

The View From The Bluff September 2019

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mother M. De Sales

De Antonio

1922-1928





Mother De Sales, formerly Rosalie Veronica De Antonio, was born in Charleston, SC, on January 29, 1876. She graduated from Bennett Elementary School and attended St. Mary's Parochial School and Memminger High School prior to her entrance into the OLM Community on August 5, 1902. The Motherhouse, then located at 51 Meeting Street (now known as the Russell House) was the site of her Reception on April 13, 1903, and, her Profession on February 4, 1905. Sister De Sales taught in Saint Joseph's Parochial School, Charleston, for several years following her profession. A gifted musician, she taught music in St. Angela Academy, Aiken, SC, from 1911 until her election as Treasurer of the OLM Community in 1914. While Treasurer she also taught in the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy until elected Mother Assistant of the Community in 1917. Three years later she resumed her teaching position in the Academy until elected Mother Superior of the Community in July 1922. Re-elected in 1925 she remained in office until 1928.

Reception 1903 at 51 Meeting Street



In Mother De Sales' first term as Superior Bishop William T. Russell authorized a fundraising campaign to build a completely new St. Francis Xavier Hospital in Charleston. The response of the Catholic Community surpassed everyone's expectations. On January 25, 1926 Bishop Russell laid the cornerstone of the new hospital. Unfortunately, however, the Bishop suffered a heart attack three days before the hospital's dedication on October 17, 1926. In January he became a patient in the building he had done so much to erect. On March 18, 1927 Bishop Russell died. His successor, Bishop Emmet M. Walsh, took possession of his See on September

22, 1927. Five months later, following the resignation of Monsignor McElroy, Bishop Walsh became the Ecclesiastical Superior of the OLM Community and retained that post for the next twenty years.

During Mother De Sales six years as Superior the Community provided staff for St. Joseph's, St. Patrick's and the Cathedral Parochial schools as well as for Bishop England High School and the OLM Academy in Charleston. The Community also conducted St. Angela Academy in Aiken, St. William's School in Mine Creek, and, St. Joseph's Academy in Sumter, SC, in addition to operating St. Francis Xavier Hospital and the Neighborhood House in



Charleston. To prepare Sisters for their ministries Mother De Sales continued the policy established by her predecessors of sending as many OLMs as possible each summer to the Catholic University of America and other Catholic colleges to pursue the academic preparation necessary for their responsibilities.

After her six years as Mother Superior Sr. De Sales was appointed Superior of the OLM Community in Sumter. The former St. Joseph's Academy had been converted into a

year round mission center. The sisters living there gave religious instruction

Sr. De Sales (L) with Fr. Burke, Sr. Mary James and First Communion Class, Camden, SC

to the children of Sumter, Florence and Camden Missions. In 1932 she returned to Charleston following her election as Mother Assistant of the Community.

During the 1940s she served as Superior of the Sisters living in the City Orphan Asylum and also taught in the Cathedral Parish School. In 1949 Sr. De Sales was again appointed Superior of the OLMs assigned to the Sumter Mission Center. Three years later she was transferred from Sumter to serve as Local Superior at St. Francis Xavier Hospital Convent in Charleston. Following a long illness Sr. De Sales died at St. Francis Xavier Hospital, Charleston, on August 31, 1957. She is buried in St. Lawrence Cemetery.









Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach Services, Inc. opened its door to serve the needs of the people living on James, Johns and Wadmalaw Island in September of 1989. A sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, the Outreach has flourished over the past thirty years. From its humble beginnings in the small house on Edenvale Road which the Sisters purchased to the expanded campus on Brownswood Road and the Neighborhood House on America Street, the Outreach continues to offer quality care and assistance to those in need. Sister Mary Albert Greer, OLM, first director of the Outreach is surely smiling down from heaven as the Outreach strives each day to continue the Sisters' vision set forth in 1989—to provide a diverse range of programs to assist people, to be a welcoming place to all, to serve with compassion.

Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach has shared its resources, both human and financial and we have been renewed many times over. Much has been accomplished, many lives have been changed. Much remains to be done. Knowing that the God of the Bible is always on the side of the poor we go on...we go on with our ministry at the Outreach doing the works for justice, serving those in need, pursuing peace and defending the life, dignity and rights of all our sisters and brothers. In our Chapter of 1992, our theme was, "The remnant of the people will strike deep roots and bear much fruit". How true this has been for OLM Outreach. OLM Outreach has struck deep roots in James Island, Johns Island, Wadmalaw Island and the East Side of Charleston. And while there is a remnant, however small, who cares intensely for the quality of life in these communities, there is hope.

May our good God continue to bless the staff, volunteers, Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, OLMCOS Board Members, and those we serve!