

Bishop John England, Our Founder



The Cove of Cork.

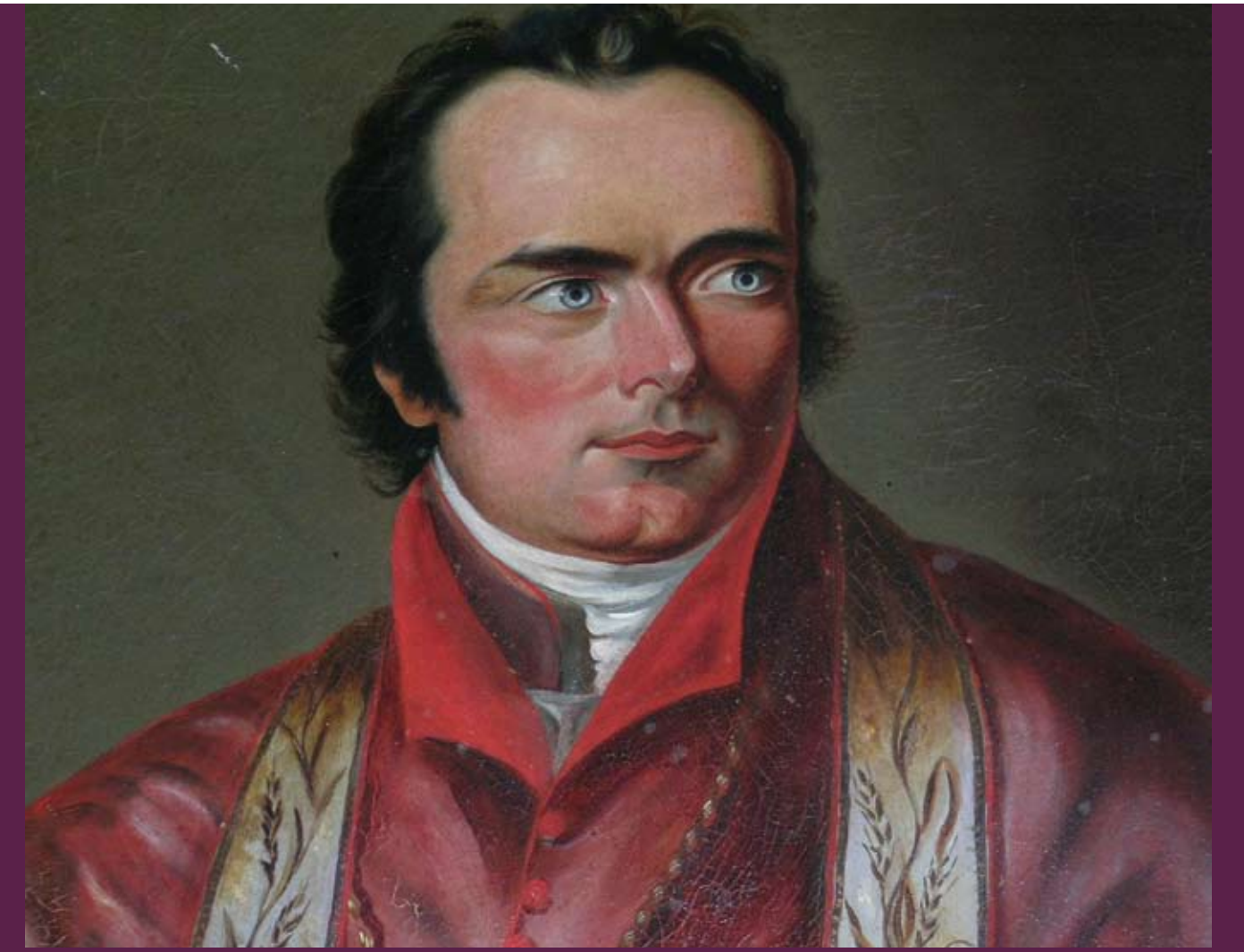
BISHOP ENGLAND'S hope of establishing a community of women religious in the Diocese of Charleston was realized in the fall of 1829. While attending the first Provincial Council of Bishops in Baltimore, he met Mary Joseph and Honora O'Gorman, their niece Teresa Barry, and Mary Elizabeth Burke, who wished to live a vowed life dedicated to serving the poor, sick, orphaned, and uneducated. Bishop England established them in Community in Charleston on December 8, 1829. He called the new institute Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and patterned it after the Sisters of Charity founded by Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, Maryland.



Charleston in 1831.

Bishop England showed concern for the spiritual and material development of the Community while he was at home or abroad. When in Charleston, he visited the Sisters frequently, conducted retreats, and received the Sisters' vows. He appealed to the annual Diocesan Conventions and raised money to purchase the property on Queen Street, which the Community occupied from 1841 until 1965. When abroad he recruited new members for the Community and sought financial assistance from European missionary societies.

When Bishop England died on April 11, 1842, there were thirteen professed Sisters and six novices in the Community. The American Catholic Church lost a zealous Bishop, a scholar, and eloquent preacher. The Sisters lost their founder and spiritual guide. Something of John England's spirit lives on in the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, the living link to the first Bishop of Charleston.



Bishop John England:

- Born in Cork, Ireland, in 1786.
- Ordained a priest, Cork, Ireland, in 1808.
- Appointed Bishop of Charleston by Pope Pius VII in 1820.
- Arrived in Charleston on December 30, 1820.
- Published a pastoral letter and visited his three-state Diocese in 1821.
- Established the Seminary of St. John the Baptist and founded the *United States Catholic Miscellany*, the first Catholic newspaper in the country, in 1822.
- Prepared a constitution for the Diocese of Charleston in 1823.
- Became the first Roman Catholic Bishop to address the U.S. Congress in 1826.
- Attended First Provincial Council in Baltimore and founded Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in 1829.
- Assigned to a diplomatic mission to Haiti by Pope Gregory XVI in 1832.
- Brought Ursuline nuns from Cork to Charleston in 1834.
- Opened a school for free children of color in August, 1835, which closed in three months.
- Established the Brotherhood of San Marino, the first Catholic society for working men, in 1838.
- Laid the cornerstone for OLM Motherhouse, Queen Street, in 1840.
- Reopened a school for free children of color in 1841.
- Died in 1842 at the age of 56 and is buried in the vault under St. John the Baptist Cathedral, Charleston.



Bishop England's chalice.

The bells as day broke tolled...Business was suspended, and shipping in the harbor hung their flags at half mast...The minute guns boomed in their awful tone the death of a great man.

Letter from Reverend Richard Barker to Reverend Thomas England, April 19, 1842

Mother Teresa Barry and Congregational Leaders



TERESA BARRY was born in Cork, Ireland, in 1814. She came to the United States with her maternal aunts Mary and Honora O’Gorman and settled in Baltimore. In 1829 at the age of 15, Teresa Barry became one of the founding members of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. For the next 71 years her life was one of prayer and dedicated service. Sister Teresa taught school, cared for orphans, aided the poor, and visited the sick in homes, hospitals, and prisons.

In 1844, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy elected Sister Teresa Barry to be their Mother Superior. As Mother Superior she guided the Community through epidemics, war, and natural disasters. Under her leadership the Sisters staffed a Confederate hospital at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, Virginia. A Civil War veteran said of her “The visits of Mother Teresa to the hospital in Charleston did me more good in the soothing influence of her deportment and conversations (although she never spoke on religious matters) than did the unvarying kindness of a mother and sister to my diseased body.”

Mother Teresa died on May 18, 1900, the last of the Sisters who knew Bishop England personally. At her death, Father Patrick L. Duffy, pastor of St. Joseph’s Church, called her “a valiant woman, tender mother, courageous to suffer and quick to sympathize.” What a Mother Foundress is to other Communities, Teresa Barry has become for the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy.

“The Mother Superior shall endeavor to be the counselor and comfort of all the sisters, the soul and life of the whole Community; animating all its members as much by her example as by her words...”

Constitutions of 1844

Mother Superiors Appointed by Bishop England:

Sr. Mary Joseph O’Gorman 1829
Sr. Martha O’Gorman 1831
Sr. Augustine Burke 1832
Sr. Benedicta Datty 1833
Sr. Magdalen Bartley 1836
Sr. Aloysius McKenna 1838

Mother Superiors Elected by the Community:

Sr. Teresa Barry 1844
Sr. Peter Sullivan 1853
Sr. Paul Harris 1856
Sr. Teresa Barry 1858
Sr. Francis Kyte 1869
Sr. Teresa Barry 1872
Sr. Isidore Barry 1875
Sr. Agatha MacNamara 1878
Sr. Teresa Barry 1881
Sr. Francis Kyte 1890
Sr. Teresa Barry 1893
Sr. Loretto Quinlan 1900 -1911
Sr. Aloysius McGrory 1911-1913
Sr. Benedicta Hummel 1913-1916
Sr. Stanislaus Hanley 1916-1922
Sr. De Sales De Antonio 1922-1928
Sr. Baptist Eccleston 1928-1931
Sr. Francis Robb 1931-1937
Sr. Bernard Campbell 1937-1940
Sr. Francis Robb 1940-1946
Sr. Loretto Reynolds 1946-1952
Sr. Bernard Campbell 1952-1958
Sr. Charles Gibson 1958-1970
Sr. Marie Daniel Hummel 1970-1980
Sr. Anne Francis Campbell 1980-1988
Sr. Bridget Sullivan 1988-1996
Sr. Anne Francis Campbell 1996-2004
Sr. Bridget Sullivan 2004-2012

Sr. Loretto Quinlan



Sr. Aloysius McGrory



Sr. Benedicta Hummel



Sr. De Sales De Antonio



Sr. Baptist Eccleston



Sr. Francis Robb



Sr. Bernard Campbell



Sr. Loretto Reynolds



Sr. Charles Gibson



Sr. Marie Daniel Hummel



Sr. Anne Francis Campbell



Sr. Bridget Sullivan



Caring for Orphans

The periodical visitation of yellow fever devastated many homes in the city, particularly the homes of the immigrants, consequently large numbers of helpless children of the most tender ages were left waifs on the city. The large heart of Bishop England yearned with pity and he provided for the unfortunate innocents by the establishment of the order of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Reverend J. J. O'Connell, Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia.



Sisters and children at Queen Street, 1940.

AS EARLY AS 1830, orphaned girls lived with the Sisters in their home on Friend Street (now Legare Street). In February 1841, the Community and 20 orphans moved into a new brick Motherhouse on Queen Street, also home to the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy. The Sisters fed, clothed, and taught the children and prepared the older girls for apprenticeships in the dressmaking and millinery trades.

Prior to the Civil War, the orphanage was supported by income from the academy and charitable donations collected by the St. Vincent's Orphan Society. After the war, the Community received additional support from the government. In 1871, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$12,000 to rebuild the orphanage, partially destroyed during the bombardment of Charleston. From 1875 to 1900 the City of Charleston appropriated \$6,000 annually to support at least 75 orphans.

In 1867, Bishop Lynch established the Boys' Orphan Asylum on Cannon Street. In 1901, the boys' and girls' orphanages became a single institution located at Queen Street and named the City Orphan Asylum. Charleston City Council annually appointed a Board of Commissioners to govern the facility and provide funds for food and clothing. The Sisters continued to care for the children and maintain the property.

During the 1950s, the number of children in the home declined steadily while the cost of maintaining and modernizing the buildings increased. The orphanage was closed and the property sold in 1965. The following year the Catholic Diocese opened the Charleston Home for Children. Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy staffed this facility until it closed in 1991.



Top: Sr. Berenice McGregor.

Middle: Sr. Eleanor McKamey.

Bottom: Srs. Mary Cyril Murray and Stella Maris Craven.

Civil War Service: To Bind Up the Wounds



THE PETITION
—OF THE—
MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE
—OF—
SOUTH CAROLINA,
—TO THE—
CONGRESS OF THE U. S. STATES
IN FAVOR OF THE
SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF MERCY,
CHARLESTON, S. C.,
—FOR THE—
REBUILDING OF THEIR ORPHAN ASYLUM,
PARTIALLY DESTROYED DURING THE BOMBARDMENT OF THE CITY.

ALSO,
VARIOUS IMPORTANT LETTERS FROM OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS
OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY. TESTIFYING TO THE
HEROIC CHARITY OF THESE GOOD SISTERS, IN
THEIR ATTENDANCE ON THE PRISONERS,
THE WOUNDED, THE SICK, AND THE
DYING, WITHOUT DISTINCTION
OF NORTH OR SOUTH,
OF CREED OR
COLOR.

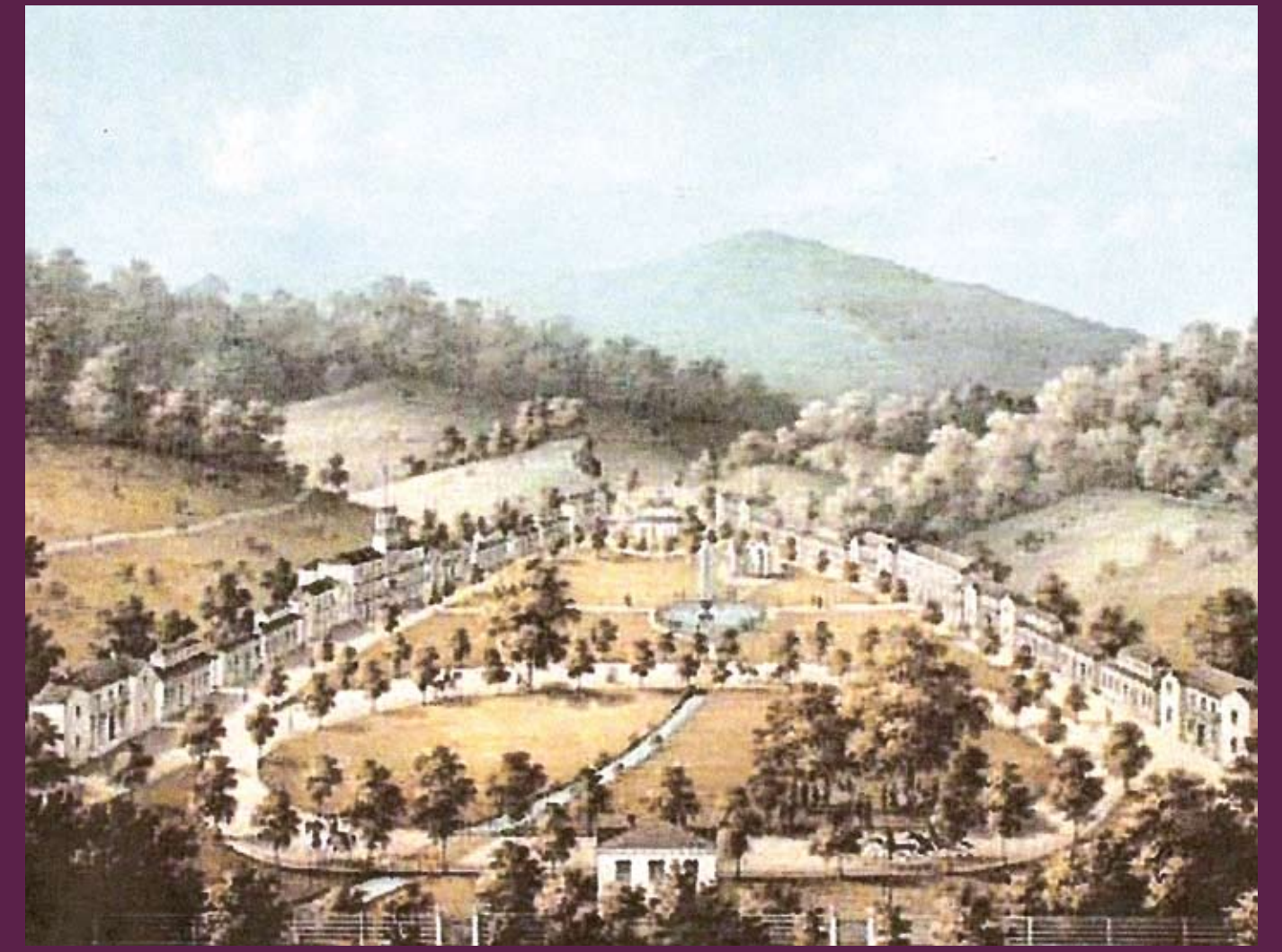
CHARLESTON, S. C.:
EDWARD PERRY, STATIONER, PRINTER AND BLANK BOOK MANUFACTURER,
155 MEETING STREET.
1870.

Sister Xavier Dunn; Right: Cover of the Petition to Congress.

ON APRIL 12, 1861, the Sisters awoke to the sound of cannons booming across Charleston Harbor. The Civil War had begun. Eight months later, Mother Teresa Barry and five Sisters traveled to Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, to staff a Confederate military hospital. The hospital housed patients with typhoid, pneumonia, and measles, as well as the wounded. The Sisters distributed medicines, dressed wounds, and supervised the kitchen and linen departments. As the Union Army advanced in May 1862, the hospital moved to Montgomery White Sulphur Springs. When the war ended, there were more than 300 soldiers in the hospital. Despite food shortages, the Sisters stayed until the patients were discharged or died.

The Sisters in Charleston stayed at the Motherhouse until the Union bombardment of the city began in the summer of 1863. Sister M. Joseph Kent and a group of Sisters, boarders, and orphaned children then moved to Sumter, South Carolina. They rented a house for the orphans and used property given to them by Mr. Edward Lafitte for a convent and boarding school, which became St. Joseph's Academy.

Some Sisters remained in Charleston throughout the war. After a shell exploded in the convent yard on November 21, 1863, they moved to a house in the upper part of the city and opened a day school. Sister Xavier Dunn, who was given the use of an ambulance, made daily visits to soldiers held in prisons and confined to hospitals. She and her companions brought food and clothing, carried messages to friends and relatives, and exchanged money for Confederate currency so that the men could buy extras from the "sutlers" in the camps. After the war many of these soldiers wrote to their representatives in the U.S. Congress urging them to appropriate funds to rebuild the orphanage damaged during the bombardment of Charleston.



Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, VA.

Nuns of the Battlefield

Mother Teresa Barry
Sr. De Sales Brennan
Sr. Ignatius Clark
Sr. DeChantal Cleary
Sr. Stanislaus Coventry
Sr. Bernard Frank
Sr. Francis Kyte
Sr. Agatha MacNamara
Sr. Helena Marlow
Sr. Alphonsa Moore

"During the war she formed one of the band of Sisters ... who nursed the sick and wounded soldiers of the Lost Cause in the hospitals of Virginia ... It was said of her that her touch was a balm, and her smile carried hope to many a weary and suffering soldier."
(On the death of Sister DeChantal Cleary, *Charleston News and Courier*, Sept. 20, 1901)



Cathedral of St. John and St. Finbar.

When you and Sister Teresa came into the prison, I met you at the gate and showed you a room where a few of my comrades were lying sick of the yellow fever. You encouraged them with kind words and promised me you would take care of them, yourself. You did so as none but the Sisters of Mercy could do.

Excerpt from a letter from Captain John O'Rourke to Sister M. Xavier, 1869

Caring for the Sick: From Home to Hospital



1. Srs. Margaret Mary Camann, Joan Marie Reynolds, Emmanuel Bevis, and Maria Murphy, SFXH. 2. Sr. M. Joseph O'Reilly. 3. Sr. Veronica Harte, SFXH. 4. Sr. Augustine McNerny, DSH. 5. Sr. Brendan Lacey, DSH. 6. Srs. Virginia Eskew and Helen Grobusky, SFXH.

"The Congregation of the Sisters has been eminently useful to us during the late epidemic... they were mercifully laborious and wonderfully indefatigable. Their charity was particularly exhibited in the hospital of the Brotherhood of San Marino, a useful association of respectable working men, by whom those good Sisters will be gratefully remembered."

Bishop England, 1838

CARE OF THE SICK and infirm was one of the original purposes of the Community. The Sisters attended the sick in their homes and in temporary relief hospitals. When epidemics swept through the city, the Sisters waded through muddy streets with food and medicine.

After the Civil War, health care moved from the home to the hospital. Thanks to the generosity of Miss Maria McHugh, who gave the Community a large brick house on Magazine Street, the Sisters established Charleston's first Catholic hospital. At the urging of Sister Xavier Dunn, the Community sold the Magazine Street house and purchased two buildings at the corner of Calhoun Street and Ashley Avenue. St. Francis Xavier Hospital, named for Sister Xavier, opened on October 1, 1882,

with five patients, five Sisters in attendance, and a horse-drawn ambulance. In 1900, the Community established the St. Francis Training School for Nurses, which operated until 1968.

In 1938, at the request of Bishop Walsh, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy opened Divine Savior Hospital in York, South Carolina, to serve this poor, rural community. Mrs. Church Carroll donated her home to serve as both convent and clinic. In 1942, a modern hospital was built to meet the growing needs of western York County. Divine Savior Nursing Home, the first Catholic nursing home in South Carolina, opened in 1963.

In the 1980s, health care across the United States changed dramatically. Faced with complex issues, fewer Sisters, and a desire to provide direct service to people in need, the Community transferred sponsorship of St. Francis Xavier and Divine Savior Hospitals to Bon Secours Health Care System in 1989.

We can be proud of passing on a Catholic health care facility that is alive and well. We are strengthening Catholic health care in this area and continuing to preserve a most significant part of our history as pioneering women in the Catholic Church.

Sister M. Bridget Sullivan, General Superior, 1989

The Neighborhood House



Clockwise from top left: Sr. Anthony Monaghan and Neighborhood House youth; Sr. Michael Leary; Mary McKenna; Christmas party 1958; Neighborhood House volunteers; Sr. Pat Keating, OP with staff.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE opened in April 1915 at 90 ½ Columbus Street, Charleston. Originally an outreach of St. Francis Infirmary, it was organized to provide home nursing care and social services to Italian, German, Austrian, and Syrian immigrants living in the northeastern section of Charleston. Miss Mary McKenna, Superintendant of the Infirmary, supervised the health-related programs. Sister Michael Leary, other Sisters, and volunteers offered classes in sewing, cooking, home nursing, and prenatal care and ran a vacation Bible school for children. The Sisters visited prisoners at the nearby county jail and residents of the Old Folks' Home on Columbus Street.

By the 1950s, this portion of the city was home to African Americans. Sister Anthony Monaghan, director from 1953 to 1968, developed programs to serve the needs of this community. She worked with local residents to create block organizations to combat juvenile delinquency, promote responsible parenting, and combat poverty. She helped form the Charleston Council of Concern for the Poor, dedicated to developing and implementing anti-poverty programs.

In 1968, the Diocese of Charleston assumed responsibility for the Neighborhood House. The Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy resumed sponsorship in 2005. The Neighborhood House staff serves a hot lunch daily to 150 local residents. Food supplies, financial assistance, and clothing are available in emergency situations. Several educational programs of health and wellness, parenting, sewing, and literacy are conducted each week. Located at 77 America Street, the Neighborhood House continues to be a haven of hope for local residents.

For some time there has been a feeling that the sick poor of the city should receive skilled care in their homes, and it would seem fitting that the Nursing Sisters of the Infirmary should be the ones to do this worthy work.
Letter from Mary McKenna, Superintendent of St. Francis Xavier Infirmary, to Bishop Henry Northrop, Nov. 29, 1914

The Mission of Education



Our Lady of Mercy Academy, 1917.

ONE OF THE first missions of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy was to provide educational opportunities to young girls from poor homes and to free children of color. In 1830, the Sisters established the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy in Charleston, a day and boarding school that offered a basic education along with music, art, and embroidery. Students of all faiths were welcome; religious instruction for Catholic children was given after school. The Academy operated until 1929. St. Mary's Free School opened in 1839 for young girls who could not afford the Academy tuition.

Bishop England established the School for Free Children of Color in 1835. This first school closed within months under public pressure. The school reopened in 1841. Sisters taught at the school until 1848.

The Community conducted Immaculate Conception Academy in Columbia, South Carolina, from 1854 until 1858. Five years later, when the Union bombardment of Charleston threatened the children in their care, the Community established St. Joseph's Academy in Sumter, South Carolina. In 1907, Bishop Henry P. Northrop asked the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy to take charge of St. Angela Academy, Aiken, South Carolina. The Community conducted the school until 1988.

Parochial schools were established in Charleston at the end of the 19th century. In 1899, the Community provided Sisters to teach in the Cathedral and St. Joseph's parishes. By 1905, they staffed all the parochial schools in Charleston. Bishop England High School, the first Catholic high school in the Diocese, opened in 1915. Sisters served on the faculty from 1915 until 1996. By mid-century, Sisters taught at schools throughout South Carolina and in Gibbstown and Middlesex, New Jersey.

Did You Attend One of These Schools?

Our Lady of Mercy Academy, Charleston – 1830-1929
School for Free Children of Color, Charleston – 1835/1841-1848
St. Mary's Free School, Charleston – 1839-1906
Immaculate Conception Academy, Columbia – 1854-1858
St. Joseph's Academy, Sumter – 1863-1929
Cathedral School, Charleston – 1899-1991
St. Joseph's, Charleston – 1899-1953
St. Peter's, Charleston – 1902-1917
St. Patrick's, Charleston – 1903-1946
Immaculate Conception, Charleston – 1904-1917
St. Angela Academy, Aiken – 1907-1988
Bishop England High School, Charleston – 1915-1996
St. William's, Mine Creek – 1920-1944
Sacred Heart, Charleston – 1924-1969
St. Mary's, Greenville – 1933-2006
St. Catherine's Kindergarten, Sumter 1937-1990
Stella Maris, Sullivan's Island – 1950-1953
Christ Our King/Stella Maris, Mount Pleasant – 1953-2006
St. Michael's, Gibbstown, NJ – 1954-1976
Our Lady of Mount Virgin, Middlesex, NJ – 1955-1984
St. Anne's, Sumter – 1955-1990
St. Andrew's, Myrtle Beach – 1957-1973
Nativity, Charleston – 1963-1965
St. Mary, Help of Christians, Aiken – 1971-1997
St. John the Beloved, Summerville – 1985-1992

Our Lady of Mercy Junior College, Charleston – 1935-1963



Sr. Veronica Janas, St. Mary's, Greenville, SC.



Sr. Rosemary Boyd, St. Mary, Help of Christians, Aiken, SC.

They taught the negro and white in grammar and high schools, free schools and academies, in city and country, in parish and mission.

Bishop Emmet Walsh, 1929 – The 100th Anniversary of the Community

Day Schools and Camps



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2



3



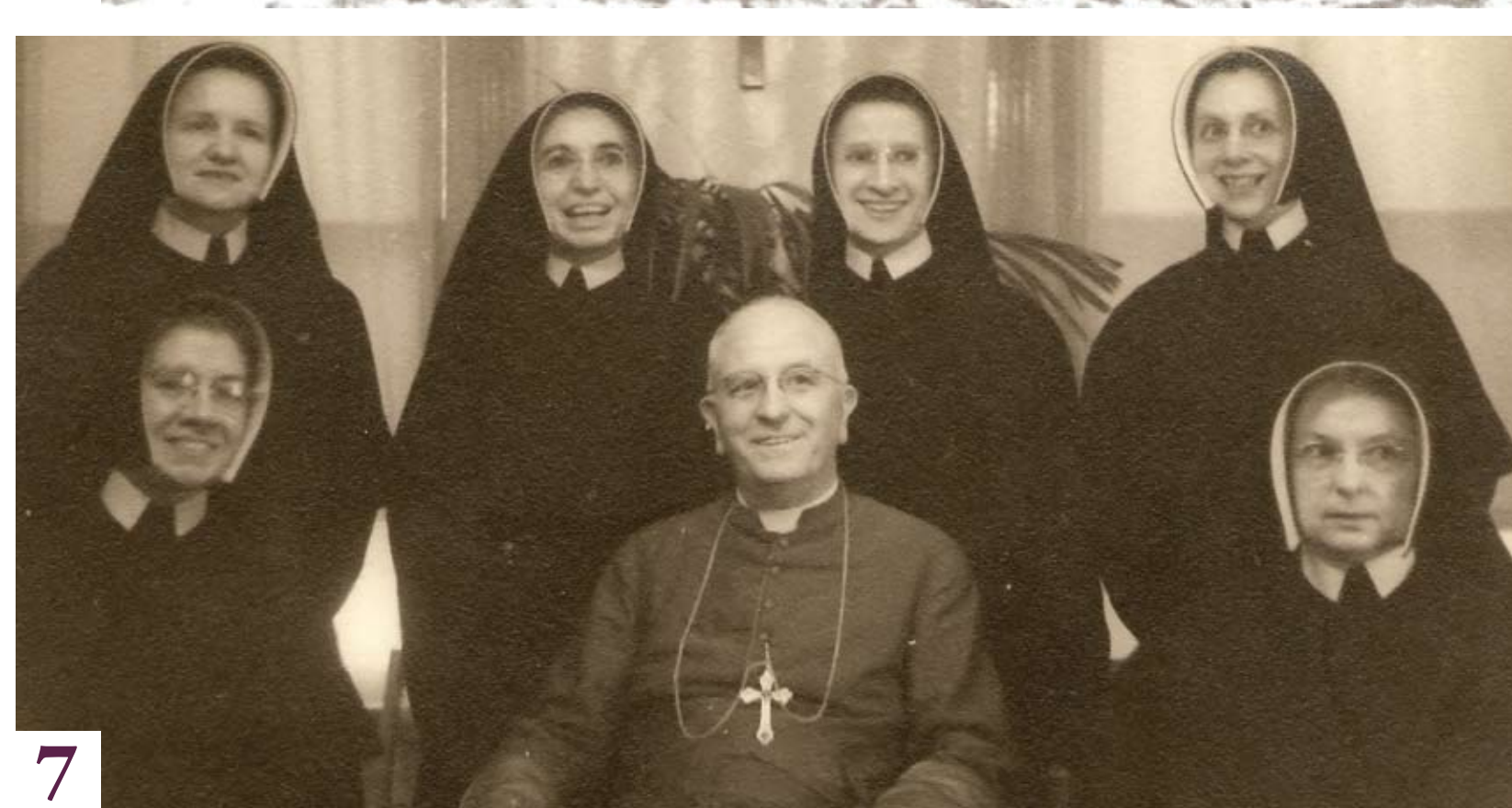
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6



7

1. St. Paul's Spartanburg, 1929.
2. Recreation, Camp St. Mary's.
3. Outdoor chapel, Camp St. Mary's.
4. Bishop Walsh and staff, Camp St. Mary's, 1938.
5. Camp St. Ann, 1936.
6. Mission Center, Sumter, 1930.
7. Catechetical Center, Hightstown, NJ.

THE DIOCESE OF Charleston was mission territory until the mid-twentieth century. Many Catholics lived far from churches and parochial schools. To provide religious education for children in these parts of the Diocese, Bishop Emmet Walsh established Religious Vacation Day Schools, Camps, and Mission Centers.

Sisters Catherine Smith and Mary Charles Gibson opened the first Vacation Day School in St. Paul's Parish, Spartanburg, in 1929. Classes were held each weekday morning for a month. In the afternoon the children went home and the Sisters visited parishioners. Similar schools were established in Anderson, Beaufort, Georgetown, and Parris Island.

OLMs worked with seminarians and counselors in the vacation camps. Camp St. Mary's, on the banks of the Okatee River, near Bluffton, served the southern part of the Diocese. Camp St. Ann, in the mountains at Rocky Bottom, Pickens, served the northern section of the state. The children attended camp for three weeks. Religion classes were held in the morning, leaving the afternoons and evenings for recreational activities.

In September 1929, the Community converted St. Joseph's, Sumter, into a year-round mission-on-wheels. For the next 25 years Sisters assigned to Sumter drove an average of 500 miles each week to teach the children of the Sumter, Florence, and Camden missions.

Responding to an invitation from Bishop Griffin of Trenton, the Community established a Regional Catechetical Center in Hightstown, New Jersey, in September 1947. The Sisters gave religious instruction to Catholic children who attended public schools in Hightstown and surrounding communities until 1955.

Renewal and Adaptation



*Top, left to right :Srs. Jean Marie O'Shea and Mary Cyril Murray, Senior Ministry; Sr. Carmelita Boyd, Pastoral Assistant.
Bottom left to right: Sr. Marcella Zwingmann and OLM Associates; Sr. Donna Lareau, Faith Formation; Sr. Ann Billard, Transformative Aging programs.*

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL (1962-65) called religious congregations to renew and adapt their lives according to the Gospel, the original inspiration of the Community, and the needs of the modern world. So began a period of experimentation and change. Sisters updated their knowledge of theology, church history, canon law, and religious life as well as their professional skills. At assemblies they reflected upon the Community's charism and mission in relation to contemporary needs and signs of the times. As a result, the Community adopted new forms of prayer, modified styles of dress, more collaborative government structures, and a new formation program. A new constitution embodying the teachings of Vatican II and the directives of the 1983 Code of Canon Law was promulgated on Pentecost Sunday, 1984.

Vatican II also emphasized a universal call to holiness and encouraged the laity to assume co-responsibility for Christ's mission on earth. A Lay Associate Program, begun in 1976, is open to men and women who wish to share in the mission and spirit of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy. Associates and Sisters come together for prayer, retreats, workshops, social gatherings, and Community events.

The decrees of Vatican II opened new ways for women religious to participate in the life of the Church. Sisters were invited to serve on Diocesan councils and committees and were actively involved in the Diocesan Synod (1993-1995). At the parish level, Sisters direct senior ministry and adult faith formation programs, are members of parish councils, and have served as Pastoral Associates. Sisters with appropriate qualifications conduct retreats and programs for church, school, and professional organizations.

Back to our Roots



1. Srs. Marie Amelia Ferillo and Mary Joseph Ritter visit migrant camp. 2. OLMCOS staff, volunteers, and children. 3. Srs. M. Thomas Neal (left) at United Nations NGO meeting. 4. Srs. Stella Maris Craven, Carmelita and Rosemary Boyd, Maureen Tzinieris, and Mary Cyril Murray at Federation Shared Vision Program, 1994. 5. Srs. Bridget Sullivan, Mary Joseph Ritter, and Carol Wentworth at Federation Leadership meeting, 2009. 6. Srs. Donna Lareau, Carol Wentworth, and Mary Joseph Ritter doing home repairs.

AT THE GENERAL Chapter of 1988, Sisters voiced their desire to return to the Community's roots by providing more direct service to the poor and elderly. Consequently, Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy established a small outreach facility on Johns Island in June 1989. Three months later, Hurricane Hugo devastated the Lowcountry. The outreach facility was too small to handle the number of people needing help. With money received from the transfer of the hospitals, the Community built and endowed a much larger facility called Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach Services to serve the people of Johns, James, and Wadmalaw Islands. The Outreach provides food

and clothing to the needy, aids migrant workers, and offers after-school tutoring, summer educational programs, GED and ESL instruction, and home repairs. Its Wellness Center provides free dental and prenatal health care to a growing number of patients. The Community also gave land on Johns Island to Habitat for Humanity to build homes for low-income families.

The decrees of Vatican Council II encouraged collaboration among religious congregations, especially those with similar charisms. In 1994 the Community joined the Sisters of Charity Federation, which includes congregations in the USA and Canada with roots in the Rule of St. Vincent de Paul and/or St. Elizabeth A. Seton. The Federation uses its corporate influence to witness and advocate for peace and justice in solidarity with the poor. The Federation has an NGO (non-governmental organization) representative at the United Nations through whom we respond to the needs of the poor and oppressed worldwide.