

*"I continue my ordinary
charity for the poor."*

- Fr. Louis Chauvet, founder

*"I give myself to God
for the good of the Church,
and the service of my neighbor."*

— Marie-Anne de Tilly,
Last Will & Testament

SISTERS
OF ST. PAUL
OF CHARTRES

1696 - 2021





**Greetings and blessings
to everyone in this holy Easter Season.**

Our Easter Newsletter this year is entirely focused on the 325th anniversary of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres. Inside you will find a bit of the overall history of our foundation with a few world-wide statistics, and then information about our early history in the United States. After this, we have included specifics about our established ministries and a few notes about some of the temporary ministries in which our Sisters in the USA District have served.

We owe a great debt of thanks, first of all to God for his wonderful blessings and guidance throughout these 325 years, secondly to our General Superiors through the years for their financial support for our buildings and their kindness in sending missionary Sisters to the United States from so many different countries. We also are extremely grateful to you, friends from all around the United States and from other countries, for your continuing support in prayers and donations.

You are remembered in our masses and prayers.

Sincerely,

Sr. Mary Ann Laurin and Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres,
District of the United States of America





“They will always remember that their first aim is to promote the Kingdom of God.”

– First Rule of the Sisters of St. Paul

EASTER LETTER OF MOTHER GORETTI

Mother Maria Goretti Lee, General Superior of the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres, wrote to all the Sisters of the Congregation in Easter of 2021, speaking about God’s fidelity in keeping his promises, calling to mind especially His fidelity to our congregation over these past 325 years. In her letter, Mother Goretti suggests 3 words for meditation: **remembering, renewing, and responding.**

She emphasized **remembering** God’s faithfulness to each of us and why we are here, **renewing** our fidelity in prayer, and **renewing** our community life through a sense of **co-responsibility for** authentic community relationships and **co-responsibility** for the faithfulness of our Sisters.

Finally, in **responding** to the gift of fidelity, Mother Goretti emphasizes the need for perseverance, keeping our gaze fixed on Jesus, and acting in sincerity and creativity in going through moments of darkness and in supporting one another.



HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT PAUL DE CHARTRES

The Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres arose in 1696 from an intuition in the mind and heart of Father Louis Chauvet, parish priest at the church of Saint Martin of Tours in Levesville-la-Chenard, France, near the city of Chartres. At that time, France had been suffering the ravages of the many wars; there was a lot of disease, apathy, ignorance and illiteracy, and there were only schools for boys.

Fr. Chauvet's idea was to have young women formed to be school teachers so that the girls also could learn to read and write and be instructed in Christian values. At the beginning, four young women accepted the call and were taught by Marie Anne de Tilly, a young noblewoman who knew how to read and write.

Fr. Chauvet provided a house for the young women, and it seemed that from the beginning, he intended them to be a religious community. The number of young women who joined the first Sisters grew in leaps and bounds, and soon nearby parishes were asking for Sisters. In 1708, Fr. Chauvet turned the Congregation over to the Bishop of Chartres, Bishop Paul Godet des Marais, who named them after the great Apostle, Saint Paul. Thus, we became the "Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres."

Despite the early deaths of the first two Superiors and of Fr. Chauvet, the humble beginnings flourished. Having the Blessed Virgin Mary as their model and St. Paul as their patron gave great impetus to the Sisters who strove "*to give themselves to God for the good of the Church and the service of their neighbors.*"

In 1727, the Sisters were requested to go to the foreign missions in Cayenne, French Guiana, to serve in the school and the hospital for French nationals. Later, they nursed the political deportees of the French Revolution of 1789 and the criminals who were sent there in order to relieve the crowding in the French prisons. Many Sisters who went to Cayenne (a 4-month trip by boat across the Atlantic Ocean) died young from yellow fever, typhoid, malaria and other typical diseases, yet when the Superior General



St. Martin of Tours

In 1792, the Congregation was dissolved in France and the convents were confiscated by the state. Some of the Sisters were arrested and held in prison, but no one was executed. Eleven years later, in 1803, by decree of Napoleon, the congregation was reinstituted and a convent of the Dominicans was given to them on rue St. Jacques. Many improvements have been made to the building over the years, and until the present, this convent is still considered

asked for volunteers to go to Cayenne to replace the ones who died, *“a great number of Sisters volunteered, and the Superior chose four among them.”* (History Annals)



Motherhouse in Chartres



Sisters' convent in Levesville

After 1803, the congregation resumed its activities of instructing the uneducated and caring for the sick and underprivileged in



Levesville convent cellar where Sisters taught



France and French Guiana, and went to the islands of Martinique in 1818, and Guadeloupe in 1820. The year 1848 saw the first foundations in Hong Kong and China. After this, foundations spread into Southeast Asia: Vietnam, 1860; Japan, 1878; Korea, 1888; Thailand, 1898; Laos and the Philippines in 1904. European foundations were Belgium in 1881, Switzerland in 1900, England in 1903, and Italy in 1930. In all of these missions, the works of education and care for the sick and the orphans continued the mission of the congregation.

In the mid-nineteenth century, foundations were made in Central Africa, 1950; Cameroon, 1965; Madagascar, 1955; Taiwan, 1960; Brazil, 1965; and Indonesia in 1967. Around the same time, the Congregation extended its frontiers in Europe to Ireland, 1972; in North America to Canada, 1930; the United States, 1963; and Haiti, 1972. Foundations of the 1980's included Peru, 1981; Australia, 1986; and Bethlehem in 1981. Then came East Timor, 1993; Columbia, 1995; Mongolia, 1996; Russia, 2000; Ukraine, 2003; Kazakhstan, 2008; Republic of the Congo, 2013; United Arab Republics, 2019; and Ethiopia, 2021.

The worldwide membership of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres at the end of 2020, includes 4,246 members with perpetual vows, 547 members with temporary vows, 216 novices, and 113 postulants for a grand total of 4,359 members in all.

This total includes Sisters from 27 different nationalities, ministering in 39 different countries, divided into 15 Provinces, 8 Districts, 2 Regions, and 3 areas governed by the Generalate in Rome.

Numbers by Continents includes 3,473 in Asia (80%), 304 in Africa (7%), 247 in the Americas (6%), 184 in Europe (4%), and 151 in Oceania (3%)

Beginnings of the Sisters of Saint Paul in the United States of America

In 1962, when Bishop Thomas L. Noa was in Rome for the Second Vatican Council, he was able to accomplish his dream of having a religious congregation established in the Diocese of Marquette.



Mother Marie-Paul Bord, Superior General, agreed to the establishment of a branch of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres in the Upper Peninsula. Bishop Noa was delighted because, other than the Carmelites in Iron Mountain, Michigan, there was no other motherhouse in the Diocese. Any young women who desired to become Sisters had to depart from the Diocese to join other congregations.

The place given to the Sisters for residence was the Holy Family Orphanage on the corner of Sixth and Fisher Streets in Marquette. At the time of the Sisters' arrival, there were only a few orphans left, awaiting placement with families, and there were about 18 Cuban boys who were sent to the United States by their families.

When the first group of French, Irish, and Canadian Sisters arrived in 1963, most took up residence in the former orphanage, and several of them were sent to Escanaba and began immediately helping renovate the former Delta Hotel on Ludington Street, which was purchased by the Diocese, to transform it into the first Bishop Noa Home. In 1964, a





large group of Sisters arrived from the Philippines and went to Menominee to the newly opened St. William's School.

In 1964, the American novitiate was opened, and for the first three years, two young women joined each year. In all, about 25 women came to join the Congregation, but many of those who entered left before final vows.

The Sisters lived at Holy Family Convent in Marquette until March 1966, when those in the novitiate were given lodging in the old St. John's convent in Ishpeming, and the Sisters who were teaching at St. Christopher School were housed in the old St. John's convent in Marquette for one year, and then with the Sisters of St. Joseph at St. Michael's convent in Marquette for one year.

In March of 1968, the new District House on the former Bishop Pinten farm was completed, and all the Sisters of St. Paul in Marquette and Ishpeming moved in. A blessing ceremony was held in July that year with Bishop Charles Salatka presiding.





Current Situation of the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres in the United States District

The **UNITED STATES DISTRICT** has 14 Sisters of 5 different nationalities: 4 Filipinos, 3 Americans, 3 Koreans, 3 Vietnamese, and 1 Indonesian. There are four local communities: three in the Diocese of Marquette, Michigan; and one in the Archdiocese of Washington, DC.

CURRENT MINISTRIES

Health care: Bishop Noa Home for Senior Citizens and Gary Abrahamson Junior Memory Care Center (Escanaba, Michigan)

Pastoral: Chaplaincy at Washington Hospital Center (Washington, DC); Ministry for the sick, the homebound, and the aged, various parish ministries, (Marquette, Escanaba, and Stephenson, Michigan)

Education: Ministry at the Catholic Student Center of Northern Michigan University (Marquette)

Social Work: Preparation and distribution of food (K.I. Sawyer, Michigan); volunteer work in support of the homeless (Marquette)

MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN

The **District House** of the U.S. District is in Marquette, Michigan, where five Sisters currently live. The present ministries of the Sisters in Marquette include visitation and distribution of Holy Communion to the homebound and those in nursing facilities, helping with singing proclaiming the Word at St. Christopher's, helping with bread distribution and preparation of meals for the needy at the St. Francis Connection Center at K.I. Sawyer, and ministering to the Northern Michigan University students and the Catholic Campus Ministry Center in Marquette, Michigan.

St. Christopher School in Marquette, Michigan, which opened in 1967 with a staff of five Sisters, was the second school staffed by the Sisters of St. Paul. The Sisters served as administrators and teachers in all grades. It was an all-Sister staff until the first lay teacher was hired in 1974. During the last few years, the administrator was a lay person. The school closed in 1982.





c. 1993



2003



2008



2020



2019



Sisters had taught religious education classes for children from public schools at St. Christopher when they were postulants living at the old Holy Family Orphanage from 1964-1966. After the school was built, they continued this ministry.

From 1994 to 1999, two different Sisters of St. Paul served **Saint Christopher Parish** as Pastoral Assistant / Pastoral Coordinator, in charge of all aspects of the parish, in cooperation with the priest who were assigned as Sacramental Ministers.

Since 2020, one of the Sisters currently serves at St. Christopher Parish in a largely volunteer capacity, helping in the music ministry and the social ministries of the parish, which includes the pasty sale fundraiser and ministry to the homeless.

The Sisters of St. Paul also ministered at **St. Michael School**, later named **Father Marquette School**, in Marquette. One Sister taught at St. Michael's from 1968-1970, and another was administrator from 1986-1992. Two different Sisters also were in charge of the St. Michael's Elementary Religious Education program from 1987 to 1996.

Since 2007, a Sister of Saint Paul has been working for **St. Peter Cathedral** in Marquette, bringing Holy Communion to homebound parishioners and to Catholics at the hospital and at various long-term care facilities. The Sister also arranges with the facilities and a priest to have Masses offered and to have the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick for those in need.

Since 2008, the "**St. Francis Connection Center**," asked for by Bishop Alexander Sample, is in operation at K.I. Sawyer, near Gwinn. The reason for beginning this program was because many residents in this area have no transportation to go to Saint Anthony's Parish in Gwinn. When the mission began, it was in a different building and was called, "Our Lady, Help of Christians." Besides having a reach-out ministry to the poor, the Sisters held faith development sessions for adults and children.

At first there were two Sisters serving in this Center, but at this time, only one of the Sisters is available to assist in pastoral minis-



try to the people in the K.I. Sawyer location providing them with food and other necessities, as well as helping them with their spiritual needs at the Connection Center on Fortress Street



The most recent ministry of the Sisters of St. Paul, begun in 2018, at the request of Bishop John Dorerfler, is a pastoral ministry to the students at the **Catholic Campus Ministry Center** of Northern Michigan University. In this capacity, one Sister is present part-time to help the students in spiritual and social activities. This ministry had also been served by two other Sisters in the past, one from 1967-68 and one from 1996-99.

ESCANABA, MICHIGAN

In Escanaba, there are 4 Sisters who currently live in the Bishop Noa Home convent and who minister at the Bishop Noa Home for Senior Citizens. One Sister is in charge of Mission Advancement, promoting the Bishop Noa Home and the Gary Abrahamson Center. One Sister is a registered nurse, and two Sisters minister in the Pastoral Care Department – one as Director and one who assists in the ministry. Three other Sisters serve





on the Board of Directors.



The **Bishop Noa Home for Senior Citizens**, founded in 1963, is the first ministry of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres in the United States. It was named after Bishop Thomas L. Noa, who had invited the Sisters to come to his Diocese. The Bishop Noa Home was opened in September, 1963, in the renovated 6-floor Delta Hotel on Ludington Street in Escanaba.

In 1988, Bishop Mark Schmitt asked the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres to become the Sponsors of the Bishop Noa Home, and on July 1st, the Sisters accepted the sponsorship.

In 1990, a feasibility study was done that showed we should build a new building. After careful study, the site chosen for the new Bishop Noa Home was 2900 3rd Avenue South in Escanaba. Thus, began the construction of a new one-floor facility with 81 nursing home beds, 28 home-for-the-aged beds, 12 independent





apartments and a convent for eight Sisters.

On April 1, 1992, with the help of ambulances and many vehicles, all the nursing home and home-for-the-aged residents from the building on 6th Avenue North were transferred into the current Bishop Noa Home on Third Avenue South. On March 3rd, an open house and blessing was held for the new facility.

Additions to Bishop Noa Home: In May, 1998, with the support of so many, the Sisters and Board members added 17 more Assisted Living Apartments to the Bishop Noa Home. On April 1, 2010, the Bishop Noa Home became a Medicare Certified Facility now providing skilled care. In 2014, a new wing was added for rehabilitation therapy. This wing contains rooms for 12 patients and a full range of therapy is provided.

On the same terrain as the Bishop Noa Home is the **Gary Abrahamson Junior Memory Care Center** opened in 2015, that is used by the Community Action Agency for respite care and services for persons with Alzheimer's and Dementia related disabilities. This spacious home-like setting came to fruition initially from a large donation by Patricia Abrahamson in memory of her adult son Gary who suffered irreversible brain damage. Fundraising activities, such as the "PAR-TEE" are scheduled every year, and donations from generous benefactors are solicited so that services and use of the Center may be given free of charge. The Sisters do not work in the Memory Care Center, but three of them serve on the Board of Directors. Speakers are invited to the Center usually one evening a month as a public service to the community, to help people to understand and deal with problems of dementia and other memory issues.

MENOMINEE, MICHIGAN

The first school served by the Sisters of St. Paul in the United States, beginning in 1964, was the **St. William's School** in Menominee, Michigan. This school was built in 1963, but waited until qualified Sisters from the Philippines were able to come to staff the school. It was later renamed **Menominee Catholic Central** after the consolidation of parishes in 1973. The Sisters served in



various positions – administrators, teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 8. In 1992, after 25 years of serving the school as a decision was reached to withdraw the Sisters, due to the diminishing number of Sisters available to teach.

While the Sisters were in Menominee, they lived in three different convents – the first one at the intersection of Highways 41 and M-35 from 1964 - 1978, the second one on the property of Holy Spirit Church from 1979 - 1985, and the third one at the convent of the Marinette Catholic High School from 1986-1992. During their years in Menominee, they also taught CCD classes on the weekends in one or more of the parishes, and in the summer time, they went to parishes throughout the Upper Peninsula to give religious instruction to children who were not able to attend Catholic Schools.

From 2003 to 2006, one of the Sisters was asked by Bishop Garland to serve as a Pastoral Assistant at Holy Spirit Parish in Menominee. In this capacity, besides helping with parish ministries, she also coordinated a program for grief support for parishioners who had suffered the death of loved ones. When the elderly pastor died, she moved to Escanaba to serve at Bishop Noa Home.

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Three Sisters of Saint Paul were sent to the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, in 1986 at the request of Cardinal James Hickey. One Sister was teaching at **Nativity Catholic Academy**, one was Religious Education Coordinator, and one was helping in pastoral ministry of the Nativity Parish. Four other Sisters came afterwards, for a total of seven Sisters. Besides the above ministries, one Sister studied at the Catholic University, one worked at Bethlehem House for handicapped persons, and one ministered in





the chaplaincy at Washington Hospital Center.

In 2003, Nativity convent became unlivable, so the seven Sisters transferred residence to Massachusetts Avenue in Bethesda, Maryland and two continued to teach at Nativity Academy. At that time, one Sister was Director of religious education at St. Jane Chantal Parish in Bethesda, and one had the same position at St. Bartholomew Parish in Bethesda, one continued working at Bethlehem House for handicapped persons, and one continued as chaplain at the hospital. Another Sister began working for the Vietnamese Catholic community at Our Lady of Vietnam in Silver Spring, MD.

After three years, in 2006, the convent at St. Anne's Parish in northwest Washington, DC became available, and the four Sisters then remaining at Massachusetts Avenue transferred there. One Sister continued the same ministry at Our Lady of Vietnam Parish, one continued at the Washington Hospital center, one Sister continued working at the parish office of St. Jane de Chantal in Bethesda, and another ministered as a teacher's aide at St. Jane de Chantal School.

When St. Anne's Parish sold the convent in 2018, the Sisters moved to a house on the property of St. Francis de Sales Parish, in northeast Washington, DC area, one Sister working at Project Rachel of the Archdiocese, one Sister at the Washington Hospital Center, and the other Sister studying English. At present, there are only two Sisters in ministries in Washington DC, one at the Washington Hospital Center and one studying nursing.

WAKEFIELD, MICHIGAN

In 2015 at the request of Bishop Alexander Sample, two Sisters of St. Paul were missioned to Wakefield to serve as pastoral ministers at the Keenagers residence, later called "**Divine Infant Living Center**", under the auspices of the Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Marquette. Due to lack of funding, this ministry lasted for only two years, after which the Sisters were sent to other ministries in Marquette and Washington, DC.

STEPHENSON, MICHIGAN

In 2017, the pastor at **Precious Blood Parish** in Stephenson, Michigan, with the approval of Bishop John Doerfler, asked for a Sister to help in the various ministries of the parish. In 2018, one Sister of St. Paul were sent for this ministry, and second Sister was sent with her to form “community life” and both Sisters currently help in parish activities – in liturgical services, the Legion of Mary, visiting the nursing home, and other pastoral services.



VARIOUS OTHER MINISTRIES

From 1998 to 2001, one of the Sisters ministered as a Social Worker under the auspices of the Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Marquette.

Besides serving in the schools, Bishop Noa Home, and the parish ministries mentioned above, the congregation of the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres has served the parishes and people of the Diocese of Marquette in many other capacities. Over the years, the Sisters have conducted summer programs of religious education in numerous towns including Bark River, Schafer, Carney-Nadeau, Menominee, Caspian, White Pine, Bergland, Houghton, Garden, and Mackinac Island.

Almost every year, one of the Sisters participates in the Youth Encounters, sharing her vocation story, and in other ways helping young people know of the joys of being a disciple of Jesus. Along the same lines, we are always happy to speak of God's call whenever invited by a parish or a school to do so.



Some of the Sisters give talks or days of reflection at gatherings such as to Companions of Saint Paul, religious education teachers, women's club, men's club, Serra Club, etc. Some Sisters have been trained as spiritual directors and assist people seeking to grow spiritually, offering one-on-one meetings or group retreats.

Whenever asked, Sisters have accepted various roles in the Diocese, such as assisting in Vocation Ministry, ministry to Native Americans, working in the Office of Religious Education, moderating the Catholic Women's Association, or coordinating the religious women of the Diocese.

As of 2021, the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres from the United States of America are Sr. Gloria Schultz, Sr. Mary Ann Laurin, and Sr. Rosalie Hughes.

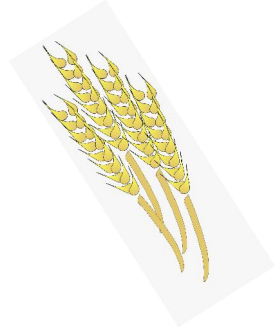
The Sisters from the Philippines are Sr. Clemence Mira, Sr. Estela Garcia, Sr. Norma Vicentilla, and Sr. Fidelia Villa.

The Sisters from Vietnam are Sr. Marie Kim Nguyen, Sr. Martha Trinh, and Maria Diem Nguyen.

The Sisters from Korea, are Sr. Juliana Djo, Sr. Dorothea Jang and Sr. Daria Moon.

And a Sister from Indonesia is Sr. Delfina Tede.

Throughout the years, the Sisters continue to respond to the needs of the Church, the call of God and the needs of God's people, which invite us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, in service to the Kingdom of the Father.



We will be having our 325th Anniversary opening Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Christopher Church in Marquette on Sunday, May 2 at 3:00 p.m., and a closing Mass in the fall of 2022.

Because of the current restrictions, attendance on May 2nd will be strictly limited to about 75 invited guests. However, everyone is invited to join us spiritually in praising and thanking God for his love and mercy.

