

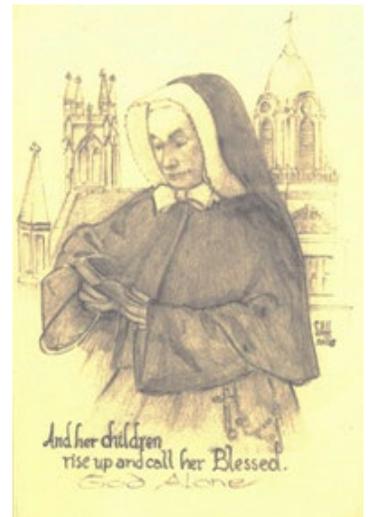


United in Prayer for Vocations | September 2022

Prepared by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, New Jersey, at the request of the Federation Vocation Core Team

A monthly prayer service is being prepared by each branch in our Federation. The purpose is to pray for vocations, to help us learn a bit more about the charisms of each of our congregations, keep us engaged collaboratively in vocation ministry and bring us closer to seeing ourselves sharing a common Mission of Charity for the present and the future.

Introduction: The [Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth](#) were founded in Newark, New Jersey in 1859 through the impetus of Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, the step-nephew of Mother Seton. Concerned for the Catholic immigrants entering from Europe, he sought a community of vowed women religious to establish parochial schools, to care for orphaned children, and to nurse the sick. With five young women who received their initial formation with the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, two New York Sisters of Charity – Sister Mary Xavier Mehegan and Sister Mary Catherine Nevin – took charge of the new foundation and ultimately chose to remain in New Jersey as Mother General and Assistant Mother, respectively. In the years since our foundation, the New Jersey community established schools and a university, hospitals and a hospice, founding homes, orphanages, and social service agencies, primarily in New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, and later in China, Bolivia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Mexico, Haiti, and El Salvador. With confidence in Providence, we seek to move the Mission forward.



Call to Prayer

Leader: Creator God, you formed us in love and for love.
All: May we see God's hand in all of creation.
Leader: Jesus, you call us to love one another as you love us.
All: May we see your face in all of our sisters and brothers.
Leader: Spirit, you gift and empower us for mission.
All: May we be ever energized by the fire of your love.

Scripture: Luke 4:14 – 21 Mission Statement of the Sisters of Charity

Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. Entering the synagogue on the Sabbath, as was his habit, Jesus stood up to do the reading. When the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him, he unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

“The Spirit of Our God is upon me:
because the Most High has anointed me
to bring good news to those who are poor.
God has sent me to proclaim liberty to those held captive,
recovery of sight to those who are blind,
and release to those who are in prison –
to proclaim the year of Our God's favor.”

Rolling up the scroll, Jesus gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of the synagogue were fixed upon him. Then he said to them, “Today, in your hearing, this scripture passage is fulfilled.”

Silence

In the words of Mother Mary Xavier Mehegan: “Do not think of great austerities, fastings, or watchings, but perform your ordinary actions, speak your simple words, think your thoughts all for **God for GOD ALONE.**”

In a letter to the community, Mother Xavier once taught: “And now, dear Sisters, try to sanctify your own souls while laboring for the good of others, as Holy Rule reminds us. Keep God and His eternal glory always before you. Love your Community; be true and loyal to it, and God will more quickly hear and answer your prayers. The Community, as Saint Vincent says so beautifully, is always a loving mother to us; we must prove worthy children of such a mother.”

(Written to the Sisters at Mt. Hope requesting used clothing for the children when the mines closed.)

“No, Sister, we will not send off to God’s children anything discarded by others. What they need is not outworn garments, but good substantial clothing that will stand the wear and tear of daily life.”

Courage

With faith wrapped tightly
in her heart,
Courage stepped out
and forged a path of expectation –
treading boldly.
Prayer kept pace
with decisions,
so the hand of confidence
moved difficulties aside.

Wearing the apron of simplicity,
she set a feast for famine –
filling poverty, healing illness,
instructing ignorance...
Veiled in love,
she protected with passion
and healed with honesty –
weaving justice into fabric
of human need.

Greeting companions
along the way,
Courage clasped the hands
of charity.
Respecting the task of vision,
she dressed her company
with Providence...
then set them on
to sow seeds of God Alone.

—Anita M. Constance, SCNJ

Let us take a few moments of reflection and sharing with one another.

1. What new beginnings do you see that offer possibilities in our living the mission of Charity as we move into the future?
2. How are ministry, prayer and life in community calling us to be signs of hope in our daily living out of the Gospel?
3. Have you asked anyone if she ever thought of becoming a Sister or Daughter of Charity or an Associate?

Intercessions

Response: Blessed be God forever.

- God, you raised up all of our founders to be an inspiration for many. In thanksgiving for the gift of their lives, we pray...
- You inspired them to found our congregations, help us to be faithful to our religious commitment that we may be transformed into Christ, we pray...
- You gifted our founders with vision and courage. Support all whose vision and gifts further the work of bringing peace and justice to our world, we pray...
- You called us to be Sisters/Daughters of Charity. May our example inspire women and men to serve as Sisters/Daughters of Charity, and Seton Associates we pray...
- And for what else shall we pray...

Closing Prayer: Federation Vocation Prayer

From age to age, O God,
you have ignited hearts
impelled by the love of Christ
to respond with the gift of their lives.
In the name of the family of St. Vincent de Paul,
we commend to you all women
in serious discernment and initial formation
with our Federation of Charity.

Through the intercession of Vincent, Louise, Elizabeth,
and all our Founders in the Company of Charity,
may they experience clarity of call,
generosity of heart,
and the courage to respond in faith.
Give us the grace to be joyful companions
on the journey of discernment.
From generation to generation
may the love of Christ impel us!



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