

INTRODUCTION

At the request of Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, the first Bishop of New Jersey and a nephew of Elizabeth Ann Seton, the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth were founded on September 29, 1859, in Newark, New Jersey by Sister Mary Xavier Mehegan and Sister Mary Catherine Nevin, her assistant, two New York Sisters of Charity until that time.

The two founders, along with five fledgling sisters trained by the Cincinnati Sisters of Charity, began a convent, a school, an orphanage and a hospital in two houses on Bleeker Street in Newark. Needless to say, they very quickly outgrew their accommodations. On July 2, 1860, the Sisters moved their Motherhouse to Convent Station (then Madison) where it remains to this day.

During the lifetime of Mother Xavier, the community saw unprecedented growth in both numbers and ministries as the sisters established schools, hospitals, orphanages, day nurseries, a home for the incurably ill and one for working women...and took time out to care for some of the wounded during the Civil War. Eventually they ventured into higher education and into mission lands.

Beginning then and continuing until now, the sisters have reached out to the poor, the sick, the uneducated, the lonely, the aged, the abandoned, the immigrant, the dying... wherever they saw- or see- those in need, at home or in foreign lands.