



DAUGHTERS *of* CHARITY

PROVINCE *of* ST. LOUISE

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Old St. James the Greater Parish Convent Gets New Life as Daughters of Charity Seminary

Monday, March 19, at 2 PM, the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul's new residence for initial formation (Seminary) will be blessed. It will occupy the old St. James the Greater Parish Convent on Tamm Avenue which has been vacant since 1992. The Reverend Bill Hartenbach, C.M., will officiate.

The new Seminary is a collaborative effort of two U.S. Daughters of Charity Provinces—the Province of the West headquartered in Los Altos Hills, California, and the Province of St. Louise headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. The Seminary was formerly located in Evansville, Indiana. Seminary Sisters (known as novices in some other communities), the Seminary Directress, and two other Daughters of Charity will reside at the Seminary. The Community of the Daughters of Charity is recognized by the Church as a Society of Apostolic Life.

In recent months, exterior and interior renovations have been underway. “We are so very happy the Seminary is now in St. Louis. This offers the Seminary Sisters an opportunity to take classes at Aquinas Institute, to get to know novices of other communities, and to participate in the ministries of the Daughters of Charity throughout the St. Louis Metropolitan area,” explains Sister Joanne Vasa, D.C., Provincial Councillor.

Father John Johnson, Pastor at St. James the Greater, invited Sister Nora Gatto, D.C., Provincial Councillor, to talk with parishioners on March 5 in advance of the Sisters move. "It was wonderful to meet the parishioners at Mass," Sister Nora adds; "the parish has been most welcoming to us and promises to continue praying for vocations and our Sisters residing here."

"For Daughters of Charity, Seminary is a time of reflection, prayer, and learning that takes place over a period of 18 to 22 months" adds Sister Margaret McDonnell, D.C., Seminary Directress. "For these women, who have already discerned their calling, this is a time of true formation into the identity of being a Daughter of Charity; it is an intensive formation program. The Seminary Sisters spend four days a week in study and one day in apostolic work. This work is important as they integrate their apostolic and prayer life."

More than 650 Daughters of Charity minister in the United States. Worldwide, there are 18,000 Daughters serving in 90 countries around the globe. In the St. Louis Metro area, Daughters of Charity serve persons who are poor in numerous parishes, Catholic schools, social service agencies, and health care entities.

Founded in 1633 by St. Louise de Marillac and St. Vincent de Paul, the Daughters of Charity were among the first communities of Sisters who were not cloistered. Their community was unlike any other. St. Vincent instructed them to have *"as a convent, the houses of the sick; as a cell, a rented room; as a chapel, the parish church; as a cloister, the streets of the city and the halls of the hospitals; as enclosure, obedience; as grating, the fear of God; and as a veil, holy modesty."* This was radical in the 1600s. Things are no different today. The Sisters, through their vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and their extra vow of service to the poor, continue to follow these rules and go where they are most needed.

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