

Vision

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NEW YORK

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Now in Our Third Century of Living Lives of Love 1817 – 2017



CELEBRATING
200
1817-2017
Years of Service
SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF NEW YORK





The Sisters of Charity proudly march with many other religious groups and the laity in support of civil rights and equality for all.

“Didn’t you just celebrate your Bicentennial?”

Well, yes, we did. 2009 marked the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of Charity in America by Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton (now a saint), in Emmitsburg, MD. Many communities of Sisters of Charity, including those in New York, Cincinnati, New Jersey, Greensburg, PA, Halifax and New Brunswick, Canada, trace their roots to Mother Seton’s community.

“So what’s 2017 about?” In 1817, Mother Seton sent three Sisters of Charity to New York to care for orphans. We have been here ever since. We began schools and hospitals, opened orphanages, served families, young people and the elderly, cared for immigrants, persons who were homeless, hungry, imprisoned, trafficked, in need of job skills or spiritual counseling. We continue to serve and advocate for “the poor of every type who may require our assistance,” including our endangered Earth itself. The hearts and hands of Charity reached every corner of this vast Archdiocese: rural counties, suburban towns, and inner-city streets. Our ministries continue to this day in this city, for which the Sisters of Charity, like St. Elizabeth Seton, bear a special love.

Cover photos, clockwise from top left:

1. St. Joseph’s Academy, Manhattan, 1952. **2.** The Gagliardi painting, which hangs in the boardroom at the Sisters of Charity Center, Mount Saint Vincent, depicts three Sisters with orphan boys in the early 19th century. It is a representation of the Congregation’s first mission at on Mott Street. **3.** Community gathers for Mass in Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, circa 1950. **4.** 200th Anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of Charity by Mother Seton; SCNY are Grand Marshalls of the 2009 St. Patrick’s Day Parade. **5.** Sister Miriam Gertrude Halloran, Fr. John Fitzgerald, and nursing students before heading to St. Patrick’s Day Parade, circa 1965. **6.** The New York Foundling cradle in which Sisters welcomed abandoned babies, circa 1870.

Rear cover photos, clockwise from top left:

1. First graduating class, the College of Mount Saint Vincent, 1913. **2.** St. Joseph by the Sea High School, Staten Island, 1964. **3.** Cardinal Spellman High School, Bronx, circa 1960. **4.** 1955 Cathedral High School graduation in St. Patrick’s Cathedral.

VISION enables the Sisters of Charity of New York to make a cohesive statement about how we reveal God’s love in our lives and the many and varied ways in which we respond to the signs of the times.



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Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

On August 13, 1817, Elizabeth Ann Seton sent three Sisters to New York to serve the growing number of orphans resulting from the cholera epidemic and the poverty of the newly arrived immigrants.

For 200 years the Sisters of Charity have seen and recognized the needs of each generation. Our hearts have held the pain across our city and state, in the Bahamas, and in Guatemala. Some of us have journeyed to Chile, Peru, Vietnam, China, Appalachia, and Louisiana. It is because of our vows that we were and are able to be a resource for healing, education, and presence. Our Sisters became pioneers in developing the finest organizations in childcare, hospitals, schools, and social services. We do this with a myriad of partners like you.

During this year of remembrance and celebration, the spirit of charity that has blossomed in New York will continue to grow far beyond our hope and imagination. We have given and received so much more than we could have ever hoped for. We invite you to journey with us! We remember the past as a springboard into the future.

Our brothers and sisters continue to experience untold suffering. We, the Sisters of Charity, Associates, colleagues, friends, and partners know how needed we are to face this suffering by our prayer, presence, and service. We carry the spirit of charity across our city streets, in cars, buses, and trains, to bring promise and hope to those we minister to, with, and for. How beautiful are the feet of those who carry across our city streets the message of charity and justice.

New York has welcomed us. The Sisters of Charity, the city, the state, and the Church have grown together over these two hundred years. What joy and cause for rejoicing are the stories that can be told! It is my hope that together we may continue to reveal God's love to those in need, especially those on the margins.

We remember, we give thanks, we celebrate.

Together we move into a future filled with hope.

With joy,



Jane Iannucelli, SC



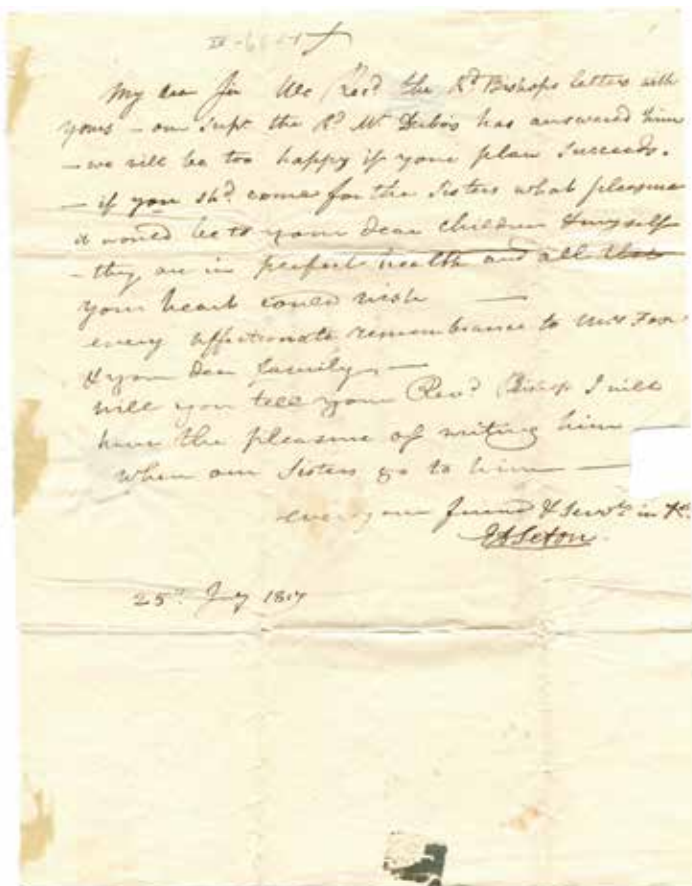
Saint Francis Xavier School in Nassau, Bahamas, was the Congregation's first mission outside the United States.



Sister Loretto John Meehan (at right) served the people in Appalachia from 1971 until 2000.



Sr. Immaculata Burke ministered among the people of Guatemala for over forty years. The mission has grown and continues to this day.



25th July 1817

My dear Sir

We received the Rev. Bishops' letters with yours — our Superior the Rev. Mr. [John] Dubois has answered him—we will be too happy if your plan succeeds. —if you should come for the Sisters what pleasure it would be to your dear children and myself—they are in perfect health and all that your heart could wish—

every affectionate remembrance to Mrs. [Elizabeth] Fox and your dear family—will you tell your Rev. Bishop I will have the pleasure of writing him when our Sisters go to him—

ever your friend and servant in Christ E. A. Seton

On August 13, 1817, Mother Seton

In September, 1809, soon after Mother Seton began her community in Maryland, Rev. Anthony Kohlmann, S.J., administrator of the New York diocese, wrote to her with the hope that she would eventually send “a small colony of your Holy Order” back to her native city to provide education for girls.

That hope wasn't realized for eight more years. In July, 1817, Bishop John Connolly of New York formally asked Elizabeth for Sisters to open and staff an orphanage. Lay Catholics like Francis Cooper, Robert Fox, and Cornelius Heeney saw the need, incorporated the “Roman Catholic Benevolent Society,” and prodded the bishop to ask for Sisters to “regulate and instruct” the orphans. “It would be productive of a great deal of good here,” Bishop Connolly wrote, prophetically.

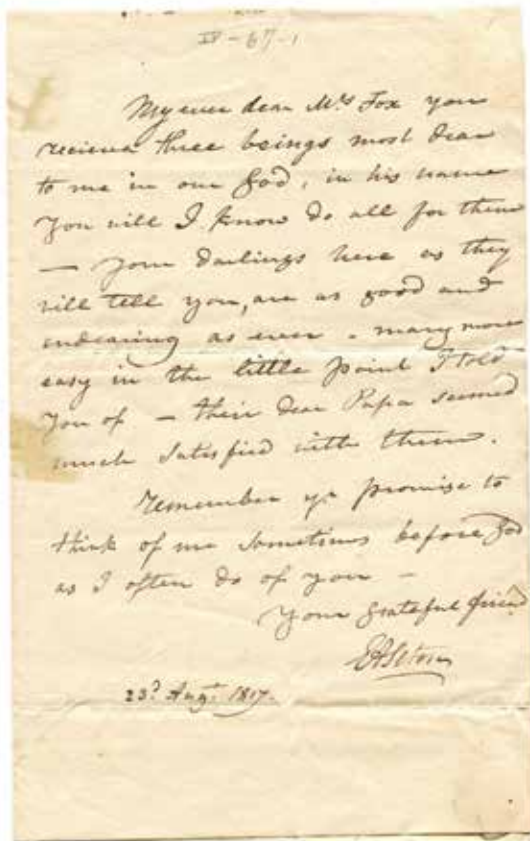
The Rev. John Dubois, canonical superior of the Sisters, made sure that the bishop understood the conditions under which Sisters would be sent:

1. The trustees would be responsible for all financial accounts and decisions, but the Sisters would be “permitted to manage the interior of the house in their own way, according to their Rules.”

2. A Ladies Society would be formed to “forward the interests of the Institution” (i.e., raise funds).
3. The Sisters would be allotted \$36 annually for their clothing, so no one could accuse them of using any money that had been collected for the orphans' support.
4. The Sister Superior would be consulted regarding any change in the number of orphans, as well as their admission or removal.
5. The trustees would pay the travel expenses of Sisters to and from Emmitsburg, if it had to do with orphanage business.

Lastly, Fr. Dubois stated that, because the New York asylum, like the one in Philadelphia, required a “zealous, prudent, economical mother to govern it,” Sister Rose White would be transferred from Philadelphia to fill the role in New York. Her experience would be invaluable for this new mission of Charity, and she was eminently suited to guide “younger and healthy Sisters ... to perform the laborious work of the establishment.”

In early August, 1817, Mother Seton wrote to an adviser, “... the desire of my heart and Soul for her [Rose] going to New York has been long pressing for so much must depend as says



23rd August 1817

My ever dear Mrs. Fox
you receive three beings most dear to me in our God, in his name you will I know do all for them—your darlings here as they will tell you, are as good and endearing as ever—Mary more easy in the little point I told you of—their dear Papa seemed much satisfied with them.

Remember your promise to think of me sometimes before God as I often do of you—

Your grateful friend

E.A. Seton



Letter images courtesy, Daughters of Charity Province of St. Louise Archives, Emmitsburg, Maryland

sent three Sisters to New York City ...

by Regina Bechtle, SC

the good gentlemen who write about it on who is sent to my 'native city' they say, not knowing that I am a citizen of the world." Earlier, Archbishop Carroll of Baltimore had commented, "New York is a city of too much consequence not to demand superior abilities."

Sisters Cecilia O'Conway and Felicité Brady were the two "younger and healthy" souls whom Mother Seton chose for the New York mission. They left Emmitsburg August 13, 1817 (probably escorted by Mr. Robert Fox, whose daughters attended the school), met Rose White in Philadelphia, and continued on, arriving in New York August 20, 1817.

Because the house that was supposed to be "fit to receive some orphans" in July was not yet ready for them, the Sisters spent their first few weeks in the home of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Fox at 89 Washington Street. The family knew the Sisters well since the Fox girls were students at St. Joseph's Academy in Emmitsburg. Mother Seton thanked Mrs. Fox for her gracious hospitality to the "three beings most dear to me in our God" who were no doubt overwhelmed by a city that was, even in 1817, the most populated in the country.

The Strangers' Guide for 1817 gave a contemporary view of the city which the first three Sisters—none of them native New Yorkers—encountered:

In extent New-York city measures in length, from the West Battery to Thirty-first street, about four miles; and in breadth about one and a half miles. Its circuit is eight miles. The whole of this space is not yet covered with buildings but the greater portion of it is, and it is probable, as new houses are rapidly appearing, that the plan of the city will be filled up within the course of a few years. The number of Dwelling Houses is estimated at 17,000. The population exceeds 100,000 which gives about six inhabitants to each house....The Streets of New-York, including Lanes and Alleys, amount to 252. Almost the whole city is well lighted with lamps....A regular night watch is also established to give security to the inhabitants.

(Walsh I, 47-48, ALSO SEE Walsh I, 47 ff - Young New York)

What the Strangers' Guide failed to note was the grinding poverty, filth, and stench of a city that did not yet have paved streets, waste management, or reliably safe drinking water. Christine Stansell, a scholar of our day, describes the brutal winters, recurring economic downturns, massive waves of immigrants, and yearly outbreaks of yellow fever and other diseases that marked life in New York in the early part of the nineteenth century. No wonder Elizabeth Seton once described New York as "so distracted a place."

Then & Now



The first three Sisters of Charity to serve in New York arrived in August, 1817, and moved into a small house on the corner of Prince and Mott Streets across from the parish church, the first St. Patrick's Cathedral.

They welcomed five orphans to the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, New York's first Catholic charity; over the years, the orphans soon numbered in the hundreds.

With few resources other than faith in the Providence of God who had called them, the Sisters began their dedicated ministry among poor New Yorkers. That small beginning would result in countless charitable works of health care, child care, education, and more.

As Msgr. Thomas Shelley wrote, the arrival of the Sisters in 1817 began an "association between the Sisters of Charity and the diocese that would pay handsome dividends to the Catholic community of New York over the next two centuries through the multiplicity of charitable and educational activities sponsored by the Sisters." (*The Archdiocese of New York: The Bicentennial History, 1808-2008*, Editions du Signe, 2009, p. 89)

Q & A—Our Beginnings in New York

Q. Did the Sisters start the orphan asylum?

A. Technically, no; they served as its first staff. In 1816 a group of laymen formed the Roman Catholic Benevolent Society in response to the growing numbers of orphaned Catholic children. (Walsh, I, 40 ff.) The only asylum then operating in New York brought up orphans as Protestants. Bishop Connolly and some of the cathedral trustees knew of the work of the Sisters in St. Joseph's Asylum in Philadelphia (1814) and wanted to open a similar institution in New York. The Benevolent Society secured a dilapidated house on Prince and Mott Streets for the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum near St. Patrick's (Old) Cathedral. Three Sisters welcomed five orphans during the first three months. The Sisters served as staff; a Ladies' Society was soon organized to raise much-needed funds.

Q. Who were the first Sisters who came?

A. Mother Seton sent three Sisters (Rose White, Cecilia O'Conway, and Felicite Brady) to the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum on Manhattan's Prince Street, near Saint Patrick's Cathedral, then close to the city's northernmost boundary.

Rose was the most experienced; she had been the first administrator of the Philadelphia orphanage. Cecilia was a teacher at St. Joseph's Academy in Emmitsburg. Felicite was the newest, having entered in 1814.

Sister Elizabeth Boyle (who later was elected to lead the Sisters of Charity of New York when they became an independent community in December, 1846) did not arrive in New York until Christmas Eve, 1822. She replaced Rose White, who had been elected Mother of the community after Mother Seton's death in January, 1821 and returned to Emmitsburg. Sister Elizabeth Boyle came to New York from the orphanage in Philadelphia.



Mother Elizabeth Boyle

1817	2017
NYC population: more than 100,000	With over 8.5 million people (U.S. Census), New York is the most densely populated major city in the United States.
New York City covered about 6 square miles. Its northern limit was North (now Houston) Street.	NYC encompasses 305 square miles in five boroughs. Mount Saint Vincent in Riverdale, the Bronx, sits at its northwest border.
Most immigrants were Irish, French (both from France and Haiti), Germans, African-Americans, and lesser numbers of Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, English, and native-born Americans.	There are over 3 million foreign-born residents in NYC – 37% of the population (2013 data). The largest numbers are from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, China, Jamaica, and Guyana.
The diocese of New York began in 1808. It included all of NY State and the northern part of New Jersey – 55,000 sq. mi. – with only 3 churches (St. Peter's & Old St. Patrick's in NYC, St. Mary's in Albany). Catholics in Manhattan alone numbered about 15,000, mostly Irish, served by only 3 priests.	Today this same area includes two archdioceses, nine dioceses, 2,000 churches, 6,000 priests, and more than 10 million Catholics. About one-third are of Hispanic/Latino origin. (2015 statistics)
Most Catholics were Irish or German immigrants, with a sprinkling from other countries. Sunday sermons at St. Peter's Church (the first in the diocese) were given in English, German, and French.	Today, Mass in the Archdiocese is celebrated in 25 languages, including Akan, Arabic, Igbo, and Tagalog.
It took the 3 Sisters seven days to travel from Emmitsburg to NY, via Philadelphia.	Today, the same trip takes about 5 hours by car.
The arrival of the Sisters of Charity marked the first permanent foundation of a congregation of men or women religious in the diocese of New York. (Earlier foundations by Irish Ursulines and French Trappists did not last; both returned to their native lands in 1815.) Sisters of Charity were the only religious in the state until 1841, when the Religious of the Sacred Heart came to open an academy for girls.	At present there are 2,244 sisters serving in the Archdiocese of New York in 110 congregations.
The Sisters received an annual maintenance of \$36 each. In their first days in New York they slept on mattresses on the floor, and lived on soup, potatoes, and carrot coffee.	The current Archdiocesan stipend for religious is: \$35,156.
The Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, Mott & Prince Streets, was the first Catholic charitable institution in the diocese.	New York Catholic Charities alone lists 88 agencies, including several sponsored by the Sisters of Charity.
The orphanage began at the urging of lay Catholics. A board of lay managers oversaw its operation, and a Ladies' Society raised funds.	Now, as then, the Sisters seek "to collaborate with others in direct service, systemic change and advocacy" (SC Assembly, 2015). We partner with committed lay leaders and colleagues who continue the mission of Charity in our sponsored ministries.
The orphan asylum depended on benefactors for its income. Many Protestants as well as Catholics contributed to it. Venerable Pierre Toussaint, himself a generous donor, kept a list of subscribers and accounts of their contributions.	Funding sources for Catholic education and charitable works include Catholic Charities, the Cardinal's Campaign, the Inner City Scholarship Fund, as well as generous individual and corporate donors.
In 1822 the Sisters opened a free school at St. Patrick's. (The first parochial school in NYC was a free school for boys in St. Peter's parish, Barclay Street, conducted by laymen since 1800.)	Until it closed in 2010, St. Patrick's School was the oldest continuously operating Catholic parochial school in the city. Even though no Sisters of Charity currently serve in the school or parish, we feel a special connection with it as our first mission in New York City.
Frequent epidemics of yellow fever, dysentery, and especially cholera regularly devastated the population. Sisters helped to nurse the sick in the 1834 cholera epidemic.	St. Vincent's Hospital was at the forefront of treating victims of AIDS in the 1980's. Sisters of Charity hospitals in Manhattan & Staten Island responded efficiently, compassionately, and heroically on 9/11. Today, St. Joseph's Medical Center, Yonkers, and St. Vincent's Hospital, Westchester, serve the health needs of well over a million people.
Construction began on the Erie Canal in 1817. Completed in 1825, it enhanced NY City's role as a center of trade. Many of the laborers were Irish immigrants from NYC.	NYC is a major international trade center and transportation hub, whether by air, rail, water, or roadway.



*A*s we look toward the beginning of the 200th

Anniversary of the Sisters of Charity in New York, why not think about a visit to the Archives to see the Congregation's early history come alive? Here is a brief look at some of the treasures from the Charity past.

by Maryellen Blumlein, SC

Sisters of Charity Archives at Mo



The Poor Box

Officially, the first New York mission was called the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, under which title it was legally incorporated in 1817. Familiarly, because of its proximity to St. Patrick's Cathedral, it was called St. Patrick's Asylum. The orphanage was quickly filled to capacity, and beyond, and a new, larger brick building was begun next to the old asylum. However, the daily maintenance of the orphans and orphanage was a difficult task. In 1822 this poor box was placed in St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum by Sister Elizabeth Boyle. Its contents were a source of support for many years.

Mother Seton's Rosary

From the time she was a young child, Elizabeth prayed often. As she grew older, she also deepened her own spirituality. She was drawn to the Blessed Mother as someone who had seen suffering in her own life. Elizabeth prayed the rosary daily, asking Mary's intercession for her own family, and then for the newly formed community of the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's Valley.



Original Letter from Mother Seton to Sister Elizabeth Boyle

On October 20, 1820, Elizabeth Seton wrote from Emmitsburg to her friend Elizabeth Boyle, then in Philadelphia. The original letter contains the famous phrase, "dearest old partner of my cares and bearer of my burdens." This was a phrase Mother Seton often used for Elizabeth Boyle, signifying their close friendship and support of each other.

Mount Saint Vincent



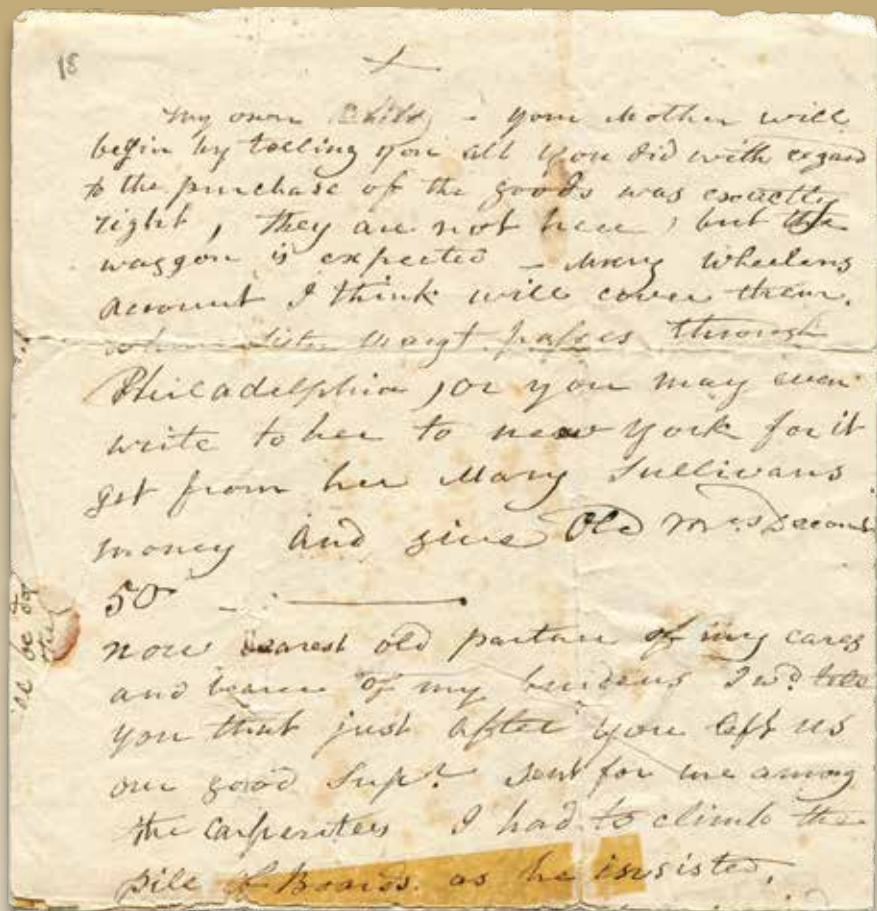
Dr. Richard Bayley's Tea Chest

"Purchased by Charles Tenley at an antiques fair." When he died in October 1992, his niece called Mount Saint Vincent to tell us that he (her uncle) wanted the Sisters of Charity to have this tea chest. It was picked up by Sr. Irene Fugazy, who said it had been seen by Christies and was an antique from the late 18th century.



Sisters of Charity Seal of Incorporation

The seal, which was adopted in 1849, was the basis for the Sisters of Charity pin worn by all members. The pin was introduced in 1969.



Sister Angela's Statue

On February 2, 1857, Mother Angela Hughes and a group of Sisters took formal possession of Font Hill. On one of the mantels in the castle, Mother Angela placed a small statue of Our Lady as a symbol that she would be "Lady and Mistress" of their new home. This eight-inch statue now stands in the Archives as a remembrance of the Congregation's devotion to Our Lady.





National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, MD

Q. Did Elizabeth Seton ever return to her native New York after she moved to Maryland?

A. No, she never returned, though she corresponded regularly with family, friends, and clergy in New York, and, after 1817, with the Sisters who served there. Mother Seton died in Emmitsburg, MD, January 4, 1821, and was buried there. Her remains are now preserved in a special shrine in the Basilica of the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Seton in Emmitsburg.

Q. Who Were the Sisters of Charity?

A. Elizabeth Seton, a convert and widow with five children, began the Sisters of Charity of Saint Joseph's in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in 1809. It was the first religious community for women founded in the United States (though the Ursulines and Carmelites had previously come here from Europe). For her American Sisters of Charity, Mother Seton adapted the seventeenth century rule that Saints Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac had written for the Daughters of Charity in France.

A key paragraph in the Rule describes Sisters of Charity as “having only for a convent the houses of the sick, for a cell a hired room, for a chapel their parish church, for a cloister the streets of the city, for enclosure obedience, for a grille the fear of God, for a veil holy modesty”

Sisters of Charity were to go out among the people, wherever there were needs, and not be confined to a convent cloister. Their way of life was to be centered around service of others, especially those living in poverty, because they saw the face of Christ in the poor persons whom they served. The community motto of the Sisters of Charity is “The Charity of Christ impels us.”

Q. What was New York like when the Sisters of Charity first came here?

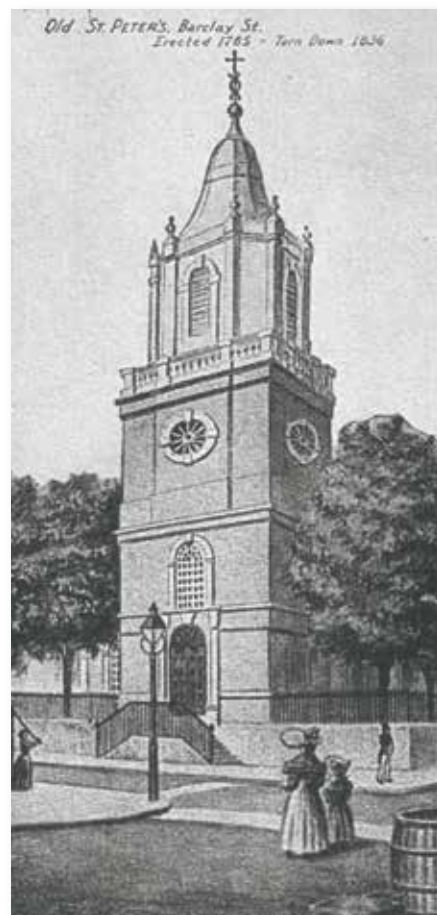
A. In 1817 there were about 15,000 Catholics in the city. (Jay Dolan, *The Immigrant Church*, 1975, p. 11)

In 1822, Rev. John Power, pastor of St. Peter's, Barclay Street, reported that there were two Catholic churches: St. Peter's, the first in New York, and the Cathedral (St. Patrick's). There were more than 20,000 Catholics, mostly natives of Ireland and France, in the city. He noted, “The Emmitsburg Sisters of Charity have a branch here of their pious institution, exclusively for the benefit of female orphan children, whom they board, clothe and educate. Their house fronts the side of the Cathedral, and is in one of the most healthy situations in New York.” He also noted that the diocese included the whole state of New York and the northern part of New Jersey. (*The Catholic Directory*, 1822)

By 1826, the Catholic population had more than doubled. John Dubois, former Sulpician and former Superior of the Sisters of Charity, was by then the Bishop of New York.

The Sisters of Charity's first mission in New York was called the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, legally incorporated under that name in 1817, although it was familiarly and universally called St. Patrick's Asylum because of its proximity to the cathedral. During that first year, the Sisters had only five orphans in their care—but twelve months later, the house was filled to more than capacity with 28 mostly Irish Catholic children. In the effort to provide for the orphans, the Sisters themselves slept on mattresses on the floor and survived on soup, potatoes, and carrot coffee.

By Regina Bechtle, SC, compiled from numerous sources



St. Peter's Church, Barclay Street, was the first Catholic Church in New York City and one of only two when three Sisters of Charity arrived from Emmitsburg.

Reading Between the Lines

by Mary E. McCormick, SC

Preparations are well under way for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the arrival from Emmitsburg of the first Sisters of Charity to be missioned in New York. The reason Elizabeth Seton and her Council decided to send three women to her native city has everything to do with the role of a small group of Catholic laity eager for their presence. It underscores the importance of our collaboration with lay men and women from our beginnings in 1817 until this very moment.

Here's how it happened:

In 1817 several well-to-do Catholic laymen presented to the Bishop of the day a problem and a solution.

The problem: there were in the city hundreds of Catholic orphans in desperate need of care—physical, emotional, and spiritual.

The solution: ask Elizabeth Ann Seton, foundress of the newly established community of women in far-off Emmitsburg, Maryland, to send Sisters to provide for them.

In the early years of the new republic, there had not yet been established much of a social safety net for the poor, the sick, the elderly, and for widows and their children.

There was an almshouse. Children were warehoused alongside adults who were mentally ill, diseased, even criminal. Very few survived. Children took to the streets rather than go there.

In 1807 Mrs. Julia Bethune and Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton (wife of Alexander,) started the NY Orphan Asylum in a building down on Chambers St. that could house as many as 200 children.

However, the by-laws of that institution stated that, once admitted, there could be no contact between the child and any family members. And when the children were “bound out,” indentured, they could be housed only with Protestant families. Catholic orphans would lose their identity of origin and would also be lost to the faith.

Ten years later, two Catholic families with ties to Emmitsburg decided to do something about the plight of Catholic orphans. Robert Fox and Francis Cooper, among others, started the Roman Catholic Benevolent Society and

incorporated it in New York in 1817. In July, they went to Bishop Connolly and urged him to write to Elizabeth to send Sisters.

He sent his letter that very day.

Elizabeth and her Council, along with the Superior, Father Du Bois, agreed to send three Sisters, who arrived in New York on August 20. The promised house was not ready, and they spent several weeks at the home of Robert Fox and his family. His three young daughters were being educated at the Academy in Emmitsburg and were delighted that the Sisters make a temporary home with them.

Sisters Rose Landry White, Cecilia O'Conway, and Felicité Brady were the three chosen by Elizabeth for this very special assignment.

Sister Rose had experience running the Catholic orphanage in Philadelphia, and was a well-qualified and compassionate administrator. Cecilia and Felicité had been early members of the community who combined the gift of teaching with loving concern for the little ones under their care.

When they were finally able to move into the house provided for them, they discovered it had been the surgery of a military hospital dating from the Revolutionary War. But it became home for the three Sisters and five orphans, ages eleven months to eight years, all boys.

The Sisters received \$36 a year each.

In the beginning they slept on mattresses on the floor and lived on potatoes, soup, and carrot coffee. Women of the city, Catholic and Protestant, came to the aid of the Sisters and provided funds to sustain the ministry and help it grow. In time they were able to move to larger quarters and were able to accept hundreds of children into their care. Other forms of service, including education and health care came to be provided as well.

Anniversaries help us remember the past, and the work accomplished by extraordinary women who as true Vincentians did what was before them, always in collaboration with others. We, their heirs, can pledge no less.

How did the **SISTERS of CHARITY** INFLUENCE your *life*?

Whenever I hear Sr. Alethea Brennan's name it brings a wistful smile to my face. As a student at CMSV in the seventies, I had the privilege of studying Philosophy with Sr. Alethea. Famous for her long walks around the campus and often seen conversing with the birds and the flowers, I did not realize then that Sister's wisdom and soul-searching counsel would stay with me for a lifetime. Each Spring I recall Sister's words that everything beautiful in nature, whether it be a butterfly, a sparrow's song or a newly budding tree, is a gift from God—and we should appreciate the majesty of His love in the simplicity of His gifts. From spending precious time with Sr. Alethea during those years, I learned the meaning of seeking one's passion in our life choices. She became a spiritual guide and friend who taught me to appreciate God's gifts and never to settle or accept less than what He knows we can accomplish—however challenging it may seem at the time.

Maureen Tomkiel
Executive Director
John A. Coleman School

I am grateful for the fine education I received from the Sisters of Charity who were my teachers at Immaculate Conception School and Blessed Sacrament High School.

The Sisters were my role models in life. Thank you.

Alice Soderberg, NYC

When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking.

by Joanne Dillon

I was just five years old when Sr. James (Sr. Margaret McEntee) made that pronouncement to my first grade class at St. Anthony's School on Mansion Street in the Bronx. Consonants, she explained, occupied a large house, while a, e, i, o, and u lived down the road in a bungalow. When consonants and vowels met on the path between the two buildings, words could be formed.

Back in 1958, letters didn't sing or dance or jump up and down. They were simply drawn on a blackboard in colored chalk. But almost 60 years later, I remember Sr. James' lesson vividly.

It was the beginning of my formal education, 10 years of which were under the guidance of the Sisters of Charity—at St. Anthony's and later at St. Raymond Academy. The nuns—and the lay teachers at each school—taught me well. I loved to read and to write, and I loved the process by which we learned to organize our thoughts for our weekly compositions. Each year, through the Voyages in English text books and the Science Research Associates reading program, these dedicated teachers helped me develop and hone my skills. And in seventh grade, a prescient Sr. Cornelius predicted I would be a writer someday. How did she know?

In the sixth grade, Sr. Thomas Loretta (Sr. Dorothy Metz) encouraged my class to keep up with current events. Daily lessons often included discussions about what was going on in China or Cuba or Vietnam. She made us realize that the events of today become the history of tomorrow. On November 22, 1963, this lesson was brought much closer to home when Sr. Thomas had to deliver the terrible news that President John Fitzgerald Kennedy had been assassinated.

This love of history stayed with me into the seventh and eighth grades—and beyond. The medal for excellence in history that I received from Sr. Ellen at my eighth grade graduation is still among my keepsakes.

I remember, too, Sr. Ellen's gentle, calm personality. How did she maintain this quality as she faced more than 40 restless teenagers each day?

The Sisters of Charity nurtured my curiosity. Equally as important, they encouraged this first generation American to dream of what I could become. And they taught me the discipline I needed to accomplish my goals. When I left St. Raymond Academy, I went on to study at both Pace University and Michigan State University, where I received B.A. and M.A. degrees in English literature, respectively.

After a career—as a writer—for several global financial services companies, I am now retired. But I still love history and writing. I am an active member of an Irish genealogy association and a regular contributor to its quarterly newsletter. And I volunteer with the New York Public Library's Community Oral History project.

But there is another aspect to the lessons the Sisters of Charity taught me that must not go unmentioned. And that is compassion for those less fortunate. A friend once asked me what I was going to do when I retired. I replied, "I'm not quite sure, but I know I want to do something to help the poor." That's why on Tuesday afternoons, you'll find me distributing food to clients of my parish's food pantry.

And so, to all the Sisters who touched my life, I say, "Thank you. Thank you for all the lessons. For the kind words. For the occasional stern looks. For the discipline. For my excellent early education. And for those unforgettable, wandering vowels!"

Joanne Dillon graduated from St. Anthony's School, Mansion Street, and St. Raymond Academy for Girls, both in the Bronx. She is retired from J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., where she was a vice president and communications manager for 16 years.

1966–2016

Celebrating Our Golden Jubilarians

One Hundred Fifty Years of Loving Service



Above from left: Sr. Mary Ann D'Antonio is Principal at St. Raymond Academy for Girls in the Bronx; Sr. Donna Dodge is Executive Director of the Sisters of Charity Housing Development Corporation; Sr. Ellen Dunne is a teacher at St. Raymond Elementary School in the Bronx.

“Keep well to what you believe to be the grace of the moment....Only do your best as you always have done, and leave the rest for our dear God.”

Elizabeth Ann Seton

by Patricia McGowan, SC

Three Sisters, all Golden Jubilarians and all native New Yorkers, are celebrating a special moment in the Congregation's 200 years of service in our beloved city.

When these Sisters entered the Congregation in 1966 their world was a much different place from what it is today: James Meredith had begun a civil rights march in Mississippi, Joseph Cardinal Bernadin of Chicago warned of a “time of peril” for the American Church, and 9/11 was an “ordinary day” on our calendars.

While each of these women experienced many of the “older” customs and traditions of religious life when they entered the Congregation, they also were exposed to many new changes in society and in the Church itself. But the essence of community has remained the same and their commitment to that belief during these past 50 years has remained a constant.

So, as each gives thanks for all the blessings these years have brought into their lives, they have chosen to celebrate their anniversaries in ways unique to each. And in thanksgiving for the years that have passed and as a connection to the future, they will also celebrate as a group when the Congregation gathers to renew vows in December.

Sister Mary Ann D'Antonio

On September 19 Sr. Mary Ann celebrated with a liturgy in thanksgiving to her family, friends, coworkers, and students in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Mount Saint Vincent. Monsignor John Graham, celebrant of the Mass, thanked her for being faithful all those years to the words of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton to “be daughters of the Church.” The liturgy was followed by a joyful reception.



Sr. Mary Ann D'Antonio with Msgr. John Graham, former pastor of St. Raymond Parish in the Bronx, at her Jubilee celebration.

Perhaps Sr. Mary Ann's future was predestined soon after her birth, when her parents (Josephine and Gennaro) brought her home from Westchester Square Hospital and stopped at St. Raymond Church to lay her on the altar. When Msgr. Tierney blessed the newborn, neither he nor anyone else imagined that she would today be the Principal of St. Raymond Academy for Girls in that same parish.

Like her younger sister, Geraldine, Sr. Mary Ann was proud to have graduated from St. Barnabas High School in the Bronx.

Her commitment to Catholic education has been a mainstay in her life during these past 50 years. Both her BA from the College of Mount Saint Vincent and her MA from Manhattan College were focused on education, and the years following were spent as a primary grades teacher, a reading specialist, and an ELA teacher. During those years she taught at St. Peter's School in Haverstraw, NY, and Incarnation School in Manhattan. Since 1984 she has been at St. Raymond Academy as history teacher, chair of the social studies department, moderator of the award winning school band, and, for the past 17 years, as its principal.

Sister Donna Dodge

Sister Donna Dodge, daughter of John and Sophie and sister of Steven, is another Bronx native.

It was during her student years at Cardinal Spellman High School that she began to think about her future. The "living of the charism of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and St. Vincent de Paul among the Sisters there," she recalls, had a "great influence" on her decision to become a Sister of Charity.

Although her early years as a Sister were spent in the classroom, Sr. Donna has spent most of the past 50 years in various ministries.

She planned and co-directed the Sisters of Charity Planning and Research Office (PRO), served as Assistant to the President and Director of Planning at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, as Executive Assistant to the President and Vice President for Planning at Sacred Heart University in Connecticut, and as Community Outreach Director for Catholic Charities in Bridgeport, CT. She was Assistant

to the President of the Sisters of Charity (NY) and now is the Executive Director of the Sisters of Charity Housing and Development Corporation. This ministry oversees and coordinates the growing number of housing projects serving the elderly which the Congregation sponsors in Manhattan, Rockland County, and Staten Island.

Her talents are many and they have been put to good use as a member of numerous committees and Boards of Directors. Much of the success of each of these great ministries, Sr. Donna attributes to the wise and understanding mentors and the outstanding men and women she has met and worked with during the past 50 years.

For her, those Sisters from Cardinal Spellman and the others she has lived with (especially the women she has lived with for the past 30 years in the Villa) and worked with over 50 years have continued to be a "great inspiration."

Sister Ellen Dunne

Like so many of the early Sisters of Charity throughout the past 200 years, Sr. Ellen Dunne has dedicated her life to elementary education. After graduating from St. Joseph Hill Academy, this proud native of Staten Island, daughter of Dr. Thomas and Rita Dunne, sister of Thomas and Jane, attended St. Rose College in Albany for a year. Then, in 1966, she decided "to explore her curiosity about a possible future life as a Sister of Charity."

During her college years at the College of Mount Saint Vincent and Lehman College in the Bronx she realized that she wanted to spend her life working with primary grade students—and that is what she continues to do today.

For 43 years Sr. Ellen has taught second and third graders and prepared them and older students for the reception of their First Holy Communion and Confirmation at our Lady of Angels School in the Bronx. It would be almost impossible to put a number on the children she has influenced, but she truly loved those years that gave her the opportunity to "broaden the horizons and deepen the faith of so many young children."

Sister Ellen has many happy memories of her time at Our Lady of Angels. Along with the children, she credits the administrations, faculty, and staff for inspiring her and helping her to grow as a Sister of Charity. Many changes, both in the Church and in the World, have occurred since Sr. Ellen first stepped into a classroom filled with young children, but her commitment has never wavered. She still considers it very much a blessing to spend her life as a Catholic educator.

For 50 years each of these women has continued the mission of all Sisters of Charity "to share in the ongoing mission of Jesus by responding to the signs of the times" and they continue, today, to be what Sr. Dorothy Metz, former President of the Sisters of Charity, once called all Sisters of Charity: "ordinary women doing extraordinary things ... always with the help of others."

Jubilarians 2016

We honor, we celebrate, we thank our Sisters who celebrated milestone Jubilees on September 8, 2016.

SIXTY YEARS

Sister Carol A. Barnes	Sister Mary Ann Garisto
Sister Rose Ann Bianco	Sister Mary T. Higgins
Sister Constance Brennan	Sister Eileen Judge
Sister Patricia Brennan	Sister Helen McGovern
Sister Mary Elizabeth Clancy	Sister Mary Ellen McGovern
Sister Margaret Egan	Sister Patricia E. McGowan
Sister Anne Marie Falloon	Sister Dorothy Metz
Sister Mary Kay Finneran	Sister Mary Ellen O'Boyle
Sister Eleanor Fitzgerald	Sister Doris Pagano
Sister Joan M. Freer	Sister Patricia Walsh

SIXTY-FIVE YEARS

Sister E. Bernadette Brennan	Sister Anne Miriam Connellan
Sister Elizabeth M. Butler	Sister Dorothy B. Emanuel
Sister Mary Jane Fitzgibbon	Sister Helen P. Fleming
Sister Winifred M. Goddard	Sister Joan Glowacki
Sister Nora Hearty	Sister Margaret Sweeney
Sister Grace Henke	
Sister Mary Adele Henze	SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS
Sister Marie John Jimenez	Sister Rosemarie Bittermann
Sister Kathleen McKiernan	Sister Margaret Franks
Sister Helen McTaggart	
Sister Patricia Padden	EIGHTY YEARS
Sister Francis Marita Sabara	Sister M. Irene Fugazy
Sister Barbara Srozenski	Sister Mary Margaret
Sister Elizabeth A. Vermaelen	McGovern
Sister Maria Goretti Wieser	

Thank you, Sisters, for serving with love for so many years. God bless you for all you have given and continue to give every day!

*To speak the joy of my soul at the prospect
of being able to assist the poor, visit the
sick, comfort the sorrowful, clothe little
innocents, and teach them to love God.*

Elizabeth Ann Seton

SC News

Live Streaming of January 8 Opening Ceremony & Prayer Service

We invite all to visit our website at www.scny.org for the link to view the live streaming of our 200th Anniversary Evening Prayer Service on January 8, 2017. The opening ceremony, to be held at the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, will begin at 3 PM. The streaming will be live approximately five minutes earlier.

During the anniversary year, www.scny.org and our Facebook® page, @SistersOfCharityNY will be the best sources for information about events, as well as photos and reports of the celebrations. You may also follow us on Twitter® @scny1.

Celebrate the History & Contributions of the Sisters of Charity of New York

Luncheon at The Staaten
697 Forest Ave., Staten Island, NY
April 29, 2017, 11:30 am – 3:30 PM



Original St. Vincent Hospital, Staten Island

200th Anniversary Gala
The Lighthouse
61 Chelsea Piers, New York, NY
May 18, 2017, 6 – 9 PM

Please Join Us!
CALL 718-549-9200 EXT. 239

2017 VISION SCHEDULE

Please be advised that during the anniversary year, VISION will not be published on the regular quarterly schedule.



SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NEW YORK

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Now in Our Third Century of Living Lives of Love

