
Ministries of The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati

The first Sisters of Charity came to Cincinnati in 1829. They were members of the religious community founded in 1809 by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American-born saint canonized by the Roman Catholic Church. Originally established in Baltimore, the community later relocated to Emmitsburg, Maryland. Six independent communities of women religious developed from Elizabeth Seton's original foundation, including the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. Their Motherhouse, Mount St. Joseph, overlooks the Ohio River in Delhi Township.

Educating Cincinnatians Since 1829

In the 1820s Bishop Edward Fenwick and lay members of the Church of Cincinnati had repeatedly appealed to the Emmitsburg community for Sisters to assist in the care of orphans. Finally, Sisters Fanny Jordan, Victoria Fitzgerald, Beatrice Tyler and Albina Levy arrived via stagecoach and riverboat in 1829.

Within a short time these four Sisters had taken charge of five orphans and opened a school out of their residence on Sycamore Street to serve six additional children. Two more Sisters arrived from Emmitsburg in 1833 to help with the expanding mission of St. Peter's Orphan Asylum and Free School. By the end of the decade 50 female orphans were being cared for and 150 young girls attended the school.

These early Sisters of Charity were later described by Cincinnati Archbishop John Purcell as "the zealous pioneer religious of this city...who were never found wanting and always bore the brunt of the battle."

The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati became an independent community in 1852 under the leadership of Sister Margaret George, superior of the eight Sisters then serving in Cincinnati. She refused to join with the Emmitsburg Sisters in affiliating with the French Daughters of Charity, because she feared their European spirituality and rules would mean a forsaking of Elizabeth Seton's commitment to meet the needs of American people.

She was elected Mother Superior by the other five Sisters who joined her in this new, independent community under the direction of Archbishop Purcell. By 1859, their

numbers had grown to 75 Sisters, their ministry to orphans had expanded to include the care of young boys, and their educational outreach continued.

Over the next 175 years, Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati would educate countless children in elementary and high schools in Cincinnati, the Midwest and the West. Sisters of Charity would also champion education for women. The College of Mount St. Joseph, which accepted its first students in September of 1920, was one of the first Catholic baccalaureate institutions for women in the State of Ohio.

Building a Healthcare Tradition Since 1852

In 1852 Archbishop Purcell bought the Hotel des Invalides on Broadway and Franklin and gave it to the Sisters to operate as a 20-bed hospital. Named St. John's Hotel for Invalids, it was the first private hospital in the city and the precursor of today's Good Samaritan Hospital. Within three years the hospital grew to 75 beds and moved to the former St. Peter's Academy and Asylum on Third and Plum.

With the outbreak of Civil War, demand for the healthcare services of the Sisters greatly increased. Every bed at St. John's was pressed into service for soldiers. More than 25 Sisters of Charity served the Civil War sick and wounded-in their own hospital in Cincinnati; in nearby army camps such as Camp Dennison; in makeshift hospitals on the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers; and on the battlefields of Shiloh, Stone River and Murfreesboro.

Sister Anthony O'Connell, the leaders of these Sister-nurses, became known as "the angel of the battlefield." Under her leadership after the war, St. John's Hospital received a new home and a new name. In 1866 the 95-bed former U.S. Marine Hospital at Sixth and Lock was given to the Sisters by Joseph Butler and Louis Worthington and renamed The Hospital of the Good Samaritan in recognition of the charity care provided by the Sisters. In 1915 Good Samaritan Hospital moved to its present location in Clifton.

Serving Where the Needs are Greatest

Since they first arrived in Cincinnati in 1829, the Sisters of Charity have sent Sisters in all directions to respond to the poor, the suffering and the needy in the

expanding American nation--and beyond. In 1928 the community opened an orphanage and hospital in Wuchang, China.

Today, over 560 Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati continue their work of education, social service, pastoral ministry, elder- and healthcare in 25 states and four foreign countries. They also sponsor organizations that address education, healthcare and social service needs, with particular concern for direct service to the poor.

In the spirit of Elizabeth Seton, the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati are dedicated to serving wherever the needs are greatest. Their spirit is captured in the community motto: "The love of Christ urges us" (2 Cor. 5: 14).

Local Nonprofit Ministries of the Sisters of Charity

Seton High School (1854)-A Catholic girls comprehensive high school in Price Hill. Originally founded in 1854 as Mount St. Vincent Academy, it moved to its present location on Glenway Avenue (called Cedar Grove) in 1857. Renamed Seton High School in 1927, it currently enrolls 680 students.

St. Joseph Home (1873)-a residential facility in Sharonville for the severe/profound mentally and multiply handicapped from infants through adults. Founded in 1873 as St. Joseph Infant Asylum, it also served for many years as St. Joseph Infant and Maternity Home.

The College of Mount St. Joseph (1920)-a coeducational Catholic liberal arts college in Delhi Township, Ohio, serving 2,273 students. It was housed on the grounds of the Sisters of Charity Motherhouse until moving to its new campus across Delhi Road in 1962.

Seton Family Center (1989)—a counseling center located on a residential street in Price Hill where total family needs are met in a home-like setting. Services include psychotherapy, play therapy for children and diagnostic testing.

Bayley Place (1989)-provides a residential environment for older adults of all faiths in a creative, home-like Christian community. Currently, Bayley Place has 100 skilled nursing beds, 60 assisted living units and 25 memory impaired units.

Eldermount-an adult-day program serving averaging over 30 daily participants from southwestern Hamilton County at the Sisters of Charity Motherhouse in Delhi. It allows the elderly to receive needed services in a non-institutional setting.

The Village at Bayley Place-is 78 independent residential living units serving those over 70 years of age in a secure, maintenance-free environment. Health-care, educational and spiritual facilities are conveniently located nearby.

The Village Wellness Center -will house an expanded Eldermount Adult Day Program and Outreach Services is scheduled for completion in 2003.