Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

Once I asked the students in an introductory biblical studies class to name their favorite biblical stories that offer insights about service. Their most frequent responses involved shepherds. When I asked them to elaborate, they named the qualities they identified as essential for shepherds: knowledge of their flocks, care to feed them and lead them safely, compassion, patience, empathy, organization in dealing with the animals. One student summarized, “Being a shepherd was ideal preparation for leading people.” The class went on to name the different early leaders of Israel who started out as shepherds; for example, Moses, David and Amos.

The students recalled the parable of the lost sheep, through which Luke’s Gospel (15:3-7) illustrates the divine joy over one repentant sinner. They then commented on biblical stories about God the Shepherd; for example, in John’s Gospel, Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me” (John 10:14). In the book of Revelation, the author says about those who worship God, “They will not hunger or thirst anymore, nor will the sun or any heat strike them. For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 7:16-17).

That class discussion comes to mind as I reflect on the goodness of the Leadership Team members who finished their time in office at the end of June. They led us with compassion and patience through the challenges and joys of the past eight years. We new Leadership Team members are grateful for the lessons of generous service they taught us, as we live into the joys and challenges to come.

Another type of service that involves knowledge, empathy and organization is that of higher education. Our Sister professors and administrators, who bequeath our cultural heritage to new generations, do so in a spirit of nurturing compassion, modeling the qualities they work to instill in their students.

These women’s stories in the following pages describe some of our efforts to serve in the spirit of our founder, St. Elizabeth Seton. She, too, found comfort and inspiration in the image of the shepherd: Psalm 23 was her favorite psalm. Like her, each of us can trust in the psalmist’s words, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me.”

S. Joan Elizabeth Cook
President
Mem-bits

This column by S. Benedicta Mahoney offers brief glimpses of the past, tiny bits of memories. Do you remember? Were you there? Did you know?

Jan. 2, 1900 – Archbishop William Henry Elder celebrated the Golden Jubilee Mass for S. Antonia McCaffery, the last of the original seven Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, because of Sister's failing health. Mass was celebrated in the Children's Infirmary, now the McCann Room.

October 1915 – Having completed a course at St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis, Mo., two Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, Sisters Margaret Cecilia Dunn and Mary Lewine Pluckebaum, began their work at St. Rita School for the Deaf in Lockland, Ohio. S. Mary Lewine worked there for 47 years.

Dec. 8, 1937 – Rosary Chapel, adjacent to the sanctuary of the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, was opened in the area which had once been two rooms – the Chapel for the Sick and the Mortuary Chapel. In 2000, the chapel was renamed Madonna Chapel.

Oct. 27, 1966 – Sisters living at the Motherhouse began the regular use of the Divine Office, praying lauds and vespers in common. This replaced their traditional morning and evening prayers. Within the month, all other houses of the Congregation followed suit.

July 1, 1996 – SCHCS, Sisters of Charity Health Care Systems, became part of CHI, Catholic Health Initiatives, a new organization which includes more than 110 hospitals, involving 72 religious congregations, in 20 states.

May our Sisters and Associates enjoy the fruits of their labor as well as peace with their God.

S. Mary Scholastica Padisak
Aug. 2, 2011

S. Anne Bockhorst
July 1, 2011

S. Marilyn Therese Beauvais
June 20, 2011

S. Anita Marie Howe
June 9, 2011

S. Mary Magdalene Oravec
May 27, 2011

Associate Carol Hoolehan
May 25, 2011

Please visit “In Memoriam” at www.srcharitycinti.org for biographical information and reflections on the Sisters of Charity and Associates who have died.
We were about “Weaving the Vision” for the future as we gathered in Charleston, S.C., for the annual meeting of the Sisters of Charity Federation May 9-16, 2011. As we “gathered the strands,” we were welcomed by and learned the history of our hosts, the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy.

The first full day we heard from a panel of board members who described how the vision of the Federation has evolved over time, creating a new structure and by-laws in 2006 and naming a full-time executive director in 2007. An NGO has been functioning in our name since 1995, but it was in 2007 that the Finance Committee began its serious work, establishing a reserve fund and investments. Inaugurating the House of Charity as a joint venture in New Orleans, La., was a leap of faith; as a Federation ministry this effort has been blessed and has the full support of the membership going forward. It has been a successful collaborative happening.

Another means of inscribing the vision has occurred through the Company of Charity Formation Programs for both vowed members and Associates. Currently four of the six directors of Associates programs are lay women. Other familiar Federation sponsored programs have been the two volumes of Elizabeth Ann Seton Writings and the Seton Legacy events as well as the Maritime Project sponsored by the Canadian Federation congregations. We have all benefited from the sharing of the challenges and spiritual groundings of the member congregations; we expressed a strong desire to move forward with more grassroots opportunities and collaboration, especially regional experiences. Several occurred this summer in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

S. Mary Ann Daly, executive director, invited us to consider: “What can we do better together than alone?” Current strengths include further development of the Federation Web site allowing for e-mail alerts and the quarterly comprehensive reports from our NGO. Ministry opportunities and regional sharing of resources are beginning to occur. The upcoming systemic change meeting in Indianapolis, Ind., Oct. 20-23, 2011, promises to provide a real opportunity for collaborative partnerships. This will surely give shape to the vision.

On the second day we listened to S. Melissa Carmardo of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth and a GenXer, who stressed her desires for greater interconnectedness within the Federation. She challenged us to go beyond belonging to “commitment.” She asked: “Are we maximizing what it means to be together?” Lively table group discussions followed. Time for open space opportunities provided ideas for new ways of collaborating. Members also prayed and played together, visiting the OLM’s Motherhouse at May Forest and enjoying a cruise of Charleston harbor. A Latin American dance troupe and the Magnolia singers provided a cultural flavor of the region. Sweet grass baskets, woven by women of the area, served as ambiance for the meeting space; congregations attending provided a meaningful weaving of their own to add to the tapestry used in the daily liturgy.

Thank yous and good-byes concluded the gathering with 34 leaders for whom this was the last meeting. S. Mary Ann Daly is leaving her role as executive director and S. Barbara Hagedorn, as past board president, completed her term in June. We left entrusting the vision to the new leaders to come. Those attending this 2011 annual meeting deepened the vision, but also enabled the vision to do what is needed.
Welcome New Associates

This spring and early summer the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati welcomed nine new Associates from Ohio and Florida. Associates in Mission seek to express in their lives a spirituality of attending to God in prayer, in each other, and wherever God’s love is made visible. Committed to exploring a new dimension of Christian life, one that calls for a deeper fidelity to the Gospel, Associates commit to a relationship centered upon living and spreading the Gospel message, serving the spiritual and corporeal needs of God’s people and sharing friendship, faith and action with the Community.

S. Maureen Donovan received the 2011 Bishop Murphy Award on April 29, 2011, at the annual Bishop’s Charity Ball. The Diocese of Saginaw, Mich., presents the award to “a person who, through the example of their life, fulfills Jesus’ mandate to promote and pass on the faith.”

“She has dedicated her entire life to passing on the faith,” the Most Rev. Joseph R. Cistone, Bishop of Saginaw, said in a press release. “She has spent decades serving St. James School and Parish in Bay City, in her role as principal, teacher and director of religious education and also in her extraordinary outreach to the community. I am very grateful that S. Maureen answered God’s call to religious life and that she has used her vocation to live and bear witness to the Gospel of Christ in such a generous and loving way.”

S. Maureen arrived in Bay City, Mich., in 1967 and served as principal at St. James School and Parish in Bay City, in her role as principal, teacher and director of religious education and also in her extraordinary outreach to the community. I am very grateful that S. Maureen answered God’s call to religious life and that she has used her vocation to live and bear witness to the Gospel of Christ in such a generous and loving way.”

SUMMER 2011
Leadership Insights
By Donata Glassmeyer, Associate

While June 30, 2011, signaled the departure of one Leadership Team, July 1, 2011, commenced a new leadership cycle for the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. Members of both teams were interviewed for this article.

Intercom asked our exiting servant leaders, those who are on the threshold of new opportunities, ministries and endeavors, two questions: Of your myriad experiences in leadership, what was one particularly satisfying event, travel opportunity, meeting or “epiphany” you found sacred or significant? In addition, what are your plans for the immediate future?

S. Barbara Hagedorn replied, “As president I had the opportunity to attend the UISG (International Union of Superiors General) in Rome, Italy, in 2007, and again in 2010. The four-day meeting gathers Sisters from around the globe to explore common themes and agendas. Each time I attended, I grew in my awareness of the solidarity of women wherever we are in the world. The culture and settings may differ but the issues remain the same – responding to unmet needs, helping oppressed women and children, and caring for the planet, to name just a few.

“I was literally part of an international community of women with considerable diversity of culture and language but always one as Sisters. Because of this experience, I was enriched and my worldview enlarged. I held the connections I made at UISG sacred. Those bonds encouraged me to be a better person and hopefully a better president,” S. Barbara said.

 Asked about her near term plans, S. Barbara replied, “As I look forward to the coming year, which will give me time for a sabbatical, I see it as a time of letting go and embracing the new. The time to slow down will be a blessing but I know it will also be a challenge. I will miss the involvement with the Community in leadership terms, but I will find new ways to become involved. I plan to travel, make a retreat, spend time catching up on books I have wanted to read, volunteer from time to time, and visit family and friends. I am looking forward to this time of renewal and relaxation.”

The simplicity of S. Nancy Bramlage’s “then and now” comments reflects the quiet, introspective spirit of deep commitment to her ministries and to her life as a woman religious.

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The simplicity of S. Nancy Bramlage’s “then and now” comments reflects the quiet, introspective spirit of deep commitment to her ministries and to her life as a woman religious.
S. Nancy said being a councilor on the Leadership Team that worked through the Future Planning Process was a satisfying challenge. “At first [the process] seemed impossibly vague and ‘all over the board,’” remembered Sister. “Slowly we came to the five areas that the Congregation determined were the priorities we wanted to take action on, and the focus committees were born. We went to work! It was really a wonderful experience of participative leadership. We have seen excellent results,” S. Nancy reported.

“As I look toward the future, I will first take some time off for a nice vacation and to catch up with friends. I hope to have a good retreat and then I hope to find a new ministry where I can still use my gifts to help transition society toward that Beloved Community Jesus came to establish,” S. Nancy said.

S. Lois Jean Goettke balances on a threshold, bidding farewell to her former team of leadership Sisters and stepping through the portal to embrace her new teammates. As a councilor for the past four years, S. Lois Jean learned the ropes, experiencing change within the Community, the Church and the world. With a second term, and as a seasoned councilor, S. Lois Jean reflected on the Community’s ability to truly live the concept of social justice. “Whether it was responding to the tsunami or helping folks pay for part of a family’s funeral, as leadership we could offer solace in times of great and small need,” she said.

“In addition, as a leadership councilor, I had the privilege to learn so much more about the SC Federation, realizing that 13 different communities are so uniformly grounded in the Vincentian/Setonian charism. This was a gift for me. I look forward to collaboration in formation activities with the Federation as we move forward.

“Another gift of great importance to me was the opportunity to get to know my Sisters in a deeper way; visiting them in their ministries, talking on the phone, corresponding, and sharing meals. I look forward to even more in-depth relationships with my Sisters over the next four years,” S. Lois Jean said.

“God called her home from that corner room just 10 years ago on the eve of my birthday. I thank our senior, wisdom- figure Sisters for sharing their stories early on after our move home, to allow me to realize these connections. This has been graced space for me in so many ways, a real coming home. Thank you, Gio, for your special presence! Thank you, senior Sisters, for occupying and blessing this space.”

In the coming months, S. Georgia said she will take some time to “renew and refresh my spirit. In addition to summer gardening, I plan to visit places where I have ministered, re-appreciating the relationships formed while there and blessings remembered.”

This fall, S. Georgia hopes to visit her mother’s four living siblings all of whom are in their 90s living in western Iowa. While there, she intends to reconnect with high school and college classmates. “Colorado will also be calling me to the Cascade cabins,” said Sister. “In addition, I want to find a helpful photography course and volunteer with several SC Federation outreach programs. I look forward to these enriching opportunities.”
S. Joan Elizabeth Cook, president:

Meeting my grace
Always with gratitude,
At times with joy
At others with sorrow
Frequently with wonder
Sometimes with delight

Secure in the knowledge that God is with us
In our humility, simplicity and charity.

S. Joan Elizabeth brings deep theological introspection to her leadership position having taught theology at St. Bonaventure University, Olean, N.Y., as well as sacred scripture at Washington Theological Union and Georgetown University, both in Washington, D.C. Sister serves as Old Testament book review editor for the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, as well.

Of her personal history, S. Joan Elizabeth said, “I grew up in a large, loving family. Our parents were models of faithfulness and integrity. I was educated at Holy Redeemer School in Kensington, Md., by Sisters of Charity. They were happy women who loved one another and all of us students, and they were marvelous teachers. I have been enriched by a life immersed in biblical scholarship, with many opportunities to share that wealth with students, parishioners and Sisters. I have had opportunities to live in Israel and Italy, and to travel to other parts of the world, too. These experiences have broadened and deepened my appreciation for our universal Church.”

Anticipating “meeting her grace” in the new leadership role as councilor, S. Mary Bookser explained, “There’s a cloth bookmark I have hanging on my computer screen with one of my favorite quotes from St. Vincent de Paul: ‘My friend, you belong to God. Let this reality color your life.’”

Sister added, “Our own Elizabeth Seton told our early Sisters, ‘The first end I propose in our daily work is to do the will of God; secondly, to do it in the manner (God) wills it; and thirdly, to do it because it is (God’s) will.’

“These quotes inform my prayer each day and guide my life,” S. Mary continued. “They are my means of ‘meeting my grace’ on a daily basis and as I move into this new ministry future.”

As a leadership councilor, S. Mary intends to draw on a variety of diverse experiences. She explained, “In the past I have been the director of initial formation for the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati and a Network leader. Through these times I have developed connections with members of the SC Federation and other religious formation groups, grown more deeply aware of our roots in the Vincentian heritage, and visited a number of our sites in Colorado, New Mexico, Ohio, Michigan, Texas and Florida. I have taught elementary school music, high school religion and music and served as advisor, counselor and faculty at several local colleges. I have
worked in a diocesan office and ministered a number of years as a licensed professional counselor.”

S. Mary has had many additional experiences too numerous to list, however, she said, “I believe my experiences during these times have enhanced my awareness of the many ways we are all interconnected and my openness to a variety of approaches to life.”

Sister mentioned, “My most recent ministry as coordinator of service learning at the College of Mount St. Joseph has graced me with connection to our own Sisters of Charity ministries and other not-for-profit organizations which work to care for people impacted by poverty, as well as the grave needs of our Earth.”

S. Louise Learns assumes her new leadership councilor role experiencing grace as, “the presence of God in and among us. We, and all creation, are the words that God speaks to tell the story of grace. As I grow into this new ministry of servant leadership to the Congregation, I anticipate meeting grace with each encounter – meeting personally with those I serve, chatting via video, sharing a prayer or a meal, celebrating a jubilee, participating in Federation and LCWR gatherings, acting on behalf of justice. I know from experience that some encounters with grace will call me to reach deep within and allow the Spirit of God to take me to places where I have not gone before, places that may be uncomfortable.

“I am confident that I will meet grace in ways that I cannot even imagine at this time. Grace is a gift of God, not within my control, and I expect the unexpected in my new role as councilor.”

S. Louise has ministered in health care systems. She has taught ethics in the Catholic tradition at the university level and believes, “these experiences should serve me well as our Congregation and society face critical issues regarding health care.”

Sister added, “Ministering on the pastoral team at St. Cronan Church in St. Louis, Mo., formed me as a pastoral leader. St. Cronan is an urban church, named by the archdiocese as a personal parish with a special focus on social justice. The neighborhood where the church is located endures poverty and drugs. I lived and worked in this neighborhood for 14 years and I learned, painfully, about the privilege of my life and the struggles of my neighbors.”

“Participating in nonviolent resistance has changed my life,” S. Louise believes. “Through the witness of our Sisters, Associates and friends, I understand a little more why ‘action on behalf of justice’ is central to the Gospel. Teaching the spirituality of nonviolence and taking part in nonviolent actions has helped me to act with integrity and love. I believe a commitment to nonviolence for the sake of the mission is essential to our present and future.”

From Cleveland, Ohio, S. Christine Marie Rody said, “I have lived long enough to know grace is always present, we just are not always conscious of that condition. I have had a few experiences in which ‘grace’ was almost visible/tangible. It was at those times when I truly did not know what to do based on my own experience, skills and talents or what to even pray for in such situations. I had to depend totally on inspiration. I know our being able to tap into power beyond us is available. That is very comforting, encouraging and strengthening for whatever lies ahead.”

“I believe,” S. Christine Marie continued, “that as a Leadership Team we will be able to share from the heart, honestly and fully, so that whatever we need to do, we’ll see the next step. During the recent Chapter, on the day of elections, our experience of a common mind to visit the Sisters in Mother Margaret Hall, despite our exhaustion and thinking of what we still had to do before leaving, was a sign to me of our concern for the whole Community. The action was instinctive.”

Of her professional experiences, S. Christine Marie related, “Every aspect of life is preparation for the next. God makes sure we are challenged in ways that may be surprising to us. To handle such times, we pray, consult, evaluate and try for resolution. For me, being honest about what I can or cannot do, listening to and evaluating criticism in light of what I know, praying, and facing fear have always served as tools for doing what is required.

“In terms of ministry, I have been a student, teacher, missionary and have had some experience as a retreat/spiritual director. I have served on committees and boards. I have been the bishop’s delegate for religious and the leader of the small community of the Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford, Ohio, at the time of the closing of our only high school and the merging of our communities. What of those experiences will be tapped in this new way of service? Only God knows. What will happen that will be very new and requiring unknown and untested skills? Only God knows that, as well. Will we be able to respond as a team in support of our president and for the good of the Community? With God’s direction and our shared skills and talents, I believe so.”

“As far as meeting my grace in this continuing leadership role,” S. Lois Jean said, “I hope to be open to listening deeply, really hearing what the new team is saying, spending time with them, discovering who they are. It will be an opportunity to learn new ideas of what community entails, how we can build community as a Leadership Team and how we can develop working relationships to make the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati Community even better.”
The Love of Christ Urges Us

“Women religious are all over the place; in hard places; have long histories (in hard places); don’t leave when the going gets tough; do a lot with a little; and come to the table about issues that are not about us (women religious).”
— S. Carol Zinn, SSJ

In 2011 Intercom takes a closer look at the ministries of the Sisters of Charity. We will learn more about where our Sisters are ministering; their challenges and triumphs; their dedication to the people they serve; and their determination to meet the needs of our Church and world. This issue spotlights the field of higher education. To read full articles and additional ministry stories, visit www.srcharitycinti.org and click on “Ministry” then “Ministry Locations.”

S. Betty Jane Lillie
Cincinnati, Ohio

Teaching at every level of the educational system, from preschool to graduate school, S. Betty Jane Lillie says her current ministry as professor of biblical studies at the Athenaeum of Ohio/Mount St. Mary’s Seminary was a natural progression.

“I love teaching, and it is a great joy for me to bring sound biblical knowledge into the public domain,” Sister said. “… In a Church whose primary ministry is teaching, in some sense, the whole world can be my classroom.”

Going into her 30th year at the Athenaeum, the third oldest seminary in the United States, Sister says bringing professional biblical and theological education to the People of God is one of the finest gifts we can give to them. “[Elizabeth Seton] had that vision,” S. Betty Jane said. “I believe it is a value to participate in it.”

S. Betty Jane’s primary ministry responsibilities include teaching in the Seminary Division of the Athenaeum and in the graduate level of the Lay Ministry Division. However, as the year evolves, she finds herself involved in much more, including participating in faculty meetings and committees; directing graduate level thesis papers as the occasions arise; giving directed study courses when requested for students with special advanced needs; and reviewing library holdings and new acquisitions for the Athenaeum’s Maly Library.

As the field of biblical studies continues to develop rapidly, Sister says challenges do arise. From keeping up with the new materials, the archaeological finds, and the contributions in the professional journals to the participation in professional meetings and discussions, the ministry is very involved.

With three decades of experience in professional biblical and theological education, Sister says the ministry of biblical scholarship for women in the Roman Catholic tradition is late coming, getting started about 25 or 30 years ago. Today, S. Betty Jane says there are many exceptional women theologians and biblical scholars in the Church, and some of them are Sisters of Charity.

“Of course, Sisters of Charity have taught religion in schools for a long time,” Sister explained, “but that is not the same thing as professional theological and biblical studies. Higher education in a Catholic context is very important because it is one way that the mission of the Church to ‘Teach all that Jesus taught’ (Matthew 28:19-20) forms leaders for today’s world who have the ability to bring the message of Jesus to contemporary society. This applies to both clerical and lay leadership.”

S. Betty Jane Lillie is a professor of biblical studies at the Athenaeum of Ohio/Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio. Photo courtesy of the Athenaeum of Ohio
As she discusses her 34 years of ministry at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, Calif., S. Mary Ann Donovan reflects on a conversation she had with Mother Mary Omer Downing as she began her doctoral studies.

“The whole idea was I would be trained in theology, preferably to teach in a seminary,” S. Mary Ann explained, “because according Mother Omer, who was a woman of great vision, the position of women in the Church will only change, in part, when men are taught by women in the seminary. She asked if I would be willing to do this, and I said, ‘of course.’”

Since 1977, S. Mary Ann has been a faculty member at the Jesuit School of Theology, part of the Graduate Theological Union, and one of three graduate schools of the University of Santa Clara, teaching such courses as the History of Christianity, Thinking and Practice in Systematic Theology, and Spirituality. She has served on numerous committees and published several books and articles.

Presently retired, Sister’s schedule continues to remain full. She teaches one graduate course each semester, and does some student advising and thesis and dissertation direction.

“I love teaching,” said the former chair of the school’s Department of History and Theology. “The thing that makes it so enjoyable is the quality of the students. Currently they are from all over the world. They have a different picture, and because they do it expands everyone’s picture. It is an exciting place for all.”

In addition to her work at the Jesuit School of Theology, for the last five years S. Mary Ann has been a commissioner of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, a membership organization, according to its Web site, that accredits post-baccalaureate professional and academic degree programs which educate persons for the practice of ministry and for teaching and research in the theological disciplines. Since 2003, Sister has been a member of the Northern California Chan/Zen Buddhist-Catholic Dialogue, a small group of Buddhists and Catholics that meet yearly to develop increased mutual understanding.

Although she is physically more than two-thousand miles from the Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse, S. Mary Ann remains connected to her Sisters of Charity Community members. Many years ago she and other Sisters of Charity in a similar position formed a small group. Called the “Somewhere Out There Group,” the women get together every year for an extended period of time and keep in touch by phone and e-mail. “You have to have some ongoing Community support to keep the bond alive, and that’s what we have designed; it has served us well,” she said.

Throughout her ministry S. Mary Ann has served the Church and the real needs of others in the spirit of her Community. “I have to constantly be living toward being a humble, simple, loving woman, never forgetting God is here,” Sister said. “It’s the spirit of our Community – and those virtues are at the core of that spirit. Those are the virtues St. Vincent de Paul laid out for the original daughters, and our constitution lays them out for us. That’s what we are meant to be like.”

Forty years after Sister’s conversation with Mother Mary Omer, S. Mary Ann reflects, “I absolutely have no regrets, only joy. The acceptance of qualified women in this School of Theology is clear, and their impact on the students, well, only they can answer that question. Let us trust that good has been done.”
Eighteen years ago, at the invitation of then dean of students S. Elizabeth Cashman, S. Marge Kloos arrived at the College of Mount St. Joseph. Initially, her responsibilities involved campus ministry; four years later, she transitioned to the academic side and has remained there since.

Today S. Marge is the dean for the Division of Arts and Humanities, the largest of the college’s five divisions. She provides leadership for the division’s nine departments and 14 programs. The majority of her time spent during the day is working with faculty on development endeavors and with students, sometimes on concerns but often times problem solving.

And while she enjoys the administrative side, particularly working with so many faculty and students, Sister says her passion is in the classroom, teaching such courses as Theology of Pastoral Care, Feminist Theology and Spiritual Care of Women.

“The thing that gives me the most excitement is when students see the relevance of the conversations we have, particularly around the content of pastoral care,” S. Marge said. “We live in a wonderful time, but we also live in a hard time. The struggling and suffering that people encounter seems to be exponential on some days, and at the same time, there is a compassionate consciousness that is emerging more and more in the world in which we live. I think people are making better connections, thinking more clearly, more systemically, and I love that about being in the classroom.”

Throughout the years S. Marge has seen many changes in the students she teaches and mentors - one of the biggest being the students’ exposure to organized religion. While many young people are curious and tolerant, S. Marge says they are not necessarily engaged.

“We’ve had to really restructure our courses to accommodate the shift from what used to be a real immersion in organized religion, much of it Catholic, to an almost passive encounter with any sort of organized religious experience,” Sister said. “That really changes what we do in the classroom. So much of what we do operates out of their story, their experience. It’s a completely different way of teaching than when I started.”

Additionally, following Sept. 11, 2001, Sister says many smaller schools, like the College of Mount St. Joseph, are unable to afford the commitment to nurturing foreign student relationships. She explains this reduces a lot of opportunity in the classroom for students to be exposed to diversity.

“I find it’s an entirely different environment in the classroom without students from other parts of the world,” she said. “It’s a real loss. I teach a lot of social justice classes and immersion courses where we take students to other cultures, but it’s much better when relationships can happen over time and students can make relationships with each other.”

As a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, the College of Mount St. Joseph is “grounded in the spiritual values and vision of its founders” – CMSJ Mission Statement. As a Sister of Charity, S. Marge has the ability to show students first-hand how Sisters are living and ministering in the world today. Her classroom is open and relaxed, allowing students to ask questions regarding religious life. And in most of her classes she will have a Sister of Charity visit and speak to the students on topics such as immigration, Earth or spirituality.

“The reason we sponsor an institution is because we have something of ourselves that can be shared with the world,” S. Marge said.

The Mount’s Immersion to College course, she explained, is one of those ways. As students have the opportunity to walk the Motherhouse grounds and visit various SC ministries, they learn firsthand that the mission of the Sisters of Charity is a living mission. Interviews with alumni further those concepts as students hear these former students, who have a sense of their own personal mission, explain how their education has allowed them to participate in the mission of the Sisters of Charity. The current students then write a reflection about what they hope to do while at the college to better understand the mission. It immerses them in the here and now, Sister explained, rather than the past and the history of the Sisters of Charity.

With 18 years of experience in the field, and now as dean for the Division of Arts and Humanities, S. Marge believes we are on the cusp of something very important in the United States in terms of higher education.
“Higher education is about helping persons discover their humanity, deepening their sense of self and importance of person in light of the bigger set of relationships in the world,” S. Marge said. “I think keeping students engaged and focused on the work of their own humanity in light of the bigger possibilities of this sort of project of transforming the world in which we live, keeping that in the forefront of our work is probably the thing that I see will be the most important for us in the next five to 10 years. It’s not fundable, and it’s often not appealing in terms of grant proposals and revenue-generating initiatives. But I think we’re at the point in higher education that we have to make this both/and argument. We have to keep demonstrating in serious ways the correlation between the two objectives. Increasingly higher education is going to have to be very serious about creating professionals who are human beings in every way, really rooted and formed, while attending to affordability and cost-effectiveness of higher education. Higher education should not be for the wealthy – it should be for the capable and invested learner!”

S. Joanne Burrows
Dubuque, Iowa

Each of us experiences stress in our lives relating to work, relationships, family, friends and school. We each deal with our stress in different ways. “I go scuba diving,” S. Joanne Burrows said. “It takes the pressure off my job. No one can find me underwater,” she added with a wry smile.

“Underwater I must be in the present moment with my breathing. I can’t be thinking of anything else.” S. Joanne is the president of Clarke University, a Catholic liberal arts school in Dubuque, Iowa.

It is not often that scuba diving options are available to Sister, however. In the interim, you will find her hosting taco bar suppers for students in her home, meeting with faculty, planning budgets, serving on boards or facing the perennial issues of the tuition-driven needs of a small, private university.

“This job is the continuum of my life,” S. Joanne said. “I’ve studied higher education. Mine is a continuous process toward leadership.”

With a doctorate in higher education from The Ohio State University, a master’s in theology from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, Calif., and more than 20 years in the field, S. Joanne’s ministry is well-fortified with considerable expertise.

“When I was at [the College of Mount St. Joseph, Cincinnati, Ohio], I was impressed and encouraged by Sisters of Charity Jean Patrice Harrington (a former president) and Elizabeth Cashman. I was also inspired by another president, S. Francis Marie Thrailkill, OSU,” S. Joanne added.

What inspires S. Joanne today? “At Clarke all dimensions of the student’s experience are encouraged, including the faith dimension. We are an inclusive environment; we value dialogue and connections. We are about relationships that promote growth and exploration. People know each other here. Our faculty members care about their students and staff is ready and available to assist. Our students are self-determined young people searching for deep connections through conversations, relationships, faith and values. They are learning more than just content here,” Sister explained. “Relationships happen in a learning exchange.”

The above article, written by Donata Glassmeyer, is re-printed from the November 2010 issue of E-Voc, the electronic newsletter from the Vocations Team of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati.

Every year S. Joanne Burrows (front, left), president of Clarke University, a Catholic liberal arts school in Dubuque, Iowa, invites new students of the university to her home for dinner.
S. Dorothy Ann Blatnica
Pepper Pike, Ohio

“I absolutely love seeing the faces of my students when a new insight happens for them or when I expose them to new knowledge that enlarges their world. There’s no greater joy for me as a teacher,” S. Dorothy Ann Blatnica said as she discussed her 28 years at Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, Ohio.

This summer S. Dorothy Ann will retire as professor and chairperson of the Religious Studies Department at the Catholic liberal arts college and sponsored ministry of the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland, Ohio.

Sister explains her calling to higher education came at the request of S. Maureen McCarthy, OSU, with whom she completed her master’s work at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind. S. Maureen needed an adjunct faculty person to teach an extension course for the college in Akron, Ohio, and called to see if S. Dorothy Ann would accept the position.

“I was teaching at Lumen Cordium High School [in Bedford, Ohio] at the time, and my first response to her was, ‘Oh, Maureen, I can’t teach in college.’” S. Dorothy Ann recalled. “She said, ‘Oh, yes, you can! You’ll love it!’ As they say, the rest is history.”

S. Dorothy Ann began teaching at Ursuline College in 1983 as an adjunct faculty member and became a full-time member in 1991. Serving at the college for 20-plus years, Sister has been challenged to keep up with what is happening in the various subject areas that she teaches, especially those that involve social and environmental justice.

“These two areas are always evolving,” she said. “However, I believe learning is most valuable when it touches the lives of my students personally and calls them to enlarge their own commitments. With so many competing voices and values in our world today, this can be most challenging for me and for the students.”

S. Dorothy Ann Blatnica (second from left) recently completed 28 years at Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, Ohio.

Like Elizabeth Seton, a teacher, S. Dorothy Ann walks in Elizabeth’s footsteps as she gives extra attention to the students who are struggling, whether it be from inadequate preparation or disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds. Additionally, ministering at a women-focused college has allowed her to empower and advance women.

“I think Elizabeth must be pleased with these efforts that so reflect her own ministry,” Sister said.

S. Patricia Wittberg
Indianapolis, Indiana

As she discusses her current ministry as professor of sociology at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), S. Pat Wittberg’s eyes light up when she begins to talk about her research. “This is why I live,” Sister said. “This is what makes my life; what I am called to do.”

Since 1990, S. Pat has been a faculty member at IUPUI, a branch campus of Indiana University in Indianapolis, Ind. Currently, she teaches mostly undergraduate courses, two each semester, while also serving as the academic advisor for the undergraduates.

“I enjoy teaching and I think this is the kind of people [our founder Elizabeth Seton] would approve of my teaching,” S. Pat said. “The bulk of these students are first-generation college students. The majority are returning adults, their median age 28, and they can’t afford to go anywhere else. These students sweat blood for this education and appreciate it in a way that many never could.”

And while she loves working with the students and helping them discover their potential, Sister’s true passion lies in her research.
“I don’t know that I would feel this way if I were researching any other topic,” Sister said. “It’s about wanting to raise the level of sociological literacy in religious life in the same way psychological studies of the 1950s and 1960s raised the psychological literacy in religious life … If what I write helps one religious community survive, grow and become healthier, then my life is more worth it.”

For the former assistant professor of sociology at Fordham University in New York, S. Pat says there can be some challenges to ministering outside the Catholic culture. “There’s a whole piece of my life I don’t feel I can share,” she explained. “I can never figure out how to integrate that. There’s no logical place to say that I am a Sister. That part was better at Fordham.”

With more than 30 years experience in higher education, S. Pat stresses the importance of religious women’s perspectives in the discipline.

“If I didn’t have a degree from the University of Chicago, and if I wasn’t teaching in a research university, would there be anyone in the country looking at what I’m looking at?” Sister asked. “There’s an importance to that. We have several Sisters whose degrees are in theology and scripture; those are good and important, and it’s wonderful that we can do that now. But they shouldn’t be the only subjects we should get doctorates in.”

“Where’s the next Teilhard de Chardin, the next Gerard Manley Hopkins?” S. Pat continued. “The people who brought spirituality into anthropology (Chardin), spirituality into poetry (Hopkins), and spirituality into genetics (Mendel)? To bring the charism of religious life and the unique way religious look at things into the secular disciplines is important. There are a precious few of us with the advanced degrees to do it.”

S. Barbara Davis
Toledo, Ohio

In 2007, after 43 years of ministry in Catholic elementary education, S. Barbara Davis felt it was time for a change. “The president of Mercy College of Northwest Ohio had heard that I was planning to change ministries and invited me to meet with him to discuss the possibility of coming to the college’s Advancement Office,” Sister said.

Although she did not have any special training in the area of development, Sister knew her ability to relate and to work collaboratively with others, accompanied by her strong organizational skills, would serve her well.

As coordinator of alumni relations and annual giving for the college, whose main campus is located in Toledo, Ohio, S. Barbara oversees the activities of the college’s Alumni Association, working closely with the board of the association. In addition, she serves the Mercy College Auxiliary and coordinates two major fund raising campaigns each year: the Annual Appeal and the annual Employee Campaign. As Mercy College’s enrollment continues to grow significantly, S. Barbara also has been named the chairperson of the Steering Committee for the college’s Strategic Planning Process.

“Our Advancement Office staff is a cohesive group and we truly do work collaboratively on a variety of events and initiatives on behalf of Mercy College,” Sister said.

Mercy College of Northwest Ohio is affiliated with Mercy and Catholic Health Partners, one of the nation’s largest and most respected health care systems. Only about 20 percent of the college’s students are “traditional” college age, S. Barbara said, and the college’s focus is on preparing health care professionals. Additionally Mercy College has a large Short Term Education Program, which offers both credit and non-credit bearing certificates in a variety of areas. It is S. Barbara’s challenge to tell this unique story in a manner that will inspire donors to support its mission, particularly in these tough economic times.

One of the things Sister says she enjoys most about her ministry is the opportunity to meet with alumni and to hear their stories - whether it be from Mercy School of Nursing or Mercy College. As she explains the Mercy School of Nursing was established in 1918 and offered a diploma program. With the transition from the nursing diploma to degrees (associate and bachelor), the college was started in 1992.

“Throughout these years, the heritage and values of the Sisters of Mercy remain foundational to our ministry,” S. Barbara said. “Currently we have three communities serving the college – the Sisters of the Precious Blood from Dayton, Ohio, the Toledo Sisters of Notre Dame, and us. Each brings our own charism to our ministry. It’s always amazing to me that while our histories are unique, we are truly unified in our desire and passion to be disciples of the Lord.”

As an educator, S. Barbara looks to Elizabeth Seton for inspiration. “Though her students were younger in age, our students, just like hers, are seeking truth and knowledge,” she says. “As a Catholic institution of higher education, we strive for excellence in everything that we do, both in the classroom and in any service we provide for our constituents.”

S. Barbara Davis, coordinator of alumni relations and annual giving at Mercy College in Toledo, Ohio, speaks at an Alumni Reunion in May.
Charity Family

“Sister Marianne Day” Proclaimed
Sharonville, Ohio, Mayor Virgil G. Lovitt II proclaimed June 3, 2011, “Sister Marianne Day” in honor of S. Marianne Van Vurst (second from right) and her 25 years of service to the community. S. Marianne retired in June as president and CEO of St. Joseph Home of Cincinnati, a residential facility and respite center for children and adults with severe/profound developmental disabilities, and a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. A crowd of St. Joseph Home residents, staff and board members gathered for the official proclamation.

DePaul Cristo Rey High School Dedication
S. Jeanne Bessette, OSF, (left) and S. Barbara Hagedorn (right) unveil the mural painted by Cincinnati artist Holly Schapker at the June 5 dedication of DePaul Cristo Rey High School, the newest sponsored ministry of the sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. The mural is inspired by the Gospel parable of the mustard seed. The arches that frame the mural are representative of the sisters of Charity, and Saints Vincent de Paul and Elizabeth Seton, depicted in the trunk of the tree, form the strong base from which the branches sprout. Nearly 400 supporters, community leaders, faculty, staff, students and family members took part in the dedication, blessing and ribbon-cutting ceremony, which marked the opening of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati’s first Catholic high school in more than 50 years.

Community Recognized
The sisters of Charity of Cincinnati were one of four honorees at the 12th annual Su Casa Silent Auction and Awards Dinner on April 28, 2011. Su Casa celebrated its 14th year of serving the Hispanic/Latino population of the region. The Community was presented with the Su Casa Corporate Award for its support to the Hispanic Center and the Greater Cincinnati Hispanic and Latino communities.

S. Barbara Jeanne Krekeler Honored
On June 22, 2011, SET Family Medical Clinics in Colorado Springs, Colo., honored S. Barbara Jeanne Krekeler for her 21 years of service to the uninsured, underinsured and low-income people of the Pikes Peak Region. S. Barbara Jeanne retired from the nonprofit at the end of June where she has been instrumental in developing the Senior Wellbeing Clinics, Spiritual Companion Program, Mini-gatherings Program and an exercise program for seniors. In addition, Family Medical Clinics recognized S. Barbara Jeanne by initiating the Sister Barbara Jeanne Krekeler Legacy of Service Fund.

S. Barbara Hagedorn Receives Honorary Doctorate
S. Barbara Hagedorn addressed the adult and graduate students during the College of Mount St. Joseph’s commencement ceremonies May 7, 2011, in the Jean Patrice Harrington, SC Student Center. S. Barbara was honored for all she has accomplished during her presidency of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati (2003-2011), as well as her dedication to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious over the years.

S. Paula Gonzalez (center) accepted the Su Casa Corporate Award on behalf of the Community
S. Barbara Jeanne Krekeler, with Greg O’Boyle, chairperson of the SET Board of Directors, during a reception honoring Sister’s retirement.
Remember when we talked about Web sites, e-mail and cell phones as the “new” form of communication? Welcome to the world of I-Phones, I-Pads, I-Pods, Droids, blogs, texting, tweets from Twitter, Facebook and Blackberries as part of a new and ever-changing vocabulary of connections. This world is very familiar to young people beginning in grade school as the online world becomes more and more accessible. The Internet is even credited with the revolutions happening in the Middle East due to “real time” instant communication.

The world of vocation ministry also is evolving as our ability to connect with this new generation continues to expand. You can pray online at sites like Sacred Space or Pray-as-You-Go. The Company of Charity vocation directors are planning an online retreat for Vocation Awareness Week in January 2012. You can read a blog from a friend living in Africa or Peru to find out how they spent their day. Pictures from a service trip in New Orleans, La., are posted on Facebook almost as soon as the final nail is hammered. You can share the latest video from YouTube to update your friends on the tornado damage in Joplin, Mo., or the flooding in the Mississippi Delta. You can find out who just had a bad break-up from a status update on Facebook.

These days a vocation minister also is likely to be texting, checking Facebook and e-mailing as well as having phone conversations and regular “face time” with interested women. E-Vite, an electronic newsletter of the Vocations Team of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, is e-mailed monthly to a growing list of those who have indicated an interest in learning more about religious life and our Community. The newsletter contains events, book reviews, interviews with Sisters, and prayers and articles that invite reflection on general discernment. S. Janet Gildea’s blog, begun during her journey with cancer, has become a way of offering reflections to visitors on living life with an awareness of God in “Each Day Counts.” S. Nancy Gerth, SCN, writes a blog titled “OMG” (texting shorthand for Oh My God). There are numerous Facebook groups for religious communities and Associates as well as groups for vocation discerners and “fans” of different founders and communities.

Plenty of events and opportunities offer personal outreach and relationship building. These are posted on the Internet at sites such as the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Young Adults E-zine and the VISION Vocation Web site. Since research has shown that young people first begin to think about life choices in the fifth grade, “Calling All Fifth Graders,” an all-day event in the Archdiocese of New Orleans, drew more than 1,400 students from across the archdiocese for a day of music, speakers and activities introducing them to religious life and vocational discernment.

Whatever we are planning, online or in person, we rely on technology to connect and present in ways that are convenient, fast and interesting. The generations we are inviting are more mobile than ever but we can stay in contact easily, chatting on Facebook or dialing up via Skype for a video call. It isn’t unusual to see a “Hi Sister!” message pop up while working at the computer. Being available to listen, encourage, promise a prayer or offer a bit of guidance online invites person-to-person encounters at a later date. These technological advances are for us what Elizabeth’s voluminous handwritten letters were to her – ways to communicate with those who hope to share in our mission and ministry.
When the golden jubilarians of 2003 celebrated their anniversaries, one of the highlights of the event was a luncheon given on the eve of the celebration by a group of their former members. Among them was Eileen O’Leary Casey, formerly S. Mary Michael, who had been the youngest member of the Band of 1953. Though in poor health, she traveled more than 3,000 miles from Juneau, Alaska, to join in the celebration.

Eileen’s return to the Mount and her reunion with her Sisters marked the beginning of a new stage in her lifelong faith journey. That journey led to Associate membership in the Sisters of Charity for Eileen who was soon to be joined by four other women of Juneau.

“As a newcomer to Juneau, though I had met each of the Associates on earlier visits, I am thrilled to have become a part of the community with them,” said S. Delia Sizler, the only Sister of Charity living and ministering in the Juneau area. “They all have a genuine love for the Sisters of Charity mission and vision and each one reflects that in their own lives and relationships.”

These are their stories.

**Eileen Casey**

“I live in Juneau with my husband, Bob. Our daughter, Genevieve, lives 10 miles away. Our family has a close and loving relationship. Health issues have come up for all three of us, which has made us even closer. We keep going, thankful for each day that we have.

“I had the blessed grace to be a Sister of Charity for 20 years, and only left for health reasons. When our band was celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2003, I attended the celebration. When I reached the Mount, I felt that I was home again, only to find out that in my heart, I had never left. The joy of meeting my Sisters and Mary Jo Mersmann, director of Associates, was tremendous. Mary Jo gave me the materials to become an Associate and became my contact person.

“In becoming an Associate it made my life complete. It connected all the dots, and gave me the grace of belonging and seeing God’s plan for my life.

“Beautiful and spiritual women entered my life and wanted the same thing I did. I made my Associate promise Jan. 3, 2005; my friend Connie Trollan became an Associate Sept. 8 of the following year. Associates Colleen Jaeger, Mary Neary and Maria Rogers made their commitment July 27, 2008. Other spiritual, gifted women recently joined us as Associates: Janet Olmstead, Angela Smith, Mary Bodine and Elisa Nillalobos. We have been richly blessed.”

**Connie Trollan**

“My roots are from the American-Romanian community of Chicago, Ill.; my blossoming has been growing for 35 years in Alaska. In 1975, I came to Juneau to work as a public health nurse and did so for 15 years.

“I also became a women’s health care nurse practitioner, raised one daughter and two sons, and participated in our salmon commercial fishing business. Twenty years ago, I founded Wellspring, a medical center that integrates medical, nursing, naturopathic, counseling, medical massage, nutritional and somatic therapies. For five years I was the senior nurse consultant for Project Hope in Romania and for three years I was the international director of Help the Children of Romania.

“It was an easy choice to become an Associate because I was already believing and practicing the mission of the Sisters of Charity in my Wellspring work and international consulting. Eileen was my formation teacher and had such love in her heart and enthusiasm for her Sisters, their mission and various ministries that I wanted to be associated with...
such a charitable Christian sisterhood and organization. 

“My association with the Sisters of Charity has made me more aware and appreciative of how God works through all of our ministries to help us live Gospel values and to care for all creation. It is with heartfelt gratitude that I accept the many blessings of friendship with Juneau Associates and with the larger community of Sisters. It is satisfying to know that our individual ministries flow into the collective ministries of other Associates and Sisters to accomplish God’s mission.”

Colleen Jaeger

“I live in Juneau and have been here for 30 years. I was married for 22 years and have two beautiful children: Kami, 21, and Kohl, 17. I have worked at Wellspring, an integrative medical center, for 16 years. I am the office manager and a licensed certified nurse’s aide. Wellspring is where I met one of my closest friends, Connie Trollan, who also is an Associate.

“I chose to become an Associate because Eileen Casey and Connie Trollan already were, and it felt right. I try to always listen to that. I believe it is how God communicates with me. I am still busy working at Wellspring, but as that part of my life slows down, I hope to be ready to help the Sisters of Charity in any way they want or need.

“I love the sense of community of being an Associate. There is so much for me to learn and it helps me to be with others who love God.”

Mary Neary

“I am married and have two children. My daughter is in college and my son is in heaven since age 16. I am a nurse on a mental health unit at our local hospital. Our family moved to Alaska in 1995 when our children were very young. In 2006, I was asked to join an Associate group in formation with the Sisters of Charity. I had considered becoming an Associate of a religious order and felt this was my answer. In 2008, I made my commitment.

“Becoming a member of this spiritual group has been a source of comfort and strength for me. Comfort through some of the most difficult times of my life, including the loss of my son and my mother; strength in having a spiritual community that is surrounding me and including me in prayer. Through sharing with our local Associate group I have gained a group of spiritual sisters. Being part of something much larger than myself gives me the strength and stability to follow through with my commitment to live the Gospel in daily life and share the message of Christ in my personal and professional life.”

Maria Rogers

“Connie Trollan, a friend of 27 years, invited me to find out about the SC Associates. After studying about the Associates and about a year of discernment, I joined. Being an Associate makes me feel that I am a part of a larger family. I enjoy getting together with the rest of my sisters here and praying and sharing with them.

“I married my husband, Jim, in 1965. We had three daughters. We lost our third in 2004 at the age of 31. She left us one grandchild. Jim and I have always been involved in the church wherever we’ve lived (four cities in Arizona, Oregon and here in Juneau). We’ve been catechists, Eucharistic ministers, youth ministers, RCIA team members and wherever else we were needed. I also lector.

“Af after my retirement from a state job I opened a childcare business with one of my daughters. I did this for about 12 years. This gave me an opportunity to meet Hispanic women who, because of language barriers, were not able to work outside the home. I began to help them open their own childcare businesses. Most of them I am still helping. This is very rewarding.

“Recently three other women and I started what we call Life Ring. We have invited women to come who might enjoy talking and being listened to, women who might enjoy doing crafts or women who are looking for new hope in life. Some of these women may be homeless. Life Ring is a circle of women coming together to learn and share, to laugh and care. We meet once a week for four hours. We also share a meal during that time. We began this on Monday of Holy Week and now have seven to nine women every time we meet.”
Around the Motherhouse and Mother Margaret Hall there are many opportunities for our Sisters to express their creative selves. Among the talented SC artists and art teachers are Sisters Mary Ellen Murphy and Patricia McNally. Both Sisters offer classes for those living at Mount St. Joseph and interested in immersing themselves in the art of creativity.

S. Mary Ellen Murphy

“They call it ‘Arts Delight,’” S. Mary Ellen Murphy said of her class, one of the Activities Department offerings in Mother Margaret Hall, “because the Sisters find so much delight in their work - with lots of ‘ooohs’ and ‘aaahs’ when I show their matted watercolors to the class.”

For the last five to six years S. Mary Ellen has offered two watercolor classes a month in the third floor Community Room for an average of five to six students. “S. Patrice Vales assists me,” she added, “as I go around helping each individual.”

S. Mary Ellen begins each class with a watercolor that she has made as a model. She then explains how to get started. “Watercolor has a life of its own, but it’s fun. Doing watercolors is a very relaxing outlet,” she says, both for herself and for her Sister students.

“Some Sisters hang their works on their room doors. The late S. Mary Joseph Koverman practically ‘papered’ her room,” S. Mary Ellen recalls. “Last year we painted Christmas scenes that I scanned into the computer and S. Pat Saul, administrator of Mother Margaret Hall, made them into Christmas cards that the Sisters could send.”

When asked what draws Sisters to the class, S. Mary Ellen replied, “‘Art’s Delight’ is an opportunity for creative expression for the Sisters who participate. It’s a time when each Sister artist can see and appreciate one another’s interpretation and creativity. It’s a joy to see how engaged they are in the process of painting their watercolor picture; the smiles on their faces are priceless.”

S. Patricia McNally

Hidden behind the Emmaus Room on the Motherhouse first floor is a gallery of matted and framed watercolors painted by S. Patricia McNally’s Tuesday morning classes in the Zimmer Room, named after S. Augusta Zimmer, a well-known artist in many mediums and former professor at the College of Mount St. Joseph.

“It’s an ideal art room with good lighting - and very spacious,” says S. Pat, who could hardly imagine such a space after inauspicious beginnings shared with S. Magdalena Linnemann in her Sewing Room on the fifth floor of the Motherhouse.

“We both existed there from 1998 to 2000,” S. Pat continued. “The late S. Marita Ganley and I had to spread oil cloth on her cutting table. We team taught 12 to 15 Sisters there until we had to leave for the renovation of the fifth floor.”

For the next two years they were in what is now the Gift Shop on the Motherhouse first floor. “We had to carry buckets of water to that room,” S. Pat said. “When a watercolor was not doing well, I would tell the student, ‘Wash it off!’ How they dislike the sound of ‘Wash it off.’”

S. Pat follows a course patterned like S. Mary Ellen Murphy’s. She creates a seasonal picture, like an iris or daffodils for spring, and makes copies since not all are able to see the painting from a distance. She also has had her students use rice paper, rolled up, put in water and then flattened out to give the picture a batik finish.

“But they have to create something that they want to do,” S. Pat added. “I have learned that if I believe they can do it, they can do it. They come because they want to paint, and that’s exciting. They give their paintings for gifts, make cards of their paintings, and offer a framed painting for the ‘Wall of Fame’ (in the Zimmer room).”
Carrying Forward the Mission
By S. Judith Metz

The College of Mount St. Joseph is a Catholic academic community grounded in the spiritual values and vision of its founders, the Sisters of Charity. The College educates its students through interdisciplinary liberal arts and professional curricula emphasizing values, integrity and social responsibility. Members of the Mount community embrace: excellence in academic endeavors; the integration of life and learning; respect and concern for all persons; diversity of cultures and beliefs; and service to others. - College of Mount St. Joseph Mission Statement

What is the face of mission at the College of Mount St. Joseph? Just about any place a person would look within the college academic community, they could find expressions of the mission of the college. The school professes to be grounded in the spiritual values of its founders, the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, and to embrace such values as respect and concern for all persons, integration of life and learning, and service to others.

One face of mission is the Office of Mission and Ministry. It provides many and varied programs, retreats and prayer opportunities for faculty, staff and students. Another face of mission is the Campus Mission Committee. This group of faculty, staff and students strives to create a campus milieu that reflects the mission and values of the college by planning and executing a number of activities throughout the academic year. This committee is currently developing a permanent heritage and mission display that will demonstrate what the college has and presently embraces.

The face of mission also is apparent in academic and co-curricular offerings available to every student. As part of an introductory course, almost every freshman visits the Sisters of Charity Motherhouse, and former home of the college, to learn about the spiritual and cultural heritage of their chosen school. In addition, the Service Learning Program allows students to provide service to others in need and receive credit at the same time. Some students participate in immersion experiences, giving them the opportunity to interact with people of different cultural backgrounds such as Native Americans and immigrants.

The SC Ministry Foundation Student Summer Employment Initiative partners with students to enable them to serve others while at the same time earning money for their tuition. Some of these experiences include direct involvement with Sisters of Charity in nonprofits serving those in need. Students can be found building homes, assisting in emergencies, participating in the removal of invasive species from our environment, or any number of other activities.

The Ethical Leadership Development Initiative, a new ‘face of mission’ at the college, is designed to “promote a sustainable, just and caring society.” It offers students the choice of different levels of participation ranging from course work, to a co-curricular certificate program, to recognition as an Ethical Leadership Fellow.

Faculty and staff are involved in many of the student mission activities and have created Faculty/Staff Learning Communities to immerse themselves more deeply in the college mission. New members of the faculty and staff participate in mission orientation sessions, as does the Board of Trustees. In addition, the Board Mission Committee oversees the implementation of mission on campus, and is charged with keeping mission awareness as the underpinning of each decision it makes.

Although the work is never complete, a dedicated cadre of trustees, administrators, faculty, staff and students are involved in continuing the proud tradition of carrying forward the mission of the College of Mount St. Joseph.
The other day I saw some numbers that reminded me of an earlier time in my life. The numbers came from NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, indicating that the wealthiest 1 percent of our population owns more than 90 percent of us combined. The wealthiest 10 percent of our population owns more than three-quarters of the nation’s wealth. The median African-American household has less than 10 cents of wealth for every dollar of wealth owned by the median white family.

These numbers reminded me of my experience in El Salvador in Latin America in the early 1970s when the gap between the rich and the poor was so wide that an oligarchy of 14 families held and profited from most of the arable land. This disparity, injustice and survival-mode living caused the peasants to rally and call for justice while the land owners protected their property and status through violence, disappearances and finally war.

With modern technology being used throughout the world, we begin to see alternative methods of organizing for change in countries with significant wealth gaps. Countries in Northern Africa have used Twitter, Facebook and other forms of technology to inform people of plans to gather, protest and demand the exit of their leaders and call for new structures.

As we watch the countries in Northern Africa changing both nonviolently and violently, it is obvious that the world will not be the same and yet the “how” it will be is very uncertain. Gaps in wealth are causing awakenings, dreams, struggles and a strong hope for a better domestic future and a global future.

What dreams, longings and hopes are bubbling up inside the 90 percent of the population here in our own country as they struggle for jobs, health care, education and dignity? The “trickle-down theory” fails to work for the middle class, who increasingly fall into the bottom percent of the wealth gap. How will they demand justice? When our structures for change are controlled by the power at the top of the wealth gap, we witness fear of other cultures and religions. How will change happen in this present reality?

One of the priorities of the Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation is the practice of active nonviolence. Throughout our history we have learned about nonviolence from Gandhi, Martin Luther King’s “Beloved Community,” Rosa Parks, the feminist movement and Marshal Rosenberg’s nonviolent communication methods. This seems to be the time when we need to use the models of nonviolent communication and organizing strategies to build movements that will change the structures that created a wealth gap that no longer supports our American values. This will demand a strong sense of compassion underlying our nonviolence practices.

In her book “Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life,” Karen Armstrong reminds us that “compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the center of our world and put another there, and to honor the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.”

How can we not put active nonviolence into practice both for the 10 percent who think they are benefiting from the wealth gap, as well as for the 90 percent at the bottom of the gap, who know they are not benefiting from the gap! Can we compassionately work tirelessly for everybody?
When the doors closed for the last time at Loyola School in northeast Denver, Colo., on June 2, 2011, a chapter closed on the Loyola education story that began 73 years ago.

For many years, Loyola Parish and the Missouri Province Jesuits supported an elementary school to meet the educational needs of parish and neighborhood students. The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati staffed the school since its onset in 1938. Loyola School exemplified what our founder Elizabeth Seton envisioned.

In 1938, 73 years ago, that Spirit was evident when Loyola Parish opened a school in the basement of the church across from Denver’s City Park on York Street. The Loyola Church basement functioned as the school with four classrooms. When enrollment grew, half the sacristy became a classroom, as well.

Sisters Alice Theresa Mengel and Ann Genevieve Ostrousky were the Sisters of Charity pioneers of Loyola School, teaching grades one through four. The next year grades five through eight were added and S. James Ellen Ferriter joined the faculty.

From 1938 to 1943, the Sisters came daily, rain or shine, from Sacred Heart Convent to teach eager Loyola youngsters. On Jan. 11, 1943, S. Agnes Maria Ryan and the Sisters moved into a convent at 2244 Vine Street, one block from the church. A new addition to the convent was completed in September 1956.

Loyola children won acclaim for their musicals presented each year at East Denver High School. In 1948 and 1951 numbers from these programs were repeated at the Catholic Parent Teacher’s League. Large groups of Loyola children participated in programs presented at the Diocesan teachers’ meetings in 1948 and 1949. At the first Catholic Parochial School Musical Festival, conducted at the City Auditorium, Loyola School was one of three elementary schools requested to participate.

In 1950, more than 300 students filled the church basement. In March 1952, the new Loyola Catholic School was dedicated and the fifth through eighth grade students moved into the first floor. The second floor was completed in 1954, and the building housed the 327 first through eighth grade children.

From a “traditional” parish school, Loyola, in the last 20 years, has adapted to the immediate demands of the changing neighborhood. In the 2010-2011 school year, the seventh grade was added. Ninety-five percent of the students came from minority populations with 86 percent African-American and 9 percent Hispanic.

Many things have changed at Loyola School but there have been three special Sisters who have served the school for more than 40 years: Sisters Mary Ellen Roach, principal, Sue Verbiscus and Janet Marie Wehmhoff. Not long ago, a Loyola press release commented on the staff and the offerings at Loyola School, “We still offer dedicated, qualified teachers; math and reading labs, taught by master teachers; special classes in music, art, computer technology; before and after school programs; full-day kindergarten; and a desire to reach children with a quality Christian education in a loving and caring environment.”

Almost 80 percent of the students were on scholarships; Loyola School had developed frugal techniques and fund raising to offer a quality education to so many children.

Today, many Loyola alumni can trace their early schooling to Loyola School and to the ringing of the bell. The educational seeds planted at Loyola School will come to fruition in years to come.

On Ascension Thursday, June 2, 2011, the students and faculty celebrated the closing of the school with a special prayer service and that final ringing of the bell.
Nestled discreetly in the hills of the west side of Cincinnati is a private art collection of unusual variety and quality. It belongs not to the trust of a titan of industry or to a Cincinnati blue blood, but to a somewhat surprising group of caretakers: the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. We are among a few of the 200 annual private visitors to the art collection of their Motherhouse, located adjacent to the campus of the College of Mount St. Joseph in Delhi Township, a stone’s throw from the Cincinnati Art Museum.

S. Judith Metz, archivist of the art and artifacts in the collection, greets us in the foyer. After introductions she dives right in, pointing out architectural details of the entryway, noting particularly the detailed woodwork. Some of the flooring, she explains, came from the old Hotel Sinton. Chandeliers from the Beaux Arts building also came to the Motherhouse from the now demolished hotel razed in 1964. The Art Museum’s Fountain Room features elements from the Hotel Sinton in the form of architectural faïences by the Rookwood Pottery Company entitled The Four Seasons. Produced in 1907, the murals depicting spring, summer, autumn and winter were originally commissioned for the elegant dining room at the hotel known as the Grand Café.

Around the corner are six prints reputed to be by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), the German painter, printmaker and theorist considered to be one of the greatest artists of the Renaissance. S. Judith discovered the prints stacked in a corner behind the spiral staircase in the Art Room in somewhat degraded condition. Following a hunch that there might be more to these prints in their dime store frames, S. Judith contacted the Cincinnati Art Museum to have the works restored. They now hang side by side, each print depicting a religious scene in the staggering detail and precision typical of Dürer’s style. As is the case with the Art Museum’s own Dürer print Adam and Eve from 1504, closer inspection reveals layers of embedded symbolism that serve as catalysts for deeper reflection and contemplation.

It turns out that the art and artful detail here may have been destined to reside together in the Motherhouse. S. Judith explains that at least four of the Sisters were students of Frank Duveneck at the Art Academy in Cincinnati, others studied at academies in Chicago and Italy, and the love of art and dedication to the craft in all its forms has been part of life here since the founding of the Motherhouse.

One notable figure from the past is S. Augusta Zimmer. S. Augusta’s talent was evident from early on. Sent by the Sisters to study for a year at the Art Institute of Chicago in the 1930s, she quickly distinguished herself as a serious and exceptional...
artist. She won the grand prize in a student competition: a grant to travel anywhere in the world to study art. After her time abroad studying throughout the Mediterranean (and receiving her MFA in Italy) she returned to Cincinnati and was tasked with creating the art department at the Mount. Upon her inquiry as to where the art department was she was told, “You’re it.” And so began a teaching career that spanned more than three decades during which S. Augusta established and steadily developed the reputation of the art program at the Mount. Paintings, prints, wood, ceramic and sculpture pieces are collected here in this room and tell the story of an adventurous and industrious woman.

While S. Augusta may be considered the mother of the arts at the Motherhouse and the Mount, a number of Sisters were also active and talented artists. S. Stella O’Rourke was a masterful portraitist and oil painter. Sisters Ernestine Foskey, Olivia Lefevre, Appolonia Liguori and Ann Xavier Magevney painted murals for the Motherhouse and produced countless other fine pieces of paintings and sculpture. Over the years, many Sisters added to the heritage of the Motherhouse through artistic contributions and this fact is never lost on those who live and work within these walls.

**The Art Room**

According to the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati literature, the Art Room “… was built to serve as an art gallery at the time the Motherhouse was constructed. This room features paintings, furniture, pottery and other art pieces, many of which were gifts to the Community by family members of the Sisters, friends and clergy.”

The eye is immediately drawn to the room’s North Wall. The collected works exemplify local artistic achievement around the turn of the 20th century. Many of the artists featured here studied under Frank Duveneck, a patriarch of Cincinnati painting. One of these students by the name of John Weis showcases his portraiture skills in a boy some attribute to Duveneck himself shows the artist’s signature tone by Dutch artist Arnold Marc Gorter. Roughly contemporary with Duveneck, Gorter worked in a style more reminiscent of the Hague School.

A wrought-iron spiral staircase leading to the second floor balcony reveals an array of sculptures, furniture and paintings from various periods in styles after the French, Italian and Dutch artistic traditions. Many are reproductions of European master works sent back to the Sisters by clergy for use as studies by art students at the Mount.

The Art Room at the Motherhouse is like a mini museum. On the way out, a tiny chest catches our attention. It contains a complete set of the works of William Shakespeare, each miniature book barely 2 inches tall. The set is another gift from a friend of the Sisters, a woman from Colorado, whose full-length debutante portrait hangs just down the hall from the Art Room.

We focus briefly on a landscape painting dark in both mood and tone by Dutch artist Arnold Marc Gorter. Roughly contemporary with Duveneck, Gorter worked in a style more reminiscent of the French Barbizon painters than those associated with the Dutch Hague School.

It’s hard not to envy the students who will find this gallery-like room open to their curiosity as they take the required freshman art classes. One can view the massive paintings of saints sent back from priests traveling in Italy to the Motherhouse students and easily imagine the sketching classes in days gone by. Although few outside these walls will get to see these treasures, it is still heartening to know there is yet another jewel in the crown of Cincinnati art, enriching our view of the world.

Editor’s Note: Tours are available by appointment only. Contact S. Judith Metz at (513) 347-4058.

**Writer Emily B. Rose, a graduate of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, in the history of art and architecture, works in the development department at the Cincinnati Art Museum. A New York native, she now resides in Loveland, Ohio, with her husband and two dogs.**

**About the Cincinnati Art Museum**

The Cincinnati Art Museum is the region’s leading art museum serving residents with a broad range of programming, education and exhibitions.

Hours of operation are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. The Art Museum is closed on Mondays. The Art Museum is located at 953 Eden Park Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45202. For general information call (513) 639-2995 or visit www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org.

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helped fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as its members.
What do you enjoy most about being a Sister of Charity?

Most of all, my Sisters – this wonderful, supportive group of spiritual, diverse women with whom I can share life and love, pain and heartache, joy and sadness, trust and concern. When you need a hand, they are there for you; and they are people with wise advice.

What is the best thing about Community life?

The best part is in knowing that I always have the support, the help and the opportunities to serve. I have been given many gifts. I know that there’s always an opportunity, always a way in which I can use these gifts, through the Community, to make this world a better place and to help other people. The Community has given me so much encouragement and taught me so much about how to work and live with all kinds of people, about how to grow spiritually and emotionally, and how to use the gifts I have for others for the global community. Had I been anything other than a Sister of Charity I don’t know what would have become of me. That is my call, and I am very grateful for it.

What do you do for fun?

I love to be outdoors. I enjoy hiking, bicycling and gardening. I also like to draw outdoors, mostly images from nature – a blade of glass, a leaf or a flower. I enjoy music. Several times a week, S. Joan Wessendarp and I go to the back room of our house and make music for an hour or so.

What is your favorite way to connect with God?

When are we not connected with God? Silence is so important. I like to get up early in the morning for prayer. There is a quote from Thomas Klise about listening prayer, and it’s always resonated with me: “The listener [puts herself] away from the pleas and suggestions of the normal self [and] opens [her] spirit to the Loving One … the YOU who is wholly other and yet wholly wedded to the true self.” But I can connect in many other ways, too – in other people, in nature, in music.

How do we become connected? It is important to slow down and allow for silence. And then to move out of the silence into an awareness of the presence of God in all that is, even in the midst of busyness and activity.

What would people be surprised to learn about you?

I was a premature baby; I think eight or nine weeks early. I weighed 4 pounds. They kept me in the hospital for six weeks, and said to my mother: “Take her home; we can’t do any more. She probably won’t make it, and certainly won’t amount to anything.” God had other plans.
Nicki Veldhaus of Anderson Township (Cincinnati) made her formal commitment as an Associate of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati on June 26, 2011. As an employee of the College of Mount St. Joseph since 2002, she initially worked in the Admissions Office counseling incoming adult students.

One of Nicki's former "intakes," Jackie Lewis, a junior at the college, said, "Nicki is one of my favorite people. She inspired me to choose the College of Mount St. Joseph. If it were not for her, I would not have become a student. She has a warm spirit and a welcoming attitude that made me feel at home the day I walked in the door."

Nicki believes her service in the Admissions Office enhanced her ability to live the mission of the Sisters of Charity. "My responsibilities in that role required me to listen and counsel adult students contemplating returning to higher education or just beginning their studies. Many times a student's life would be in turmoil, so being an empathetic listener as well as a 'cheerleader,' helped me to help the student work through issues impacting their education," Nicki said.

"Often," she continued, "the subject of God and spirituality would arise, opening the door for a deeper discussion of a student's beliefs. I could relate the Sisters of Charity mission and their long affiliation with the college. This was a ministry for me."

"In the Admissions Office, however," Nicki said, "relationships with students were often short-lived. In October 2010, I transferred to the Alumni Office as the director for alumni relations. Now I find that my relationships with former students are more substantial and long term. The title of the position is descriptive. I work to keep alumni engaged in both service and financial support of the institution because it is with committed and engaged alumni that the mission of the college can continue to be viable."

"When I transferred into this position from admissions, I knew it was right, but not knowing where God was leading me. I am experiencing a different side of college operations and I am slowly seeing additional ministry opportunities. Fund raising is the biggest challenge; it's probably the same one the Sisters faced when they operated as management and board of directors of the college," Nicki said.

Nicki believes that "Elizabeth Seton has a presence in the halls of the college, as well as all of the Sisters of Charity who have carried her mission and courage forward. I feel honored to serve in this position and hope to have many newly formed friendships through my work in alumni relations, as well as with the Associates of the Sisters of Charity. I feel I carry the spirit of Elizabeth in all the relationships I continue to build with former students, whether they graduated two years ago or 52 years ago."

Editor’s Note: Associate candidate Deborah Rose-Milavec also serves in higher education as vice president of Catherine of Siena Virtual College. To read more about Deborah, visit our Web site at www.srcharitycinti.org/news_events/features.htm.
Leadership Insights: Fr. Al Bischoff, SJ, blesses members of the outgoing Leadership Team, (from left) Sisters Barbara Hagedorn, Nancy Bramlage, Georgia Kitt and Lois Jean Goettke, during a thanksgiving liturgy on Sunday, June 19. Members of the new Leadership Team began their term on July 1, 2011.

The Love of Christ Urges Us: S. Barbara Davis (center), with Mike Whalen, director of college advancement at Mercy College of Northwest Ohio, and Barb Eyler, president of the Mercy Alumni Association, is one of many Sisters of Charity ministering in higher education.

Seeing Beauty, Sharing Beauty: S. Mary Ellen Murphy (right) works with (from left) Sisters Joan Crocker, Claire Foken and Mary Ann Raycher in their ‘Art’s Delight’ watercolor class at Mother Margaret Hall.