

History is made at St. James, Basking Ridge

St. James, Basking Ridge joyfully announces the opening of a convent for the Sisters of Christian Charity now serving in the parish. On October 26, 2021, Mass was celebrated by Msgr. Sylvester Cronin, pastor and concelebrated by Fr. Greg Zannetti, parochial vicar, and Msgr. William Fadrowski, retired priest from the Newark Archdiocese. At the conclusion of Holy Mass, the Blessed Sacrament was placed in the tabernacle for the first time in the newly renovated convent.

Msgr. Cronin mentioned in his homily that when the sisters were invited to St. James in 2015, the then provincial superior, Sr. Mary Edward Spohrer, said that there were no sisters available, and that we had to pray and get out of the way and let the Holy Spirit work, which we did. This night is an answer to our prayers.

Having religious sisters living on our campus is historic also, Msgr. Cronin said. "The last time religious women lived on the property of St. James, Basking Ridge was in the year 2000. The Felician Sisters of Lodi, NJ were in ministry here from 1964 - June 2000."

The Sisters of Christian Charity have been in ministry at St. James since 2016. There are six sisters on staff with four of them living in the newly renovated convent.

Sr. Joann Marie Aumand, Provincial Superior and Sister Esther Falzone, a member of the provincial council attended the Mass. Following Holy Mass, the resident sisters prepared a delicious meal for all.



L-R: Sister Elena Pierce, 1st Grade teacher at SJS; Sister Marie Luu, PCL grades 1-5; Sister Faustina Nguyen, pastoral associate; Sister Esther Falzone, provincial councilor and part time office staff at St. James; Sister Annelyth Pandi, local leader and PCL grades 6-8; Sister Joann Marie Aumand, Provincial Superior.



The biography of their founder and beginning of the congregation according to the Sisters of Christian Charity website <https://scccast.org/> is as follows.

Pauline von Mallinckrodt was born on June 3, 1817 in Minden, Germany. Her father, Detmar, was of the Lutheran faith and held positions in the German government. Her mother, Bernardine, was Catholic and proved to be a loving wife and mother. Pauline's parents provided an excellent education for their four children and afforded them wonderful traveling experiences throughout Europe.

Pauline's love for the poor and those in need began at an early age. Picking up pieces of broken glass from the streets so that poor children without shoes would not cut their feet and sharing her allowance with the poor and needy were signs that this child born into an aristocratic family would not allow social status, prestige, power and wealth to deter her from serving Christ in each person, and easing the lot of those less fortunate. Grief entered the hearts of the Mallinckrodt family when Pauline's mother died in 1834. Pauline was just 17 years of age and now had the responsibility for her two younger brothers, George and Hermann, and her sister Bertha.

Also, she cared for the household and servants, and accompanied her father to social gatherings and on his travels. Pauline's unbounded love for the poor and her interminable energy on their behalf had as its source a deep and intimate union with Jesus in the Eucharist. At a time when daily reception of the Eucharist was not the norm Pauline sought and received permission for daily Holy Communion.

In the future, when discerning whether or not to take a mission, Pauline always had as a prerequisite that the Eucharist be reserved in the convent chapel, and that the Sisters attended Holy Mass daily. For Pauline the Eucharist was the center of her life and from there flowed her enduring love for others.

The Industrial Revolution of the 1800s had a monumental effect on the lives of the poor as their poverty intensified and the number of indigents expanded to those who once were self-sufficient.

Pauline and other women responded to Christ's call to alleviate the conditions of the poor in Aix-la-Chapelle. It was here that Pauline cared for the sick and the dying. Upon

moving to Paderborn, Pauline continued working for the poor, and also turned her attention to the needy children ages 2-6 who had no one to care for them during the day.

The formation of a kindergarten in 1840 was Pauline's unique idea to provide safekeeping and a nurturing environment for neglected children. Pauline's work with



the blind began in 1842 and their care proved to be the central reason for the founding of the Congregation.

On August 21, 1849. Pauline and three other women joined together as the first Sisters of Christian Charity. After their novitiate they pronounced their Holy Vows on November 4, 1850 in the Busdorf Church in Paderborn. Within the next twenty years their field of activities flourished in various towns of Germany. By 1871 the congregation numbered 244 Sisters and labored in more than 19 missions.

During Otto von Bismarck's rise to power the Kulturkampf began to rage throughout Germany, causing many crushing events for the young community. Religious property was seized and one school after another was closed by the government. The work started by Pauline and her Sisters was being obliterated. The motherhouse was moved to Belgium. Pauline's words to her Sisters at this time were, "The Lord gives and takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

At the same time requests from North and South America for Sisters to teach the German immigrant children came pouring in. Pauline responded by sending a small group of Sisters to New Orleans, LA in 1873. Within a few months Pauline sent more Sisters to the United States, and she herself made two extensive trips to the New World so as to witness firsthand the needs of the people in both North and South America. Within a short time after a provincial motherhouse and novitiate were established in Wilkes Barre, PA, the German community of the Sisters of Christian Charity was thriving in the United States.

By the end of the 1870s the religious persecution in Germany had ended and the exiled Sisters in Belgium were able to return to their homeland and continue their work. The community had grown in number and in missions during the time of oppression. There were 9 establishments in Europe, 27 in the US, and 8 in Chile. Mother Pauline returned to Paderborn after her trip to North and South America in 1880. Within a few short months, to the great sorrow of the Sisters, Pauline became ill with pneumonia and died on April 30, 1881.

Beatified by Pope John Paul II in Rome on April 14, 1985, she is now addressed as Blessed Pauline.

Blessed Pauline's legacy of love continued on after her death. Here in the United States in 1915 the thriving community moved its motherhouse from Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, to Wilmette, Illinois, and in 1927 established a second province, with a motherhouse and novitiate in Mendham, N.J. This new Eastern province had as its



primary work that of Catholic education. During the 1950s and 1960s the Sisters added to the field of labor the care of the sick by establishing two hospitals in Pennsylvania.

Today the community in the Eastern province is present in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and New Orleans. As the times and needs of the Church change, so does the Sisters' fields of labor expand to meet those needs. Their works include not only education and healthcare, but also social work of various kinds. The Congregation is now present in four continents – North and South America, Europe and Asia. In Pauline's words, "It is a great grace that God should permit us to assist in the spread of his Kingdom."

The work of Blessed Pauline is being carried out not only by her Sisters but also by her Companions of Pauline. These women and men embrace her vision and live in her spirit of prayer and loving, joyful service to others. They strive to deepen their living of Gospel values while remaining in their present life style. The Sisters and Companions of Pauline are spiritually united in fostering the Kingdom of God and being transformed into His image and likeness. Pauline's life has been a beacon of light for many.

The Sisters of Christian Charity invite any woman who may be discerning a call to Consecrated Religious Life to contact them

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScEmFow5IDC1UAGPqenp7rPhJswBLqN1RhaJprQaihZgFxohQ/viewform>