



Sisters of Charity

o f C i n c i n n a t i
Associates in Mission

INFORMATION AND
APPLICATION PROCESS
Revised 2005

5900 Delhi Road
Mt. St. Joseph, OH 45051

**We, Sisters of Charity,
believe that community
grows out of the quality of our relationships
which impel us to be for others.
Therefore, we extend relationships to persons
who actively share our mission and spirit
and who wish to associate with the congregation.**

**This extended Charity Community
allows for mutual strength,
enrichment and support
as we strive to live out the Gospel values.**

**Associates in Mission
are women and men
who share in the mission and spirit
of the Sisters of Charity.**

**They seek to express in their lives
a spirituality of attending to God
in prayer, in each other
and wherever God's love is made visible
and to share friendship, faith and action
in the spirit of the Gospel.**

In response, each Associate is encouraged to:

- ❖ Strive to integrate the mission and spirit of the Sisters of Charity into her/his role, position or ministry.
- ❖ Respond to and initiate communication with sisters, Associates and the Director of Associates
- ❖ Participate in regular Associate gatherings for prayer, discussion and socializing.
- ❖ Be involved in the life of the community.
- ❖ Pursue avenues with the congregation which encourage personal spiritual growth and development.
- ❖ Keep informed, as far as possible, with regard to community events and functions.
- ❖ Renew her/his commitment annually following an assessment of the vitality of the relationship.
- ❖ Pray for the intentions of the Congregation and its members.

FORMATION

Prior to making a commitment the candidate participates in a Formation Process designed to fit his/her needs. The intent of the Formation Process is to offer the opportunity to:

- Deepen in the candidate a sensitivity to God's call to holiness and service
- Provide knowledge of the Congregation's response to God call as demonstrated in
 - The lives of its founders – St. Elizabeth Seton, Mother Margaret George Ferrell, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac
 - The history and present lived reality of the Sisters and Associates
 - The charism, vision and mission statements
- Communicate general information about the Congregation's administrative structure
- Help the Candidate discern the call to be an Associate in Mission

COMMITMENT

When the Formation Process is completed, the Candidate begins a discernment process with their companion. When completed and a decision is reached, the Director of Associates is notified. If the Candidate discerns a call to be an Associate in Mission, the request is made and if accepted, a ceremony is held and the Candidate makes her/his formal commitment to the community. This commitment is renewed annually.

COMPANION

Each candidate will be linked with a companion - a Sister or experienced Associate - who assumes the following responsibilities:

- Facilitates the Formation Process using the Formation Binder
- Links them with other Associates, Sisters, the Director of Associates
- Invites the Candidate to join in prayer, liturgy and social gatherings on the local, Network and Congregational level
- Provides the Candidate with information about available programs
- Leads the Candidate through a discernment process
- Advises the Director of Associates of her/his desire to make commitment and may assist with planning the ceremony

WITHDRAWAL

The Associate in Mission may withdraw from the program at any time by informing the Director of Associates.

As part of the family of Charity, each Associate in Mission can expect:

- ❖ A mutual striving toward living out the Gospel values that includes
 - Giving and receiving emotional and spiritual support
 - Understanding, accepting and sharing friendship
 - Forgiveness for mistakes made
 - Loving unconditionally
 - Sharing faith and faith vision
- ❖ Opportunities for spiritual journeying with Sisters and Associates
- ❖ Invitations to attend congregational and Network meetings insofar as activities are applicable to the Associate's relationship with the congregation
- ❖ Invitations to attend Network-Area prayer and social gatherings
- ❖ Options of joining Network small groups and Network committees with attending responsibilities
- ❖ Assurance of special prayers by a designated Sister or Associate
- ❖ Receipt of appropriate Congregational, Network and Associate communications
- ❖ Celebration of a Mass at the time of her/his death.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. When an Application is received in the Associate Office, a personal letter or phone call acknowledges the request and names the person a "Candidate".
2. The Candidate is added to the mailing list of the Community.
3. The Director notifies a Companion or Formation Group.
4. The Companion meets with the Candidate and leads her/him through the Formation Process beginning with a Ritual of Acceptance.
 - a. This process usually takes six months to a year.
 - b. The length of time varies depending on the prior connection of the Candidate to the community, schedules, etc.
 - c. Communication is maintained with the Director.
5. The Companion integrates the Candidate into a local group.
6. When the Candidate is ready to discern their call, the Companion leads the Ritual of Discernment and helps the Candidate through a discernment process.
7. When the Formation Process is complete and a formal request is made and accepted, the Companion schedules a Commitment Service locally and notifies the Director.
8. Commitment forms are signed at the ceremony or prayer service and then mailed to the Associate Office.
9. The Candidate is named an Associate in Mission and has the opportunity to renew her/his commitment annually.