



90 years in New York



*This is not a history of the Sisters of Charity-
Halifax in New York so much as an attempt to
give you a sketch of the Sisters as they became
part of New York's history.*

Cover:

Docking of Eastern Steam Ship Acadia in New York Harbor, 1934

Sister Judith Park with guest at St. John's Bread & Life

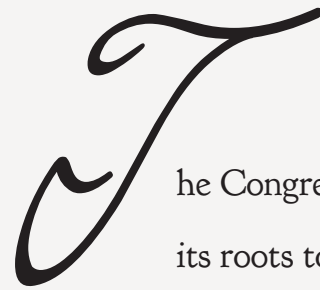
Our Lady of Angels School, Brooklyn

Sister Kathleen O'Donnell, NYPD Chaplain

Opposite:

Elizabeth Seton Shrine, Battery Park


Thanks to Sisters Anne Power, Mary Louise Brink, Joan Holmberg, Judith Park;
Congregational Archives and Communications Office, October 2014



he Congregation traces its roots to Elizabeth Ann Bayley, born in New York in 1774. Her marriage to William Seton united two prominent New York families. Born an Episcopalian, Elizabeth converted to Catholicism after the death of her husband. Her conversion meant ostracism by relatives and friends, so when Elizabeth received an invitation from Bishop John Carroll to open a school in Baltimore, she seized the opportunity. Within a year, she took vows as a religious. A small group of women joined her, and from these humble beginnings, Mother Seton founded the first congregation of women religious in the United States, based on the rule of Saint Vincent de Paul.







*This seed planted in faith took
root and by God's grace grew
and spread.*

In 1849, four Sisters from her community ministering in New York answered the call to open a school in the Canadian city of Halifax, Nova Scotia. By 1856, the Halifax group became an independent congregation now known as the Sisters of Charity–Halifax.

In 1924, a request for teachers from Monsignor Joseph McClancy, Superintendent of Schools in Brooklyn, NY, brought Halifax Sisters back to Elizabeth Seton's birthplace. Sister Mary Clarissa Conlan arrived with five companions to open the Congregation's first convent and parochial school in Our Lady of Angels Parish.

This painting by Sister Agnes Berchmans hangs in Caritas Residence, Halifax, NS

The next 40 years became a period of rapid growth as the following missions opened:

Our Lady of Good Counsel, Staten Island, 1927

Saint Sebastian, Woodside, 1928

Saint Nicholas of Tolentine, Jamaica, 1929

Saint Sylvester, Brooklyn, 1930

Holy Saviour, Westmount, NJ, 1930

Saint Mary, Canton, 1930

Sacred Heart, Riverton, NJ, 1931

Saint Barnabas, Bellmore, 1931

Seton Hall High School, Patchogue, 1937

Our Lady Help of Christians, Brooklyn, 1937

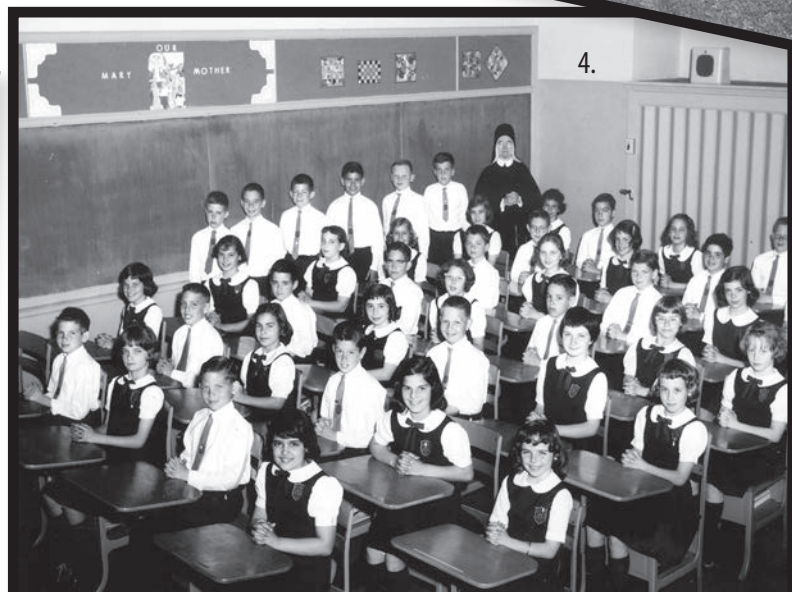
Resurrection-Ascension, Rego Park, 1939

Saint Aidan, Williston Park, 1950

Our Lady of the Cenacle, Richmond Hill, 1950

Bishop Reilly High School (Girls' Division), Fresh Meadows, 1962

Saint Paul, Brooklyn, 1964





5.



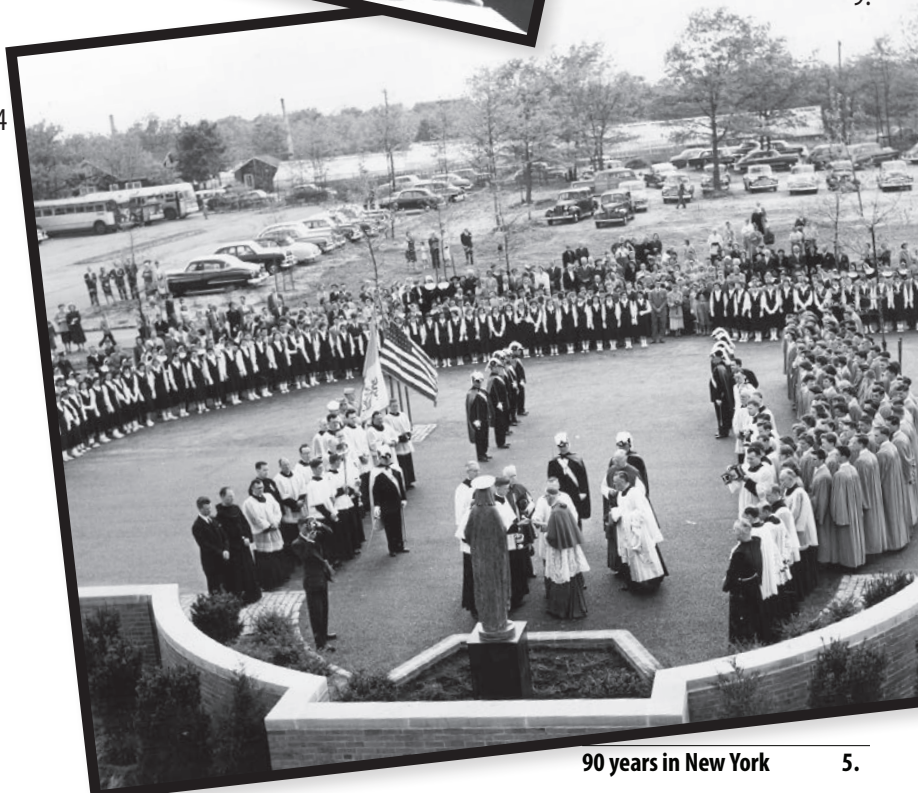
6.



7.



8.



9.

1. Sister Paul Frances, Saint Nicholas of Tolentine, 1965
2. Saint Barnabas graduation class
3. Saint Sylvester School
4. Sister Maria Andrea with grade 5 class, Holy Saviour School, 1964
5. Saint Mary School, 1960
6. Sister Mary Clarissa Conlan, Sister Marie Clotilde Douglas and Mother Stella Maria Reiser
7. Resurrection-Ascension schoolyard
8. Sister Kathleen Kull, Vocations Exhibit, 1978
9. Dedication of new building, Seton Hall High School, 1953



1. Retreat, Quogue, 1978
2. French class, Seton Hall, 1960
3. Saint Sebastian Convent
4. Our Lady of Angels Christmas pageant, 1945
5. Blessing of new Boys' School, Our Lady of Angels, 1959
6. Saint Aidan Convent kitchen
7. Book Fair, Saint Mary's School, 1965
8. House of Prayer, 1972
9. Our Lady Help of Christians Convent





5.



6.



7.



8.

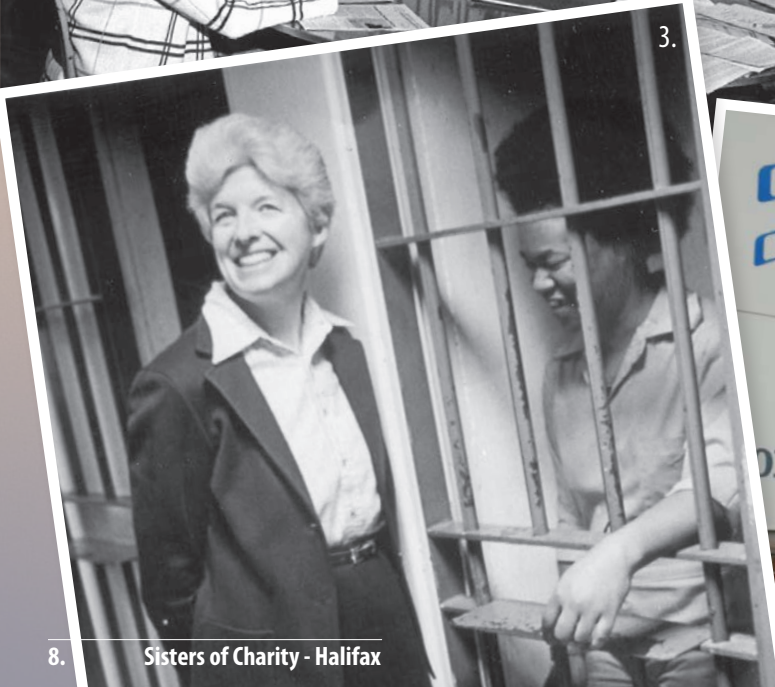
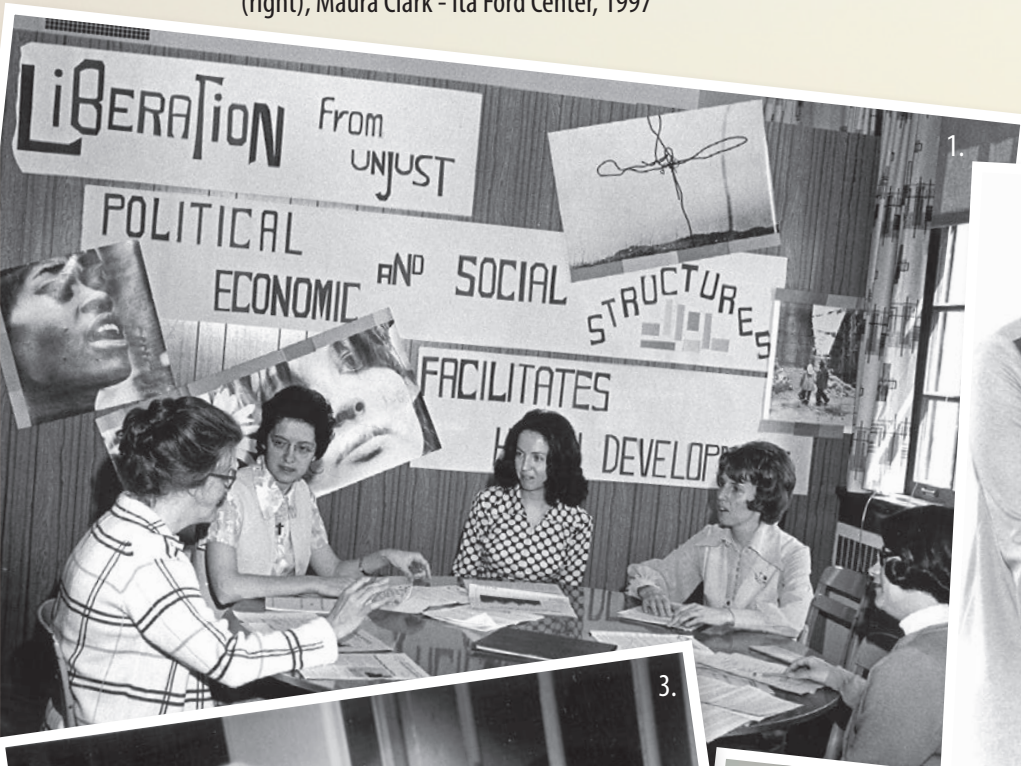


9.

During this whirlwind of expansion in the parochial school system, the Congregation earned a reputation for quality teaching and well-run schools. By 1960, when membership in the Congregation peaked at 1600, more than 300 Sisters served in the NY/NJ area and most of them were teachers.

Then came the Second Vatican Council, the Vietnam War and the general societal upheaval of the 1960s and 70s. Sisters began to examine the needs of the times and to reconnect with the spirit of Saints Elizabeth Ann Seton, Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. This was a perfect time for the House of Prayer to open in Wantagh.

1. Social Justice Workshop, 1973
2. Sister Joan Holmberg, Wagner College, 1985
3. Sister Mary McGowan with inmate, Washington DC Jail, 1985
4. Sister Eileen Schulenburg, Rikers Island, 2010
5. Sister Maryanne Fitzgerald, Saint Barnabas, 1997
6. Sisters Mary Burns (second from left) and Elizabeth Minturn (right), Maura Clark - Ita Ford Center, 1997
7. Sisters Edna Clark (left) and Julia Heslin (right), Mision Tu Puedes, Dominican Republic, 2011
8. Sister Susan Smolinsky, Saint Pascal Baylon, 2000
9. Sisters Catherine O'Leary (left) and Maureen Burke (right) at Women Helping Women fundraiser, 1995
10. Sister Mary Slavin, Our Lady of Angels Library, 1997



8. Sisters of Charity - Halifax



It has been said that if you can teach, you can do anything, and it wasn't long before the world discovered that Sisters could do just about anything.

Some Sisters turned to social work as a way to concretize their option for the poor. Others worked with immigrants and developmentally challenged adults and children. Women Helping Women opened, to receive battered women and their children. The Maura Clark-Ita Ford Center provided educational opportunities for poor immigrant women. Sisters could be found working in prisons and parishes, and sitting in corporate board rooms, as well as continuing in education at all levels.

With the advent of a new millennium and a growing global awareness, Sisters met new challenges that immersed them in the lives of God's people. Thoughtful use of water, care for the earth, support for trafficked women and children, and commitment to changing unjust systems became the new areas of focus.

An increasing number of Sisters, retired from full-time ministries, now volunteer in a range of ministries that serve the needs of the poor. For instance, St. John's Bread and Life in Brooklyn has a cadre of Sisters who serve in the soup kitchen. LifeWay Network, literacy programs, prisons and parish food pantries welcome the expertise and helping hands of Sisters who continue to answer the call to serve.



1.



2.



3.

- 1. Sisters Sheila Ferraz and Catherine Donelan
- 2. Sister Mary Ann Seton Lopiccio
- 3. Sister Joan Dawber (center) with LifeWay board members
- 4. Sisters Barbara Buxton and Frances Gritte
- 5. Peruvian water project
- 6. Sisters and Associates meeting in Bermuda
- 7. Sisters congratulating Sister Theresa Ryan on her reception of the Celtic Cross Award, Irish Fair 2014
- 8. Sisters Julia Heslin (left) and Mary Louise Brink (right) with John Walsh at an Advancement event



4.



5.

Since our beginnings in 1849, Sisters of Charity have been dependent on co-workers, benefactors, family and friends to fulfil our mission.

In recent years, a more formal Associates Program has blossomed in the various areas. New York is home to more than 50 Associates who have answered a call for deeper spirituality, community and a sense of mission in living the Gospel.

From our vantage point of 90 years since those first six Sisters arrived in New York, we can affirm that God's love and guidance have been an overwhelming force. Where God's Spirit will lead us in the future isn't clear. But from those who have gone before us, we have learned that living in the present, discerning the future and trusting in God's goodness and faithfulness have been, and will continue to be, a hallmark of the Sisters of Charity-Halifax in New York.







7.



8.

Wherever a Sister of Charity-Halifax lives, you will find her living out her mission of giving "joyful witness to love: the love of God, of one another, and of all persons."



9.



10.

1. Sister Angela Stodolski, St. Vincent de Paul Society Adult Services Financial Management
2. Sister Ann Woodford, Amethyst House
3. Sister Aileen Halleran, Saint Andrew Avellino
4. Sisters Noreen Cleary, Margaret Copenrath and Grazyna Michniewicz, Earth Cluster meeting
5. Sisters Barbara Toland and Virginia Blend, Congregational Assembly
6. Sister Mary Beth Moore, Centro Corazon de Maria
- 7, 8. Peace marches, 1970s and 2000s
9. Sister Frances Fahey and friends
10. Sister Margaret Mary Fitzpatrick, South Dakota reservation



More than 350 Sisters of Charity-Halifax currently serve in five countries, with 65 in the New York area. In addition, a number of Sisters who served in New York now live at the Sisters' retirement center in Wellesley Hills, MA. Across the Congregation, ministries include spiritual direction, social services, health care, pastoral ministry and education.

1. Sister Maureen Bernius, Saint Francis of Assisi School, 2. Sister Susan Dean, Archbishop Molloy High School, 3. Sisters Rose Annina Stehle, Alice Johnson and Anne McGovern, 4. Sisters Marie Elena Dio and Roberta Kerins, 5. Sister Maureen Skelly, NYPD Chaplain, 6. Sister Elizabeth McNeela, New York Treasurer's Office, 7. Sister Kati Hamm, LifeWay event

