

## Further Growth

In 1872, due to the increase of Sisters, the Motherhouse in Reading was transferred to West Chester.



There it remained until 1966 when the present Motherhouse, Villa Maria House of Studies, was built at Immaculata, PA.

Today, the Immaculata IHM's minister in dioceses on the East coast of the United States and in Peru, South America. Our corporate apostolate of Catholic education takes on many forms to include:

- ♥ Catholic School Ministry
- ♥ DRE/CRE Ministries
- ♥ Pastoral Ministry
- ♥ Hospital and Prison Ministry
- ♥ Counseling
- ♥ Literacy Instruction
- ♥ Adult Education
- ♥ Retreat Work
- ♥ Campus Ministry
- ♥ Nursing and more



*Love*  
*Creative*  
*Hope*  
*Fidelity*



History of the Sisters,  
Servants of the  
Immaculate Heart  
of Mary



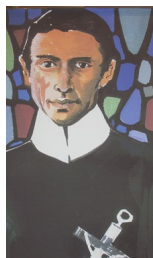
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## Origins



The origins of the Congregation can be traced back to a log cabin in Monroe, Michigan.

It was there that Reverend Louis Florent Gillet, a Redemptorist missionary, saw the dire necessity for schools.



Having searched in vain for religious to teach his people he decided, "If I cannot find a religious community, I shall organize one"!



Father Gillet invited Mother Theresa Maxis Duchemin and Sister Ann Constance Schaaf, who belonged to the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore, Maryland, to begin a community based on the spirit of St. Alphonsus

Liguori and to prepare and educate children for the reception of the Sacraments.

On the morning of November 10, 1845, the two Sisters and Miss Therese Renauld attended Mass celebrated by Father Gillet and prayed for God's grace. Thus began the humble beginnings of this new community known at the time as the Sisters of Providence.

## Early Days

The two Sisters and the "first postulant" lived in a two-room log cabin along the Raisin River. On November 30<sup>th</sup>, Father Gillet gave the holy habit and a religious name to each.

- ♥ Mother Mary Theresa Maxis
- ♥ Sister Mary Ann Schaaf
- ♥ Sister Mary Celestine Renauld

In the spring of 1846, five months after its foundation, a fourth member, Josette Godfroy-Smyth, was received and given the name, Sister Mary Alphonsine.

A Young Ladies Academy opened in January of 1846 with forty students and four boarders.

In December of 1847, the name of the congregation was changed, at the request of the Sisters, to the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The special virtues of the Congregation,

- ♥ Humility
- ♥ Simplicity
- ♥ Self-abnegation
- ♥ Devoted Charity

express the original spirit, the legacy of St. Alphonsus, through our co-founders, Father Gillet and Mother Theresa, and passed on by our first Sisters.



*"Who can measure all that is yet to be done?"*  
Father Gillet

## Growth

Slow yet steady growth characterized the first decade of the IHM Community.

- ♥ Eight Sisters entered from 1849-1855
- ♥ In 1858, five Sisters were sent to Susquehanna to open the first Pennsylvania mission
- ♥ Soon another invitation arrived from Redemptorist bishop, Bishop John Neumann to open a mission in Reading, PA, home of the first IHM Motherhouse

This move of Sisters to Reading, which reduced the number of Sisters in the Detroit diocese, led to a serious conflict between the bishop and Mother Theresa. Bishop Lefevere banished Mother Theresa to Pennsylvania. Despite this painful separation, in God's Providence, two branches of the IHM Sisters, Monroe and Philadelphia, evolved, grew, flourished, and developed their individual spirit, charism, and gifts.

In 1871, Bishop O'Hara of the Scranton diocese, with the consent of Bishop Wood of Philadelphia and Mother Gonzaga, General Superior of the Philadelphia IHM's, formed a separate foundation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the diocese of Scranton.

By the 1890's, the three branches of the IHM Sisters were flourishing in Monroe, Philadelphia, and Scranton.