



THE VIEW FROM THE BLUFF

FEBRUARY 2018

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



The Ecclesiastical Superior

By Sr. Anne Francis Campbell

The Constitutions and Rules of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in effect from 1830 to 1949 recognized the Bishop of the Diocese as “head of the whole Community.” However, the Rule also stipulated that “the government and immediate direction of the Community shall be vested in an Ecclesiastical Superior, a Mother Superior, an Assistant to the Mother Superior, a Treasurer and a Procuratrix.” The Ecclesiastical Superior,

appointed by the Bishop was responsible for “the general welfare, spiritual and temporal, of the Community, and for the success of the establishments undertaken by the same.” He attended Council Meetings and in the case of an

Article 1
Jurisdiction and power of the Bishop

1^o The Bishop of the Diocese, as head of the whole Community is the first Ecclesiastical Superior, and, as such, is to be obeyed in every thing, not contrary to the laws of God, of the Church or the Province. To him appertains the appointment of the Ecclesiastical Superior, and

2. The government and immediate direction of the community shall be vested in an Ecclesiastical Superior, a Mother Superior, an Assistant to the Mother, a Treasurer and a Procurator. These select

equal number of votes, he gave the casting vote. He also could veto any resolution passed by the Council. However, the Mother Superior could refer the matter to the Bishop whose judgment was decisive.

The first Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community, Father Jeremiah Francis O'Neill, Sr., was appointed by Bishop England in 1830. Born in County Kerry, Ireland, Father O'Neill attended the Seminary established by Bishop England in Charleston. Ordained in 1826, he became Bishop England's constant companion on his missionary journeys throughout the Diocese. Father J.J. O'Connell, author of *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, described Father O'Neill as "a man of rare intellectual attainments, a good mathematician, an accomplished musician and a gentleman of polished manners. He was a welcome guest in every circle of Southern society." On a trip to Ireland in 1832 Father O'Neill recruited two young women for the OLMs, the future Sr. Veronica Cagney and Sr. Bridget Kennedy. Shortly after his return Bishop England appointed him pastor of the church of St. John the Baptist in Savannah, GA, then part of the Diocese of Charleston. About the same time the Bishop relieved Fr. O'Neill of his responsibilities as Ecclesiastical Superior of the OLMs and appointed Father Andrew Byrne as his replacement. However, the second Bishop of Charleston, Bishop Ignatius Reynolds, reappointed Father O'Neill as Ecclesiastical Superior in 1844. The next year he

obtained the approval of the Community to establish a branch house in Savannah where he had a convent built and ready for occupancy. On June 13, 1845, Father O'Neill accompanied six OLMs to Savannah. Six months later, he resigned as Ecclesiastical Superior of the Charleston Community. In December 1846 Mother Vincent Mahony, Superior of the Sisters in Savannah, informed Mother Teresa Barry of the Savannah Community's desire to become independent. In her letter Mother Vincent stated that Bishop Reynolds and Father O'Neill approved the request. The Communities became independent of one another in July 1847.

When the Diocese of Savannah was established in 1850, many expected Father O'Neill to become its first Bishop. Instead, Father Francis Xavier Gartland became the first Bishop of Savannah. Father O'Neill continued to play an important role in the growth and development of the Church in Georgia until his death. He died in Savannah at age 80 on July 12, 1870. The obituary notice in a Savannah newspaper stated that "In feelings, he was truly southern; in his charity he was cosmopolitan, loving his country of adoption with ardor, and his own people and country with a warmth of attachment that neither age nor infirmity could overcome."

Photo courtesy of the Diocesan Archives.



REFLECTION

Cultivating Kindness:

Ways to Bring Light into Your Everyday Life

We are called to live our lives in kindness and to bring kindness to all people. But how do we cultivate kindness in a world that can often seem dark? How can we bring light out of the hate and ugliness that threatens our world? In John 1:4-5, we are told: "What came to be through God was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." The smallest action can create a space for light and hope to emerge. Now, more than ever, we are all called to let light shine. Here are some suggestions to create kindness in your everyday life!

- Give someone a compliment
- Check in with friends who have lost a loved one
- Each time you go to the store, buy one additional canned good to donate to a local food pantry
- Put a surprise note in with your child's lunch
- Visit with an elderly neighbor
- Help others find the positive in themselves and their lives
- Listen to others without interrupting
- When you see something good happening, share it with others
- When you get great service, tell the manager
- Encourage someone to pursue their dream
- Give someone the benefit of the doubt
- Learn the names of the people you see every day
- Check in with a friend you haven't spoken to for a while
- Buy a stranger's coffee for them
- Call your parents or grandparents
- Make someone laugh
- Volunteer at a local nonprofit
- Share a great book you've read
- Let a car merge in front of you
- Leave a big tip
- Tell someone you love them
- Allow someone to help you
- Talk to a homeless person
- Let someone cut in front of you in line
- Make an effort to not complain for a day
- Surprise a friend with flowers
- Stand up for others in need
- Help a coworker when they are stressed
- Ask someone how their day is
- Post affirmations on your social media
- Share pictures to brighten someone's day
- Take part in a service day!

Source: Sisters of St. Joseph





FAITH IN ACTION

You **CAN** change policy. You **CAN** take action **TODAY!**

It is not just politicians and the media who have all the power to create policies that govern our lives. You have more of a voice than you think. These tips will make sure that those in charge hear you loud and clear.

- **Google Alerts:** Sign up to receive news and articles about policy issues that are relevant to your interests.
- **Statehouse News:** Sign up for alerts and newsletters to stay up-to-date on policy.
- **Research programs in your community related to policy issues of your interest.** Learn about the organizations that run them and who the leadership is.
- **Educate yourself on the policy making process, timeline and budget.** Each election also has important dates and processes related to voter registration and voting.

Stay informed about issues, policies, and community conversations in your state.

- **Attend conferences, state capital days, events,** and meetings around your state and meet others who work in the field.
- **Network, ask questions and research organizations** to learn about their policy agendas and priorities.

- **Introduce yourself, and keep in contact with leaders.** Share articles or reports, ask to meet and talk about their role, volunteer for their organization, attend events hosted by their organization.

Build relationships with key leaders and decision makers in the field.

- **Learn which philanthropic, nonprofit, and businesses** in your community support your areas of interest.

- **Follow elected officials and organizations** related to your issue area — participate, comment, like, share, and retweet information.
- **Join a coalition, or volunteer** for a local or statewide advocacy organization.
- **Attend candidate forums & VOTE:** Ask questions about which platforms your candidates support, volunteer for phone banks or GOTV drives, and VOTE. Talk to your friends, family, and colleagues about important issues and encourage them to register to vote.
- **Write a Letter to the Editor** for your local paper.
- **Write a letter to your local elected officials** urging them to support a specific policy related to your issue area.
- **Meet with your local elected officials,** talk to them about current policies and issues of interest in your community.

Join the conversation by becoming a champion of your policy interest.

Connect community engagement to policy change and action!

- **Develop initiatives** to gain school credit for building, shaping, advocating and learning more about policy and advancing policy priorities.
- **Seek or establish internship programs** that allow young people to engage and support organizations, efforts, and/or related issues or campaigns.

- **Encourage organizations** and government agencies to establish committees or subcommittees led by young people to help shape that organization's policy priorities.
- **Support policies** that encourage school districts and/or higher education to support careers in your interest area.
- **Support and/or educate political candidates** about your policy priorities to reinforce that youth have a vested interest in policy, too.
- **Lead by example.** If you want a role at the table ask for one by taking your own action steps!

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,

that we may protect life and beauty.

*Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.*

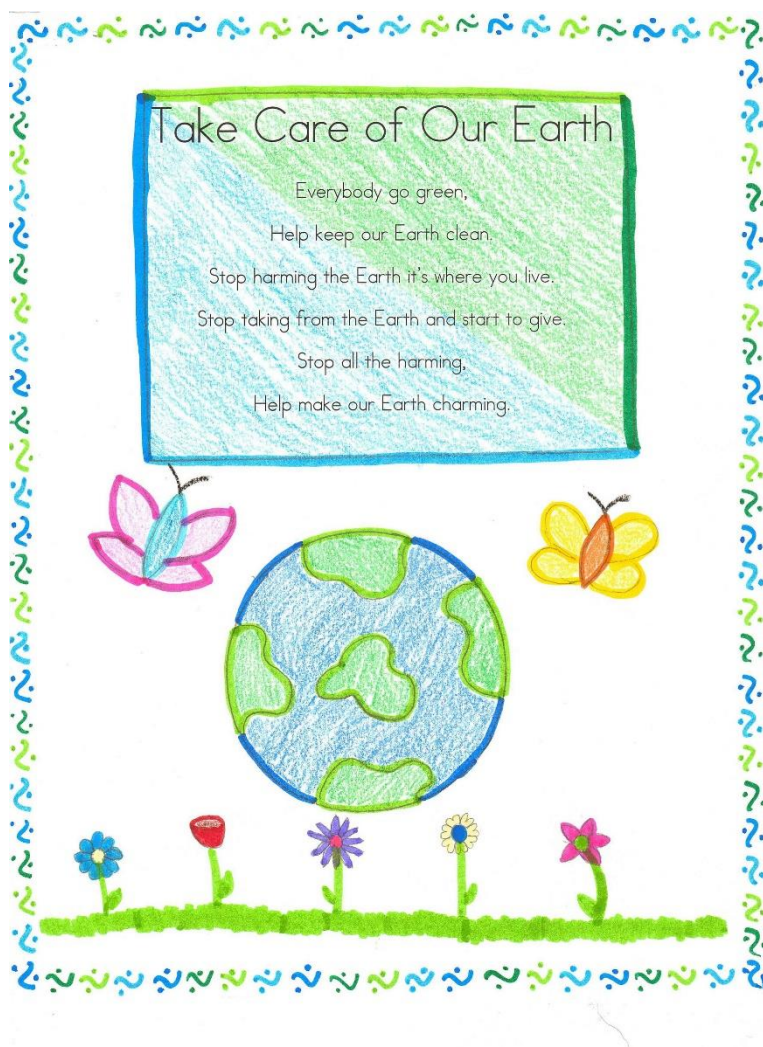
*O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of
this earth, so precious in your eyes.*

*Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and
destruction. Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.*

*Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.*

We thank you for being with us each day.

*Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace. **Pope Francis***



Saint Valentine, officially known as Saint Valentine of Rome, is a third-century Roman saint widely celebrated on February 14 and commonly associated with "courtly love." Although not much of St. Valentine's life is reliably known, and whether or not the stories involve two different saints by the same name is also not officially decided, it is highly agreed that St. Valentine was martyred and then buried on the Via Flaminia to the north of Rome.

In 1969, the Roman Catholic Church removed St. Valentine from the General Roman Calendar, because so little is known about him. However, the church still recognizes him as a saint, listing him in the February 14 spot of Roman Martyrology. The legends attributed to the mysterious saint are as inconsistent as the actual identification of the man. One common story about St. Valentine is that in one point of his life, as the former Bishop of Terni, Narnia and Amelia, he was on house arrest with Judge Asterius. While

discussing religion and faith with the Judge, Valentine pledged the validity of Jesus. The judge immediately put Valentine and his faith to the test. St. Valentine was presented with the judge's blind daughter and told to restore her sight. If he succeeded, the judge vowed to do anything for Valentine. Placing his hands onto her eyes, Valentine restored the child's vision. Judge Asterius was humbled and obeyed Valentine's requests. Asterius broke all the idols around his house, fasted for three days and became baptized, along with his family and entire 44 member household. The now faithful judge then freed all of his Christian inmates. St. Valentine was later arrested again for continuing to try to convert people to Christianity. He was sent to Rome under the emperor Claudius Gothicus (Claudius II). According to the popular hagiographical identity, and what is believed to be the first representation of St. Valentine, the Nuremberg Chronicle, St. Valentine was a Roman priest martyred during Claudius' reign. The story tells that St. Valentine was imprisoned for marrying Christian couples and aiding Christians being persecuted by Claudius in Rome. Both acts were considered serious crimes. A relationship between the saint and emperor began to grow, until Valentine attempted to convince Claudius of Christianity. Claudius became enraged and sentenced Valentine to death, commanding him to renounce his faith or be beaten with clubs and beheaded. St. Valentine refused to renounce his faith and Christianity and was executed outside the Flaminian Gate on February 14, 269. However, other tales of St. Valentine's life claim he was executed either in the year 269, 270, 273 or 280. Other depictions of St. Valentine's arrests tell that he secretly married couples so husbands wouldn't have to go to war. Another variation of the legend of St. Valentine says he refused to sacrifice to pagan gods, was imprisoned and while imprisoned he healed the jailer's blind daughter. On the day of his execution, he left the girl a note signed, "Your Valentine." Pope Julius I is said to have built a church near Ponte Mole in his memory, which for a long time gave name to the gate now called Porta del Popolo, formerly, Porta Valetini. St. Valentine is the Patron Saint of affianced couples, bee keepers, engaged couples, epilepsy, fainting, greetings, happy marriages, love, lovers, plague, travellers, and young people. Source: Catholic Online

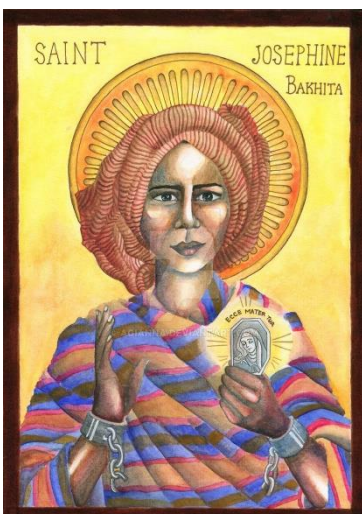


Our new associates "Partners In Charity"

Debbie Shogry Blalock
Diane Dufour Brumley
Patricia O'Brien-Dorner
Debbie Howard
Jacqueline Jefferson
Fiona O'Brien
Catherine Park
Karen Rankine
Frances O'Brien Sheley



New pin
for
Associates,
Partners In
Charity



February 8 has been designated by the Vatican and the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) as an annual day of awareness raising and prayer against human trafficking. It is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy. She learned from Canossian sisters that she was created in the image of God and possessed human dignity. Once she asserted herself and refused to be enslaved, Josephine became a Canossian and dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the suffering. She was declared a Saint in 2000. This year's remembrance highlights the human tragedy of trafficking in migrants and refugees. Forced migration puts many at risk of trafficking both when they move from one country to another and when they are in the country where they have settled. Oh God, help us fight against all forms of slavery. Together with Saint Bakhita we ask you to put an end to human trafficking.