

## **Dominican Sisters, St. Mary of the Springs**

2320 Airport Drive  
Columbus, OH 43219  
(614) 416-1900

### **Facts at a Glance**

**Founded** February 1830 (Somerset, Ohio)  
July 1868 (relocated to Columbus, Ohio)

**Leadership Team**  
2002-2008 Sr. Anne Kilbride, OP, Prioress  
Sr. Anne Keenan, OP, Vicarress  
Sr. Patricia Twohill, OP  
Sr. Helena Sause, OP  
Sr. Jacqueline Baum, OP, Secretary General

**Membership** Vowed members: 252, including two temporary professed (one novice in addition)  
Associates: 160 (with Associate Groups in Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin)

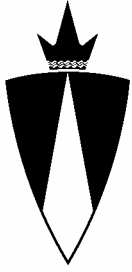
**Ministry Locations**  
(Archdioceses/Dioceses)

Baltimore, MD	Las Cruces, NM
Brooklyn, NY	New Orleans, LA
Chimbote (Peru)	New York, NY
Cincinnati, OH	Pittsburgh, PA
Columbus, OH	Rome (Italy)
Denver, CO	San Pedro Sula (Honduras)
Detroit, MI	Santa Fe, NM
Ft. Wayne/S. Bend, IN	Seattle, WA
Gary, IN	St. Petersburg, FL
Green Bay, WI	Wheeling/Charleston, WV
Hartford, CT	

**Supported Ministries** Dominican Acres/Shepherd's Corner (Blacklick, OH)  
Dominican Learning Center (Columbus, OH)  
Martin de Porres Center (Columbus, OH)  
Springs Learning Center (New Haven, CT)

**Other Founded Institutions** Albertus Magnus College (New Haven, CT)  
Dominican Academy (New York, NY)  
Mohun Health Care Center (Columbus, OH)  
Ohio Dominican University (Columbus, OH)

**Order of Preachers** St. Mary of the Springs is a congregation of vowed Dominican Sisters who are part of the worldwide Order of Preachers. Their patron Saint Dominic de Guzman founded the order in 1215 for the purpose of preaching the Holy Gospel of Christ Jesus to the world. Today Dominicans embrace this "charism of preaching" in new and different ways, seeing their ministries and their very lives as forms of preaching. Throughout the US and abroad, the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs preach the Gospel through many ministries, including education, administration, parish ministry, health care, community outreach, social work, the arts, and more. St. Mary of the Springs is one of 27 congregations of apostolic Dominican Sisters in the United States.



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## Mission Statement

We, the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs, are a community of religious women who dedicate our diverse gifts and energies to the needs of God's people. With pioneer American roots in the Dominican Order, we share the fruits of our prayer and contemplation in the service of preaching the Gospel. We collaborate with others and use resources of contemporary culture to further the Church's mission. In a spirit of joyful hope, we strive for the fulfillment of God's reign of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace.

## A Brief History of St. Mary of the Springs

On February 5, 1830, four Sisters from St. Magdalen's, Kentucky, arrived in Somerset, Ohio at the invitation of Bishop Fenwick to begin a foundation where the Dominican friars had been laboring for over 20 years. The Sisters opened St. Mary's Academy there, and in 1832 enlarged the accommodations to take boarders, as well as day students. With only four Sisters and two novices to teach and do all the domestic work, the community struggled in pioneer Ohio. The school continued to grow, and in 1833, Mother Angela Sansbury and Sister Ann Hill arrived from Kentucky to help.

Beginning in 1851, the Dominican Provincials invited Sisters to begin new Dominican foundations. Within a ten-year period, Sisters went from St. Mary's to help found and enable many schools and congregations throughout the United States, including San Rafael congregation (California), St. Agnes (Memphis), Father Mazzuchelli's community (which became the Dominican Sisters in Sinsinawa, Wisconsin), St. Columba's in Zanesville, Ohio (later renamed St. Thomas), and St. Cecilia's (Nashville).

On June 6, 1866, a disastrous fire destroyed St. Mary's in Somerset. The friars of St. Joseph's took the Sisters in for two years, while Theodore Leonard of Columbus supervised the building of a new convent and academy in East Columbus. The Sisters had accepted his gift of 33 acres, the bricks needed for the large three-story building, and his supervision of the construction. In July 1868, the community moved to St. Mary's of the Springs (the phrase "of the Springs" being added because of the many clear bubbling springs on the property) in the newly created diocese of Columbus, where it remains to this day.

In 1870, Bishop Rosecrans sent some of the Sisters to St. Francis, Newark, OH, and other parochial schools in other towns of Ohio followed. At the request of the Dominican friars, the Sisters went to staff St. Vincent Ferrer in New York City in 1888. Meanwhile, the community lost two of its members when Mother Rose Lynch and Sr. Mary Agnes Magevney, with the blessing of the bishop, left in 1873 to found Sacred Heart Academy in the city of Columbus. The community they formed at Sacred Heart was the nucleus of what would later become the Dominican congregation of the Sacred Heart of Houston, Texas.

When Sister Vincentia Erskine was elected prioress in 1889, she initiated the process by which St. Mary's received the status of a pontifical institute in 1903. She led a remarkable growth of membership and expansion of schools to the archdioceses of New York and Hartford and to the diocese of Pittsburgh. The newly approved constitutions continued to embrace teaching as the primary way of preaching the Word. In 1924, under the leadership of Mother Stephanie Mohun, the congregation opened St. Mary of the Springs College (now Ohio Dominican University) on the motherhouse property, and a year later, Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, CT. The community, deeply in debt from the new college buildings, escaped foreclosure on its property during the Depression only through the intervention of the bishop, and remained in financial straits for decades.

In 1935, at the request of the Dominican friars, five Sisters went to Kienning-Fu, Fukien, China, where they remained on mission during the Sino-Japanese War and World War II, until they were forced out by the Communists in 1949. Mother Stephanie also accepted missions in Amarillo, TX, and in Santa Fe, Abiquiu, and Dixon, NM. When Archbishop John T. McNicholas, OP, of Cincinnati asked Mother Stephanie Mohun to open a small convalescent hospital in that city, the congregation in 1944 embraced a new type of ministry. Named the St. George, this hospital merged with St. Francis Hospital in 1974 to build a large new facility called St. Francis-St. George Hospital. In 1965, in response to the Pope's request for religious congregations in North America to send some of their members to Third World countries, Mother Francis de Sales sent Sisters to Chimbote, Peru. As still-active older Sisters left the classroom, the congregation in 1969 took over the management contract for a new HUD-subsidized housing facility sponsored by five inner-city parishes in Columbus: Nazareth Towers was the first such HUD facility in the country.

The membership of the congregation peaked in 1967 with 735 Sisters in mission houses across the US, in Puerto Rico, and in Peru. A new high-rise motherhouse, built as a house of studies for a hundred Sisters still in temporary profession, was dedicated in the spring of 1971. After Vatican II, the congregation was a part of the larger sociological shift that saw an increased number of members asking to be dispensed from their vows and a decrease in the number of women entering the congregation. This affected many of the congregation's corporate commitments. Since the mid-70's, many Sisters have engaged in various ministries other than teaching and school administration, including parish and diocesan religious education, social work, missionary activity, counseling/therapy, retreat work and spiritual direction, pastoral ministry, campus ministry, family ministry and ministry to the elderly, EMR and health care. At present, the congregation officially sponsors the two colleges and Dominican Academy, as well as their nursing home, Mohun Health Care Center. Other congregational works are two literacy centers (Dominican Learning Center – Columbus, Springs Learning Center – New Haven), an outreach center (Martin de Porres Center – Columbus) and an ecology-spirituality project (Shepherds Corner – Blacklick, OH).