

VOCATION CONNECTION

>newsletter

DAUGHTERS of CHARITY
OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



daughters-of-charity.com

from the directors

Dear Friends,

Happy 400th Anniversary of the Charism of Charity that was first born in the heart of St. Vincent de Paul in 1617! A very special anniversary greeting to our Family members, the Ladies of Charity, the first members of the Vincentian Family, for their 400th birthday!

Two things we ponder:

1. We celebrate the Charism of Charity anniversary because St. Vincent didn't start out caring for those who are poor. He became a priest to become wealthy. (You could do that in those days!) A couple of events happened that change his heart, changed the world! That's good news for those of us who worry about worthiness of call.
2. Coming home: praying for the grace to recognize home during discernment can be a great help when we are struggling with deciding between communities or even between vocational paths. Which feels most like home?

Please know that we pray for you daily and do not hesitate to reach out to us!

Blessings, Sisters Lisa, Theresa, Regina, Jean, Pat, Kathy, and Virginia Ann

Coming Home: For the Very First Time

by Sister Lisa Laguna, D.C.

If you've seen our Facebook page over the last weeks, you may have seen that Sister Liz is posting regularly from her trip to our Motherhouse and to many places around France—places that are special to our heritage as Daughters of Charity. She is there with other Daughters of Charity—not only from the U.S., but from all over the world—attending the Vincentian Session. The Vincentian Session is a special time when Sisters immerse themselves in our heritage for a month, living at the Motherhouse and taking trips to other sites. It is a life changing, vocation affirming experience!



One of the day trips included a visit to the house where St. Vincent de Paul was born in Dax, France.

It was a joy to see when Sister Liz and Sister Marie Rachelle first arrived at the Motherhouse and posted a live video from the

courtyard. To the eyes and heart of a Daughter of Charity who has been there, we could see the stairs leading to the General Council room, the original building where St. Catherine Labouré took her famous walk during the first apparition of July 18, 1830 from her bedroom down to the chapel, and the windows of the secretaries and translators that keep our community united through their hard work of communication.

On that first evening for Sister Liz and Sister Marie Rachelle, they were coming home for the very first time. There was a sense of excitement and awe. This is holy ground and it's holy ground with all of these amazing Sisters!

Discernment is seeking God's calling for us. Part of that seeking is finding our home on this planet. We know that our hearts only rest when they finally rest in God. There is a sense of that happening in a grand way when we finally make it to heaven, but God has put us on Earth to start living out that love now. It's not only then and far away. It's here and now too.

We have more than one home—that first home with our family or those who have cared for us, the home we find in a community of prayer or supportive group of friends, the home we will find in our vocation, and other homes we have found and will find throughout our lives.

Sister Liz and Sister Marie Rachelle did find their homes when they felt God calling them to become Daughters of Charity. They found a home in the lives and charism of the Daughters of Charity and now, in their local communities. On August 30, 2017, they made their way to the Motherhouse at 140 Rue du Bac, Paris, France and arrived at a very special home for the very first time.



Daughters of Charity from all over the world come together during the Vincentian Session to learn about the lives and teachings of our founders.

Coming Home: To the Motherhouse

by Sister Lisa Laguna, D.C.

“Our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” - St. Augustine

When St. Augustine shared this timeless thought, he was talking about God. There’s a restlessness that exists in us until we come to rest in God. As Ron Rolheiser, OMI suggests in his book, *The Restless Heart*, until we “come home.”



The Sisters who work and live at the Motherhouse overlook the courtyard.

For members of a community, we have another type of “homecoming” that is also very powerful. Many of us have the joy and privilege of visiting the places of our founders—*their* homes. We get to walk where *they* walked, touch *their* front doors, maybe even sit in a pew and pray where *they* prayed in *their* churches.

For the Daughters of Charity, one of our most significant homes is our Motherhouse. There are over 70 provinces of Daughters of Charity throughout the world. Each of these provinces has its own provincial house, but we all share one Motherhouse. With over 15,000 Daughters of Charity, you can see why we would need to take turns, over time, visiting this special home of ours.

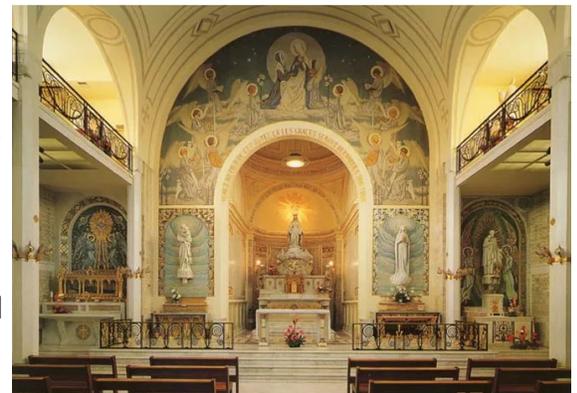
The Motherhouse chapel is small and simple. It’s easy to pass it by without knowing at all. From the street, there is only a simple building façade with a very plain sign. I sometimes wonder if that’s why people often refer to it as “Rue du Bac,” the name of the street it’s on.

In addition to being our home, our Motherhouse is the site of the apparitions of Mary to St. Catherine Laboure in 1830, resulting in the Miraculous Medal. Over a million pilgrims visit our Motherhouse chapel each year. So in a way, we share our Motherhouse with the whole world. Still, it is our home. And there is no place like home.

There’s something overwhelming about praying with Sisters from all over the world. The Motherhouse is the residence and ministry to Daughters of Charity from all over, speaking many languages. They are serving the entire community and the many pilgrims who respond to Our Lady’s invitation to “Come to the foot of this altar. Here, graces will be spread over all who ask for them with confidence and fervor.”

There’s also something beautiful about praying with the pilgrims who visit this special place. You see, it’s their home too.

If you’re ever in Paris, stop in at 140 Rue du Bac. Come over to our home. Our Lady is waiting for you there with her Son. A Daughter of Charity is holding the door open, inviting you in, and welcoming you home. Until then, you can visit the Motherhouse with us [virtually here](#).



The altar in the chapel of our Motherhouse. “Come to the foot of this altar...”

upcoming events

<http://daughters-of-charity.com/retreats>

Online Retreat

December 10-14 // Advent

Come & See

November 3-5 // Emmitsburg, MD
November 18 // St. Louis, MO

America’s Got Sisters!

October 13-14 // Chicago, IL
February 23-24, 2018 // Indianapolis, IN
March 9-10, 2018 // Chicago, IL

Motherhouse Fun Facts

- Our Motherhouse was originally a parish orphanage for girls before it was given to the Daughters in 1815 as a gift from Napoleon. To this day, it is still owned by the French government.
- The chapel is the site of both apparitions of the Blessed Mother to St. Catherine Laboure. The chair where she sat is a popular place for people to place Miraculous Medals before giving them to loved ones.
- The remains of St. Louise de Marillac and the preserved remains of St. Catherine Laboure lie in the chapel of our Motherhouse along with a portion of St. Vincent de Paul’s heart.
- In a statue on the altar of the chapel, Mary is holding a globe which contains the names of every province of Daughters worldwide.
- During large gatherings, everything is translated in many languages at once. Sisters wear headphones to listen in their preferred language in real time.