



THE VIEW FROM THE BLUFF

FEBRUARY 2021

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA



*And the Sisters of
Charity of Our
Lady of Mercy's
Participation*

The history of the Federation begins in 1947. In that year, the Major Superiors of those congregations of Sisters of Charity who traced their origins to Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton in North America met to discuss their common concerns and organized themselves as the Conference of Mother Seton's Daughters. The Conference had two goals: to strengthen the bond of union among the member communities and to work to advance the cause of Mother Seton's canonization. In 1965 the Conference became the Federation in response to Pope Paul VI urging that congregations that possessed the same general spirit join in associations or federations for mutual support and development. Following Mother Seton's canonization on September 14, 1975 several other communities in the Vincentian and Setonian tradition joined the original six Communities. A revision of the bylaws in 1989 provided for the admission of congregations that had no direct historical connection to Elizabeth Seton, but share in the charism of charity through some adaptation of the Rule of

St. Vincent de Paul. The OLM Community, whose original and subsequent Rules had been based on that of St. Vincent de Paul, became members of the Federation at its annual meeting in Nazareth, KY, in May 1994. Once a Congregation joins the Federation all members of that Congregation are considered members of the Federation. However, the General Superior is the official representative of each Congregation in the Federation. The Sisters of Charity Federation, which consists of the official representatives of member Congregations, meets once a year and is hosted by member Congregations on a rotational basis. In 2002 the OLMs co-hosted the meeting in Cincinnati with the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, and, in May 2011, the OLMs hosted the meeting in Charleston. Sister M. Bridget Sullivan and Sister Mary Joseph Ritter served as Secretary of the Charity Federation Board of Directors during their terms as OLM General Superior.

Through the years the Sisters of Charity Federation has offered a number of programs open to all Sisters in member congregations. OLMs have participated in the following:

1. Sisters Carmelita, Rosemary, Stella Maris, Mary Cyril, and Maureen attended the Shared Vision Program held in Emmitsburg from July 27 to 31, 1994
2. Sisters Ann Billard, Alice Joseph, Stella Maris, Mary Thomas, Jean Marie and Bridget Sullivan attended Seton Legacy in Halifax, Nova Scotia from August 2 to 4, 1997
3. Sisters Mary Clement and Nancy Purdue attended a session of Seton Legacy held in Nazareth, Kentucky in September
4. Sister Carol attended a meeting of the Company of Charity Formation Personnel (CCFP) in March 2002. Sister Carol and Sister Stella Maris attended a CCFP meeting in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, from April 3 to 7, 2003.
5. During the summer of 2003 Sisters Donna and Stella Maris joined the Federation Pilgrimage to France.
6. From 2001 through 2008 Sister Rosemary Boyd served as a member of the Charity Connections Committee which prepared a publication which explored contemporary implications of the Charity Heritage.
7. In 1997 the Federation gained recognition as an NGO (non-governmental organization) at the United Nations. Sister Mary Thomas served as the OLM Liaison with the Charity Federation NGOs from 1996 to 2003. Sister M. Carol Wentworth is our current NGO Liaison.



1993 Meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia



1994 Annual Meeting in Nazareth, Kentucky



Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy

Office of the General Superior

February 6, 1994

CHARITY FEDERATION:

We request membership in the Elizabeth Seton Federation because we recognize our common charism and rootedness as religious women in the Church. As a small congregation we choose to collaborate with other congregations whose heritage and sense of mission are similar to our own. We appreciate the opportunities for experiencing the larger Church, for participating in programs of personal development, especially on our charity foundation and connection. We hope to bring the richness of our unique expression of the charity charism to the Federation and to enrich our lives together through this relationship with you.

**Letter written before the 1994
annual meeting requesting the
OLMs membership into the
Charity Federation**



2000 Annual Meeting in Emmitsburg, Maryland



Weaving The Vision
Sisters of Charity Federation
Annual Meeting
Charleston, South Carolina
May 12-16, 2011



Sr. Catherine Bertrand, SSND
Facilitator

***The Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy
hosted the Annual Meeting in 2011. A grand
time was had by all!***



2016 Annual Meeting, Emmitsburg, Maryland
OLMs attending the Federation's Shared Vision Program in 1994, Emmitsburg.



Family Tree of the Sisters of Charity Federation

Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac

Elizabeth Ann Seton

Daughters of Charity
Founded—1633

Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
Mother Elizabeth Boyle
New York
Mission in New York—1817
Independent Community—1846

Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph
Emmitsburg, Maryland
Foundation—1809

Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
Mother Margaret Cecilia George
Cincinnati, Ohio
Mission in Cincinnati—1829
Independent Community—1852
Vincian SC Bedford 1939
Became SC-C in 2004

Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
SCNY: Mother Basilia McCann
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
Mission in Halifax—1849
Independent Community—1855

Affiliated with Daughters of Charity
of St. Vincent de Paul 1850
Motherhouse—Paris, France
Two Provinces in North America

Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill
Mother Aloysia Lowe, SC-C
Greensburg, Pennsylvania
Independent Community—1870

Sisters of Saint Martha of Antigonish
Bishop Cameron and 15 SC-H Founding Women
Nova Scotia, Canada
1900

Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth
Novices to SC-C
Mother Xavier Mehegan, SCNY
Diocesan Congregation in 1859
Newark, New Jersey

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
Father John David and Mother Catherine
Spalding
Nazareth, Kentucky
Founded—1812
Vincian SC Pittsburgh 1938
Became SCN in 2008

Sisters of Saint Martha of Prince Edward Island
Bishop O'Leary; Mother M. Stanislaus and 2 sisters
from Antigonish 1916
Charlottetown, P.E.I., Canada

Sisters of Charity of Immaculate Conception
Novice SCNY : Mother Mary Vincent Conway
Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada
Independent Community—1854

Emmitsburg sent the American Vincentian Rule (adapted
by Elizabeth Seton, Bishop Carroll, Bishop David et al for
the American Church) No direct connection to Elizabeth
Ann Seton

Religieuses de Notre-Dame-du-Sacre-Coeur
Mere Marie Anne Cyr
Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada
Independent Community—1924

Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy
Bishop John England
Charleston, South Carolina
Founded—1829

Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, KS
Mother Xavier Ross
SC-N Mission in Nashville—1841
Independent Community—1851
Moved to Leavenworth—1858

Sisters of Charity Federation A Developmental Overview

Betty Ann McNeil, D.C.

1947	Initially the Conference (and later Federation) held semi-annual meetings in which the sister convener simply served as hostess with Bishop John McNamara as presider.
1947	Conference of Mother Seton's Daughters founded to work together for cause of canonization of Elizabeth Bayley Seton, which remained the primary focus until 1975. Founding members of the Conference of Mother Seton's Daughters: Daughters of Charity of the United States (Emmitsburg and Saint Louis Provinces); Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul of New York; Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati; Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth (Convent Station); Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill (Greensburg); Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul of Halifax.
1965	Federation members explored charism, formation, and mission projects related to shared heritage. ¹
1965	Became the Federation of the Daughters of Blessed Elizabeth Ann Seton in response to the invitation of the Second Vatican Council that communities sharing same charism form federations (after 1975, Federation of the Daughters of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton). (Cf. <i>Perfectae Caritatis</i> , §1-2; §22).
1966	The mistresses of initial formation were the first group invited to convene through the Federation.
1967	Annual conferences of Seton colleges began.
1969	Over time the lived experience of the group became normative. Members approved the first revisions (1969 and 1972) of the by-laws which limited the term of the Chair to one year with her principal duty to prepare and preside at the annual meeting and appoint a secretary from her community.
1969	Members began assisting the Mother Seton Guild with public relations and promotion of the Seton cause and served as docents at the Seton Shrine in Emmitsburg.
1969	Federation members desired to forge links with other groups in the Vincentian Family and appointed (1969) Sister Mathilde Comstock, D.C., (1901-1997) and later (1984) Sister Rosemary Fleming, S.C. (Greensburg), as the official representatives of the group to serve on the national board of the Ladies of Charity of the United States.
1973	Members added a preamble to the by-laws and a proposed revision (1989) allowed for a new category of membership. This provided for the admission of congregations with Vincentian but not Setonian roots.
1973	Federation members committed themselves to seek effective strategies for human development, to promote investment in minority enterprises, and to make corporate responses to social justice issues.

¹ Among its earliest inter-congregational projects were observances of the feast of Blessed Elizabeth Ann Seton, special gatherings at professional meetings, a newsletter, and the publication of reports related to social justice, advocacy, and local ministries among persons oppressed by poverty.

1974	During the annual meetings of the Federation, members considered strategies to make their shared charism more effective in the modern world, especially in the areas of social justice, spirituality, and renewal programs.
1975	Successful accomplishment of founding purpose, canonization of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, 14 September. ² Sister Hildegarde Marie Mahoney, S.C., major superior of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth (1971-1979) was Chair of the Federation.
1976	After again revising the statutes and by-laws, the Federation adopted a new purpose: “to bring together in love and friendship the various congregations that are inspired by the charism of their common foundress, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton; and thus be enabled to discover more fully the life and mission of a Sister of Charity today.”
1977	Members explored the feasibility of common study of the charism which led them to adopt a resolution (1977) to encourage each community in the Federation to engage in ongoing study, reflection, and sharing of the lives of Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, and Elizabeth Bayley Seton. One result was the initiation (1988) of <i>Charity: A Shared Vision</i> , an ongoing formation program. A later outcome was the first of several scholarly symposia to explore the historical and theological relevance of <i>The Seton Legacy</i> (1992).
1977	Members launched drives to seek approval for a Seton stamp from the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee of the United States Postal Service.
1979	Members sought ways to study unmet human needs and resources.
1979	The Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception (1979) of Canada was the first additional community to seek admission as an associate member.
1980	A committee on by-laws was established to define the terms of association with the Federation.
1982	The by-laws were amended to allow for two categories of membership: Full Membership for those with common origin in the Emmitsburg foundation and Associate Membership for those that derive their spirit and inspiration from Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton. These were later modified (1985, 1988) to allow equality of status among members and to admit congregations within the Tradition of Charity which do <i>not</i> have a direct connection to Elizabeth Seton but are rooted in the Vincentian tradition.
1984	The Federation designated the archives of the Daughters of Charity at Saint Joseph's Provincial House, Emmitsburg, Maryland, as the repository for its official papers and artifacts.
1985	This led to the ongoing discussion about formation practices and sponsorship of formation programs (1985), <i>The Roots Program</i> (1986), <i>Roots on-the-Road</i> (1987), <i>Roots Revisited</i> , and a final vow retreat (1989).

² The Seton cause was introduced in Rome in 1940. Saint John XXIII declared Mother Seton venerable December 18, 1959; presided at her beatification March 17, 1963. Blessed Paul VI canonized her as Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton September 14 during the Holy Year of 1975 and the International Year of the Woman. The Holy See accepted three miracles through her intercession: the cures of Sister Gertrude Korzendorfer, D.C. (1872-1942), of Saint Louis, of cancer; a young child, Ann Theresa O'Neill (b. 1948), of Baltimore, from acute, lymphatic leukemia; and Carl Kalin (1902-1976), of New York, from a rare form of encephalitis. Exhumed prior to the beatification, the remains of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton repose in the Basilica of the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

1986	Les Religieuses de Nôtre Dame du Sacré-Coeur (1986), of Canada, was the second community to seek admission as an associate member.
1987	Members sought to coordinate and network among already existing ministries which respond to neighbors in need.
1988	First annual session of <i>Charity: A Shared Vision</i> .
1988	The associate status was deleted in favor of full membership and the following congregations were admitted.
1988	Representatives gathered informally as <i>Charity Connections</i> to share reflections and to write occasional essays on the charism, later published in booklet format, <i>Living the Charity Charism</i> . This is now an ongoing project.
1989	Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Pittsburgh admitted as a member.
1989	An annual gathering of formators evolved (1989) into the Company of Charity Formation Personnel (CCFP), which affiliated (1992) with the Federation as a formal sub-group.
1990	Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford admitted as a member.
1990	Gradual refocus as The Elizabeth Seton Federation.
1990	Later the Sisters of Charity of New York and the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth established a joint novitiate (1990) which became (1992) a collaborative novitiate with the additional involvement of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill, the New York and Boston Provinces of the Sisters of Charity of Halifax, and later other Federation members.
1991	Format of annual meetings was changed for coordination by a rotating chair of an Executive Committee which handles Federation business between annual meetings, including development of ways to connect the various sub-groups to its organizational structure.
1991	The Federation has initiated first publication project by commissioning Sister Hildegard Marie Mahoney, S.C. (New Jersey), to prepare a manuscript on the history of the Federation. ³
1991	The Federation continued updating and refining its structure and restated (1991) its purpose as follows: To bring together in love and friendship congregations that trace their roots to Emmitsburg; have a Seton connection and share her spirit; or share the spirit of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac through adaptation of the <i>Common Rules of the Daughters of Charity</i> . ⁴
1991	Sisters of Charity of Nazareth admitted as a member.
1992	First of several scholarly symposia to explore the historical and theological relevance of <i>The Seton Legacy</i> (1992). Seton Legacy II was held in 1996-1997 and Seton Legacy III in 2001. The Vincentian Studies Institute collaborated with the Federation and published the proceedings of the first two symposia in <i>Vincentian Heritage</i> .

³ Sister Hildegard Marie Mahoney, S.C. (New Jersey), was commissioned in 1991 to prepare a manuscript on the history of the Federation, but failing eyesight necessitated her withdrawal from the project. Sister Geraldine Anthony, S.C. (Halifax), completed *A Vision of Service* (Sheed & Ward, 1997), which was published during the fiftieth anniversary of the Federation.

⁴ The American Sisters of Charity inculcated the Vincentian charism in North America by modifying the seventeenth-century French rule of Louise and Vincent to suit the needs of the nineteenth-century Church in the United States. The Setonian Tradition developed from the Vincentian Tradition.

1994	Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy of Charleston admitted as a member.
1995	Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth admitted as a member.
1995	Incorporated in the state of New York as The Elizabeth Seton Federation.
1996	<p>Adopted the following purposes and a new name: The Sisters of Charity Federation in the Vincentian and Setonian Tradition:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support the commitment of its members to the mission of Charity expressed through the diversity of their specific congregational charisms. 2. To foster ongoing study and reflection on the Tradition of Charity. 3. To facilitate collaboration in projects related to ministry and other areas of common concern. 4. To foster ongoing study and reflection on the charism and Tradition of Charity in its seventeenth-century origin and in its flowering in many congregations founded in North America.
1996	<p>In order to make the writings of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton more available, the Federation appointed Sister Regina Bechtle, S.C. (New York), and Sister Judith Metz, S.C. (Cincinnati), as co-editors for the three volume publication <i>Elizabeth Bayley Seton Collected Writings</i> (New City Press, 2000-2005), for which Ellin M. Kelly was designated manuscript editor. DePaul University Vincentian Studies Institute published <i>Elizabeth Bayley Seton Collected Writings</i> and writings to and about her, the Seton Writings Project. See <i>Via Sapientiae</i>, the digital repository of DePaul University: http://via.library.depaul.edu/seton_stud/</p>
1996	<p>The Sisters of Charity Federation in the Vincentian and Setonian Tradition adopted a new name and clarified that congregations must meet one of two key criteria for membership:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Trace their characteristic spirit and charism to the Tradition of Charity of Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, and Elizabeth Ann Seton; 2) Trace the influence of the Vincentian Rule (<i>Common Rules of the Daughters of Charity</i>) in their documents and in their lifestyle.
1997	Sister Geraldine Anthony, S.C. (Halifax), completed <i>A Vision of Service</i> (Sheed & Ward, 1997), which was published during the fiftieth anniversary of the Federation.
1997	<p>In order to be more effective advocates on peace and justice issues, the Federation gained recognition as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) at the United Nations. Sister Maria Elena Dio, S.C. (Halifax), was the first representative of the Federation to the Department of Public Information at the United Nations. During her eight years at the UN, Sister Marie Elena was a founding member of Religious at the UN (RUN), a group to support efforts in promoting the principles Catholic Social Teaching.</p>
1998	Sister Theresa Capria, S.C. (New York), represented the Federation at the 1998 General Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission in Rome.
1999	The Federation launched (1999) a new project <i>Charity 2000 & Beyond</i> to provide another series of ongoing formation opportunities (charism retreats and retreat at Dax, France).
2004	The Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Bedford dissolved and the members joined the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati.

2004	The Sisters of Saint Martha of Antigonish admitted to membership in the Sisters of Charity Federation.
2004	Sister Mary Ann Daly, SC (NY) accepted the new position as Administrative Assistant to the Federation.
2005	Sister Maria Goetschalckx, S.C. (Seton Hill), served as NGO Representative for two years and brought her expertise to poverty and development issues as well as trafficking and migration.
2006	Name officially changed from Sisters of Charity Federation in the Vincentian and Setonian Tradition to Sisters of Charity Federation.
2007	Sister Mary Ann Daly, S.C. (New York) appointed Executive Director of the Sisters of Charity Federation.
2007	Sister Caroljean Willie, S.C. (Cincinnati), assumed the role of NGO Representative.
2008	The Vincentian Sisters of Charity of Pittsburgh dissolved and the members joined the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth.
2009	Bicentennial of the founding of the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's by Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton.
2011	Sister Julie Cutter, D.C., appointed Executive Director of the Sisters of Charity Federation.
2011	The Sisters of Charity Federation began to explore alternative governance structures for the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, located at Emmitsburg, Maryland. Heretofore the Daughters of Charity Province of Emmitsburg had responsibility for the Seton Shrine.
2014	Sister Teresa Kotturan, SCN, assumed the role of NGO Representative.
2017	The Sisters of Saint Martha of Prince Edward Island admitted to membership in the Sisters of Charity Federation in June.
2017	Sister Grace Hartzog, S.C. (Seton Hill) appointed Executive Director of the Sisters of Charity Federation.

Betty Ann McNeil, DC, "The Sisters of Charity Federation," *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (The Catholic University of America Press and the Gale Group, 2002).

Reviewed and updated June 4, 2018