

IN Formation- Vocation SCNJ

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Supper and Stories: We Open Our Stomachs and Minds

For 117 years, the young women of the College of Saint Elizabeth have coexisted with the Sisters of Charity without necessarily knowing just what lies 'under the habit'. However, each year there are a select few young women who build relationships with certain sisters.

In recent years though, as students learn more and more about the founders of the school they know and love, they aim to build positive relationships and lasting memories with the Sisters of Charity. As relationships fortify and memories solidify, students and sisters alike begin to request more time together. "I didn't realize how fun and approachable the Sisters of Charity were until they invited me to be a part of the Blessed Miriam Teresa book club," Shannon Hoffman, '16, of Bayonne, NJ reflects, "from then on out, I knew I had to share their light with the rest of the CSE Community in order to strengthen the bond between the sisters and the women of the college." Shannon is one of many CSE students who in recent years has come to highly enjoy time spent with the sisters.



*After her presentation at Supper and Story, Sister of Charity Sister Prudentia Osuji enjoys a good time with two college young women and two of their sister students who live at the Motherhouse.
(l to r) Vivian Igwagu, Sister Florence, Nancy Boachie, Sister Prudentia and Sister Prudentia.*

In response to their booming popularity among St. Elizabeth students, the sisters decided to implement a new series they call 'Supper and Stories'. On Sunday, February 28, the sisters opened their home to the college women for the third "Supper and Stories". February's session featured Sister Agatha Mathangani SC of Kenya and Sister Prudentia Osuji, SC of Nigeria. Students were truly touched by the unique and intriguing journeys that these women traveled as they came to their vocation.



Sisters Agatha Mathangani and Prudentia Osuji pose for a picture after their presentation at the monthly gathering of Supper and Story.

First to speak was Sister Agatha Mathangani, SC who after attending Catholic school in Kenya, trekked to the U.S. to gain a college education. Originally, Sister Agatha planned to obtain her BA and return to Africa to teach, but something kept her rooted in the U.S. "I admired the Sisters," Sister Agatha reflects; after being hired to teach at St. Patrick's Elementary School in Jersey City, where she worked with the Sisters of Charity, she felt a connection that she was not willing to leave behind. "Because I joined the Seton Associate program," Sister Agatha adds, "I started to learn more." And the more she learned, the more she was inspired and transformed by the Vincentian charism of the Federation. The smile painted on her face as she told of her life struggles and successes, was reflected on the faces of her audience. Still content with her vocation many years later, she hoped that her life would inspire others. As Sister Agatha finished her story and thanked those in attendance, she gave the floor to her fellow Sister, Prudentia Osuji, SC.

Like Sister Agatha, Sister Prudentia Osuji, SC of Nigeria also faced many struggles before coming to the

U.S. and becoming a Sister of Charity. “My story begins with my father,” Sister Prudentia begins her story, “...know what you say to your children and know what you ask God for.” She goes on to explain this proverb by speaking of her father who worked at a college in Nigeria. He quickly rose up in the ranks because of a sister who “gave him so many things”. Before long, this sister so trusted Prudentia’s father that she gave him access to all of the keys to the schools. Followed by laughter in the audience, Sister Prudentia smirks, “and he said to himself, the next child coming to me will be a nun...and lo and behold I was the next one.” So, naturally, by her father’s will she joined the convent and eventually traveled to America.

Whereas she came to the States as a part of another order, after working closely with the Sisters of Charity, she discovered a “love in them” that she had never seen elsewhere. Even after 37 years as a sister, she still gleamed with the joy and radiance of a sister new to the vocation. Still as giddy and in love as she was when she first transferred her vows, through a smile she addressed the crowd saying, “This is the best vocation in the whole world.” Her passion was both inspiring and refreshing to the sisters and women listening.

A pin drop could have been heard as these sisters graced the audience with the stories of their lives. With great grace and elegance laced with humor and joy, Sister Agatha Mathangani, SC and Sister Prudentia Osuji, SC opened their lives to students eager to learn more. Over dinner and dessert, students and sisters mingled; “tonight there is no separation of sister and layperson,” I recall realizing. That night we were all one – all sisters in Christ.

by Marissa Gioffre, CSE ‘16

Periodically the Vocation/Formation Office offers retreats for women. These retreats are growing in number and are very much appreciated by the women who attend them. In March a four hour retreat was given on the Passion of Jesus Christ in preparation for Holy Week. The women spent their time with the 10 men and women who were with Jesus at the Passion. The retreat was very prayerful and inspiring for everyone who attended. Pictured here is the environment which included a picture of each of the 10 people.



Every year Sister Regina Bernard McCartney’s friend, Joseph Cunder, invites her to his 4th grade CCD class at Our Lady of Peace Parish in New Providence, New Jersey. Included in her presentation is a song that she wrote about “Vocations” The thank you notes are precious.



Dear Sister Regina,
I am happy that you could come and talk to us about being a sister. I learned a lot. I hope that I can see you again.
Emily



Dear Sister Regina,
Thank you for telling us about your wonderful life and playing the piano and teaching us the song.
Love Megan

Dear Sister Regina,
I hope you keep seeing kids because I know you love them. May you have a long life and be healthy. Thank you for visiting our class. You did a great job. Also, you were the first sister I’ve ever met or saw. May you keep doing what you are doing and never stop. Your new friend, Jackson



Social Media has taken over the 21st Century with email, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube and many other forms of being connected. This

past month the Vocation Office has taken the opportunity to prepare 60 second videos on several sisters to be used by the Vocation Office on YouTube. To see the first one click the YouTube icon and enjoy!



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