, Top to Bottom: Sister Damian Wetzel, Sister Mary Cecilia Schlebecker, Sister Paula Slama, Sister Patricia Nee, Sister Mary William Sullivan, Sister Sheila O’Friel.
Third Row: Sister Agnes Power, Sister Rebecca Hite, Sister Julia Walsh, Sister Joan Curran, Sister Mary Gerald McCloskey, Sister Jeanne Parrish, Sister Eleanor Marie Shea.
Bottom Row: Sister Mary Irene Brokmeier, Sister Clare Marie Angermaier, Sister Camilla Harant, Sister Mary Elko, Sister Joan Barrett, Sister Mary Philip Agnew.
75 Years Vocation
Sister Anne Joseph Edelen, D.C.
December 2, 1938
Sister Anne Joseph ministered in Children’s Homes, Diocesan Social Service Agencies, and Parishes in Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina. She currently serves in the Ministry of Prayer in Emmitsburg, MD.

Sister Camilla Harant, D.C.
December 2, 1938
Sister Camilla served as a Business Manager, Administrator, Treasurer and in Administration in Pennsylvania, Florida, Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., Michigan, and Maryland. She now serves in the Ministry of Prayer in Emmitsburg, MD.

Sister Agnes Power, D.C.
December 6, 1938
A Secondary Teacher, Education and Parish Minister in Illinois, Missouri, California, and Texas, Sister Agnes now serves in the Ministry of Prayer in Evansville, IN.

Sister Julia Walsh, D.C.
December 2, 1938
A Teacher, Nurse, Nursing Instructor and Administrator, Sister Julia ministered in Massachusetts, Virginia, Maryland, New York, Washington, D.C., and Florida. Sister currently serves in the Ministry of Prayer in Emmitsburg, MD.

70 Years Vocation
Sister Mary Elks, D.C.
October 28, 1943
In her early years in ministry, Sister Mary served in hospitals in Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., Massachusetts, Maryland, and Virginia. Since 1966, Sister has been serving in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Sister Marian Hager, D.C.
December 6, 1943
An Elementary and High School Teacher and Principal, Seminary Directress, Guidance Counselor, Administrator, Parish and Pastoral Care Minister and Receptionist who served in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C., Sister Marian currently serves in the Ministry of Prayer in Emmitsburg, MD.

Sister Rebecca Hitt, D.C.
December 4, 1943
A Teacher, Group Home Mother, Administrator, Registrar, Docent, and Office Worker, Sister Rebecca served in Texas, Mississippi, Missouri, Maryland, and Louisiana. Today, Sister serves in the Ministry of Prayer in Evansville, IN.

Sister Jeanne Parrish, D.C.
December 4, 1943
Educator, Administrator, Counselor, Provincial Councilor, Spiritual Director, and Retreat Director, Sister Jeanne served in Louisiana, Missouri, California, and Iowa. She now serves in the Ministry of Prayer in Evansville, IN.

Sister Mary William Sullivan, D.C.
December 4, 1943
Social Worker, Administrator, Program Director, Parish Minister, and Volunteer with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Sister Mary William served in Wisconsin, California, Illinois, Texas, and Missouri. Sister currently serves in the Ministry of Prayer in St. Louis, MO.

60 Years Vocation
Sister Marian Angenuewitz, D.C.
December 6, 1953
An Elementary and High School Teacher and Principal, Seminary Directress, Guidance Counselor, Administrator, Parish and Pastoral Care Minister and Receptionist who served in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, and Arizona. Sister is currently serving as part-time Receptionist at the Provincial office and is Chair of the St. Louis-based English Tutoring Project Board.

Sister Clare Marie Agermann, D.C.
December 1, 1953
Elementary and Secondary Teacher and Principal, Vice President of Mission Services, and Provincial Councillor, Sister Clare Marie has served in New York, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, and Florida. Sister is currently serving in Mission Integration at St. Vincent’s Healthcare (Southside), in Jacksonville, FL.

Sister Joan Barrett, D.C.
December 31, 1953
A Teacher, Missionary, Home Visitor, and Care Provider for the Elderly, until recently, Sister served at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Mission in Taiwan, Taiwan. She now serves in Gloversville, SC.

Sister Mary Irene Brokmeier, D.C.
December 31, 1953
Sister Mary Irene has served in Health Care Finance and Administration and as a Parish Administrator. She served in Connecticut, Washington, D.C., Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. Sister is currently serving as part-time Receptionist and Clerical Assistant at Seton Internal Medicine Outpatient Offices in Troy, NY.

60 Years Vocation
Sister Mary Power Agnew, D.C.
December 5, 1953
Elementary Teacher and Principal, Secondary Teacher and Principal, and Health Care Vice-President of Mission Services, Sister Mary Philp has served in Illinois, Missouri, Louisiana, and Iowa. Sister is currently serving as part-time Receptionist at the Provincial office and is Chair of the St. Louis-based English Tutoring Project Board.

Sister Joan Curran, D.C.
December 5, 1953
Educator, Nursing Manager, In Service to Hispanics, Outreach Center Coordinator, Homeless Outreach, and Vice President for Mission, Sister Joan has served in Washington, D.C., Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Sister currently serves in the Ministry of Prayer and volunteers at City Rescue Mission in Albany, NY.

Sister Mary Caroline Hricako, D.C.
December 5, 1953
Sister Mary Caroline has ministered with the Elderly, in Psychiatric Hospitals, in Medical-Surgical Hospitals, Health Care Centers, Golden Age Clubs, Nursing Homes, Home for Incarcerees and in Home Care Nursing. She has served in Maryland, Washington, D.C., Maine, and New York. Today, she serves in the Ministry of Prayer in Albany, NY.

Sister Evelyn McCarr, D.C.
December 31, 1953
Sister Evelyn has served in Elementary and Secondary Education, Social Work in Child Care, Catholic Charities Outreach, and Parish Ministry, she has ministered in Virginia, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. She currently serves as a Volunteer at Catholic Charities and Parish Ministry in East Brunswick, NJ.

60 Years Vocation
Sister Teresa Buckley, D.C.
December 31, 1953
Sister Teresa has served as an Elementary and High School Teacher in New York, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Sister currently serves in the Ministry of Prayer in Emmitsburg, MD.

Sister Patricia Nees, D.C.
December 31, 1953
Elementary and High School Teacher, Pastoral Associate for Justice and Peace, and Outreach Minister, Sister Patricia has served in Maryland, South Carolina, Massachusetts, Virginia, Delaware, and Florida. Sister is currently serving as Vincentian Coordinator at St. Vincent’s Healthcare (Riverside), in Jacksonville, FL.

Sister Phyllis Nolan, D.C.
December 5, 1953
Intermediate and High School Teacher, Parish Religious Educator, Pastoral Minister, and Missionary, Sister Phyllis has served in Missouri, Nevada, Puerto Rico, and Texas. Sister is currently serving at Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center as Intake Specialist with detained Immigrants in El Paso, TX.

Sister Sheila O’Fried, D.C.
December 31, 1953
High School Teacher, College and Family Services Coordinator, Administrator for Family Services, Child Care Agencies Representative, Daughters of Charity Representative at the United Nations, Vincentian Family Coordinator and Docent, Sister has served in Virginia, Maryland, Massachusetts, California, and New York. Sister is currently serving as Pastoral Minister at Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bayside, NY.

Sister Mary Gerald McCluskey, D.C.
November 6, 1953
District Executive, Sister Mary Gerald currently serves at Casa Santa Maria in Trinidad, Bolivia.

Sister Mary Cecilia Schlebecker, D.C.
November 6, 1953
Business Manager, Provincial Secretary, Parishes and House. Sister currently serves in the Ministry of Prayer in Evansville, IN.

Sister Eleanore Marie Sheer, D.C.
December 31, 1953
Elementary Teacher, Nurse, Nursing School Instructor, and Care Provider for the Elderly. Sister Eleanor Marie has served in Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., Maryland, New York, and Massachusetts. Sister currently serves at Our Lady of Peace Nursing Care Center in Lewiston, NY in Spiritual Care and as a Palliative Care Nurse.

Sister Paula Sienstra, D.C.
December 31, 1953

Sister Damian Wetzel, D.C.
December 5, 1953
Nurse, Nursing Instructor, Director of Nursing Service, CEO/Administrator of Hospitals, Governance, Regional Senior Vice President for Health System, Consultant, Provincial Treasurer, and Project Manager, Sister Damian has served in Wisconsin, Missouri, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas. Sister currently serves as Trust Fund Manager and in Governance and Advocacy Work in St. Louis, MO.

During October through December of 2013, 25 Daughters celebrated Jubilees.  The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Province of St. Louise, and the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Province of St. Louise, are celebrating 1610 years of serving Christ in those in need.
There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.  

Ecclesiastes 3:1

The residences where the aged and infirm Daughters of Charity reside are truly the Powerhouses of Prayer supporting every Sister and every mission throughout the Province of St. Louise. These Sisters live daily the Constitutions of the Daughters of Charity that state:

By their prayer, the offering of their sufferings, and the witness of their lives, the sick and elderly Sisters truly share in mission. The community surrounds them with care and affection and helps them to accept, in peace and serenity, their limitations of age and health as a form of service. C. 35 b

Each of these sisters is formally commissioned to pray for the Sisters and the works of a specific local mission in the Province. In every issue of Faith Afire, we will introduce you to Daughters who reside in one of the Senior Sister Residences throughout the Province. This issue, we highlight a few Sisters who live at The Sarah Community in Bridgeton (suburb of St. Louis, MO.)

Sister Mary Virginia Clark

“My ministry with the Daughters can be broken down into thirds: I taught school for 15 years; served in Charismatic Renewal for 15 years; and worked with the Homeless for 15 years. I was an educator in California, Louisiana, St. Louis, and Texas. My education ministry trained me in teaching skills and enjoying personalities in the classroom. We would evangelize before class, during Bible study and then read and practice the Word. It has been most fulfilling to have ‘Freedom with God’, this is for me! Mothers pray to have their children taken care of; we help with the physical life, food and shelter. We became social workers in Juarez, Mexico. A donor once asked what was needed, I said property. He took care of it. Land was given to us, people from all over would come and stay at ‘The Ranch.’ We had a retreat dormitory-type building, people would come to help us for two-week retreats. They would bring their own cook (they realized how much of a burden it put on us to care for them too). One person attending the retreat was shielded in Montessori, and she trained all of us. Then she and others would send educational toys and materials. We would pray with the poor who were in the jail; it was unbelievable that 70 people would be in a room built for 10. I spent 15 years in Juarez and El Paso, teaching and evangelizing. In Amarillo, I ministered at a home for the homeless; who lived by faith and by hope. The Sarah Community is an amazing place put by God into the hearts of people who built it. Everyone is cared for. The Chapel was built by donations. At first it was difficult, it’s good now.” Sister Mary Virginia, a Daughter for 66 years, is currently serving in the Ministry of Prayer at the Veronica House in The Sarah Community.

Sister Mary William Sullivan

“It is my privilege to serve the poor. They find you, thank God. My mother was from Ireland. She said the Daughters spent time building, and then educating, now their challenge ahead is relationships. One specific time I remember in 1965 comes to mind; it shows our solidarity with those in need. Then, in Chicago, the situation in the schools and public housing was terrible. Six of our Sisters were marching and protesting the situation in the settlement house program. I received a call from one of the Sisters to let me know they were at 11th and State Street. I knew it was the jail. I said, ‘What do you want me to do?’ She said, ‘nothing, we have five more phone calls to make!’ I asked our Superior what I should do, she said, ‘Go bail them out!’ That’s what I did!” Sister shared that Suellen Hoy wrote a book about the religious sisters of Chicago during this time. The title is Good Hearts. The author commented, “…the Sisters’ contributions were unique and generous, often saving those most at risk in a growing city.”

Sister Mary William’s 70 years as a Daughter focuses on this theme, ‘Vincent’s belief grew in the Providence of God.” Sister serves in the Ministry of Prayer at Anna House in The Sarah Community.

Sister Carmella Molini

“I have been a classroom teacher for 60 years. The most fulfilling things in my life are when I see development in the little children and when I serve the poor. The simplicity of the poor’s life is a good lesson! I spent six weeks in Guatemala, and I wouldn’t trade that time for anything.” Sister Carmella has been a Daughter for 63 years. Sister Carmella remembered a beautiful character she met when she was a Spirit Animator with the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Gloversville, SC. A shut-in had lost both legs, and the medicine he was taking caused his blindness. He never complained. Sister added, “It lets you know what a glorious life you have, when serving the poor.”

“I have been at The Sarah Community since April. I am grateful for time for prayer, reading and visiting. I am here so that I can visit others who are in a less healthy condition or are lonely.” Sister continues to live the true spirit of St. Vincent and St. Louise. Sister Carmella’s current ministry is working with the retired sisters. She lives in Naomi House at The Sarah Community.

Sister Rosella Molitor

“I was 31 when I came to the community 56 years ago as a bookkeeper. I was called to this life for many years and finally stopped fighting it. I liked the looks of the Connette and the Daughters charism for the ministry to the poor. I chose to join the Daughters. The journey was fairly easy. When you are first missioned, it is hard, but then when it is time to leave, you don’t want to leave your ministry. I guess I am a slow adjuster! Kansas City was my first mission. My ministry was at a home for unwed mothers. I kept up with one of the girls for many, many years.” Sister Rosella has fond memories of ministering to Native American Indians in Eagle Butte, SD and in Poteau, OK.

Sister Rosella serves in the Ministry of Prayer at Veronica House in The Sarah Community. She says the food is good and she enjoys the lovely gardens.
Meet

Jenna Gubbels, Postulant

Jenna Gubbels became a postulant with the Daughters of Charity in February of 2013. She is from Delaware, Ontario, Canada and has lived in community with the Daughters of Charity in Niagara Falls, NY until fall of 2013 when she became a postulant. Now, Jenna serves in Chicago and lives with the Daughters of Charity.

And then what?

When I was in university I was really involved with a local parish’s youth ministry program and I would regularly volunteer to chaperone young people to retreats. On one such retreat the volunteer to chaperone young people ministry program and I would regularly involved with a local parish’s youth Community with the Daughters of Charity. Jenna shares how she came to find her place in Community with the Daughters of Charity.

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As a child I felt a call to religious life after visiting a Carmelite community with my homeschooling group. There I was struck with the joy on the Sisters’ faces as they shared their vocation stories and I remember telling my mom that I wanted to be a nun. This call was pushed to the back of my mind and I felt God calling me to turn my plans over to Him, to trust and to follow.

The final hesitant response of ‘Well then, I guess I die,’ really struck me that day because it seemed so empty and so pointless. That uncertain response forced me to pause and to ponder the life trajectory that I had so carefully planned out for myself that involved graduating from university and then becoming a music teacher. The more I thought about the plans I had made for myself, the more I realized I would not find fulfillment in them and I felt God calling me to turn my plans over to Him, to trust and to follow.

It was at this time that I had almost finished with the idea that God might be calling me to religious life, but I decided that I would visit one more community, the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, because I had been inspired by service, I really struggled to see how their lives were different from my own at the time. Each of these Sisters got up in the morning, prayed on her own, went to Mass, served in her ministry during the day, and then each went home to an empty apartment where she lived alone. The only difference I could see between their lives and mine was that at the end of the day I went home to live with my family. I began to wrestle with the call I was feeling to religious life arguing with God and justifying myself saying that I was already serving the church as a Coordinator of Youth Ministry and that I didn’t need to be a Sister to serve God.

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Jenna takes a minute to visit with Sister Theresa Sullivan, Vocations.

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In Memory

We remember the 10 Daughters of Charity who, in recent months, have gone to their Eternal Home.

Sister Mary Patrick Collins
November 6, 1921
May 11, 2013
73 years vocation
Group Mother, Teacher, Foreign Missionary, Provincial Councillor, Administrator

Sister Mary Jo Swift
February 8, 1931
August 2, 2013
60 years vocation
Teacher, Professor, Missionary, Advocate

Sister Paula McGuire
December 1, 1924
August 5, 2013
69 years vocation
Teacher, Principal, Care Giver

Sister Mary Josephine Hill
September 29, 1916
July 30, 2013
64 years vocation
Nurse, Nurse Education

Sister Mary Agnes Davenport
September 30, 1935
July 28, 2013
59 years vocation
Childcare, Teacher, Director of Volunteers, Pastoral Care

Sister Helen Agnes Davenport

Sister Helen Agnes Davenport
September 30, 1935
July 28, 2013
59 years vocation
Childcare, Teacher, Director of Volunteers, Pastoral Care

Sister Aileen Marek
February 10, 1922
September 7, 2013
71 years vocation
Nurse, Nursing Director, Volunteer

Sister Aileen Marek

Sister Catherine Witte
September 4, 1919
September 3, 2013
67 years vocation
Nurse, Nursing Schools Director

Sister Catherine Witte

Sister Paula McGuire
December 1, 1924
August 5, 2013
69 years vocation
Teacher, Principal, Care Giver

Sister Paula McGuire

Sister Eileen Simms
November 8, 1910
November 12, 2013
84 years vocation
Nurse, Administrator

Sister Eileen Simms

Sister Estelle Laiche
February 11, 1922
November 16, 2013
72 years vocation
Nurse, Healthcare Worker

Sister Estelle Laiche
Province News

Daughters’ Farmers Market & Community Garden Opens in Gould, AR

The Daughters’ Farmers Market and Community Gardens Grand Opening was held May 18 in Gould, AR. Kathryn Musholt, CEO of Daughters of Charity Services of Arkansas, explained the Community Gardens & Farmers Market was established to provide a variety of nutritious food to people in the area. Local gardeners tend their individual square gardens. Daughters of Charity Services provided the square boxes, soil and plants. Local gardeners can use the food for families, friends, or churches, or may sell the food they grow at the Farmers Market. (Pictured are Ms. Musholt, Sister Kathleen Miles, Sister Cecilia Tsao, and Sister Dorothea Moll.)

“Charity Afire” Exhibit Opens

“Charity Afire,” a new exhibit at the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, is now open. Not only is this the first new exhibit since the opening of the Shrine, it is a collaborative exhibit encompassing stories of the six Federation Communities whose sisters served during the Civil War. This is a permanent exhibit and it draws significantly from the archival collections of the Daughters of Charity and the Sisters of Charity Communities. Website: http://sisters-of-charity-federation.org/charity-afire-exhibit-now-at-national-shrine-of-st-elizabeth-ann-seton/

Want to Learn More about the Role of Sisters during the Civil War?

Sister Betty Ann McNeil’s book, Dear Masters - Extracts from Accounts by Sister Nurses, highlights the mission and role of Roman Catholic Sister Nurses who served during the US Civil War. Their charitable work encompassed more than 60 sites in 15 states and the District of Columbia. Sister Betty Ann examines their personal courage and zeal, as well as the flexibility they possessed to boldly cross lines, and to care for war victims from both armies with compassion, regardless of their own politics or religious beliefs. Dear Masters is the first publication of the Daughters of Charity Civil War Annals, a redaction of the original source documents which Sister Betty Ann is now compiling. Dear Masters is available for purchase online at Amazon.com.

Mother Seton School Students Plant “Pinwheels for Peace”

September 24, the students at Mother Seton School in Emmitsburg, MD, participated in the school’s 8th annual International World Peace Day celebration. The theme, “Pinwheels for Peace,” was carried out by students and staff as they gathered outside and planted their pinwheels, the pinwheels symbolized youth and innocence. Last year, more than 4 million pinwheels were planted worldwide. This year, Emmitsburg joined locations including Honolulu, Hawaii, and Cairo, Egypt, in planting the pinwheels. Website: mothersetonschool.org

Daughters from the Province of St. Louise Join Other Members of the Sisters of Charity Federation for Annual Meeting

Daughters from the Province of St. Louise joined Sisters of Charity from 12 other communities for the annual Sisters of Charity Federation Meeting held in Leavenworth, KS. Leaders from the 13 member congregations that trace their roots to St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton opened their meeting with community “appearances” by historic figures from the past including three Mothers General, a historian, and an archivist. Discussion of the leaders focused on collaboration, the need to balance prayer and ministry, and a deep look at the heart of the mission. Website: sisters-of-charity-federation.org

The Daughters of Charity Mark the 380th Anniversary of the Founding of the Company

November 29, 1633, 380 years ago, St. Louise de Marillac and St. Vincent de Paul founded the Company of the Daughters of Charity in Paris, France. Today, there are about 17,000 Daughters of Charity serving in 94 countries around the globe. Sisters from the Province of St. Louise minister in the United States, the District of Columbia, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and in foreign missions on every continent except Antarctica.
Sister Anne Higgins Publishes *Vexed Questions*

A book of poetry, *Vexed Questions*, written by Sister Anne Higgins, Professor at Mt. St. Mary’s University in Emmitsburg, MD, was published by Aldrich Press in California in late spring. It is available on Amazon.com. “Leave the given in order to imagine the possible,” Sister Anne shares.

Sisters of Charity Federation Archivists Hold First Joint Conference

Ten archivists from Sisters of Charity Federation communities held their first Federation Archivists Conference in October in Emmitsburg, MD. As the members gathered, their goal was to create a productive and engaging archival collaboration consistent with their mission to share and preserve their Communities’ histories. The objective of the Conference was to examine ways the archivists can educate and inspire new audiences about the Mission of Federation Communities. In the spirit of the Federation Strategic Plan (2012 – 2017), they emphasized that collaboration means never to do alone what can be best done together. Pictured are Sister Kathleen Mary Connelly, Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth; Dee Gallo, Daughters of Charity Provincial Archivist; and Sister Noreen Neary, Sisters of Charity of Convent Station as they examine the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s original entrance ledger, newly conserved by the Provincial Archives. The ledger was surrounded in the Federation exhibit by portraits of Mother Margaret George, first Mother of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, and Mother Elizabeth Boyle, first Mother of the Sisters of Charity of New York.

Mercy Housing Recognizes Province of St. Louise

At its 30th Anniversary Gala, Mercy Housing honored the Province with the Dignity Award for its sponsorship. Mercy Housing works to create a more humane world where poverty is alleviated, communities are healthy and all people can develop their full potential. They believe that affordable housing and supportive programs improve the economic status of residents, transform neighborhoods and stabilize lives. Daughters of Charity pictured are Sister Rose Ann Aguilar (second from the right, Province of St. Louise) and Sister Betty Dunkel (third from right, Province of the West).

Sisters Travel from Bolivia to Attend DOC Stewardship Assistance Fund Annual Meeting

On November 14, the DOC Stewardship Assistance Fund (SAF), Inc., held its annual meeting at the Provincial office in St. Louis. The fund is a not-profit corporation that was set up by the former Southeast Province on behalf of the Daughters of Charity serving in Bolivia. Pictured in the photo are members of the SAF board, Sister Josefina Maldonado, Province Nuestra Señora de la Misión; Sister Claire Debes, Province of St. Louise; Sister María Dolores Yañez and Sister María Isabel Ruiz, Province of Nuestra Señora de la Misión; Sister Jean Rhoads and Sister Cora Anne Signaigo, Province of St. Louise.

Seton Healthcare Family in Austin Celebrates Homecoming; Daughters of Charity Share Memories

On December 6, the Seton Healthcare Family employees and volunteers gathered for a Christmas Homecoming. Daughters of Charity were on hand to greet all who attended and share memories of their years of ministry in Austin. A story from the archives was read, taken from details of the first Sisters who served in Austin’s account, about the Daughters first Christmas in Austin when they served at the Seton Infirmary in 1902. Pictured are (left to right) Jesus Garza, Seton Healthcare Family CEO; Sisters Catherine Brown; Jean Ann Wesselman; Gertrude Levy; Sharon Groetsch; Helen Brewer; Jean Thomas Dwyer; and Charles Barnett, Executive Chairman of the Board Seton Healthcare Family.

Daughters Remember You in Prayer

As the Christmas celebrations wind down, the Feast of the Epiphany is celebrated, and 2014 begins, please know the Daughters of Charity remember you daily in their prayers. This photo was taken in the Evansville Seton Residence Chapel following a snowfall.
Faith Afire is printed with the environment in mind. In addition to domestic made recycled paper, the energy used to produce this magazine has been offset 100 percent with Missouri wind energy credits procured from the Ameren Missouri Pure Power program. The print facility is one of fewer than 50 SGP certified printers in the US and uses only printing inks that are solvent-free, low V.O.C. and soy based.

Daughters of Charity from the Province of St. Louise who are “Under 10” years in Community recently gathered with “Under 10” Daughters from the Province of the West in Los Altos Hills, CA. The Sisters focused on Community life during their time together. Pictured are, Sisters Meg Kymes, Liz Sjoberg, Ellen Reilly, Cecillia Tsao, Mary Ellen Lacy, Roberta Treppa, and Salvatrice Murphy.

Given to God, in Community, for the Service of Those who are Poor.