

## 2010 Kinship Award Acceptance Speech by Sally Duffy, S.C.

*After thanking the Urban Appalachian Council Board and Staff and all those who support UAC in fulfilling its mission of improving the quality of life of Appalachians and their neighbors in the Greater Cincinnati community, Sr. Sally went on to say that she felt like the award should really be given to the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, Ohio where she has “the honor and the privilege of serving with the SC Ministry Foundation whose mission is to promote the mission and ministry of the Sisters of Charity.”*

*She expressed deep gratitude to all Sisters of Charity and to the Leadership Council of the Sisters of Charity and extended her thanks to the SC Ministry Foundation Board, Board committees and Staff of the SC Ministry Foundation. Last but not least, she thanked her family and particularly her parents, who instilled in all nine of their children the value of family and community. She added, “For as a family we were nurtured through meals & rituals & being together in joy and love. I might add that you needed a good sense of humor to survive!” Sr. Sally then gave a truly moving acceptance.*

“I would like to call to mind a story. It is a story we are all familiar with, but I think it is reflective of the goals and the mission of the Urban Appalachian Council. It is the story of the Good Samaritan. If you recall the story, a lawyer had just received the reply to love your neighbor as yourself. The lawyer who was striving to be right asked Jesus who his neighbor? Jesus relayed the story of a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who was

attacked by robbers who stripped him and beat him up and left him half dead. Three travelers came along and passed the man who had been beaten up, the first a priest, and the second a Levite. The third traveler was a Samaritan who, when he saw the man his heart was filled with compassion. He went over to him, poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own animal and took him to an Inn where he took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. "Take care of him," he told the innkeeper, "and when I come back this way I will pay you back whatever you spent on him." The lawyer was asked which of the three acted like a neighbor toward the man attacked by the robbers and answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus replied, "You go then and do likewise."

"I believe this story has much to teach us about what an organization like the Urban Appalachian Council is trying to achieve through their programs and services that focus on adult education, GED preparation, workforce development, emergency assistance, case management, family connecting and development, cultural diversity, art and cultural development to name a few. You promote an improved quality of life for people through empowering individuals, strengthening families, developing communities, and reforming systems. The people connected with the UAC/Urban Appalachian Council are moved with compassion.

"In this story we see the Good Samaritan, a foreigner who is the one that is moved with compassion. The Good Samaritan judges by his actions a way of life that is evident by the two people who both passed on the opposite side of the road. Those that walk by in our society are often disregarding or ignoring the marginalized or oppressed through their own numbness, indifference and apathy, for them life is business as usual. Passer bys are

often benefiting from our systems and structures or colluding with those who benefit. They would rather avoid or isolate or keep silent those who are losing.

“The Good Samaritan had to have known pain and suffering in his own life and chose not to be bitter or cynical, but having felt pain moved to alleviate pain and suffering of others. The Good Samaritan had the power to care, to recognize and see the needs of others and to do something to alleviate the pain and suffering by acting and going beyond the thinking and feeling mode. The Good Samaritan engaged others (developing communities) in the process such as the innkeeper. I believe that the Good Samaritan would strive for systemic and structural changes to make the road safer for all future travelers.

“I want to thank all those here tonight who support the efforts of the Urban Appalachian Council by giving of your time, your interruptions and your resources. You help all of us to see those who are beaten down in society and yet you are moved by compassion to act to improve the quality of life for others. You are willing to stop and care for the stranger, the foreigner, those different than you. You have the eyes to see the need, ears to hear the cries and lamenting, to dry tears, provide comforting words, and to live out the words love you neighbor as yourself. You empower others to use their own voice to be given the shared membership in our society that they deserve and to go beyond empowering to sharing power. You advocate so that all roads and conditions will be safe and just so that all people will be given the dignity that they deserve as a person made in the image and likeness of God. In *Les Miserables*, Victor Hugo wrote: “To love another person is to see the face of God.” So let us keep imaging a neighborhood where people are safe, individuals are empowered, families are strengthened,

communities are developed and transformed to benefit all people. Systems and structures are reformed so everyone wins. May we leave here tonight renewed and strengthened to continue to work for the common good of all.”