

CHARITY CHAT

"To serve rather than be served with humility, simplicity and charity"

Association of the Ladies of Charity, Milwaukee, WI

Spring 2025

Important Dates

July 15, 2025

6:00 PM

LOC Board Meeting

Location TBD

General Membership Welcome

September 2, 2025

Clothing Center Opens

September 11, 2025

LOC National Assembly

Emmitsburg, MD

September 20, 2025

Opening Mass and Breakfast

Auxiliary Bishop Haines Presiding

October 21, 2025

6:00 PM

LOC Board Meeting

Location TBD

General Membership Welcome

December 6, 2025

Christmas Luncheon

Wisconsin Country Club



Welcome Pope Leo XIV

With hearts full of prayer and hope, let us all join the global Church in welcoming our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV. His election this spring comes at a time when the world yearns deeply for compassion, clarity, and courageous leadership rooted in Christ's love.

As women devoted to serving those in need in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, we are inspired by the Pope's early words and gestures, which speak of humility, mercy, and a deep concern for the poor and marginalized. These values are at the very heart of our Vincentian mission, and they affirm our work and prayerful commitment to "serving Christ in the person of the poor."

Let us keep the Holy Father in our daily prayers as he undertakes the profound responsibility of guiding the Church in faith, charity and unity. May his papacy be marked by peace, justice, and a renewed call to holiness for us all.

Our **Spiritual Moderator** Cathy Liska shares a **Vincentian reflection on Pope Leo XIV's first address on Page 2.**

In the first prayer intention of his papacy, Pope Leo XIV has asked us to pray that the world might grow in compassion during the month of June. His prayer included:

"Jesus manifested an unconditional love for everyone, especially for the poor, the sick, and those who were suffering. The pope encourages us to imitate this compassionate love by extending a hand to those in need."

Let us all take time to pray for this intention during the summer

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Social and Digital Media
(Paulette Pecard)

Parish Outreach
(Jude Schubert)

See our new website locmilwaukee.org for full listing of opportunities.



Generosity
changes everything

CATHY LISK A REFLECTION

Our Spiritual Moderator Cathy Liska shares this Vincentian reflection on Pope Leo XIV's first address.

Vincentian Tidbits

Pope Leo's address was brief; every phrase was rich with meaning.

Peace, unity, mission and hope resonate with Vincentian convictions.

God walks with the poor, peace is born of love, the church must be missionary and we are called to build bridges not walls.

The famvim site shared ten takeaways from this inaugural speech that I cautiously edited and would like to pass along to each of you.



1. "Peace be with all of you" The pope presented himself as a brother among us not a ruler above. St Vincent de Paul reminded us that this peace cannot be imposed but must be lived through the open doors of our heart, our gaze, our hands and our presence.
2. "An unarmed and disarming peace, humble and persevering" this is the peace St. Vincent de Paul lived, choosing reconciliation over revenge, transforming through a quiet strength.
3. "God loves all of us and evil will not prevail" rather than naive words a bold proclamation rooted in the heart of the Gospel. As Vincentians we serve with the conviction that love is stronger than hate, employing compassion to dismantle systems of indifference.
4. "Without fear, united hand in hand with God and among ourselves" We are people walking together, hands clasped in faith, grounded in friendship and solidarity. The SVdP family, international and diverse, is strongest when united, sharing in the mission; grounded in Christ.
5. "Help each other to build bridges-with dialogue, with encounter" We utilize dialogue as a spiritual discipline, not a diplomatic tool. SVdP taught that we meet Christ in the poor not to fix them, but to welcome them and in that encounter, a bridge is built.
6. "To proclaim the Gospel, to be missionaries" Vincentians walk through villages, prisons, shelters, schools etc. carrying the Gospel in their persona and their actions.
7. "With you I am a Christian, for you a bishop" This is an Augustinian phrase that affirms the bishop belongs to the people, not above them. SVdP lived this deeply, refusing honor and status, choosing instead the company of the poor and dedicating his life to those poor and excluded.
8. "A Church with open arms....those who need our charity, presence, dialogue and love" spoke profoundly to the Vincentian heart. The Vincentian family must continue to be the Church's outstretched hands.
9. "We want to be a synodal Church, a Church that walks" Pope Leo's dream, with no bureaucratic vision-is over the top biblical. Vincentian gatherings, collaborative missions, communal discernments are each signs of this walking Church.
10. "Let us pray together....for this mission, for peace, and ask grace from Mary". Vincent and Louise had great confidence in Mary's maternal protection...as a companion, sister and mother.

As Pope Leo XIV begins his ministry, these ten messages offer not just a program but a path forward. For Vincentians they are a mirror and a reminder that our charism is alive and continues to be abundantly needed in today's world. May we continue to walk together, carrying the peace of the Risen Christ wherever we go.

"You will help others more by the peace and tranquility of your heart than by any eagerness or care you can bestow on them." (CW 3b:84)

– St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Use me, Lord, as an instrument of your peace today.

A message from our President, Marlene Kollmeyer

Spring is a special time of the year when flowers bloom and the days are warmer. God breathes new life all around us.

Our Children's Clothing Center had new life this school year at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish on the south side of Milwaukee. **What a year it was!** 865 children in need were given school clothes. I am so proud of all the volunteers who gave their time, talents and commitment to make the Clothing Center run efficiently. A special thanks goes to Gail Proite-Adams and Francie Shea for their willingness to do whatever it takes to make things run smoothly. You can read more about the amazing work and service of the Children's Clothing Center later in this issue.

Many of our Ladies of Charity gathered together for the Christmas Holiday Luncheon at the Wisconsin Club and the Lenten Evening of Reflection for prayer and to renew their friendships with our members. Many thanks to Mary Johnson and her Events Committee who diligently worked to make these events a success.

Another highlight of Spring is the Ladies of Charity New Member Installation Event, held this year at Holy Family Church, McCormack Hall. Six ladies were welcomed into our organization and we are so pleased to have them join us!

Looking ahead to the fall--- **The Ladies of Charity National Assembly** will be hosted in Bethesda, Maryland September 11-13. The theme for the Assembly this year will be "*Choose Hope*" and I would encourage you to attend this event if you are able. National Assemblies are informative, inspiring and spiritually uplifting. You become aware of the depth and breadth of the national organization along with local groups. You develop new friendships and share special, memorable moments with current friends. For specific information, please check the website: [LCUSANationalAssembly2025](https://www.ladiesofcharityusa.org/LCUSANationalAssembly2025), then click on registration.

It is not too early to be thinking of the position of co-vice president for 2026. Our current Co-Vice Presidents are Kathleen Valusek and Judy Moran. They will take office as Co-Presidents on January 1, 2026 and they will need vice presidents to fill that position for a 2-year term. This is extremely necessary to carry on with our organization into the future. Please, prayerfully, consider whether you can take this position.

In closing, your prayers for members who are experiencing health issues are greatly appreciated. May God's compassionate care give them strength, health and inner peace.



2024-25 LADIES OF CHARITY SPECIAL EVENTS

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

It was a “Ladies of Charity Christmas” at the Wisconsin Country Club for the second year in a row and our 2025 luncheon will be held there too! The venue, the ambiance, the food and the service were once again first rate.

Mark your calendars now for Saturday, December 6th and plan to attend. When we get together in early December, we celebrate the beginning of Advent and anticipate the joy of Christ’s birth. In 2024, we had the joy of having the DSHA Angelaire’s singing group perform for us. What a delight! We hope to have them back again this year.



LENTEN EVENING OF REFLECTION

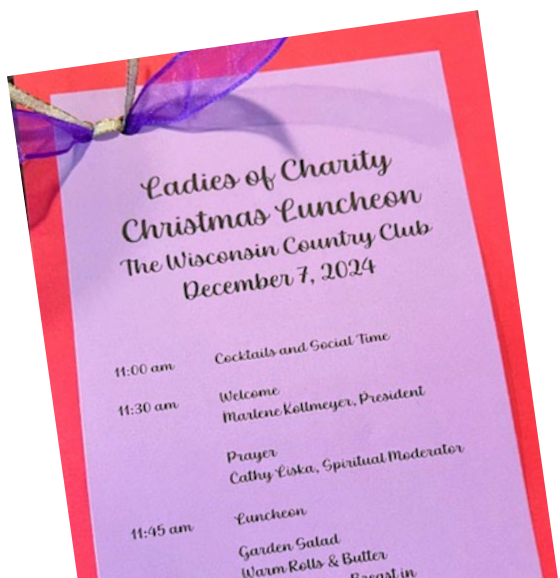
The 2025 Evening of Reflection was held at the Milwaukee Catholic Home on Thursday, March 13th. Over forty women, comprised of both LOC members and guests, gathered for a 5:00 p.m. Mass in St Anne’s Chapel. We enjoyed having the newly ordained Fr. Charles Luke from St. Robert/Holy Family parishes as the celebrant.

With a recommendation from Cathy Onopa, we secured Brenda Cline, Director of Priest Placement and Lay Initiative for the Milwaukee Archdiocese to share her Lenten Reflection, “Women of Justice in Service”. Brenda used “The Hunger Cloth” which depicted biblical images of women and readings from the Old and New Testament as the focus of her talk. She had us work with our table mates to identify the women in the cloth, reflect on the readings, and then choose those women to whom we most related. The specific women who were featured included Miriam, Mary Magdalene, Shiphrah and Puah, the Syrophoenician woman, Ruth, and Mary and Elizabeth. Brenda left us with much to ponder during the remainder of Lent. Event Coordinator Mary Johnson extends a heartfelt thank you to the Event Committee: Marleen Kollmeyer, Mary Roets, Judy Moran, and Kathleen Valusek. Special thanks go to Cathy Liska, our lay moderator, for her Lenten prayer and Jennifer Onopa for commemorating the event.



2024-25 LADIES OF CHARITY SPECIAL EVENTS

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON



LADIES OF CHARITY AT LENTEN REFLECTION



THE CLOTHING CENTER

It is hard to believe that the Ladies of Charity Clothing Center just concluded its first year at our new home, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. We occupy two rooms on the first floor of a former school and a third storage room on the second floor. The former parochial school houses a number of outreach programs that serve the community; we are grateful to be one of these programs.

Most everyone associated with Ladies of Charity knows the story of how we moved from St. Francis Assisi Parish to Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. Although the move was difficult, we are grateful for the 10 years we spent at St. Francis Assisi and now look forward to a successful tenure at Our Lady of Guadalupe. Pastor Aaron Pierre, SJ has been most accommodating and we love our new home.

As members we all recognize the importance of our clothing outreach program for school age kids, but not everyone may know how we operate. Let's look at our operations! As a client enters the Clothing Center on 4th Street, he/she is greeted by a receptionist who processes their voucher and determines whether the client will go to the boys (Chicos) or girls (Chicas) first floor rooms. Next, the client is greeted by a volunteer who takes the voucher and begins to process each student listed by gathering appropriate clothing options for them to choose. Each student receives 10 pairs of socks (thank you, Bombas), 7 pairs of underwear, 3 to 5 shirts, 2 to 3 pairs of pants, a hoodie, winter coat, gloves and hat. Currently, we are well stocked so our clothing selection is terrific! By the end of April, the LOC outreach program had clothed a total of **865 students** this year. Oh yes, clients get their vouchers through the schools their child(ren) attends.

A critical aspect of running a Clothing Center is where to keep extra clothes. Currently the racks in each of the boys and girls' rooms are full; therefore, the bags and bags of donated items that come to us on a weekly basis need to be stored elsewhere. This includes boxes and boxes of Bombas socks and underwear. We have a storage room on the second floor that addresses this need. Prior to bringing the items to the second floor, the bags of clothing are sorted by designating items as ones that we will keep or give away. Volunteers also determine whether or not the clothing items need to be washed prior to labeling, storing or hanging. Since the storage room is on the second floor involving many steps, we try to keep going up and down the steps to a minimum. Although ample in size the second floor storage room is shared with another tenant. Careful planning of space utilization is required. Fortunately, we have three gifted organizers (Judy Moran, Kathleen Valusek and Claire Wycklendt) who developed a plan that accommodates the orderly storage of all of the items in our surplus inventory.

Finally, an indispensable component of running a successful outreach program requires dedicated volunteers. We thank God we are blessed in abundance with incredible women who share their time and talents with clients who in turn share their incredible gifts.



CALLING ALL SUMMER SHOPPERS

The Clothing Center staff is asking all to be on the look out for these clothing items new or gently used. Check with family, friends, neighbors, rummage sales, store sales.

Boys and Girls sizes 4, 5, 6, 7

(Of course other sizes too if you find them.)

Boys and Girls Pants

especially joggers, sweats, athletic in the larger sizes (jeans too)

We will reimburse bargain purchases,

\$10 or less for smaller sizes

\$15-18 for larger sizes.

Please get a receipt.

You can call me if you have any questions.

Thanks, Gail

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED IN THE 24/25 SCHOOL YEAR

As of April 29th, the last day the Clothing Center was open, we served 865 children during the 24/25 school year. We served 738 children in the 23/24 school year. This was an overall increase of 115 children. Our concern with the change of location to the south side of Milwaukee was that we might see a drop in the families from the north side. This was certainly not the case. The number of children from the north side rose from 549 to 602, an increase of 53 families or 9.7%. The number of children from the south side rose from 171 to 218, or an increase of 47 families or 27.5%. We are so pleased to see this growth and have started planning ways to increase our outreach to families even further in the upcoming year.

THE CLOTHING CENTER



PRAYER INITIATIVE

In February 2024, we began a prayer initiative, with Ladies of Charity meeting for mass and praying together (usually) on the first Friday of the month. Our time together at mass is followed by a social hour. The number of members joining our monthly mass has steadily grown and we hope to see more Ladies of Charity throughout 2025.

Our attendance generally is between 8-15 attendees at Mass depending on weather, location and member commitments. It has been a blessing to pray together and share that experience. The social time after Mass has facilitated new friendships and sharing time with new members. Another benefit of our monthly Mass attendance has been the recognition of our organization by the parish priests. Many of them will spend time with us after Mass asking questions about our mission. It's been a win, win for all of us. Please join us at any parish that works for you and feel the power of praying with your fellow Ladies of Charity. The July mass will be on July 11th, 2025 because the 4th of July falls on the first Friday of the month. Please watch for a follow-up email that identifies our location for the July Mass.

– Mary Roets



“A MIRACLE MOMENT”

Recognizing a special Ladies of Charity Donor of the Month, “Wendy” Maxfield’s Hostess

After our May Mass several members (12-13) gathered at Maxfield’s restaurant for our social hour. We had gathered in the small waiting area when a friendly hostess, Wendy asked if we belonged to a “group of some kind”. This was our GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY to expound on our Ladies of Charity organization and mission. Our quick thinking President quickly pulled out a brochure from her purse to give to Wendy for further information. She was so excited to hear about our mission and quickly spread this news to her daughter and other employees that were working that day. All seemed to have an interest in donating clothes and/or money to our mission.

If you ever stop into Maxfield’s restaurant (corner of Brown Deer Rd and Port Washington Rd.) for breakfast or lunch and see Wendy please thank her for her enthusiasm and donations.



MEMBERSHIP

The membership committee sent out renewal forms the last week of January, with a follow-up email sent in March. Thank you to all who submitted their 2025 renewal forms and paid their membership dues. We have 114 potential members. This year we have six new members for whom an installation ceremony was held on Thursday May 29th at Holy Family Parish -McCormack Hall. If you are a member and were never officially installed, we encourage you to consider taking part in next year’s ceremony. The installation is a nice opportunity to meet other members, as

well as a chance to learn more about the core values of Ladies of Charity, ‘to serve rather than be served with humility, simplicity and charity’. All members are always invited to attend our annual installation ceremony. Finally, we will be emailing an updated membership list soon. If you would prefer a hard copy of this list, please contact Kathleen Valusek at kvalusix@gmail.com.

Membership Committee Members: Kathleen Valusek, Barb Dineen and Paulette Pecard

LADIES OF CHARITY MOVIN TO SUPPORT CAPUCHIN WALK FOR THE HUNGRY

2025 marks the 20th anniversary of a primary fundraiser for the Capuchin Community Services here in Milwaukee.

Ladies of Charity of Milwaukee have participated in this Walk almost, if not every, year! It is always a fun time as we gather by beautiful Lake Michigan and support Capuchin Community Services work to feed those struggling with hunger here in Milwaukee. All proceeds for this fundraiser benefit Capuchin Community Services at the House of Peace and St. Ben’s Community Meal.

The walk (options 1- or 2-mile), is around Lakefront State Park on the first night of Polish Fest, Friday, June 13, on the Summerfest grounds. Anyone who hasn’t registered online is welcome to register at the walk! A registration table will be at the main gate at Summerfest on 6/13 beginning at 5:30 pm.

Please feel free to contact Adele Eklund for any information about the walk or making a donation to Capuchin Community Services. Call or text Adele at 414-507-0254.

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THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

Dear Ladies of Charity,

I want to thank all of you for your incredible kindness and support that was shown to me during my brother's illness and death. His illness and death happened very suddenly and it is still difficult to comprehend his loss. I know your prayers have helped me with the grieving process. You are an amazing group of very thoughtful women and I'm so proud to be a part of this organization.

Thank you again for your prayers, kindness and love. Blessings to all of you,

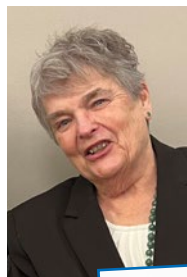
– Mary Roets

Thanks to all who submitted articles and pictures and assisted in bringing this issue of Charity Chat to the finish line!

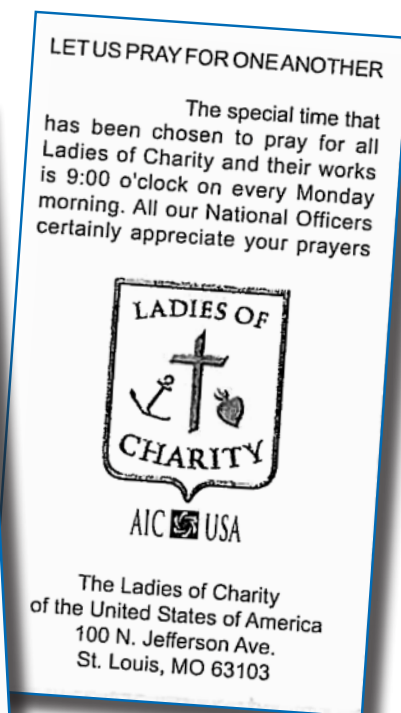
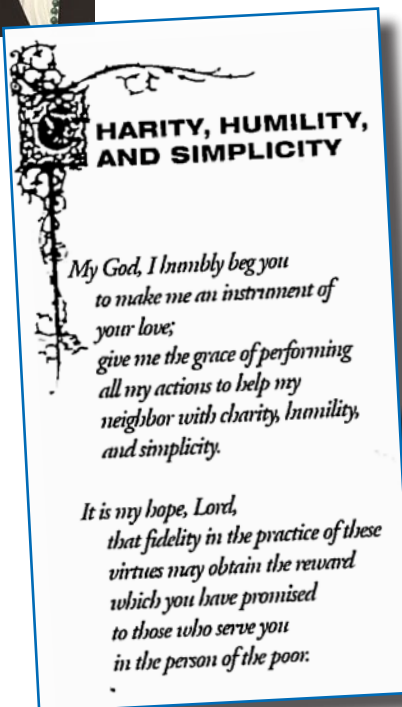
A very important recognition and Thank You

As we finally bring this Spring issue to press in June 2025, a bit later than we intended, we want recognize Susan Westlake who has been the Charity Chat editor for quite some time. In putting this together, we have come to learn more about the care and coordination Susan brought in producing this important newsletter. Susan---you are AMAZING and APPRECIATED! We did our best to step into your shoes and "pinch hit" for this issue as you dealt with health issues---but those are some big shoes to fill! We all owe you a debt of gratitude for your commitment as Charity Chat editor. We are sending our love and prayers,

Jane Beyer and Jude Schubert



*Please keep
Susan Westlake
in your prayers as she
continues to address
health issues.*



Thank you to Shorewood Press for their friendly service & expertise. Printed copies of Charity Chat are available for purchase at Shorewood Press 1700 E. Capitol Drive Shorewood, WI 53211

"To limit your desires and your hopes is to misunderstand God's infinite goodness."

– St. Therese of Lisieux "The Little Flower"