The growth of a tree is imperceptible. It sends out new shoots, produces leaves which absorb the sunlight and convert it into nourishment for the whole plant. Storms come, lightning strikes, ice breaks off branches, all seeming to diminish the tree. Yet year by year, ring by ring, the record of unrelenting growth is indelibly carved in the very substance of the trunk and branches.

The development of the Community is also gradual. It branches out into new paths, new methods of service, producing sisters who absorb the light of God’s love through prayer that is at the heart of their service. The spirit of the Founders, embodied in the sisters of each generation, constantly replenishes the vitality of the Community. The rings which record its history are the choices discerned at provincial and general assemblies every six years, decisions faithfully lived in the time between assemblies.

The principal work of the General Assembly of 1968-1969 was to decide the content of the provisional Constitutions, based on the Rule of Saint Vincent and the prayerful recommendations of all the sisters throughout the world. The lived experience of these would enable each sister to respond in wise fidelity when the time came for revision six years later.

One of the decisions made early in the Assembly of 1968 was to study the numbers of sisters and provinces in the Company and to redivide, where indicated. This was to be effected immediately in order to provide a better balance of world representation at decision-making assemblies, while making provincial administration more proximate and accessible. In some countries new provinces had already been created several years earlier. This decision, implemented in the United States, called for five provinces to replace the Eastern and Western Provinces.
Erection of the New Provinces in the United States

Many factors determined the boundary lines of the new provinces: geographic size; population density; the people in terms of religious, ethnic, cultural, and economic factors. Even more important were the needs and goals seen by the bishops of the dioceses involved, balanced against the works, personnel, and resources of the Community already invested in some of these dioceses. Throughout the United States there were in 1968 over twenty-five hundred Daughters of Charity staffing seventy-nine elementary and secondary schools, forty-four hospitals, forty social agencies and other apostolic ministries. Some of these institutions were owned or sponsored by the Community; others were diocesan, while a few were under state or federal auspices.

After several plans for division had been proposed and discussed, the consensus of the superiors was to divide the country into these five provinces: Northeast, Southeast, East Central, West Central, and West.

Ten states composed the Northeast Province: Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New York—where Daughters of Charity were serving—and New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont, where there were at that time no Daughters of Charity.

The Southeast (Emmitsburg) Province already served in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Florida, North and South Carolina, the District of Columbia, and missions in Bolivia. Only the state of Georgia had as yet no Daughters of Charity.

Nine states composed the new East Central Province: Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Michigan. Daughters were serving in all nine states.

In the West Central (Saint Louis) Province, sisters were serving in Missouri, Iowa, Louisiana, and Texas, as well as missions in Puerto Rico, Taiwan, Ecuador, and Japan. There was no Community presence in the other seven states of the province: Arkansas, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Minnesota, North and South Dakota.

Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, and Wyoming—where there were no Daughters of Charity—were named part of the Province of the West, as were California, Washington, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, and Nevada, where the sisters were already serving.
PROVINCES OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY
IN THE UNITED STATES

NORTHEAST PROVINCE

EAST CENTRAL PROVINCE

WEST CENTRAL PROVINCE

PROVINCE OF THE WEST
(also Alaska, Hawaii)

SOUTHEAST PROVINCE
The Planned Division Realized

The division into five provinces became official on the feast of Blessed Elizabeth Ann Seton, 4 January 1969. The formal ceremony, attended by all the sister servants of the United States, was held in Saint Joseph’s Provincial House Chapel, Emmitsburg. Father William M. Slattery, former superior general, read the rescript from Rome giving the new provinces the official recognition of the Church, thus implementing the directives of Vatican II concerning decentralization. After installing the five visitatrixes and their councillors, Mother Christine Chiron cited the day as a joyful, confident beginning of a new era in the life of the Community, an era that would be fruitful in holiness, both for the sisters personally and in their collaboration with the Church.

All divisions are painful, but in this one the human dimension had been taken into account. Sisters were consulted regarding the province to which they would prefer to belong. As a result, the pain of separation was less severe. Sisters were quick to see the advantages of the change: Smaller provinces freed provincial superiors from overwhelming administrative detail, and enabled individual sisters to participate more in the government of the province, to share in the concerns and decisions that affected them.

While each province began its distinct development immediately, provincial rosters remained fluid for several years, allowing for gradual relocation of sisters for professional, health, or family reasons. The Southeast, East Central, and West Central Provinces retained responsibility for the sick and elderly members of the Community, since facilities for them were already operative in these provinces. Formation programs remained for a time centralized in Emmitsburg and Saint Louis, where Saint Joseph’s and Marillac Colleges were available. Gradually programs of formation were developed in the new provinces.

Constitutions Revised and Approved

Events and developments in the Community on the international level continued to be guided by the decisions of the general assemblies: that of 1974 which resulted in the 1975 edition of the Constitutions and Statutes; that of 1979-80 in which the international commissions, after synthesizing the prayerful responses from
sisters of all seventy-four provinces from all continents, compiled the final revision of the Constitutions and Statutes. These were submitted to the Holy See and approved 2 February 1983.

The World Mission Center

Vincentian spirituality is, by its very nature, missionary. Until the twentieth century missionary efforts came primarily from Europe, particularly France and Spain. After World War I provinces on several continents sponsored missions. In some cases Daughters of Charity from several nations were working in the same country, even in the same district, but sometimes in separate establishments.

Discussions of Mission ad Gentes at general assemblies brought out the need for Christian witness to be given by international houses of Daughters of Charity, manifesting the unity and universality of the Church and the Community. In such houses, the emphasis would be on the culture and advancement of the people being evangelized. Sisters would identify with the province or region to which they were assigned, rather than their province of origin.

The need for specialized language study, spiritual formation, and preparation for living an alien lifestyle led Mother Christine Chiron to set up an international Mission Center in Paris shortly after 1968. Here sisters who volunteered for the World Missions learn to depend totally on God while living with fewer conveniences among sisters from other cultures before departing for missions in Africa, the Near East, Latin America, or Asia. Since 1969 many sisters from the five provinces of the United States have served in Taiwan, Thailand, Burundi, Zaire, Egypt, Japan, Turkey, India, Israel, Lebanon, Madagascar, Ecuador, and Bolivia. International teams of missionaries are freer from political suspicion, able to build native leadership for the Church and the Community more expeditiously, working toward the time when each nation has its own self-sustaining, largely native province of Daughters of Charity.

Diversity in the New Provinces of the United States

While avenues of cooperation on the international level multiplied, decisions made on the provincial level were giving to each of the provinces of the United States a uniqueness—Vincen-
tian in essence, but diverse in the responses to specific needs of the Church and the poor. To express this uniqueness, each province appointed a sister to tell its own story of the first seventeen years: 1969-1985.

Northeast Province

by

Sister Mary Anne Brawley

The new province of the Northeast, although the smallest geographically, was the most urbanized. Here Catholicism was the majority religion with a membership five times greater than Judaism, the next largest faith. The region contained an ethnic mixture of persons; there were more Hispanics than in any other region except the Southwest, and more blacks than in any other region except the South.

To this province came Sister Mary Basil Roarke, who had spent more than twenty years in the secretariat and general administration in Paris. She brought with her a sense of the Company's charism and a vision for the new province of thirty-two houses in six states, with 368 sisters serving the needs of the poor.

Health Care Institutions

As might be expected, the health care institutions of the province had been developed in the cities of this Northeast corridor. Some dates of establishment — 1848, 1857, 1863, 1868, 1913, 1925 — allow one to study the path of Catholic migration moving westward from their Atlantic Coast point of entry. In 1985, no less than then, the Catholic hospital faced the needs of the poor and the signs of the times.

And how these signs bore upon the Church! It might be said that the greatest difficulty in the health care apostolate those years had been maintaining a role as a Catholic hospital adhering to religious, ethical, and moral standards while conforming to an ever increasing
number of state and government regulations. In addition, practical administrative problems such as the growing shortage of nursing and technical personnel, inadequate reimbursement, and lack of funding to meet the expense of operating a variety of services for a majority of the poor or near poor were constantly present.

Perhaps the most heavily regulated state in the Union was New York, where the Northeast Province staffed four hospitals. In each of these could be observed fidelity to the mission "servant of the poor" despite bureaucratic complications.

A dramatic example was found in Saint Mary's, Rochester. In 1979 the hospital was faced with a decision either to renovate the building on the site occupied since 1857 or to build at a new location. In choosing the former, the board gave witness to the commitment to care for the poor and underserved in their own neighborhood while working with local leaders to stabilize the area.

In Buffalo, Sisters' Hospital began in 1970 the first Methadone Maintenance Clinic in upstate New York. At its opening it served 113 clients and had a waiting list of 165! It continued to function with roughly fifty-five thousand clinic visits per year recorded.

Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Binghamton, an acute-care general hospital, developed a specialty in oncology. Since 1973 it has been the National Cancer Institute's designated treatment center for south central New York and northeast Pennsylvania.

The Health Center for Children and Adolescents at Saint Mary's Hospital, Troy, welcomed families with poor or no insurance coverage. By 1985 statistics showed an average of approximately fourteen thousand visits annually.

In Massachusetts the sisters of the province were staffing three hospitals in 1985; two of the three were archdiocesan health care facilities. Carney Hospital served the largest percentage of poor of any Catholic hospital in the state. A recognized leader in community health services, Carney operated six satellite clinics in neighborhoods most in need of ongoing health care.

Saint Margaret's Hospital for Women was an early center for Natural Family Planning Services. Members of Saint Margaret's staff have developed curricula for Family Life Education widely used by dioceses.

The remaining archdiocesan facility, Saint John of God Hospital, has engaged sisters of the province since 1974. This is a long-term care center for the disabled and chronically ill.
After Saint Vincent's Medical Center, Bridgeport, Connecticut, moved into its new building in 1976, its Board of Directors continued to search out ways to improve its service. As a result, the Board mandated an outreach program to the medically and financially underserved.

Since its inception in 1969, the province has relinquished one hospital—Elizabeth Ann Seton in Waterville, Maine—and assumed responsibility for another: Good Samaritan Hospital in Pottsville, Pennsylvania.

Other changes were apparent in the health care delivery of the Northeast Province. Of the nine hospital commitments, Daughters of Charity were by 1985 chief executive officers in only three. More frequently, qualified lay people had been appointed to this position. However, a Daughter of Charity continued to serve as president of the Board of Directors in each Community-sponsored institution.

Gone, too, were the schools of nursing. Only two of the hospitals continued to operate schools, and each of these had been restructured to a two-year associate degree program.

Consistent with a developing pattern within the province, many sisters with a health care background became employed outside Community facilities. Several sisters were doing home nursing within social agencies; one directed a collegiate program; one worked in an administrative position in a Sisters of Mercy health-care agency. All brought to their insertions the spirit of the Company to serve the sick poor with cordiality, compassion, respect and devotion.

Varied Educational Apostolates

This Northeast Province had ownership in 1985 of only one educational institution, Laboure College in Boston, which in 1972 replaced Catherine Labouré School of Nursing. Adjacent to Carney Hospital, Laboure College offered majors in health-related subject areas and enrolled approximately one thousand students in its regular and continuing education programs in the 1985 academic year. Many of Labouré's students were adults who had returned to school to increase their ability to secure steady employment.

In a number of houses of the Northeast Province there was effort expended in the broad area of adult education. The first and best known was the work of Saint John's in Brooklyn. Here in 1973 the
New Horizons Adult Education Program was initiated. A wide variety of instruction was provided from basic literacy to specialized job training. It was the hope that such training might help these adults break the poverty cycle into which they had been forced because of a lack of marketable skills.

Parish catechetical works, while still serving the needs of children in the early stages of faith development, were ever increasingly involved in meeting the needs of the adult in Christian growth. The province had six sisters who were directors of religious education in rural, suburban and urban settings. Three of these positions entailed bilingual skills.

Reaching the young adult was a special concentration of the six sisters assigned to positions at the Vincentian universities, Saint John's and Niagara. Whether professors, librarian or campus ministers, their presence was part of the broader collegiate community.

Several factors had great impact on elementary and secondary education in the Northeast. The publication of *Are Parochial Schools the Answer?* in the early 1960s, the unrest of many Catholics following Vatican II, the move of Catholics from the traditionally strong urban areas, the loss of large numbers of religious, and the broadening of services offered by the Church were among the reasons for such a large decrease in Catholic schools throughout this region.

Although the province, in the legal sense, has never owned a school, the sisters have traditionally referred to “our” schools. In 1969 the province had 121 sisters teaching in thirteen schools. In 1985 half that number were in seventeen schools. No longer were seven to fifteen sisters assigned to one school; one to five per school were present by the mid 1980s. Schools merged and were restructured, and the sisters necessarily became part of the process. Of the four high school commitments the province had in 1969, one had closed and the other three were merged by 1985. However, sisters of the province entered three additional secondary schools in that period. The same was true of elementary schools. Five of the ten staffed by the province in 1969 closed, but five new insertions were made. All of these were in city target areas for marginals: the

unchurched, the new immigrants, and the disadvantaged. Saint Catherine's in Elizabeth, New Jersey, had a multi-ethnic student body representing fourteen nations. Saint Joseph's and Saint Mark's in Harlem, New York, served 100 percent minority populations. In the diocese of Brooklyn, three sisters worked in two schools within the poverty pocket of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

In the province's educational apostolate the needs of special students were not neglected. New York City's Kennedy Child Study Center sponsored an Infant Stimulation Program for developmentally delayed children from six months to three years.

At Astor Home for Children, Rhinebeck, New York, and Saint Catherine's Center, Albany, special schools were maintained for emotionally disturbed children. Both facilities offered both residential and day treatment to these students with special needs.

Social Ministries

The Social Service apostolate of the province covered a multitude of varied activities aimed at the betterment of the human condition. A sizable number of sisters worked under the auspices of Catholic Charities. Two were diocesan directors of the agency: one in Albany, New York, and the other in Metuchen, New Jersey. In the Brooklyn Diocese, sisters served in numerous roles: as director of senior citizen housing management, coordinator of Golden Age Clubs, building manager, clinic director, day care director, and social worker. Other dioceses in which sisters worked under Catholic Charities in 1985 were: New York City as director of services to the handicapped; Metuchen as director of services to migrants and refugees; Buffalo as director of services in Niagara Falls; and Boston as social worker for child and family counseling.

Through the years since the Northeast became a separate province, social ministries underwent significant changes. Most notable was the closing of the traditional children's homes; often the agency retained its identity but changed its emphasis. A good example of this was Nazareth Child Center in Boston, Massachusetts. Established in 1864 as the Home for Destitute Catholic Children, it ceased operation as a residential facility in 1985. It did, however, maintain a day care program and sought to provide new and needed services to children and families.

Another institution which remained a primary care giver was
Saint Catherine’s Children’s Center, Albany. In 1971 the governing board discontinued the home for unwed mothers, the infant home program, and the training course for child-care technicians. In place of these were initiated an emergency shelter for abused, neglected, and abandoned children; three residential group homes for emotionally disturbed youth; and a short-term shelter for homeless families.

In 1984 the Community’s oldest child-caring institution closed its doors. Saint Joseph’s, Philadelphia, had been undertaken as a work by Elizabeth Ann Seton in 1814 and later relocated to Germantown, Pennsylvania. Sisters remain in the Germantown neighborhood to do parish ministry, outreach to the elderly, and nursing service for retired Vincentians at Saint Catherine’s Infirmary.

Other social service apostolates were part of neighborhood or parish centers. At Labouré Center, South Boston, comprehensive programs met specific neighborhood needs: home nursing, mental health clinic, day care for children, and family counseling. Sisters and lay women, qualified public health care nurses, provided home care to the elderly, homebound, diabetics, terminally ill, and those recently discharged from hospitals. They also offered caring support and information to caregivers. At Saint John’s Parish Center, Brooklyn, initiated in 1972, the work included a thrift shop serving two hundred persons a week and a soup kitchen called “Bread and Life,” begun in 1982, which served an average of 8500 meals a month.

In Niagara Falls, New York, Rosalie Rendu* House offered shelter for women and their children who had been victims of domestic violence. Saint John’s Center in Utica depended heavily on volunteers to assist the two sisters who coordinated services to the elderly and disadvantaged.

Saint Agatha’s Parish in Canastota, New York, became actively involved in an ecumenical project to reach out to the needy of this rural community with food, clothing and advocacy. Quite aptly, the project was named Opportunity Shop.

Indeed, the opportunities for growth and development within the northeast corner of the United States were constantly changing.

*Sister Rosalie Rendu was a Daughter of Charity who worked with the poor in Paris in the 1830s. Her influence on Frederic Ozanam led to the formation of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul according to the rule Vincent wrote for the Charity he had founded in 1619.
from 1969 to 1985. Sister Mary Rose McGeady, second visitatrix of the province, initiated active apostolic advisory commissions for each service, with members elected by their peers. In addition, two other commissions—Peace and Justice, and Aging—offered assistance to the provincial council in planning for the future as a province.

Important to the province is the directive of the Constitutions, Article 2.9: “Praying for the poor and in their name remains the Sisters’ primary obligation.” For this reason, the sisters involved in the works came to rely heavily on Saint Louise House, where this directive is lived out in the reality of each day. These sick and elderly sisters have become the power behind the service of the poor in the Northeast.

Since 1979 Saint Louise House has been a wing of DePaul Provincial House. In 1971 the province purchased from the Canonesses of Saint Augustine their American provincial house, Mount Saint Augustine, on Route 378 just north of Albany in the village of Menands, New York. On 8 September 1971 Father Joseph Tinnelly, provincial director, celebrated Mass in the chapel for the first time. This became the center of the Northeast Province. From here sisters go forth for mission, return for renewal, and find the welcome which makes this their home.

Southeast Province

by
Sister Grace Dorr

Emmitsburg, the parent stem for all the branches and provinces of Mother Seton’s Daughters in the United States, became the Southeast Province in 1969. Changes in apostolic service since then reflect two priorities: concern for and ministry to the poor, and a thrust toward service in areas where the unchurched are numerous or where Catholic presence is minimal. In 1970, under the leadership of Sister Eleanor McNabb, 725 sisters served in 39 apostolic works, most of them north of the Carolinas. By 1981, 511 sisters ministered in 55 apostolic works, many south of Virginia.
Health Care Facilities

Two acute-care hospitals, sponsored and staffed by the Community for more than seventy years, serve the people of Florida. At Sacred Heart Hospital, Pensacola, a special pediatric building houses the sixty-bed regional neonatal intensive care unit for parts of Florida and Alabama. Saint Vincent's Medical Center in Jacksonville is well known for its complete cardiac program, serving northeast Florida and southern Georgia. Saint Catherine Labouré Manor, a 232-bed long-term care facility near Saint Vincent's, became in 1979 the third health-care institution in Florida sponsored by the Community.

DePaul Hospital in Norfolk, Virginia, one of the few Catholic hospitals in the state, conducts its own diploma nursing program. Sacred Heart Hospital in Cumberland, Maryland, provides medical care for the people in mountainous Allegany County, offering medical day care for adults, in-house hospice, and hospice home-care as well.

In the Baltimore-Washington area the sisters withdrew from some institutions in order to strengthen in others their focus on pro-life programs and outreach to the poor. Sponsorship of Seton Institute, leader in Catholic psychiatric care for over a century, was relinquished in 1972. The trend was again to treat the whole person in a general hospital setting. Good Samaritan Hospital in Baltimore and the United States Soldiers Home Hospital in Washington were also turned over to others. Century-old Providence Hospital in Washington continued to introduce state-of-the-art programs, including a separate alcoholism rehabilitation unit. Saint Agnes Hospital in Baltimore added a comprehensive community education program for pregnant adolescents as well as married couples, and a center for neonatal intensive care. Nearby Jenkins Memorial Home, diocesan-owned but administered by Daughters of Charity, strengthened its program of care for the elderly by adding low-income units for aging singles and married couples.

Through the World Mission Center, sisters of the province have brought their expertise to Africa, India, Madagascar, Bolivia, and Taiwan—where some teach nursing skills, operate a hospice for the elderly, and staff other facilities. An inter-provincial disaster-response program brought sisters from the Southeast to assist flood victims in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and in Keyser and later Williamson, West Virginia; to ease the distress of Vietnamese refu-
gees at Fort Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania and at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida in 1975; and to give basic nursing care and medical treatment to Cambodian refugees in the primitive camps on the Thai-Cambodian border in Indochina in 1980.

Concern for the poor has customarily extended beyond the hospitals, beyond the hours on duty. In Jacksonville sisters offered their help in a soup kitchen for indigents; in Norfolk sisters followed up destitute patients discharged from DePaul to be sure they had the basics of food, clothing, and shelter. Sisters from Jenkins Memorial in Baltimore sponsored and aided “boat people” as well as refugees from Ethiopia and Poland. The Center for Life at Providence Hospital in Washington was established to assist expectant mothers from the poor Hispanic area of the city; one sister-midwife was assigned to work at a clinic in the barrio.

Continuing Commitment to Education

In an era marked by many closings of parochial schools, the Southeast Province has continued to educate in almost twenty schools. In the southern part of the province, Daughters of Charity accepted the administration of schools left by other communities: Saint Patrick’s and Saint Ann’s in Fayetteville, North Carolina, near Fort Bragg; Saint Mary’s in Rome, Georgia, where in 1971 the sisters began their first work in that state, also participating in an ecumenical program to help the needy and in work with college students and instruction to children of other parishes.

Consolidation of schools led to better use of educational resources—including sisters—and the achievement of other goals. In Greensboro two schools staffed by the sisters integrated; Saint Mary’s became a parish center in the black community. Decreasing enrollment led to closings in Staunton and Norfolk, Virginia, and in Martinsburg, West Virginia. In Baltimore two elementary schools and one small high school staffed by the Daughters closed, and became part of the archdiocesan cluster system.

Under the leadership of Sister Mary Clare Hughes, visitatrix from 1974-1983, the sisters created advisory boards and developed funding programs for Community-owned schools. Scholarships for poorer students and special attention to children with learning disabilities are part of the Seton tradition the province has always striven to uphold, together with the improvement of curricula in
order to give quality education in all subjects. By 1985 all elementary schools had kindergartens in operation; several had added before-school and after-school programs for children of working mothers.

In 1984 the sisters withdrew from a school in Pikesville, Maryland. Immaculate Conception Academy in Washington merged with Saint Anthony's to become All Saints High School for girls. The school cafeteria became involved in a program offering employment to handicapped youth from nearby Saint Elizabeth's School. In Petersburg, Virginia, Gibbons High School acquired a closing Episcopalian high school; many of its former students remained to increase the interfaith enrollment of Saint Vincent de Paul High School, as the school was renamed. Many other schools in the South have similarly ecumenical enrollments, since Catholics are a small percentage of the population. To meet this challenge, Saint Joseph’s School in Petersburg, Virginia, began a religious education tracking system based on knowledge and experience of primary students. Many sisters also teach in weekend and summer schools of religion and sacramental preparation programs, in order to reach Catholic children not enrolled in the schools.

Religious education requires the support of a competent and visionary administrator. Saint Ann’s School in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and Saint Michael’s in Overlea, Maryland, each have one Daughter of Charity who serves as principal. The schools all educate students about the causes of poverty in the United States and in the world, and try to instill attitudes of service: visiting the elderly close to the school, or trying to help the poor. School sisters visit nearby hospitals, teach inmates of jails, serve food to the homeless, telephone shut-ins, tutor immigrants in their homes, and reflect in their teaching the values which inspire this service. Senior students at Holy Cross High School in Lynchburg, Virginia, deliver meals on wheels to the elderly as part of their school service program, delighting in the visits involved.

In 1985 the sisters of the Southeast Province administered or taught in fifteen elementary and seven high schools, working with their lay collaborators to keep tuition low. Costly maintenance, just wages for teachers, and increased costs of education indicate that some schools will merge in the future, or that the sisters will have to withdraw, leaving a Vincentian legacy of education behind them.
Expanding Social Ministry

As schools consolidated, works in social ministry expanded from eight in 1970 to seventeen in 1981. Many of these are parish outreach centers. At Our Lady of the Valley Parish in Gloverville, South Carolina, the parish center offers catechetical programs, courses in adult literacy, alcoholism counseling, assistance for abused persons, and emergency relief. In this economically depressed area the needs of millworkers and their families are many. A thrift store and food pantry are included, partly funded by Catholic Charities of South Carolina. Similar work has been done by sisters in parishes in Florida, Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

In the diocesan office in Charleston, South Carolina, a sister social worker assesses needs throughout the state and aids parishes in beginning social ministry programs. In the Jacksonville and Fayetteville offices of Catholic Charities, sisters make other services available. Their work includes advocacy, aid to families, work for crime prevention, community development, ecumenical work, victim assistance, work with adolescents, and services to the elderly.

In some areas of North Carolina sisters minister in jails, work with migrants, do peace and justice work, develop parish social ministry, serve the elderly, advocate for jobs, give emergency relief, work with adoptions and in foster care, and do ecumenical outreach. One sister's job covers eight counties where she works in a multi-purpose social service agency—through which she coordinated relief after a tornado hit in 1984. Others work as pastoral associates and directors of religious education, as visitors to the elderly, and in direct services to provide food, clothing, and emergency funding.

Trends toward non-residential maternity programs and foster care for children led to the closing of some institutions, and program changes in others. Saint Joseph's Villa in Richmond was transferred to the Xaverian Brothers in 1977 for the care of emotionally disturbed children. Seton House—a home for single mothers in Richmond, Virginia—closed, as did Villa Louise in Timonium, Maryland, which had worked closely with Saint Vincent's Infant Home. The program at Saint Vincent's changed to residential and developmental treatment for abused, neglected, and handicapped children, expanding its services to families of abused and emotionally disturbed children as well.
The century-old Saint Ann’s Infant and Maternity Home in the Washington suburb of Hyattsville, Maryland, retained its home for unwed mothers, staffing a school in which they could continue their high school education while at the home. Child-care services were expanded to include abused and abandoned children and an infant day care center for children of working mothers, the first to be licensed by the state of Maryland. Some of the sisters also help the homeless of Washington at a special shelter.

A day care program at Saint Vincent’s in Washington was turned over to others, but one sister continued to work for Catholic Charities and to serve as moderator for the Ladies of Charity of the archdiocese.

Sister social workers have also become part of hospital staffs, counseling, consoling, and securing placement for those discharged from the hospital but in need of further care.

Changes at Emmitsburg

One trend, new since Mother Seton’s time, has been the service of sisters on boards and committees in schools, parishes, dioceses, and institutions, resulting in more efficient stewardship. This sense of stewardship prompted the province to close Marian Retreat House in Baltimore and Seton House of Studies in Washington, and to utilize space at the provincial house (built in 1964) by relocating there the sick and elderly sisters from Villa Saint Michael in Baltimore. Each sister of the Villa (as it is still called) is commissioned to pray for one of the works of the province.

Other changes at Emmitsburg bear the mark of good stewardship. Saint Joseph College for Women closed in 1973 and was later sold to the federal government. The National Fire Academy and Emergency Management Institute now occupy the former college grounds. This sale necessitated moving Mother Seton’s Stone House from its original site overlooking Tom’s Creek to its present location nearer the provincial house. Construction of a new school on Creamery Road freed the former Mother Seton School building to house the services of Seton Center in 1969. Since that time these services have mushroomed: day care for children from ages two to twelve; information, counseling and referral services for parents; emergency assistance with food or clothing; and a thrift shop. The building is also used for basic adult education classes, sponsored
enrichment programs, and services to senior citizens. Home visiting is a regular part of the program. The day care program is recognized for excellence; students and trainees are brought to observe and tour the facility as a model for early childhood education.

By 1982 Saint Joseph High School had closed because of low enrollment, leaving only Mother Seton Elementary School to continue in unbroken line the school begun by Elizabeth Seton in Emmitsburg in 1810. The school has an excellent development program and serves students from many surrounding counties.

In 1983 Sister Genevieve Kureth and her councillors became the current successors to Mother Seton and her original advisors. Consulting with them, the sisters periodically adapt and revise their works. By the end of 1985, four hundred thirty-six sisters were working in thirty-two houses. Although the sisters have diminished in numbers, they have been supported and enriched by the work of many lay collaborators. This involvement of the laity will increase and intensify in the years ahead, as the sisters continue to search for new ways to adapt and serve while remaining faithful to their original inspirations of service.

**East Central Province**

*by*

*Sister Catherine Madigan*

Unique to the East Central Province in the 1969 division was the bringing together into one province seventy sisters who had entered and lived their community life in the Emmitsburg Province and three hundred thirty-one sisters who had belonged to the Saint Louis Province. Two states formerly associated with Emmitsburg joined seven states formerly with Saint Louis to form the new province.

Although the East Central Province is generally considered to be inland, it is almost surrounded by waterways: the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, the Gulf of Mexico and smaller rivers to the east. In 1969 six archdioceses and twenty-eight dioceses coincided with the territory of these nine states, with community houses in four
archdioceses and in ten dioceses. The apostolic works were well established for the most part: four houses were founded in the 1840s, seventeen more before 1910, and thirteen more between 1910 and 1969.

**Getting Established**

Sister Elise Boudreaux became the first visitatrix. Four councilors were named to aid her: Sister Constance Dahinden, councillor for education and provincial secretary; Sister John Gabriel McPhee, councillor for health services; Sister Margaret Flynn, councillor for social ministry, and Sister Virginia Kingsbury, councillor in charge of formation and assistant. Sister Virginia May was appointed provincial treasurer and Father John F. Zimmerman, C.M., provincial director.

For two years the provincial headquarters were in Chicago in a residence owned by Mrs. Helen Kellogg. Sister Elise chose the name Mater Dei and placed the province under Mary's patronage. The statue of Mater Dei, now the symbol of the province, was designed after one seen in Rome by Sister Elise and Sister Margaret Flynn at the Church of Santa Maria del Miracoli in the Piazza del Popolo. The original statue had been especially designed for the community of priests of Betharram, a village ten miles from Lourdes in France.

During the first twelve years, efforts were directed toward activities which fell into five broad categories identified as concerns by Sister Elise and her Council: becoming acquainted with all the sisters of the province, establishing a provincial house, organizing formation opportunities and personnel services, promoting and developing all areas of ministry and continuing education for the sisters in their apostolic work, and lastly, encouraging the sisters to develop a life-style in their local houses according to principles of wholesome group living and the evolving provisions of the revised Constitutions and Statutes.

To begin a province without a permanent provincial house was a challenge. In 1971 the Community acquired property near Evansville for the building of a residence and administrative offices for the provincialate. Until the completion of the administration building in December 1972, the Council rented office space in downtown Evansville, living at Saint Mary's until 22 March 1974, when they moved to the Mater Dei Residence.
In the spring of 1969 a nine-member commission was formed to study the apostolic works: three from each of the areas of education, health and social ministry. Their work involved the participation of every sister to make recommendations for the future. After surveying pertinent literature, consulting the sisters, and addressing inquiries to the archbishops and bishops concerned, the commission published a summary in January 1971. Included in the report were twenty-eight recommendations. In her circular letter of 16 August 1971 Sister Elise wrote:

We have arrived at a significant moment in the history of our young province. After having reflected for two years on all the facets of our apostolic endeavors, we must now face ourselves and our works openly and honestly as we try to respond to the obligations that are ours in relation to Article 79 of our new Constitutions. Paraphrasing this article, we ask ourselves: How are we going to adapt ourselves and our works more and more to the needs of the times and approach more closely the least fortunate?

Mergers and Withdrawals

This adaptability in moving into new modes of service demanded much of the sisters. The first change occurred in 1970 with the merging of Saint Vincent Group Home in Milwaukee with Saint Mary's Hospital. Next Saint Patrick's High School, Chicago, was closed because of declining enrollment and the availability of education at nearby high schools. Some sisters remained in residence to serve other needs.

Spiraling costs of child care, policies which favored placing infants and children in foster homes, and the decreasing numbers of children in child-care institutions and sisters to care for them led to several hard decisions. Sisters were withdrawn from Saint Rose's in Milwaukee, and the administration relinquished to the director of Catholic Social Services of the archdiocese. Saint Vincent's Home in Saginaw, Michigan, was transferred to a lay board of directors. The sisters also withdrew from Saint Thomas on the Hill in Birmingham, and also from Saint Barnabas School, where sisters who staffed the home had been teaching.

Saint Vincent's Infant Hospital in Chicago, which had cared for more than sixty thousand infants in its ninety-year history, closed 15 March 1972. A residential maternity program was no longer
needed; other aspects of the program were continued by Catholic Charities and the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Although the historic Saint Vincent's on LaSalle Street was discontinued, its corporation was not dissolved, but rather merged with DePaul Settlement and Day Nursery; the name was officially changed to Saint Vincent de Paul Center.

Another merger took place in Farmington Hills, Michigan, when Saint Vincent-Sarah Fisher Center and Marillac Hall were legally merged 1 July 1979, thereby facilitating the administration of the single-parent program at Marillac Hall and making possible some financial advantages in its operation.

Allen Memorial Home in Mobile had operated two programs: one for single mothers and the other for the care of the aged. Catholic Charities of Mobile assumed the care of the unmarried mothers. The elderly moved into the former Martin de Porres Hospital, which became a licensed skilled-nursing-care facility, retaining the name Allen Memorial Home.

In 1974 the Community transferred the sponsorship of Saint Joseph Hospital in Alton, Illinois, to the Sisters of Saint Francis, thereby easing somewhat the province's burden of eleven hospitals. In June 1979 the sisters left Our Lady of Peace School in Canton, Ohio; Ursuline Sisters agreed to staff the school.

New Ministries

All these changes enabled the province to consider new ministries, new works to fill unmet needs. From 1972-1975 four pioneer sisters were part of the Appalachian project, Seton Home Health Services, in London, Kentucky, renting office space in Marymount hospital. One sister taught for a year in Saint William's School. When the Daughters withdrew, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth at Marymount accepted the sponsorship of Seton under a corporation separate from that of the hospital.

From 1972-1977 the Community responded to the urgent need for sisters to care for the black population of Selma, Alabama, at Good Samaritan hospital. The sisters at Saint Margaret's in Montgomery continued to serve on this hospital's board until it closed in 1983.

The East Central Province made a major commitment to Mississippi, a state with great needs in many areas, by sending
sisters to Gulfport and Jackson in 1972 and to Charleston in 1973. In Gulfport six sisters were sent to staff Saint John’s Inter-Parochial High School. Through their dedication the enrollment mushroomed. Sisters filled other roles in the area: pastoral associate in Saint Theresa’s, a black parish; superintendent of schools and director of deaf ministry for the diocese of Biloxi; and principal at Our Lady of Victories High School in Pascagoula.

Sisters living in St. Joseph House in Jackson 1972-1978 worked in many ministries: nurse-midwifery at the University of Mississippi, deaf ministry, administrative assistance to the vicar general, coordinator of health-care services for the diocese, and coordinator of day care in Saint Jude’s Parish in Pearl. When a sister was named to administer Holy Family School in 1974, Saint Joseph House relocated to the convent there. Holy Family was one of two integrated schools in Jackson at that time. One sister came as a practicing midwife and the supervisor of maternity services in the predominantly black areas around Mound Bayou, Mississippi.

Saint John’s Mission in Charleston was the first of three missions opened to serve the rural people, to bring the message of Christ and the Church to this mission territory and to the poorest of the poor. In 1979 two sisters came to work in Hernando, and the following year two more began social services in Walls.

In Alabama two works specifically for the elderly were undertaken. In 1975 two sisters were requested for Cathedral Place in Mobile. Their gentle presence and warm relationships with the residents prompted Archbishop John May to request two more sisters to staff a similar facility he planned to erect for the elderly in Montgomery. When Seton Haven became a reality, two sisters served there. Two others taught in Saint Bede’s School, Montgomery.

In Indiana and Illinois two rural missions were commenced. In 1978 three sisters were sent to Huntingburg, Indiana, to serve in Saint Mary’s Parish, one of the largest of the Evansville Diocese, as religious education coordinator and parish visitors. Also in 1978 two sisters came to Saint Elizabeth’s Parish in Robinson, Illinois, where Bishop Joseph A. McNicholas had asked for them to witness the love and concern of the Church in an area where the smallest number of Catholics lived.

Flexibility and adaptability were characteristics of this time. With so much happening, Sister Elise saw the need for another councillor-at-large, since her term and that of the entire Council would end in 1981. Sister Gertrude Bastnagel was installed 21 May
1978. Three years later she became the second visitatrix of the East Central Province. Her councillors were: Sister Dorothea Huber, assistant, social ministry; Sister Mary Frances Loftin, health; Sister Catherine Madigan, education; and Sister Priscilla Grimes, councillor-at-large. Father Carl Schulte was named provincial director and Sister Margaret Polheber, treasurer. These continued the work of the first Council with evaluation of works and expansion of ministries.

The balance between withdrawing and sending sisters was an ever-present concern. In 1981 sisters were withdrawn from Catholic Social Services in Covington, Kentucky. Two years later three sisters were sent to open a mission in Auburn, Alabama: one to direct the religious education program in the parish; the second to be a campus minister at Auburn University; and the third to be director of religious education in the parishes of Opelika, Lanett and Roanoke. In 1985 when the house at Long Beach, Mississippi, closed, the sisters joined those in Gulfport. The same year two houses opened in Illinois: Effingham and East Saint Louis. Effingham is a rural city in central Illinois; the four sisters there work in Saint Anthony’s High School and Parish, Sacred Heart School, and Catholic Charities. In East Saint Louis the sisters teach in Saint Joseph School, minister in the parish, and work for the poor in social ministry programs.

The health care apostolate changed radically. All ten schools of nursing have closed since 1964, with the last, Saint Vincent’s in Birmingham, being phased out by 1987. Hospitals expanded with additional facilities at Saint Mary’s of Osaukee, Wisconsin, and Saint Vincent’s in Carmel, Indiana. Hospice, home care, clinics, wellness centers and family birthing centers have sprung up in almost every hospital setting.

Insertions and Short-Term Ministries

More and more, sisters became involved in the governing boards of the ten hospitals, four social agencies and one high school sponsored by the Community. The trend of ministry away from the corporate community setting to individual positions of insertion into non-Community-sponsored institutions created a new relationship for the sisters in collaborating with members of the laity, clergy, or other religious communities, either as their peers or
working under their leadership.

In response to ever-changing needs, sisters were sent to serve in newer and sometimes short-term ministries. In addition to opening new missions, sisters worked in diocesan offices and Catholic Charities positions in Biloxi and Jackson, Mississippi; Evansville, Indiana; Mobile, Alabama; and Nashville, Tennessee. They served on university campuses in Chicago, Illinois; in parishes in Mobile, Alabama; Moss Point and Pass Christian, Mississippi; Evansville, Indiana; Nashville, Tennessee; and Chicago, Illinois. They taught in schools in Morrisonville, Illinois, and in Evansville and Rockport, Indiana. In 1979 each retired sister at Seton Manor was formally commissioned to pray for a specific local mission and for each ministry of the sisters in that house.

The Community has collaborated with the Ladies of Charity and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in many places. One sister is on the staff of the Society in Evansville. The efforts of the sisters have been greatly supported by the collaboration of generous men and women; forty-five of them have become affiliates of the Daughters of Charity, sharing in the spiritual benefits of the Community.

In addition to service within the province, sisters have volunteered for service in Thailand, in a leprosarium in 1969 and working with the refugees who came there from Laos and Cambodia in 1979. Others responded to the call to World Missions and serve in Lebanon, Bolivia, Zaire and Taiwan. Since its foundation, the East Central Province has shared help in many forms with the Community in Venezuela.

West Central Province

by
Sister Daniel Hannefin

The Saint Louis Province became the West Central instead of the Western Province 4 January 1969. On the surface nothing had changed. Marillac's turreted facade still welcomed homecoming sisters to the hub of the province; sister students still hurried across to Marillac College; and Sister Mary Rose McPhee was to be visita-
trix for six more years. But a glance at the map of the province revealed how great the change was: from an area covering twenty-nine states extending from Canada to Mexico, from the Great Lakes to the Pacific, the province was suddenly reduced to eleven states, ranging from the Dakotas in the north to Louisiana and Texas in the south.

Putting aside the wide-angle lens with which the larger province had been studied, the sisters focused on each diocese to discern with a telephoto lens its unique needs and characteristics. All sisters participated in the Needs Study of 1970-1971 to locate pockets of poverty and underprivileged groups, to find the unchurched and the forgotten, to spot the places where the Church was understaffed and little known. Census figures and federal government statistics revealed where people fell below the meager income recognized as “the poverty level.” A questionnaire went to bishops asking what they saw as the greatest needs of the Church and the poor, and how Daughters of Charity could help them.

**Evaluation of Existing Works**

At the same time, each institution conducted a self-study to determine how effective its services were. Interviews with co-workers and clients as well as pastors and community leaders were conducted. These self-studies became the basis for evaluations of each apostolate by visiting teams, who then recommended to the Council continuance, modification, or phasing out of the works.

At two provincial meetings ending in January and May 1972, criteria for discerning which works to retain and which to discontinue, or which new works to accept, were decided upon by a majority of the sisters and given to the Council for action. The choices made at this time traced the path the province was to follow for the next decade or more. Among the most significant of these were:

To deploy within the next three years a minimum of ten per cent of sister personnel in short-term assignments among disadvantaged people;

To give primary consideration to the needs of the least fortunate when deciding to open, continue or close works;
To give preference to geographic areas where the Church is not being represented—where missionary needs are greatest;

To form a review board of advisory committees elected from the various apostolates to assist the Council in keeping abreast of developments in the apostolates.

From this time on, evaluation of works became an ongoing process. This led to such decisions as merging high schools in both New Orleans and Saint Louis; merging or closing grade schools where enrollment was too small; gradually reducing the number of sisters in schools serving middle-class parishes or where the Church was strongly established. For instance, in Perryville, Missouri, the sisters withdrew from administration of the high school and reduced the number of sisters committed to it. In Donaldsonville, Louisiana, integration and the practice of brotherhood in the school were among conditions to be met if the sisters were to remain. In New Orleans the sisters relinquished sponsorship of a psychiatric hospital and a day care center. Sponsorship of two child-care institutions was turned over to Catholic Charities, with a sister continuing to work in administration. In Austin the Home of the Holy Infancy changed its focus from child care to maternity programs, and its name to Marywood. The sisters remained under a lay board.

In Saint Louis, DePaul Hospital, Saint Vincent's psychiatric hospital and Saint Ann’s nursing home were combined into the new DePaul Health Center in Bridgeton. Marillac College was phased out, to close at the end of the 1973-1974 academic year; but the Theology for Today program, offered for sisters in active service, was retained for a few years and moved to the provincial house. DePaul School of Nursing moved to the Marillac College campus in 1973, and to Fontbonne College for its last year in 1976, when the 44-acre Marillac campus was sold to the University of Missouri.* In 1977 the 121-acre Saint Vincent Hospital farm was purchased by Saint Louis County and became Saint Vincent Park. In Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Catholic leadership was able to assume administration and fiscal responsibility for the schools.

*Proceeds from the sale of the college were allocated among the three provinces: West, West Central, and East Central.
When Mayaguez was named a see city and a former student selected as its first bishop, he chose the parish church for his cathedral and the sisters' former home above the school to be his home and chancery office.

New Missions Opened

In 1969 Seton Neighborhood Services in Kansas City, Missouri, became West Central's first new work. The help of the Ladies of Charity made Seton's program of day care and emergency assistance possible.

As responses to the survey of bishops arrived, dialogues were set up with them regarding new short-term missions (two to six years) among the disadvantaged, preferably where missionary needs were greatest. While serving, the sisters would involve and train the laity to give permanence to the work. The resulting new missions brought the Community into five new states as well as new parts of the states already served.

In the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, in the bootheel section of Missouri, Bishop Bernard Law asked for diocesan directors of social concerns and communications. These were sent in 1975, as well as others who taught at the state university, worked with the Vincentian evangelization team, served as principal for the Saint Agnes Cathedral School in Springfield and worked with refugee resettlement, even teaching English to a community of Vietnamese priests and brothers the Bishop had welcomed to his diocese. In Cape Girardeau the sisters initiated a house of vocation discernment for women, combined with parish service, transferring it to another community after three years. In West Plains where the sisters conducted a school serving five towns, others were sent who added outreach of health care and social service into the surrounding Ozarks, as well as team ministry with pastors serving six parishes around Willow Springs.

In Arkansas, only three percent Catholic, Bishop Andrew McDonald of Little Rock obtained sisters for several parishes. From 1973-1978 they worked in Fort Smith visiting, organizing, helping black Catholics become incorporated into a white parish. In Pine Bluff from 1978-1985 they initiated a Catholic Social Services outreach office called Helping Hands, and in 1984 sisters began a similar program in Little Rock called Neighbor to Neighbor. Parish
work and empowerment of the laity were carried on in all three cities.

In North Dakota sisters were asked to staff a nursing home for aging native Americans at Fort Yates. They returned in disappointment when the tribe was unable to purchase the home due to inadequate funding.

In the Rapid City Diocese of South Dakota sisters served the extensive All Saints Parish centered at Eagle Butte in the Sioux Cheyenne River Reservation, offering health and social services, teaching school in Cherry Creek, inviting children and adults to religious education classes in Dupree, Eagle Butte, White Horse, Ridgeview, Red Scaffold and Thunder Butte. From 1974-1977 sisters staffed an Office of Social Concerns in Rapid City, offering social services and training others to replace them.

In Aberdeen, South Dakota, two sisters taught nursing in a Catholic college from 1980-1985, while a third served in a nursing home.

In the Grand Island Diocese of Nebraska, three sisters served 1973-1978 in Saint Patrick's Parish in the railroad town of North Platte. Educating, visiting, developing parish organizations and leadership, integrating Hispanics and former migrant workers into parish life, they eventually worked themselves out of a job. From 1975-1982 a similar program was carried out in Scottsbluff and its two mission parishes of Gering and Minatore. The parishioners were largely farmworkers, including Hispanics. Religious education was offered at all levels and parish organizations and leadership developed. At Loup City, Nebraska, also in the Grand Island Diocese, three sisters were asked to help manage a 30-bed hospital and an 89-bed nursing home. The contract was signed in 1985.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, three sisters served from 1978-1983, initiating a Friendship House as a shelter for battered women and their children, working in prison ministry, and laying the groundwork for a possible home for retarded adults.

Southeast Oklahoma was almost 60 percent unchurched. Five priests served eight counties; there were no sisters in this part of the Tulsa Diocese, where Catholics were fewer than 1 percent. From 1974-1983 sisters served in Poteau, helping a pastor who ministered to three parishes: teaching religion classes, initiating parish programs, and preparing potential leaders. A similar service commenced in Sallisaw in 1983, while a third group of sisters served 1984-1985 at Pawhuska, also in the Tulsa Diocese, among a popula-
tion which included many native Americans of the Cherokee nation.

From old and new dioceses in Texas requests came for sisters to work among Hispanics, who make up one-fourth of the Church in the United States, but have less than one-tenth of its priests and sisters. While responding to these urgent requests, Sister Mary John Lindner, visitatrix of the province from 1974 to 1983, pointed out to the sisters the need for many to become fluent in Spanish in order to be ready to answer the calls of the Church, particularly in Texas.

In 1972 sisters were sent to Cotulla in south Texas for parish work in a disadvantaged area. Religious education programs were set up in nearby Encinal and Dilley as well as in Cotulla. From 1975 to 1978 sisters taught in Our Lady of the Valley School in El Paso, where the enrollment was largely Hispanic.

Marillac Social Center in Dallas, begun as outreach from Saint Paul Hospital to the Mexican community in West Dallas, became a separate mission in 1978. Day care, recreational activities, emergency assistance, and family counseling were among the programs offered. The range of services expanded to include elderly day care, home nursing, and supplementary services to aid families caring for older members at home.

In 1979 sisters went to work in the Brownsville Diocese of Texas, radiating out from Mercedes to offer health and social services and basic education in several nearby communities. In 1985 plans were made for sisters to work with the Vincentians in an apostolate among the poorest in Las Colonias, the barrios of the diocese.

Since 1981 the province has increased its commitment to education in Texas, with sisters teaching in Saint Philip's School, San Antonio; Saint Mary's, Odessa; Our Lady of Victory, Beeville; and Reicher Catholic High School in Waco. Sisters were sent for parish ministry to Pampa and to Alpine, from which they were able to reach out to vast areas of west Texas. In the Amarillo Diocese one sister was called to serve as diocesan superintendent of schools, another as principal, while a third initiated a teen pregnancy program for the diocese. The San Angelo Diocese asked for and obtained sisters to staff a branch office of Catholic Charities in Odessa. The three clinics operating in San Antonio have expanded to offer health care to the poor of three large sections of the city and its environs, including medical services to migrant workers, undocumented aliens, and the homeless. After seventeen years of
organization and advocacy by the sisters at El Carmen Mission in San Antonio, a potable water supply was piped into the adjacent communities of Losoya and Buena Vista.

In order to preserve the Christian uniqueness of hospitals and make health care available to the poor, mission affairs coordinators were appointed for each hospital. Christian leadership retreats were introduced, giving hospital personnel opportunities to imbibe Vincentian values.

In 1982 the Community assumed sponsorship of Holy Cross Hospital in a section of Austin, Texas, where the population is predominantly black and Hispanic. Among new programs offered in the hospital was respite care for the elderly, providing needed relief to family caretakers on a short-term basis. Saint Paul Hospital in Dallas purchased a nursing home and transformed it into Labouré Extended Care Center, the only Catholic skilled nursing facility in Dallas.

The province's concern for the health care of the poor can be measured in part by the total of charity and free care given in the seven hospitals sponsored by the province in the fiscal year ending 30 June 1985: over thirteen million dollars. Services given in DePaul Family Center and El Carmen Clinic in San Antonio are not included in this amount.

**Associates in Mission**

During the provincial assembly of 1978 the decision was made to establish a program for lay persons who wished to be associated in prayer and service with the Daughters of Charity. In 1979 an associate house was opened where women could live for a year while learning the Vincentian spirit. After evaluation this evolved into the DC-AIM program, where volunteers share community among themselves while serving with the sisters. During the program's first three years, twenty-six adults—men and women of various ages, a married couple, a single parent with her baby—each gave a year or more of voluntary service to the apostolates in which sisters of the province are involved.

The Saint Louis Province celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary 31 July 1985. As a panel of diamond jubilarians shared memories of the first years of the Saint Louis seminary, before Marillac was built, Sister Bernice Coreil, visitatrix, prepared a videotape to share
with the province the challenges of the General Assembly of 1985:
"Do the impossible in order to go to the poorest of the poor." (Pope
John Paul II) "Work for justice, respect human dignity." "Work
toward a unified life of prayer and service." Among these challenges
will be found, perhaps, the direction for the province's next decade.

Province of the West

by
Sister Mary William Vinet

The vast geographical area of the Province of the West embraces
almost two million square miles in thirteen states, including Alaska
and Hawaii. In 1969 its Catholic population numbered over six
million. However, the 243 Daughters of Charity of the province
resided in only six of the western states: California, Washington,
Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and Colorado. The twenty houses in which
they served comprised twelve schools, five social agencies, and three
hospitals. It was to this province that Sister Rose Collins—former
president of Marillac College, Saint Louis, with twenty-seven years
of community leadership and administrative experience—was sent
as first visitatrix.

Four provincial councillors and the treasurer also assumed office
on 4 January 1969: Sister Frances McCarthy, social ministry coun­
cillor (later assistant); Sister Mary Genevieve Moonier, education
councillor; Sister Teresa Piro, councillor for health care; Sister Mary
William Vinet, councillor-at-large and provincial secretary; and
Sister Emily Bourg, provincial treasurer. The director appointed by
the superior general was Father James F. McOwen, C.M.

Establishing Provincial Identity

Sister Rose's first circular letter, dated 17 January 1969, estab­
lished provincial identity:
Our new home will be called Seton Provincial House. I am happy we shall be under the patronage of a great American woman, a true Daughter of the Church.

The letter bore a Saint Louis postmark, for three visitatrixes were still involved in “the innumerable details of our ‘united division’”—so-called because West Central, East Central and West were to share the formation program at Marillac as well as the administration of the Daughters of Charity Shared Services Association and Marillac College.

“Do you know the way to San Jose?” was the theme song of the new Council members on 8 February 1969 as they traveled from Saint Louis, Los Angeles, and Daly City to San Jose to set up their first provincial headquarters in the sisters’ home of O’Connor Hospital. When in the summer of 1970 the nursing school closed, the O’Connor nurses’ residence housed the Council and the provincial offices. In July 1972 the Council moved again to a recently vacated 23-room convent in Saint Lawrence Parish, Santa Clara.

Meanwhile, a new Seton Provincial House had been under construction in Los Altos Hills on the 53-acre Mount Helen property (gift of the B. P. Oliver family in 1923). By 11 June 1973 the buildings were sufficiently completed for the Council to make a final move into the permanent Seton Provincialate. Sister Mary Louis Maranta, first sister servant, and the staff sisters arrived a week later. An open house was held 29 July 1973, but delay in the arrival of the chapel furnishings postponed the dedication until 18 August 1974. This beautiful redwood complex was provided largely through the Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation, headed by Father William G. Ward, C.M., a long-time friend of the Daughters.

During these years of growth the formation program had been steadily developing. The first postulants were received 7 September 1972 at Cathedral High School, San Francisco, where the sister servant, Sister Adelaide Kulhanek, had been appointed the first directress of formation. The seminary was officially opened at Seton Provincialate in Los Altos Hills 29 August 1973; Sister Stella Joseph Burns was installed as the first seminary directress. Four years later the postulants also moved into the provincialate.

Sister Mary Genevieve Moonier, the newly appointed councillor for formation, also served as seminary directress, a role she filled until 1984, when Sister Marjory Ann Baez was named seminary and formation directress.
Provincial directors were on the move too. By December 1977 Father McOwen had moved into his newly built home in Los Altos Hills. In May 1979, however, he left to prepare for an assignment in Burundi. On 24 June 1979 Father John J. Danagher, C.M., was installed as director.

The first priority of Sister Rose and her Council had been to establish the province on a firm spiritual foundation. Seton provided opportunities for days of recollection, weekend prayer institutes, renewals and workshops on spirituality as well as annual retreats. Community life was fostered by the Vincentian lecture series, heritage sessions, and joyful celebrations for jubilees, vow days, and sending on mission of young sisters.

In response to the new Constitutions and Statutes, an Apostolic Works Study was initiated in June 1971; twelve sisters were elected to study and evaluate the apostolates of the province. The commission submitted a comprehensive report with recommendations which highlighted the unmet needs of the poor in all dioceses of the West. This served as a guide in planning new fields of service. Another Apostolic Assessment Task Force updated this valuable research study in 1983.

New Apostolic Works

Lafayette, Colorado, was the scene of the first new apostolic work in 1970, when two Daughters commuted from Denver to teach Christian doctrine and do home visiting among Hispanic families. Catholic Community Center was established in Lafayette in 1971, and the Sister Carmen Center, providing food, clothing, and classes in English, opened in 1976.

The next two ventures were in the San Francisco Bay area, insertions of one or several Daughters of Charity into institutions administered by others. One Daughter served as principal with a lay faculty at Saint Martin School, San Jose (1971-1983); and three sisters were sent in 1973 to work with elderly residents of Alexis Apartments, San Francisco, in twin fourteen-story towers named for Sister Alexis Kuhn, who had taught in old Saint Patrick School on that site for thirty-four years.

*Sister Carmen Ptacnik pioneered in the Lafayette work.
The Council sent four sisters in 1974 to cook for the priests and novices at Saint Mary’s Seminary, Santa Barbara, affording these young Vincentians an opportunity to know Daughters of Charity. After the novitiate was moved to Perryville, Missouri, the sisters withdrew in 1979.

An urgent request from the pastor in Bisbee, Arizona, brought three sisters to Saint Patrick’s there in 1977. For the next seven years they provided pastoral ministry services, mostly to Mexican-Americans.

In 1979 two Daughters were assigned to serve the San Francisco Archdiocese for three years in the six-story residence for the elderly known as Francis of Assisi Community, built on the site of the old Mary’s Help Hospital.

Two other short-term insertions lasted four years (1980-1984): one sister working with the hearing-impaired in the Denver Archdiocese; and two sisters serving in the Knights of Malta free clinics, Los Angeles.

The 1970s witnessed the beginning of health care expansion in the province. By March 1975 the new Saint Vincent Medical Center, Los Angeles, was completed; its physicians’ office building opened in 1977. During 1981 the Daughters assumed sponsorship of two Catholic hospitals in southern California: Queen of Angels Medical Center, Los Angeles, and Saint Francis Medical Center, Lynwood.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, interprovincial aid enabled the sisters of Mary’s Help Hospital, Daly City, to continue caring for patients during the 21-day nurses’ strike in 1974. The hospital’s first medical office building was completed in 1976; the Community built a new residence for the sisters the following year. In 1980 the Half Moon Bay Community Hospital, a long-term care facility, was acquired and later dedicated as Saint Catherine Hospital on Half Moon Bay. It operated under the administration of Mary’s Help—which was renamed and rededicated as Seton Medical Center in 1983. One of the hospital’s Mission Services corporations is Seton Institute for International Development, which helps the poor of Central and South America in missions served by the Daughters of Charity.

Down the peninsula in the Santa Clara Valley, a Center for Life clinic was opened by O’Connor Hospital, San Jose, in 1976. To provide alcohol/drug dependency programs and psychiatric care, O’Connor acquired two facilities: O’Connor Hospital at Campbell (1978) and Monte Villa Hospital in Morgan Hill (1982). Despite a
seven-month nurses' strike in 1982, the new O'Connor Hospital was completed and dedicated by 1983. It includes a model day-care center serving the children of employees.

The child-care agencies of the province also moved with the times. By 1977 the three-story San Francisco landmark which housed Mount Saint Joseph Home for Girls failed to meet fire regulations and was closed. Group homes were purchased, and the administrations of the Mount program and the residential program for unwed mothers at Saint Elizabeth Infant Hospital were consolidated as Mount Saint Joseph-Saint Elizabeth.

Maryvale—the original Los Angeles orphanage relocated in suburban Rosemead—opened a day care center as early as 1969. In 1970 the agency sponsored two hundred Cuban refugee families. Five years later its doors were open to provide shelter, medical care, and education for thirty-two Vietnamese children, most of them polio victims, who were airlifted with four Vietnamese Daughters of Charity from war-torn Saigon. The new Maryvale school building was dedicated in 1978.


Enrollment in some schools of the province burgeoned in the 1980s. Preschools and kindergartens opened at Saint Rose of Lima, Ephrata; Notre Dame, Price; and Cosgriff Memorial, Salt Lake City. Saint Olaf in Bountiful acquired much-needed space when the parish church moved into a new edifice. An addition and large grant for Saint Teresa, Carson City, provided for library expansion, a tutoring section, and a computer room. In San Francisco, Our Lady of the Visitacion introduced an all-school computer program. Saint Vincent de Paul, Phoenix, initiated "Hope for the Teens," a drug prevention program; while Marian School, Montebello, began a Marian youth group. Religious education classes and programs for family life flourished at Our Lady of the Rosary of Talpa in Los Angeles.

But scarcity of vocations took its toll. In 1984 the Daughters
withdrew from the intercommunity faculty at Judge Memorial High School, Salt Lake City; and by 1985 the Council announced its decision to remove the sisters from Saint Vincent de Paul School, San Francisco, and Most Precious Blood School, Denver, within the next two years. In 1984-85 a consultative/decision-making process was set up between the Daughters of Charity at Cathedral High School and the Christian Brothers at Sacred Heart High to consider merging to form the first Catholic coeducational high school in San Francisco.

New Personnel, New Priorities

At Seton Provincialate, the first visitatrix and her councillors had served two six-year terms by 1981. Meanwhile, Sister Kathleen O'Sullivan had been appointed provincial secretary in 1973 and Sister DePaul Massoni, councillor for education in 1977. Sister Teresa Piro, former councillor for health care, was installed as second visitatrix 28 February 1981.

Sister Julia Denton, councillor general, officiated 7 June 1981 at the installation of the three new council members: Sister Adelaide Kulhanek, councillor-at-large (later assistant); Sister Marilynn Emminger, health care; and Sister Linda Ann Cahill, social ministry. Sister Rosalie Larson was appointed provincial treasurer. In 1984 Sister Louise O'Neill became councillor for education and Sister Janet Barrett, provincial secretary.

Providing a new home for the sick and elderly sisters was a priority in long-term planning. The Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation made the dream a reality during Sister Teresa's first term of office. Groundbreaking took place across from the provincialate 5 August 1983. By 18 November 1984 the new Labouré Residence was formally blessed as "a lasting witness to the Community's service of God and of the Church." The initial Labouré community consisted of eight sister patients (five of whom had been moved from Seton Infirmary, Los Angeles) and six staff sisters. Labouré became a place of active prayer and prayerful activity for the whole province.

Daughters of Charity in special apostolates often serve as a bridge by which newcomers and the disadvantaged can cross into more stable conditions of life. Their own experiences become gifts to be used in the service of others. An example of this is Sister
Philomena Shu, who visits the homebound and elderly, helps with parish activities, and serves as a Eucharistic minister in Saint Francis Parish, Chinatown, San Francisco. Like the older generation, she grew up in mainland China and speaks the language fluently. Like the young, she is an American and can understand their bicultural difficulties.

In the San Jose Diocese, Sisters Nicole Thanh and Martine Hieu work with the United States Catholic Conference Migration and Refugee Resettlement Program in Santa Clara County. Serving refugees from a dozen countries of Asia, Africa, and Europe, they process people for status verification and help with counseling, referrals, translation, and interpretation.

In Los Angeles Sister Alice Marie Quinn, reaching out from Saint Vincent’s Medical Center, has developed a senior nutrition program that is more than Meals on Wheels. Staffed largely by volunteers, the program offers a variety of nutritious meals prepared in Saint Catherine’s Kitchen from computerized menus, providing visits with the meals for the needy elderly at home, companionship for those who are able to come to the parish center for dinner. At Our Lady of Talpa, Sister Minerva Rodriguez serves the Spanish-speaking poor of several parishes, including many Latin-American refugees, with clothing and groceries from the Charity Room. Ladies of Charity and parish volunteers assist in the service and fund-raising activities. Across the city in Rosemead, Sister Elizabeth Hurley works with Hispanic mothers who sew for the poor and meanwhile enjoy informal classes at Guadalupe Center. Sister Elizabeth has also encouraged and inspired the Ladies of Charity of Los Angeles since the time of their organization in 1948—when Carrie Estelle Doheny was among the charter members.

The Saint Vincent de Paul Society in the Oakland Diocese received similar encouragement in 1985 when Sister Patricia Geoghegan was sent to work in their Free Dining Room across the San Francisco Bay in Oakland. Many Daughters have served there, preparing nourishing meals for countless poor and homeless of every race and creed. In Visalia, California, Sister Kenneth Quinn, too, feeds the hungry and also provides bargains for needy Mexican-Americans at Sister Ursula’s Kitchen and Thrift Store, named for pioneer Sister Ursula Peternel.

Years ago, at the groundbreaking for Seton Provincialate in Los Altos Hills and at the first provincial assembly, a large colorful
banner next to the podium read: "Which one in this Community accomplishes anything alone?" The symbol on the banner pictured circles or rings, each one joined to the next, presenting a strong unified chain. Such a chain is the Province of the West, of which each Daughter of Charity in the West is a link.

Collaboration Among the Five Provinces

Despite their diversity, the five provinces of the United States have manifested remarkable unity of purpose, especially where there is question of advocacy for the poor, an ethical stand, or intervention in times of disaster. Interprovincial meetings of visitatrixes, directresses of formation, and sisters in the same kinds of services have kept open avenues for concerted action.

Nowhere is this cooperation more evident—or more necessary—than in the health care field. More than forty years ago central purchasing services were developed in both provinces. With the division into five provinces in 1969, these departments and other centralized services became one cooperative service for the two provinces of Northeast and Southeast, and another triprovincial shared services for the East Central, West Central and West. In 1982 a further step toward unity was taken when a national purchasing service for all Daughters of Charity health care institutions in the United States came into being.

National Health System

But more than centralized purchasing was desirable. As early as 1978, committees were appointed in the various provinces to explore the multi-hospital-system approach to hospital management. A few years later the systems approach was tried, with the hospitals of the Northeast and Southeast forming one system, and those of East Central, West Central, and West forming another. Finally, at a January 1985 meeting of visitatrixes and health councillors in Chicago, all five provinces agreed to explore the feasibility of a national Daughters of Charity health system. A task force was named, with Sister Margaret John Kelly as chairperson. Reports were encouraging as various aspects of the formation and management of a national system were pursued.
The Daughters of Charity National Health System became a reality 18 July 1987, with Sister Irene Kraus—past president of the Catholic Hospital Association and former chairman of the Board of Trustees of the American Hospital Association—as its first president.

In the constant challenge to be cost-effective and state-of-the-art efficient without neglecting religious and ethical values and the health care needs of the poor, the five provinces have chosen to pursue a course of unity of action as harmoniously concurrent as five fingers of the hand of Providence, reaching out in strength and compassion to the most abandoned.

Seton Shrine Center, Emmitsburg

Elizabeth Ann Seton was proclaimed a saint by Pope Paul VI in Rome 14 September 1975. The canonization ceremonies were held outdoors because Saint Peter's could not hold all who had expressed the desire to be present. During the Eucharistic celebration the offertory gifts were carried by Mrs. Ann Hove and Carl Kalin, two recipients of miracles accepted in the process of her beatification and canonization,* and by six mothers general of communities descended from the little band she brought together at Emmitsburg in 1809. These communities numbered in 1975 more than ten thousand living sisters, in addition to the myriads already joined in heaven.

In Saint Joseph's Valley, where it all began, Mother Seton's remains had been enshrined beneath a marble side altar in the chapel of the provincial house. Already hundreds of pilgrims were coming each week to honor Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, praying in the chapel and in the rooms where she prayed and taught, lived and died.

Seton Shrine Center, begun by the Southeast Province as a service to the pilgrims, soon became an interprovincial house, where sisters from all five provinces and from other communities belonging to the Federation of Mother Seton's Daughters share

*Sister Gertrude Korzendorfer, D.C., recipient of the first miracle, a cure of cancer forty years earlier, had since died of an unrelated illness. Ann had been healed of leukemia at age four; Kalin's cure was of a brain tumor.
community life and the privilege of giving talks and tours to groups of pilgrims. The chapel, the Stone House, the White House, the cemetery are all places of pilgrimage, visited by an average in 1985 of three hundred a day, all coming to honor the little woman who came to Emmitsburg to teach poor children and to form Sisters of Charity. Among those who make the pilgrimage an annual event are many midshipmen from the United States Naval Academy, who celebrate Navy Day in Emmitsburg to honor their patroness, whose sons were in the Navy.

In July 1984 the 175th anniversary of Mother Seton's arrival in Emmitsburg was celebrated. Sisters from all the communities of the Federation gathered near an old conestoga wagon similar to the one that carried the Setons and the sisters down the Westminster Turnpike. It was a day of prayer, festival, and unity as sisters of the various communities and provinces enacted scenes from their mutual heritage and from their own histories, all rich in the spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul and the traditions handed down from Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton.

Beyond the mountains was a nation and a world still very much in need of Sisters of Charity: children, the aging, single parents, the sick, the afflicted, the addicted, the homeless, the hopeless—all children of God in search of their Father. Her Daughters struggling with these problems of the present could take heart from the advice written so long ago by Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton:

Look up! He is ever a witness of your struggles. Put all your trust in Him.₃

The Challenge of Tomorrow

After serving as an auditor at Vatican II, Mother Suzanne Guillemin shared her reflections with the sisters and other Catholic women:

We are at a moment when women are preparing to play a very different role in the world. It was this that struck me many times during the Council, on hearing it recalled that if women did not give their opinion on certain subjects, a certain comprehension, flexibility, and depth would be lacking... Things are not complete, nor balanced, and are good only when both [men and women] have
given their opinions, when both have agreed, as it were, in judging things.4

The Daughters of Charity in the United States have a long history of collaboration with the clergy, particularly with Vincentians, who have often served as chaplains in hospitals and institutions sponsored by the Community. In many Vincentian parishes—Brooklyn, Donaldsonville, Long Beach, Perryville, LaSalle, New Orleans, Baltimore, Emmitsburg, Greensboro, Phoenix, Montebello and Los Angeles, to name a few—sisters taught in the parish schools and shared other parish apostolates with Vincentian priests and brothers.

This close collaboration continues; but in the newer forms of collaboration between Vincentians and Daughters of Charity, the balance described by Mother Guillemin is more in evidence. Sisters serve not only as parish helpers and teachers, but also as professors, counselors, and campus ministers in Vincentian-administered seminaries and universities. One is part of the Vincentian formation program; another serves on the Mission Band. Sisters in parish ministry, particularly in rural areas of Texas and Alabama or in inner-city parishes, serve as full-fledged members of the parish team, sharing responsibility and decision-making with the parish priests. On committees and projects there is evident an equality, a shared leadership marked by respectful support that is enriching to all involved.

The sisters have need of this brotherly support as they seek ways to meet the challenge communicated to their delegates to the General Assembly in Rome 20 June 1985 by Pope John Paul II:

Sisters, do the impossible in order to go to the poorest of the Poor. There are so many of them today. In the name of the Church, I bring to your attention—what am I saying?—to the charity of God which burns in your hearts, the refugees, the unemployed, the starving, the victims of drugs and of marginalization. The more available you are to the most unfortunate, the more you will feel the need to live in your own lives that material poverty of which Saint Vincent spoke so ardently: “You have a right only to food and clothing, the rest belongs to the Poor.” (Coste, X). The whole Church needs to remember that while evangelization cannot snap its fingers at modern means, evangelizers must be seen to be disciples of the poor Christ.
Go, dear Sisters, through the entire world! *The Church counts a great deal on you.* She knows that apostolic mobility is part of your consecration. The Church, in various ways, communicates to you the richness of Christ so that you may go still further in this eminent service of the Poor. The Church also offers you the teachings of its magisterium in order to enlighten the socio-political and ethical problems so many Daughters of Charity have to face in their love of the Poor. May the Sisters use all these sources to the full.⁵