

Member Testimonial

This testimonial was given by Gail Proite-Adams to the attendees of our September Opening Breakfast September 24, 2022 and we'd like to share it with you!

"I have been a member of the Ladies of Charity since about 2006. My main focus has been working at the Clothing Center. My involvement has grown over the years. I have been asked to talk about what being a Lady of Charity means to me and how it has impacted my life. When I started thinking about it, three reasons came to mind pretty easily: sharing our faith, service to the poor and new friendships that have been a blessing.

When I joined, I really didn't understand what Ladies of Charity was all about or its mission. Since I had retired from teaching, I now had time for new activities and of course, who can say no to Mary Domer who invited me to join, so I joined.

At first, I worked sporadically at the Clothing Center but I did start going to the monthly mass and breakfast which unfortunately, didn't last more than 2 years after I joined. Back then many of our older Ladies, some who were original Ladies of our chapter, like Cathy Onopa's mother Jane Schieffer, Evie Beyer and Mary Collentine, organized these monthly masses. Attending mass with these lovely ladies was the best entrée into what being a Lady of Charity means. I enjoyed worshipping with them and the conversations afterwards helped me learn more about Ladies of Charity.

For me, being a Lady of Charity means being part of a prayerful, faith-filled group of women. I am so moved spiritually and emotionally each time we attend mass together, singing and praying as a unit. I love that we start and end our meetings with prayer. I love that we can reach out to the membership when prayers are needed and I know prayer warriors are on it. I love hearing the stories of St. Vincent De Paul, Louise Marillac and Elizabeth Ann Seton. I have come to realize that they are our people. They are a reminder that we are part of something that is over 500 years old. We are part of a worldwide group of women of faith and service. It's our faith and service that has brought us together. It's our shared faith, our shared mission to serve the poor that has become so inspiring and important to me.

*Being a Ladies of Charity means service to the poor whether you are in Milwaukee or France. The theme of this year's annual assembly was **Seeing Christ in the Faces of Those We Serve**. Our Milwaukee Ladies of Charity mission of service to the poor is our Clothing Center. I have been so humbled and moved by working at our store. I have been humbled by our clients, hearing their many often distressing stories and being on the receiving end of their gratitude.*

It is very crucial that families are coming back into the store once again. It's important to see and interact with the people we serve to see Christ in their faces. I love that our members support our mission in many ways. I love the way our members step up to the call for service, by working in the store or working from home or shopping, marking, hanging clothes, soliciting family and friends when the call goes out. You always heed the call and step up willingly to give of your time, talent and money. To quote from a letter from the National Assembly, "Together we are strong not only for each other but for those we service."

I have always said that the greatest reward for my service is the blessing I have received by working, collaborating and praying with our members and especially forging new friendships. You are women of faith and service. You are women of action. You are heroes who quietly serve others without fanfare not just at Ladies of Charity but through many other outreach places such as your parishes, the Women's Care Center, St. Vincent De Paul Society, St. Ben's, other food pantries, tutoring and many other places. You inspire me! I watch you come to work at the store willing to pitch in wherever it is needed or support the store from your homes. My life has become so enriched by being a Lady of Charity. I am inspired by the service and dedication that I see daily being with all of you.

Ladies of Charity is not a flashy organization but it's filled with wonderful, caring, strong women doing our Lord's work. I am proud to be a Lady of Charity. I am proud to call you my friends!"

Gail Proite-Adams

