

ACS

Assumption's Current Sharings



Assumption College for Sisters ✦ July 2014

Assumption College for Sisters Commencement 2014

"Go forth! Set the world on fire!" was the injunction given by ACS President to the graduates at the close of the 2014 Commencement Exercises in the Chapel of Mary Immaculate, Mendham, NJ, May 10 at 2 pm. These words were taken from St. Ignatius Loyola as he commissioned his best friend and missionary, St. Francis Xavier, as he embarked on a new mission. It was in keeping with the school's theme for the year, "Stir into flame the gift of God."

Rt. Rev. Joel Macul, OSB, delivered the invocation and celebrated Benediction at the ceremony's close.

Sister Francis Raftery, SC, delivered the commencement address. Sister Francis holds a Doctorate in education from New York University, a Master's degree in guidance and counseling from Catholic University of America, and a Bachelor's degree from (now) Jersey City University.

In her career as educator, she has taught at both elementary and secondary levels before assuming the presidency of the College of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, NJ, where she served for 16 years. During the time she served as Professor of Education and Department Chairperson at the College, she designed and implemented the College's Education major, its field experience component, and its student/transfer advisement program. The College of Saint Elizabeth bestowed on her its prestigious Seton Award in 1991 and she was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane

Letters from Seton Hall University in 2004. In 2011, the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education honored Sister Francis with the Sister Rose Thering Award, given for her support of educational and community programs and activities that combat bias, bigotry, and intolerance.



Pictured above in a lighter moment before graduation are: Sister M. Antonia Mtega, OSB; Ana Simon, SCC; Sister Mary James Thuy Dinh, FMSR; Sister Lucia Thiep Ngo, FMV; Sister M. Rustica Kayombo, OSB

Morris Catholic High School Celebrates Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes



In 1957 when Morris Catholic High School opened its doors for the first time, it was placed under the patronage of Our Lady of Lourdes, honoring the 100th anniversary of the apparition of Mary at Lourdes. Each year on that feast the school celebrates a special Mass in her honor.

As a Global Solidarity School, they invited ACS international students to enhance the singing with some of their traditional music and gestures. Pictured below at the Offertory of the Mass are Sister Mary Duong, FMSR; Sister Theresa Lien Pham, LHC; Sister Fides Nijimbere, BM; Sister Alice Seshahu, BM; and Sister Martha Mary Thuan Doan, LHC, representing four different religious congregations from two different nations: Vietnam and Burundi.

Commencement (continued from page 1)

Sister Francis has actively served on many boards both within the scope of education and health care. She currently serves as Coordinator of Patient Relations at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center, Paterson.



Sister Francis Raftery, SC

The following students received Associates in Arts degrees and are the recipients of scholarships to continue their studies to attain their Bachelor's degree:

- *Sister Mary James Thuy Dinh, FMSR (Siena College)*
- *Sister M. Rustica Kayombo, OSB (College of Mount St. Joseph)*
- *Sister M. Antonia Mtega, OSB (College of St. Scholastica)*
- *Sister Lucia Thiep Ngo, FMV (Georgian Court University)*
- *Ana Simon, SCC (Novitiate of Sisters of Christian Charity)*

In addition, six students were awarded Certificates in Theological Studies. They are:

- *Amanda Bathalon, SCC*
- *Sister Lindsay Durham, FMA*
- *Sister Brigitte Hanley, FMA*
- *Sister Theresa Khong, FMA*
- *Sister Mary Amata Reifsnnyder, SCC*
- *Ana Simon, SCC*

A highlight of ACS' graduation program each year is a brief talk by one of the graduates who reflects on her class' experiences during the three years of study at the College. This year's presentation was given by Sister M. Rustica Kayombo, OSB.



Pictured above are the six students that were awarded Certificates in Theological Studies: From left to right: Amanda Bathalon, SCC; Sister Brigitte Hanley, FMA; Sister Lindsay Durham, FMA; Ana Simon, SCC; Sister Mary Amata Reifsnnyder, SCC; Sister Theresa Khong, FMA

President Receives "Sister Rose Thering Award"

Sister Joseph Spring has been selected to receive the annual "Sister Rose Thering Award". According to the letter sent from Dr. Paul B. Winkler, Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education, "the award is to honor the life work of Sister Rose in the area of education, specifically related to anti-Semitism, the Holocaust/Genocide and prejudice reduction and in developing relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish communities to better enhance and strengthen relationships with each other."

Sister Joseph has been involved in Holocaust education for several years. In 1994 when the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education mandated that "Every board of education shall include instruction on the Holocaust and genocides in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary school pupils", Sister Joseph, then principal of St. Joseph School, Mendham, and subsequently Assistant Superintendent of Schools in the Paterson Diocese, took active measures to implement the mandate. This included revision of the Paterson Diocesan Social Studies Curriculum to include Holocaust and genocide education, presentations at the national level on teaching the Holocaust, and presentations to students in both public and Catholic Schools in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. She currently serves on the College of Saint Elizabeth Holocaust Education Resource Center Advisory Board and has been invited to participate in the 2014 New Jersey Education Summit, "Exploring the Future of Holocaust Education."



The award was presented at the year-end meeting of the Commission, June 11, NJ Department of Education, Trenton.

ACS Honors 2014 Alumna of the Year

Each year, ACS recognizes an Alumna of the Year. Sister Elizabeth Calello, a member of the Religious Teachers Filippini, who graduated in 1974 from Assumption College for Sisters was this year's recipient. After obtaining her AA, she received a BA in Elementary Education from Felician College, Lodi, NJ, and a MA in Religious Studies from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Philadelphia, PA. She was awarded her certification in School Administration and Supervision.

Sister Elizabeth's ministry in Catholic school education spans several dioceses and archdioceses: Philadelphia, Newark, Trenton, Camden, Cleveland, and Albany. She has served as principal for 22 years.



Sister Elizabeth Calello, MPF

Most recently, Sister Elizabeth has served as principal of St. Bartholomew Academy, Scotch Plains, co-sponsored by the parishes of St. Bartholomew, Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Bernards, St. Stanislaus, and also St. Mary's. It is a pre-K-8 thriving educational institution where students are encouraged within a faith-filled environment to: Strive academically, Build character and Achieve their goals.

Recognizing Sister Elizabeth's outstanding leadership qualities, she has been elected this year by the Sisters in her congregation as Provincial Councilor and serves as Director of Ministries.

From An ACS Discerner to the Poor Clares Community

My time at Assumption College for Sisters was undoubtedly a blessing, one of those experiences in life that I will never forget. I learned about ACS while looking for religious communities on the Internet. I was seriously discerning, trying to find the community to which God was calling me, but my fears and prejudices regarding religious life kept me from completely opening my heart to Him. Eager to learn more about both God and religious life in order to pursue my vocation, ACS seemed the right place for me.



It was during my time there that I learned about the Poor Clares in Roswell, NM, the community to which God was calling me. Today, as a second year junior in the community, I can look back and say that my time at ACS was essential for me in my discernment and made the transition of entering the enclosure a lot easier. It also made it clear to me that our Lord was calling me to a contemplative cloistered life and not active life, which up until that year, had been my preference due to my active personality. I've learned now that active, community-minded people are very much compatible with contemplative cloistered life.

My first months living with the Sisters at ACS and studying theology and philosophy with them were hard, but the reward was far greater than what I could have ever imagined. Living with sisters from different communities and different countries of the world opened my eyes and gave me the exposure to religious life that I needed in order to overcome my fears and dissipate my prejudices. Through the whole year that I spent at ACS, I was able to deepen my spiritual life by praying in community and learning from the example of the Sisters how to put into practice what I was learning in my philosophy and theology classes, all the while learning about the many different charisms of each of their communities and those I was able to visit on my own.

All in all, I am deeply grateful to the Sisters of Christian Charity who made possible for me the privilege of studying theology and philosophy while at the same time living with Sisters and discerning my vocation to religious life. May God reward you as only He can do it.

Sister Maria Jose of Jesus, PCC

Editor's note: Sister Maria Jose (nee Elena Parres) made her First Profession Nov. 1, 2012. Any woman who is seriously discerning religious life and is recommended by a vocation director or spiritual advisor is welcome to enroll at ACS.

Adapted from world Youth Day Homily July 28, 2013—Pope Francis

Lord, where do you send us to bring your love and mercy to others? There are no borders, no limits: you send us to everyone. Grant us the grace to remember that your love is not only for those who seem close to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Help us not to be afraid to go and to bring the Gospel into every area of life, to the fringes of society; even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent. You seek all, and you want everyone to feel the warmth of your mercy and love.

Students Visit the Cathedral Basilica

On March 25th, Sister Mary Veronica Kulsar, SCC, Sister Marie Cecilia Landis, SCC, and Dr. Jo Anne Sylva accompanied the second-year students on a field trip to experience some of the religious and cultural wonders of a city so near to us, Newark, New Jersey. The first objective was to introduce the students to the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart which Pope John Paul II visited on October 4, 1995, and, overwhelmed by its beauty, designated as a Minor Basilica.

The group was fortunate again this year to have as its guide Rev.

Armand Mantia, Pastor of Holy Spirit Church in Union and a true historian of the Basilica. Fr. Mantia gave an expansive presentation highlighting the five ambulatory chapels surrounding the sanctuary which reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the Roman Catholic Church in the



Archdiocese of Newark at the time of construction. He also explained the dual purpose of the magnificent stained glass windows as bringing color and light to the faithful and teaching them about the lives of the saints. The students were thoroughly engaged and responded with thoughtful questions.

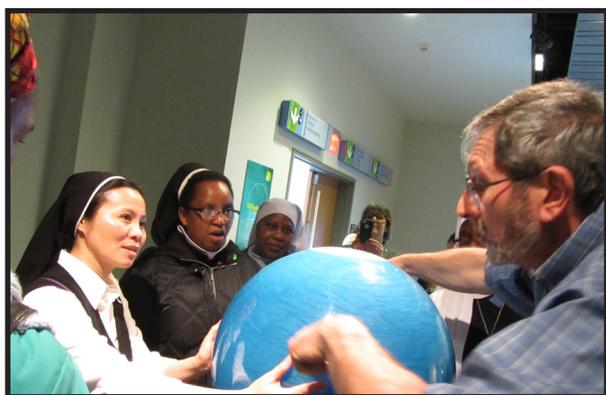
The second part of the field trip was a luncheon at the Casa Seabra Portuguese restaurant in the Ironbound Section of Newark which afforded the students an opportunity to sample one of the hundreds of cuisines that are part of the fabric of America. Much to the delight of the group, one of our students, Sister Theresia Ndesoma, MM, spoke in Portuguese to the restaurant employees.

We all knew that Sister Theresia had been a missionary for years in Brazil, but to see her in action was amazing. While the students were very appreciative of the field trip, it is quite evident that they, themselves, certainly have much to contribute wherever they go!

Hands-On Science: Field Trip to Liberty Science Center

In early April, second year ACS students traveled to Liberty Science Center and explored current research in technology, ecology, and immunology. The theme of this year's Introduction to Biology curriculum was science communication. Students debated lab results and analyzed graphs. They wrote papers on disease prevention and researched conservation issues in Vietnam and Africa. Through class work, students learned how scientists perform experiments and discuss results. They also discovered that non-scientists, too, contribute to local and global discussions of relevant issues. Within the ACS science and mathematics program, students acquired strategies for life-long learning.

Our field trips offered an invaluable opportunity for the students to apply these skills. ACS international students enthusiastically communicated about science during the course of the day. They observed endangered South American monkeys and Hudson River wildlife, and discussed conservation issues with LSC staff members. Together with other science center visitors, students investigated topics including renewable energy and fiber optic cable technology. Thanks to the continued support of our donors and sponsors, this visit reinforced classroom learning and expanded opportunities for independent investigations. The students gratefully acknowledge the generous spirit and prayers of all the benefactors of the college which help to make such experiences possible.



Instructor Don Succardi provides some hands-on learning for Sister Teresa Suong Tran, LHC, Sister Cecilia Athumani, CPS, and Sister Yovina Mpale, OSB.

Trip to Corpus Christi Parish



An integral part of the Th 098 course, Fundamentals of the Catholic Faith, is to familiarize the international Sister students with aspects of ministry in the American Church. For the second consecutive year, Sister Margaret Dincher, SCC, Pastoral Associate for Spirituality, has invited the class to visit Corpus Christi Parish for a tour of the facility and an explanation of the various ministries and outreach of the parish.

Introduction to American Culture



On Wednesday, December 4th, ESL Instructor Dr. Jo Anne Sylva, and Sr. Marie Cecilia Landis, SCC, took the first year ESL 101 students on a field trip to experience some of the highlights of Morrissetown,

New Jersey. They began their afternoon with a luncheon at The Market Restaurant on Rt. 202 where they got to choose from a menu that is indicative of the multicultural origins of the United States. The group was very willing to be adventurous, and they ate food that was prepared in ways that they had never experienced. Many of the stores, homes, and even the Morrissetown Green were already adorned for Christmas, and the students were amazed at the lavishness of American holiday decorations.

The second half of the trip was a visit to the Morris Museum where they had two hour-long programs led by Jennifer Schweitzer, the Museum docent. The first program was American Indian Cultures during which they learned about the Native Americans who had lived in the various regions of the United States. The students were very interested in the topic, and they asked thoughtful questions so that they could compare and contrast early life in their countries with that in America. Jen commented to them that their interactive participation was exciting for she was also learning from them.

The group then entered the Guinness Wing of the Museum which houses the world's largest collection of music machines and animated toys. They were delighted with the sounds and movements, and they themselves were allowed to play many of the music boxes.

World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life

Several Sisters of Christian Charity and ACS students gathered with Bishop Serratelli at St. Philip's Church, Clifton, NJ, to participate in the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life.

The evening began with a call to prayer as religious women and men presented symbols — such as flowers, a globe and the cross — near the altar. Also presented was a portrait of Venerable Miriam Teresa Demjanovich, Sister of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, who in October, will be the first native of New Jersey to be beatified, the last step before canonization. A procession of religious then followed representing the different congregations in the diocese, twenty in all. Candles were lit during the renewal of commitment, which reminded the religious about the commitment they made in their vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, and their love for serving others in continuing the gift and mission God has given them through consecrated life. Sister of Christian Charity Mary Edward Spohrer, SCC, diocesan chancellor/delegate for religious, coordinated the evening. SCC novices and postulants provided singing and bell choir accompaniment.



Pictured here are Sister Cesilia Martinez-Zoto, OMO, from El Salvador and Sister Fides Nijimbere, BM, from Burundi.

Third Year Students Visit Art Museum

Students from ACS's drawing class FA 101, were treated to a field trip to the Princeton University Art Museum. They were accompanied by their drawing professor, Dr. Katherine Doyle, and Sr. Marie Cecilia Landis, Director of Experiential Learning. Docent Harvey Rothberg kept the students engaged by his informative remarks, taking the small group



through exhibits of Renaissance Drawings, the prints of Edvard Munch, and Renaissance and Baroque paintings, which included some of the masterworks of Princeton's collection. It was a great trip, highlighted by the sunny and cool weather and a final stop at the Gothic-style university chapel, the third largest university chapel in the world.

The Annual Fund: Teach a Sister Touch the World!

The Annual Fund seeks to enhance the educational and spiritual formation programs offered at the college. All contributions to the Annual Fund assist the college and its students in achieving measurable success as they prepare for a life of service.

Thank you to the many who have responded with a pledge. If you have not had the opportunity to pledge, there is still time. Donations may be made by check, payable to Assumption College for Sisters; credit card by calling the college at 973-543-6528 x 227; or online giving at acs350.org.

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Assumption College for Sisters Honors Five at Annual Caring Basket Gala



On Thursday, April 3rd, five friends of Assumption College for Sisters were honored at the Thirteenth Annual Caring Basket Gala held at the Hanover Marriot. Proceeds fund scholarships for Sister students from developing nations.

Pictured here from left to right are:

- Kenneth and Kristine Donovan: recipients of the Family Life Award
- Rev. Michael J. Drury: recipient of the Servant Leader Award
- Sister Joseph Spring, SCC: President, Assumption College for Sisters
- Jim and Barbara Salerno: recipients of the Spirit of the Heart Award

Msgr. James Mahoney delivered the invocation and Andrew Anselmi served as Master of Ceremonies and Auctioneer.