

Patterns of Life 1650

Through the “patterns” of their lives, the Soeurs de Saint Joseph, founded in 1650 in LePuy, France, by Fr. Jean-Pierre Médaille, SJ, gave birth to a spiritual tradition and a variety of works that would span more than three and a half centuries. Their vision would give their descendants a firm commitment to the values of excellence, right relationships, justice, service to the “dear neighbor”, gentleness, peace and joy.



Most importantly, Mother St. John Fontbonne, post-French Revolution foundress, and those who followed her in leadership instilled in the Sisters an understanding that the work of God would not be diminished by their individual inadequacies, fears, or lack of resources. Rather, their willingness to let God fill their empty spaces urged them to keep their eyes open, their ears attentive, and their spirits alert to the signs of the times. God would take care of the rest!

The Sisters left St. Louis on April 20th, 1870
and arrived in Arizona on May 26th, 1870.

Trek of the Seven Sisters

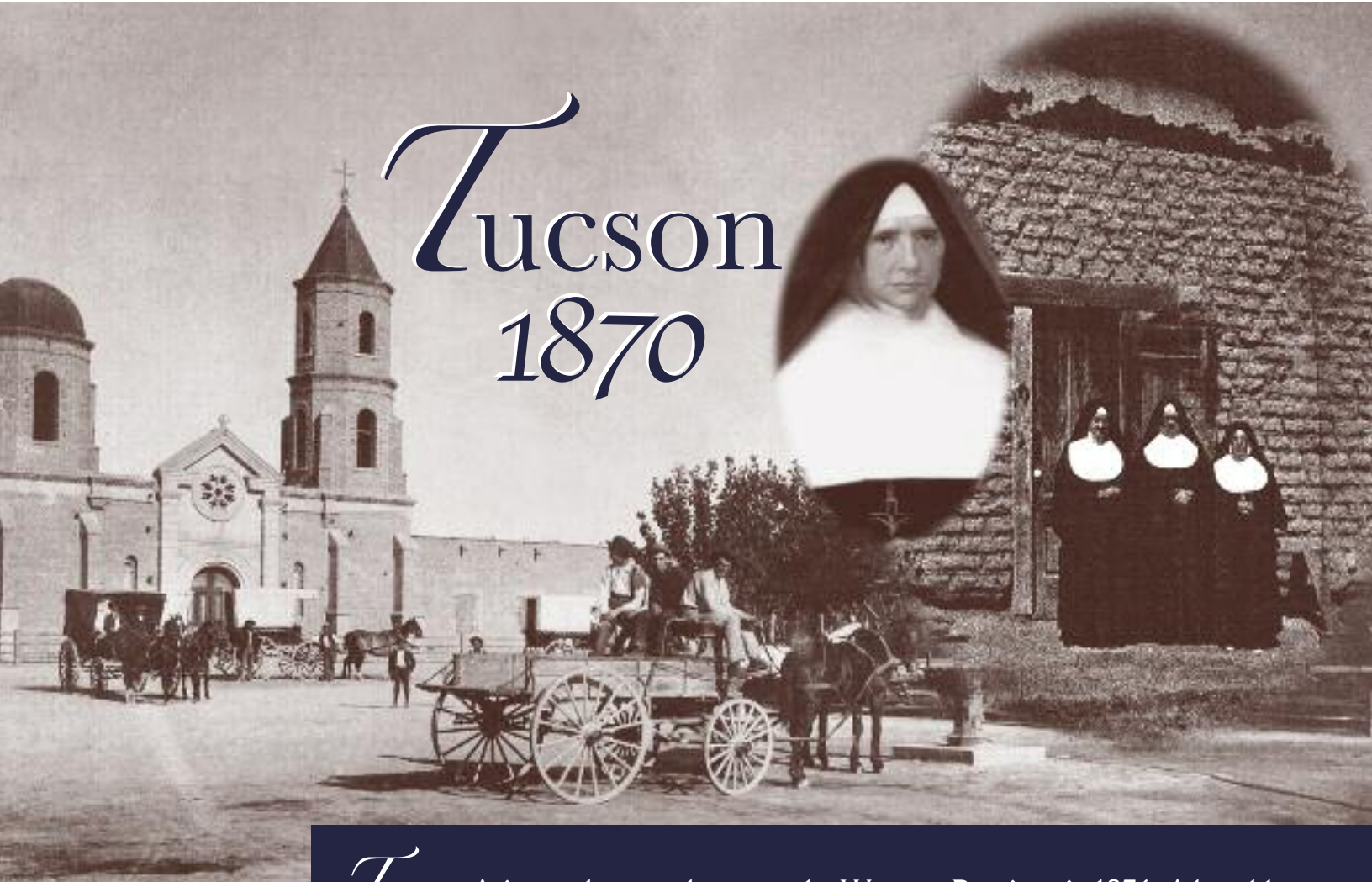
The original Sisters left France to establish themselves in St. Louis, Missouri, in an area called Carondelet. Once established, the Sisters began to move westward. Our arrival in the West found Sisters of St. Joseph traveling by train from St. Louis to San Francisco, by steamer from San Francisco to San Diego, and by covered wagon from San Diego to Tucson.

In remote areas of the West, they taught the young, helped the poor, nursed the sick, and buried the dead. Their presence and mission served the needs of the “dear neighbor,” and brought all closer to God. They assumed every kind of work in those early days, giving new meaning to the founder’s vision



“...to take up every good work of which woman is capable.”

Tucson 1870

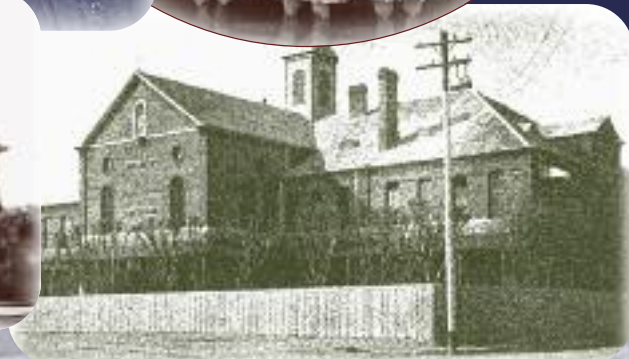


Tucson, Arizona, became home to the Western Province in 1876. A humble one story adobe sun-baked brick house became the first provincialate and novitiate. Its new name, "Mount St. Joseph" dignified this first dwelling. As the Sisters worked side by side with others who felt called to the same spirit of service, they stretched the "threads" of interdependence and improved the status of women and children. They focused their ministries on empowering others to personal dignity and independence.



New Apostolate

Not long after the 1876 foundation, the Sisters accepted an invitation to begin a new apostolate, the education of native tribes in the Southwest. Schools for children of the Papago and Pima tribes at San Xavier del Bac Mission were followed in quick succession by Fort Yuma Government School on the California bank of the Colorado, St. Anthony's in San Diego, St. Boniface in Banning and St. John's in Komatke, Arizona.



1880



Founding Spirit



While Arizona was, in itself, a fruitful location for mission and ministry expansion, vocations to the Congregation were few. In 1890, the decision was made to temporarily close the provincialate and novitiate in Tucson, a decision that now placed all the houses in Arizona and California under the St. Louis, Missouri, Province.



1890

New Opportunities

Our French roots set the stage for further expansion of missions here in the United States. Mother St. John Fontbonne established houses in France for the protection and education of orphans of the French Revolution. In that same spirit, our Sisters responded to the needs of this new time as they built or staffed orphanages, homes for the deaf, schools, academies and hospitals—in villages, small towns and cities throughout Arizona and California.

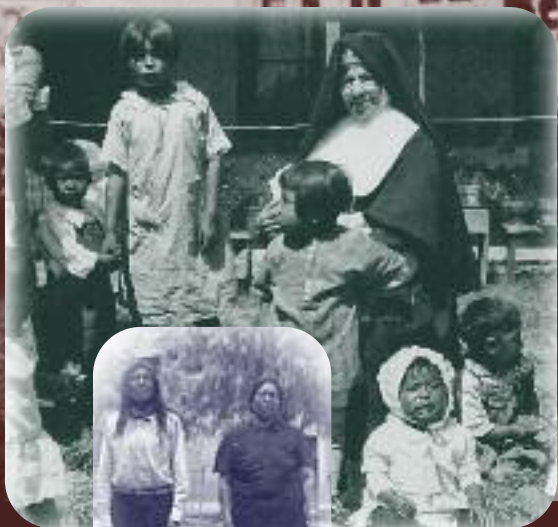


By 1900, new opportunities presented themselves. Already established in Los Angeles, California, the Congregation re-opened the Western Province Provincialate at St. Mary's Academy on Grand Street.

1900

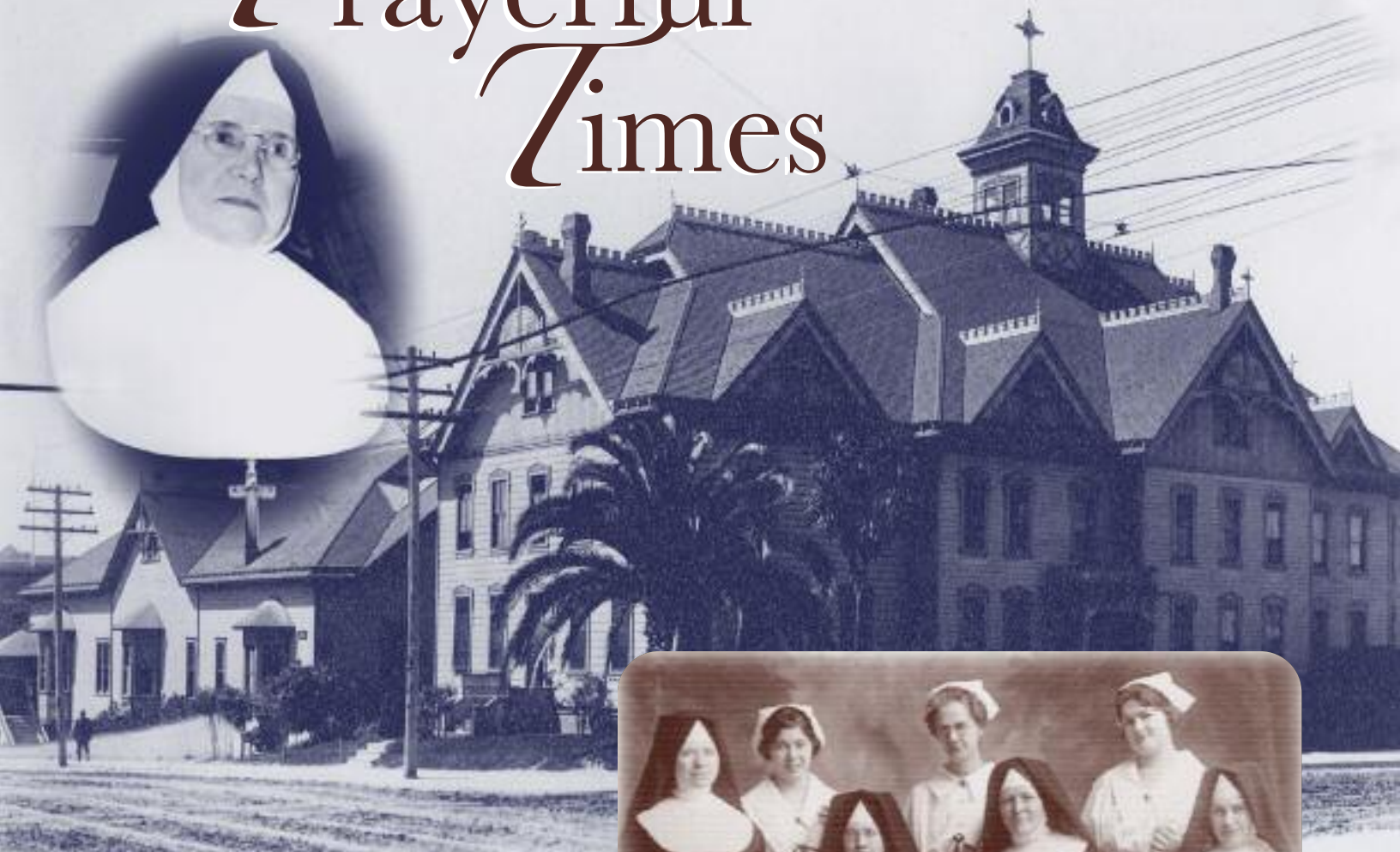
Expanding Population

At the turn of the Century, an era in the nation's history closed. The frontier turned back on itself with western migration—California was as far West as people could go. This expanding population, with its numbers of Catholics, different nationalities and immigrants changed the face of the Church in California and, likewise, the opportunities for ministry by the Sisters.



1910

Prayerful Times



The 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic took the lives of many as it raced across the face of the nation. A small group of Sisters of St. Joseph in Idaho lost many Sisters during the epidemic. After prayerful thought, and the support of their bishop, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Idaho sought affiliation with the Carondelet Congregation. In 1925, the Sisters were formally received and welcomed as part of the Los Angeles Province. The coming together of the two groups expanded the vistas of administration to schools and hospitals in Idaho.

1920

Mount Saint Mary's College was founded in this decade. Mother Margaret Mary Brady, Provincial Superior, had earnestly recommended this project. The importance of a college for the future growth of the Los Angeles Province in such a rapidly growing area could not be emphasized enough.



New Adventure



In 1938, the Sisters of St. Joseph accepted the invitation of the Bishop of Honolulu to come to the island of Oahu. December 7, 1941, was a memorable day as the Sisters experienced the horrors of war at dangerously close range. While carrying out their "detail" of teaching religion to the children of the personnel of Schofield Barracks, Pearl Harbor was attacked.



For five years, the islands knew martial law. The Sisters adapted their lives to a regime of wartime restrictions. Their homes became second homes for many servicemen who, in turn, aided the Sisters in countless ways. Gradually, the work of the Sisters extended to other parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous catechetical centers on the islands.

1930

War Time



During World War II, California became increasingly important as an economic indicator for the country. Following the war, California grew faster than almost any other state. Its growth led to heavy migration. Thousands of war babies reached school age at the same time, creating difficulty in providing adequate schools and educators. Parishes and communities of women religious expanded and improved existing institutions in an effort to provide for increased enrollment. Sisters were continually asked to staff the schools.

1940



Expansion

On August 14, 1956, four Sisters of St. Joseph accepted an invitation from the Maryknoll Fathers in Kyoto to minister to the people of Japan. They served in education, from nursery schools to high schools and on to university level.

Elementary schools and the teaching ministry flourished within the Los Angeles Province as new parishes were established and ministry needs grew. Expansion flowed from the northern bay area down through the central and San Fernando Valleys. Further down the coast, south into Arizona and north to Washington and Idaho, mission after mission opened in quick succession.



1950

Constant Progress

Mount St. Mary's College, other high schools and hospital expansions were record-breaking. Perhaps the most significant accomplishment was the creation of St. Mary's House of Studies—later to become the Province Center and novitiate.



The sixties found religious communities accepting missionary work in Latin America. Nine Sisters went to Peru to work in education in Ica, Chimbote and Arequipa. Instinctively drawn to the poorest in cities and mountain areas—the “dear neighbors” in Peru—Sisters established ministries to provide basic human needs for the people.



1960

A Clear Clarion Call



In response to the call of the Second Vatican Council, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph initiated a program of spiritual renewal. Included in that renewal was an intensive re-study of the gospels interwoven with the spirit and vision of Jean Pierre Medaille, SJ, the Congregation's founder. At the same time, the Sisters undertook an appraisal of the needs of late twentieth-century society. Expansion of ministries designed to respond to contemporary and diverse cultures and situations was an outgrowth of the renewal. The lives and community living of Sisters changed with the times.

1970

A World in Need

In many ways, our life's commitment and the works we embrace are directly connected to decisions made at our General Chapters—special times of election of leadership and direction setting for continued calls to ministry. Challenged to live right relationships with God, our “dear neighbors” and Earth, we evaluate the needs perceived in every era. “The Gospel calls us to embrace a fidelity to right relationships... this embrace is not a specialized ministry, but is an emphasis which permeates our life and work.”

(Acts of General Chapter)

In light of this commitment, the needs of our world and our present CSJ reality challenge us to turn beyond ourselves to serve a WORLD IN NEED. In a spirit of hope, we say yes to this challenge.



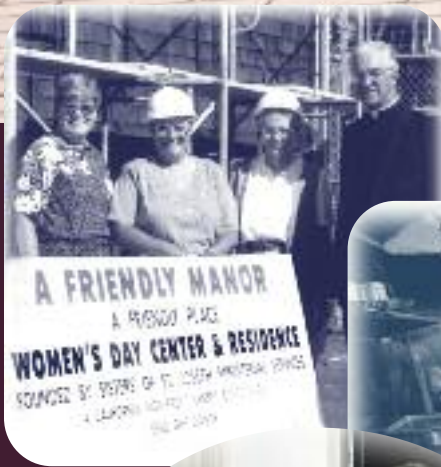
Expressing a desire for North American religious to serve the people of Chile, the Bishop had only one request: “Live among my people, get to know them and love them. Be a sign of hope.” On December 1987 four Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet arrived in Talca, Chile, to begin our first mission.”



1980



Collaborating



All Congregations of religious focus on a particular gift of their Institute, often called the “grace of the Holy Spirit.” This CHARISM attracts and inspires women and men, with and without vowed commitments. Shared Charism energizes and challenges all to act justly in the world, to embody the “oneness” and integrity critical to people everywhere.

Shared Charism invites us to collaborate with others. In each era, in every circumstance, new gifts of the Charism are identified and embraced for the life of the world.

1990



New Millennium



2000



The needs of this new millennium are, in reality...not unlike the years that mark the journey of Sisters from Carondelet to the west. Situations evolve and call for new responses. These are challenges that we willingly take on. In the words of Jean Pierre Medaille SJ, with great generosity and love we strive to meet all the human needs, "of which women are capable." All-inclusive love never fades... it renews itself in every age, and demands the best we have to offer our world and the People of God.



A New Harvest

✿ They had learned
The total emptying of self
To be filled with God,
These black-robed women
Who carried their baskets to the poor,
Bathed the sick,
Gently tended the wounded,
And lovingly gathered together
The orphans in their outstretched arms.

Uncommon women for an uncommon time,
They were not formed by formal rules
To be the congregation
Of the great love of God.

The world still needs their kind of loving.
With a new harvest
The chaff is scattered by the wind.

Through different pathways
Women will come
With new voices taking up the singing.
They will come and listen
To the unspoken,
Walk in strange places,
And dream strong dreams.

Sister Alberta Cammack, CSJ