4. Peace Pole
Cross the avenue and stop by the wooden pole on the lawn to the right of the Motherhouse and in back of Mother Margaret Hall nursing facility. This pole is a peace pole, one of thousands like it across the world that bear the words “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in languages chosen by the organization. The Motherhouse’s Peace Pole was blessed and dedicated in 2009 as part of the Sacred Web of Creation retreat that took place, and it features eight languages. Five are human languages – English, Spanish, Chinese, Slovakian, and American Sign Language – and the other three are representations of non-human creations – paw prints, leaves, and celestial bodies. All languages represent facets of the Sisters’ current and previous ministries. The Peace Pole is one of many contemplation-provoking spots around the grounds to stop and be still.

5. Mother Margaret George Statue
Continuing along the avenue past the main entrance of the Motherhouse, you will see on your left a bronze statue of Mother Margaret George atop a circular modern fountain. This statue of the Cincinnati Community’s founder was commissioned in 1997 in preparation for the 150th anniversary of the Community in 2002. The statue was dedicated on March 18, 2001, and hundreds of Sisters and friends came for the ceremony, processing outside from liturgy with white roses and reciting Margaret’s poem “Flowers.” The statue was recently reinstalled after over a year of refurbishment, and once again reminds passersby of Mother Margaret’s ministry.

6. Cemetery
This stop on our tour could be its own article since the Motherhouse cemetery is rich with history and encompasses a significant portion of the grounds. Located on the west side of the property, the cemetery contains the graves of over 1,700 Sisters, the first grave created for Mother Regina Mattingly upon her death in 1883. Graves from the previous Motherhouse were moved later, including the Congregation’s original seven founders, Sisters who served as nurses in the Civil War, and S. Blandina Segale. Other points of interest include “Fields Afar” engraved memorial books that list Sisters not buried at the cemetery, and the gate from the previous Motherhouse.

7. Labyrinth
As you leave the cemetery, stop at the circular set of brick and rock paths near the entrance. This is the labyrinth, a winding design that one walks in meditation. The Motherhouse labyrinth was dedicated on June 2, 2002, and is designed after the one on the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France dating from 1221. It received some renovations in 2014 by volunteer high school students from around the city who cleaned and repositioned the bricks over the course of five months. Visitors are free to walk the labyrinth at their own pace and with their own meditation preferences, suggested methods including walking with a question in mind, emptying the mind and being present in the moment, or repeating a phrase or mantra.

8. Regina Hall
Heading to the back of the Motherhouse, you will see a gray stone building called Regina Hall. Built from limestone found on the property at the same time as the original Motherhouse main wing that burned down in 1885 shortly after its completion, Regina Hall was used first as the laundry, then was converted into an art building for the college in 1939 until 1962. Today, there is an art studio room still in use, a large meeting space on the first floor, guest apartments on the second floor and basement, and a spacious patio with tables and grills is enjoyed by Sisters.

9. Saints Louise de Marillac and Vincent de Paul Statues
Across from the pool is a courtyard with trees and tables surrounding two statues, one of Saint Louise de Marillac with a child, and the other of Saint Vincent de Paul. Saints Louise and Vincent were the founders of the Daughters of Charity in France, which Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton modelled aspects of the Sisters of Charity after. These two statues were moved in 2012 from Villa San Bernardo in Bedford, Ohio – the Motherhouse for the Vincentian Sisters of Charity – when it closed some years after their merger with the Community in Cincinnati. At one time, the statues stood in front of the Villa, then were moved to a brick display structure outside the chapel. Today, Sisters and Motherhouse employees enjoy the statues as they take a break outside and remember these two Saints’ contributions to the formation of the Community.
1. Ohio Historical Marker
Before reaching the avenue leading up to the main entrance of the Motherhouse, you will find an Ohio Historical Marker detailing the history of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, these markers commemorating sites of historical importance to the state. The marker was dedicated in a ceremony on May 7, 2004 that was attended by Sisters, Associates, employees, friends, and several local dignitaries. It describes the arrival of the Sisters in Cincinnati in 1829 and gives an overview of the many ministries that were created thereafter, providing background and context for visitors on their way to the Motherhouse.

2. Grotto
On the Eastern lawn at the corner of Delhi and Bender roads, you will find a grotto enclosed by bushes and benches. An old pond and ice house on Bender from days without electricity were converted into a grotto in 1929 as part of the centennial celebration of the arrival of the Sisters of Charity in Cincinnati, a plaque at the base of the statue of Mary reading, “To Mary Immaculate, Our Lady of the Springs – On this hillside, Mary’s grotto, a centennial gift we place.” The Lady of Lourdes statue and accompanying kneeling Saint Bernadette Soubirous statue were moved to the Motherhouse in the early 1950s, and the old ice house and pond were demolished when Bender Road was put in later. Today, the grotto is a quiet place to rest and pray on the looping path around the Eastern lawn.

3. St. Joseph with Christ Child Statue
After passing through the entrance and continuing up the path alongside the avenue, you will see a statue of Saint Joseph holding Jesus on your left, a short winding path leading up to two benches on which you can rest for a moment. This statue, along with a statue of Mary up the avenue, was created and installed at the turn of the century when it was noticed that the hill the Motherhouse was on seemed to be sliding, prompting the building of a retaining wall that was to be protected by the two statues. Since the Motherhouse was named after Saint Joseph, it seems fitting that this statue in particular would “guard the front slope,” as it was put at the time, and that it is one of the first sights that greets visitors on their way up the avenue.