ANNUAL REPORT

2014-2015
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This time last year, our Holy Father Pope Francis declared that from the first Sunday of Advent 2014 until the Feast of the Presentation 2016, we would celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life.” What a wonderful year for a Sister Formation College to celebrate!

Pope Francis has said the Religious should be people who “Wake up the World”. Taking his lead and quoting from his pastoral letter, we have taken as our theme: “Gratefully remembering the past, we embrace the future with hope, while living the present passionately.”

We are thankful for all who have gone before us and have made ACS the wonderful and nurturing institution that it is. It is built on the vision and hard work of many Sisters. I like to quote Sir Isaac Newton who said, “If we seem to see farther than others, it is because we stand on the shoulders of giants.”

And it is to the courage of these “giants” that I look to as we move into the next phase in our 62 year history. It will take both courage and ingenuity, but I am confident that God will bless this venture.

Meanwhile, we are striving to live our religious consecration faithfully. We do this in our present academic setting, striving to do our best with the resources and talents God has given us.

I count on your prayers and support for the future of Assumption College for Sisters. Please know that you are in our prayers, too.

Sister Joseph Spring, SCC
President
ANNUAL REPORT

Assumption College for Sisters (ACS), sponsored by the Sisters of Christian Charity and founded in 1953, first as an extension of Seton Hall College (now University) and then separately incorporated in 1961 as an independent college, authorized to confer an AA degree on religious women and those in formation or a religious congregation. Until now, it has been housed within the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Christian Charity in Mendham, NJ.

Times are changing. Since 1899, the Sisters have maintained two large properties: the Motherhouse, first in Wilkes-Barre, PA and then in Mendham, NJ, along with Holy Family Convent and Infirmary in Danville, PA. It is now time to bring the Sisters from Danville to the Mendham property. To make this possible, Assumption College for Sisters is in process of planning a move to the Morris Catholic High School campus, Denville, NJ, this Summer, 2015 when the summer session is completed.

This is both a challenging and exciting opportunity for ACS. The administration and students of Morris Catholic High School look forward to the presence of religious women from the United States and developing nations on their campus. ACS students look forward to a first-hand glimpse of Catholic secondary education. We entrust this move to your prayers.

We can assure you that at our new site, the College is, and will still remain, the embodiment of the heritage received from Blessed Pauline von Mallinckrodt who founded the congregation in Paderborn, Germany in 1849. It witnesses to her conviction that her Sisters should be as well prepared professionally as their lay counterparts.

Since its actual founding in 1953, Assumption College for Sisters has provided a religious environment in which a young religious’ spirit would be nurtured while she is in the process of attaining an academic degree.

The goals of Assumption College for Sisters clearly support its mission. This is demonstrated by the involvement of the religious women who are students at the college, whether they are members of the sponsoring congregation, those of neighboring religious congregations, or international Sisters here on scholarship. A few examples provide illustration.

Integrated Religious Formation

Throughout its history, Assumption College for Sisters has consistently maintained its focus and distinctive mission of...
educating women religious. By providing sound theology and philosophy courses in an atmosphere of integrity and shared vision, the administration and faculty strive to enhance the religious formation of the students within the context of their own distinctive community charisms.” (Bulletin 2013-2016)

Annually, the women in initial formation for the Sisters of Christian Charity attend the “Here I am, Lord” Conference, Mount St. Mary, Emmitsburg, MD, a weekend event.

It has become a tradition that both the Orientation Day liturgy as well as the Graduation liturgy reflect the cultures and languages represented by the international Sisters here at the college.

Each year, Most Rev. Arthur J. Serratelli, bishop of the diocese of Paterson in which Assumption College is located, hosts a gathering for young religious of the diocese. Several students from Assumption College for Sisters were invited and benefited from the inspirational liturgy celebrated by the bishop and enjoyed his words of encouragement. In addition, several students participated in the Paterson Diocesan Mid-Day Prayer in honor of the Year for Consecrated Life.

The Sisters of Christian Charity sponsored a dramatic performance on St. Faustina which was attended by all ACS students residing at the Motherhouse.

As opportunities present themselves in the curriculum, the history, traditions and charisms of the members of religious congregations attending the college are shared.

An alumna of ACS, currently the province leader of the Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth, invited ACS international students to the “Transitus” service at their Motherhouse on the eve of the feast of St. Francis. Several students attended and were greatly inspired. First year students were also invited to the celebration of the canonization of the founder of the Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth, St. Ludovico of Casoria.

As part of the Year for Consecrated Life, various religious communities attending ACS had an “Open House”, sharing the life and ministries of the Sisters.

· Leadership

ACS strives to form women who will be a light for the world and a savior in society. Whatever form their service may take, Assumption’s students need to be prepared to assume the esponsibility of Christian leadership and the commitment to bring, through countercultural witness, the Gospel message to God’s people. The College aims to instill qualities of leadership in its students.” (Bulletin 2013-2016).

Students exercise their leadership skills in organizing and presenting various programs of entertainment for both the Motherhouse community as well as for the public.

Members of the student body also join the administration of the College on parish visits to raise awareness of the mission. SCC students and Salesian students of ACS conduct religious education classes as well as sacramental retreats for elementary school students in a neighboring parishes. Salesian novices conduct periodic Youth Nights for high school and college students.

· Community

Community, founded on service and respect for each person’s dignity, ranks among Assumption’s most cherished values. Intrinsic to its heritage, the College strives to further the vision of Blessed Pauline and the spirit of Christian Charity she imparted to her Sisters” (Bulletin 2013-2016).

Despite the fact that the college student body speaks several different languages as their native tongue, a great spirit of Christian love and unity exists among them.

A true community experience exists in what is known as the “Sister to Sister” program. Cornerstone women, retreat
Participants from St. Joseph Parish, Mendham, have partnered with our international Sister-students. They have provided friendship and encouragement for the fourth consecutive year.

Also, as part of the civic community in which ACS is situated, several students attended the local Labor Day Parade in Mendham, experiencing this tradition for the first time. In the neighboring community of Bernardsville, NJ, A Veterans Day memorial service was held and attended by ACS first year international students.

The Vietnamese celebration of Tet (Vietnamese New Year), the most important and popular holiday which celebrates the arrival of Spring, was celebrated by all students as well as the Motherhouse community. Beginning with Eucharistic liturgy, the celebration continued into the evening meal prepared by the Vietnamese students, during which the international student body as well as the young women in the SCC formation program provided entertainment.

• Service

Service, central to Christian discipleship, is an essential aspect of ACS. Students are expected to avail themselves of opportunities to prepare for a life of service in the Church” (Bulletin 2013-2016).

The dedicated, loving, generous service offered by alumnae in schools, health care, parishes, retreat ministry, and other ministries both in the United States and developing nations, provide convincing confirmation of the irreplaceable value of Assumption College for Sisters.

On a regular basis, resident students respond to college and Motherhouse hospitality needs, offering service to both retreat centers: Villa Pauline and Quellen Spiritual Center.

Both the young women in initial formation as well as the international students entertained with song and dance at the jubilee celebration for the Sisters of Christian Charity.

Prior to and during the Caring Basket Gala, the major fundraiser or ACS, students assisted with various tasks: selling of raffle tickets, serving as greeters, and providing entertainment.

As part of their religious formation, the SCC students in initial formation assist the formation directresses in vocation outreach and provide service to the local mission houses when needed. They also take part in events which allow them the opportunity to speak in small or larger groups on the topic of vocation and the call to religious life. They also assist in tutoring local elementary school students in need of help.

The Sisters from neighboring religious congregations, Salesian Sisters and Sisters of Divine Vocation, are actively involved in the apostolates of their respective congregations, whether it be retreat work or early childhood education.

• Social Justice

Growing out of a firm belief in the dignity of each person, faculty and students at ACS strive to see the face of Jesus in all. They seek ways to embrace the poor and eliminate systems of oppression worldwide” (Bulletin 2013-2016).

On September 21, the International Day of Peace ACS students led the commemorative service, carrying in procession the flags of the nations represented here at the College.

Students of Th 098 Fundamentals of the Catholic Faith class had an extensive tour and explanation of the various outreaches of Corpus Christi Parish, Chatham Township, NJ.

Curriculum

The liberal arts curriculum provides the principal vehicle of academic instruction at Assumption College for Sisters. Approved by the Commission on Higher Education of the State of New Jersey, the curriculum gives priority to Catholic theology and philosophy.
The curriculum at Assumption College for Sisters is designed to reflect a global perspective that incorporates an awareness of and respect for the viewpoints, cultures, and customs of all peoples. Through the teaching and study of the contributions of the world community to humankind, ACS strives to broaden student horizons by realizing the connectedness of all individuals whose common needs call each person to strive for the peace and justice of Gospel teaching (Bulletin 2013-2016).

Commenting on this very statement, Pope Francis has said: “If our schools do not create another way of being human, another culture and another society, we lose our time. It is better to have free and responsible learners, capable of asking themselves questions, to decide at the risk of making mistakes rather than to produce more replicas of our own successes or our own failures.”

Although ACS emphasizes the liberal arts, current technology provides a useful tool in the learning process. Each classroom is equipped with internet access, a laptop and LCD projector. The two Epson BrightLink Interactive projectors are used extensively by faculty.

The new technology has enabled instructors to use new techniques in teaching. Both Ph 205 Historical Introduction to Philosophy and Ph 203 Philosophy of the Human Person have become blended courses. A blended course combines the traditional face-to-face classroom with an online learning environment. With the assistance of the course management system (CMS) application named Coursesites, a free version of Blackboard, the instructor is able to deliver and manage course content, assignments, learning resources, student’s progress, and student’s grades online. Through the use of audio and video lectures, which are uploaded on the CMS application, and supplementary videos and articles, students access their course content prior to having their face-to-face class.

Students are challenged to make use of online educational tools such as Blendspace, Google Hang Out, Google Applications and Drive, and Google Shared Documents. These resources have enriched, expanded, and extended the learning environment beyond the classroom walls.

Google Hang Out has been used by both the ESL instructor and the Theology instructor in the spring semester when traditional classes could not be conducted due to severe weather.

All curricular offerings are faithful to the mission and goals of Assumption College for Sisters and faithful to the Catholic intellectual tradition in which every discipline is open to searching for the good, the true and the beautiful.

Enrollment

At the conclusion of the 2014-15 academic year, there were 49 students enrolled, including both full-time and part-time: 20 international students, 5 Sisters of Christian Charity, 17 Sisters from local religious communities, and 7 lay students.

Student enrollment was comprised of 14 different religious congregations representing 12 different countries. The following communities were enrolled:
- Bene Maria Sisters
- Benedictine Sisters of Our Lady Help of Christians
- Lovers of the Holy Cross--Nha Trang
- Lovers of the Holy Cross--Thu Thiem
- Daughters of Mary
- Daughters of Mary Help of Christians
- Daughters of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary
- Daughters of Our Lady of the Visitation
- Franciscan Sisters of St. Bernadette
- Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth
- Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood
- Oblates of Mother of Orphans
- Sisters of Christian Charity
- Sisters of Divine Vocation
Administration and Faculty

Throughout the 2014-15 academic year, administration and faculty have been involved in the research and compiling of the Middle States Self-Study in preparation for the Accreditation visit in March 2016.

ACS faculty and administrators have made professional contributions outside the institution:

The College Registrar has served as ministry leader for the Pre-Cana program at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Whitehouse Station, NJ. She has organized an assembly featuring Holocaust survivor testimony at Readington Middle School. In addition she has served as team captain for the Walk to Find a Cure for Diabetes at Rutgers University/ Cook College.

The Theology instructor who is also the director of Sacred Heart Retreat Center, a ministry of the Salesian Sisters, has conducted several catechist workshops, Ministry Days, retreats and sacramental presentations for parents. She has provided numerous evening sessions throughout the diocese of Paterson on “Living and Proclaiming the Joy of the Gospel”.

The Philosophy instructor has provided individual faculty sessions on various topics: Creating a Blackboard account, designing a course syllabus template, uploading documents, creating and sharing folders in Google drive, how to edit, leave comments, and change editing settings on shared folders.

The Art History instructor participated in a focus group for a major textbook publisher developing on-line course materials in art history. She is also finishing an article on two modern American sculptors.

The President has received the 2015 Recognition Award from the Bayley Seton League of Seton Hall University, the oldest service organization at the University.

Alumnae Achievements

In the recent document, “Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion,” the Congregation for Catholic Education acknowledged that “the real expected result” of education “is not the acquisition of information or knowledge, but rather personal transformation.” As a Sister-formation college, here at ACS, as we educate our students, we strive to provide the fertile ground for both formation and transformation.

Nine new members were added to the cadre of ACS alumnae with graduation 2015. Eight students received an AA degree and one in ARA degree.

Four Salesian novices and one lay student received their Certificates in Theological Studies during the commencement exercises. This was the first time in the history of the Certificate program that this was awarded to a layman.

Sister Mary Dominic Kopitar, SCC (ACS ’82) was recognized as 2015 Alumna of the Year. After obtaining her AA, she received a BA in Elementary Education from Felician College in Lodi, NJ. Sister Mary Dominic ministered in Catholic education for eleven years in the Scranton and Paterson Dioceses. Presently, Sister has been serving the community as Provincial Secretary. In addition to her secretarial duties, Sister mentored postulants for several years and was a member of the leadership team as a provincial councilor for two years. She has served as Secretary at several international meetings of the congregation including the previous two General Chapters.

Sisters of Christian Charity, alumni of ACS are now ministering on our different continents:

In North America, the newly elected Provincial and Council are all alumni of ACS: Provincial Superior, Sister Mary Edward Spohrer ACS ’63; Provincial Councilors Sister Marlene Weitzel (ACS ’68), Sister Joann Marie Aumand (ACS ’75), and Sister Marie Pauline Demek (ACS ’73).
On the South American continent, Sister Celice Marie Gonzales (ACS ‘12) has been missioned to serve in the Chilean Province where she ministers in both Chile and Bolivia. Although not an alumna, but rather, someone who served as support staff at ACS, Sister Sophia Marie Peralta has been missioned to serve in the Uruguay/Argentina Region.

On the European Continent, Sister Joanne Bednar (ACS ‘65) had been elected to serve as General Councilor for the North American Eastern Province and Western Region.

In Asia, Sister Martin Haubrich (ACS ‘67) once again traveled to the Philippines with the World Surgical Foundation where she assisted with a total of 222 operations on those persons who ordinarily would be deprived of such treatment.

This summer an SCC sponsored initiative is providing a three week international community living and service experience for the sisters of the various provinces among the poor in Uruguay in honor of the 200th birthday of Blessed Pauline von Mallinckrodt. From the North American Eastern Province, those participating are: Sister Mary Joseph Albright, Sister Maria Lan Nguyen (ACS ’95) and Sister Christina Marie Cables (ACS ’91). From the Uruguay-Argentine Region, Sister Marisol Garcia (ACS ’95) will participate.

Since the beginning of the college in 1953, 406 Sister students have received their AA or ARA degree. Since 2005, 95 students have graduated with degrees. 90 students received their AA Degree and 5 students received their ARA Degree. Of those receiving an AA degree, 56 continued to study for an undergraduate degree. Of those who earned a Bachelor’s Degree, 36 students went on to receive or are pursuing a Master’s Degree and 1 is pursuing her doctorate. Eleven alumni are continuing in their congregation’s initial formation program or congregational ministry.

In a recent Alumni survey sent to graduates within the past ten years, it was revealed that our graduates are in active ministry in their native lands, holding a variety of positions: teacher, Human Resource officer, Emergency Room technician, Emergency Room nurse, catechist, counselor of individual and group therapy, spiritual director, Pre-K teacher.

### Academic and Cultural Enrichment

Students from FA 101, Drawing, accompanied instructor Dr. Catherine Doyle to the Center for Contemporary Art where they saw an exhibition entitled, “Line, Color and Surface” and met artist attending studio classes there. At the conclusion of the spring semester, each member of the class exhibited three of her best drawings for an art show attended by both the Motherhouse and ACS community. The FA 101 Dance and Music class, accompanied by the Fine Arts instructors, Barbara Kelly-Vergona, Dr. Catherine Doyle, and Sister Mary Edward Spohrer (ACS ’63) enjoyed a contemporary dance performance entitled *Innervisions* presented by the Complexions Contemporary Ballet at the Mayo Performing Arts Center, Morristown, NJ.

First Year international students visited the Morris County Courthouse to obtain their Morris County Resident ID Cards. While there, they learned about the county history and actual working of the Courthouse; they also met the County Commissioner.

Rev. Hubertus R. Drobner, STD, DD, enriched the Hi 101 World Civilization Class with a lecture on the “Fathers of the Church”. Father Drobner is a priest of the Diocese of Mainz, Germany, and professor of Ecclesiastical History and Patristics in the Diocesan School of Theology, Paderborn, Germany. He holds doctorates from the Universities of Mainz and Oxford, the Patristic Institute Augustinianum” and the Pontifical Institute of Christian Archaeology in Rome. He is the author of numerous books including *The Fathers of the Church, a Comprehensive Introduction*.

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 (ACS ’64), has invited the class to visit Corpus Christi Parish for a tour of the facility and an explanation of various ministries and outreach of the parish.

As part of the Ed 102 Health and Wellness course, students and instructor Therese Tully toured the new Chambers Center for Well Being which is part of the Atlantic Health System, Morristown. There they participated in an energy therapy session. They also participated in an instructional session at the Carol W. & Julius A. Rippel Breast Center at Morristown Memorial Hospital.

Russian Orthodox priest Rev. George Hasenecz, former pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Randolph, NJ, presented students of Hi 102 World Civilization II with some history of the Russian Orthodox religion including the underground Church during the years of Communism and the resurgence of faith after 1989. The class was able to see some of the difference between Roman and Byzantine services and worship through samples of icons, leavened bread, vestments, crosses, prayer beads, etc. Understanding the meaning of symbolism not used in the Roman Catholic tradition was enriching for the students.

Students of ESL 108 Independent English Study and Hi 102, accompanied by instructors Dr. JoAnne Sylva and Sister Mary Veronica Kulsar, experienced the religious, architectural and cultural wonders of the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Newark. A docent from the Central Synagogue in New York City explained how religious toleration developed in New Jersey and gave the historical background of the construction of the Cathedral. The associate organist at the Cathedral presented a lecture on the origin and composition of the world-famous organ and played an elaborate baroque piece.

On this same trip, students were treated to a luncheon as the Casa Seabra Portuguese Restaurant where they had the opportunity to sample one of the many cuisines represented in New Jersey.

Brother Paul Diveny, OSB, Headmaster at Delbarton School, Morristown, NJ, has been a featured guest speaker during the summer session Th 201, The Church: Its Nature and History class. He spoke about St. Benedict and the Benedictine rule through the centuries.

Public Relations and Outreach

Assumption College for Sisters students were the “face” of ACS many times during the course of the academic year. They served as hostesses and provided entertainment for the Caring Basket Gala, the major fundraiser for ACS.

At the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Christian Charity, the women in initial formation play in the Bell Choir for local and diocesan events.

The SCC women in initial formation have been highly visible in vocation school visits in both elementary and high schools, and as well as assisting with “live-in” experiences at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Christian Charity.

The college newsletter, Assumption’s Current Sharings, continues to be the main vehicle for public relations along with the newly designed website. The ACS Development Team has assisted in the creation and management of an Alumni and Friends Network. They have sent several e-mails encouraging alumni to stay connected and to update ACS with their status since graduating.

Another means of indirectly promoting ACS, was the accomplishment of the new Chair of the ACS Board of Trustees, Andrew Anselmi. A lawyer and author, he released his first book, Autumn Rush, in June 2015.

The ACS website, both colorful and informative, hosts photos of fundraisers and other College events. There has been great success in getting news and feature stories in various local newspapers. ACS continues to seek avenues of involvement and opportunities for good public relations.
Updates

Several new members joined our Board of Trustees this year and Andrew Anselmi became our first lay chairperson. We are grateful to have Andrew, who not only is a busy lawyer and father of three children, but he is soon to be a best-selling author. His first book, The Autumn Rush, was just released in June 2015.

Assumption College for Sisters is preparing for the upcoming Middle States Accreditation Visit, March 13-16, 2016. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education oversees the accreditation of colleges, schools, and online universities in Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands. The first accreditation visit took place in 1965 and then ACS was re-accredited every ten years.

Gifts

Many donations were received in the form of scholarship aid, Memorial Scholarships and “Sponsor a Sister.”

At a Christmas gathering at the new site for Assumption College for Sisters, attendees were presented with several naming options. To date, the following items were memorialized: President’s office, dining hall, main classroom, five chapel pews, and several appliances.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Bernardsville, NJ had designated the proceeds from their annual pancake breakfast and their Lenten Soup Supper as a financial gift to Assumption College for Sisters.

Four grants were received in the month of March, St. Joseph’s month:
- Lipari Family Foundation
- William E. Simon Foundation
- John F. Byrne Family Foundation
- Koch Foundation

The Fourteenth Annual Caring Basket Gala marked the greatest success of all previous ACS Galas. This year’s honorees were:

Spirit of the Heart: Timothy I. Duffy, Esq.
Education: Antoinette Petrocelli
Servant Leader: Rev. Paddy O’Donovan

Due to an added feature, a live auction item for scholarship donations, ACS gained three full scholarships for the international students.

Morris Catholic High School community provided a special welcome to ACS with a lovely reception and a wide variety of very practical gifts for use in the new facility.

The success of our development efforts and the extraordinary generosity of our friends and benefactors enabled Assumption College for Sisters to approach a more sound financial basis.
Conclusion

With the graduation of 2015, Assumption College for Sisters awarded an AA degree for the 53rd time.

At this year’s commencement I sent forth our graduates with the stirring words of St. Ignatius Loyola to his best friend, St. Francis Xavier, “Go forth, Set the World on Fire.” So...whether these newest alumni minister here in the United States or in Tanzania, Kenya, Vietnam, or Uruguay we are confident that they will use their talents and knowledge to make the world a better place. They will truly be women who “Wake Up the World”.

On June 28, a special Mass of Thanksgiving and Blessing was concelebrated by Trustees, Msgr. John Fell, Msgr. John Doran, and Rev. Michael Drury, recognizing those Trustees whose terms have expired as well as members of the administration, faculty and support staff who are retiring from ministry at ACS. A special blessing was bestowed on them as well as on those students, faculty, and administration who will move forward to the new site.

I began this report with a quote from Pope Francis and I would also like to conclude with one which seems to speak to the years ahead for ACS:

Three things are necessary to educate in hope:
• memory of the heritage received and assumed,
• work with this heritage so that it may not become a buried talent,
• and vision through utopias and dreams into the future.”

As you read this report, we ask you to help us thank God for his manifold blessings on ACS. As we move into a new and challenging phase of our history, we ask His blessing for its continuance.

Sister Joseph Spring, SCC
President, Assumption College for Sisters
August 2015
Founded and sponsored
by the Sisters of Christian Charity

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