

About the Brothers

The Franciscan Missionary Brothers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus have a long tradition of caring for others. Their roots and the age-old tradition of care-giving that is at their foundation can be traced 800 years into the past.

It all began back in 12th Century Assisi with the birth of Francis Bernadone. The son of a wealthy merchant, he originally planned to follow in his father's footsteps. However, when he was 20 years old, he engaged in the military campaigns of those days. In 1201, he was taken hostage and lived in captivity for a year and became severely ill.

While he continued in military campaigns until 1205, Francis had turned his mind to religion. He had a dream in which God called Francis to His service, and he began to care for the sick. Francis was joined in his efforts by companions who became known as Franciscans and, two years later, approval for the Brotherhood was given by Pope Innocent III. Thousands were drawn to his sincerity, piety, and joy. And, hence, there was the beginning of what we know today as our 800-year-old tradition of caring for those in need.



The modern-day Franciscan Missionary Brothers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus had their beginnings in this tradition when, in 1888, their order was founded in Poland. In 1922, two of the Brothers visited the United States and, in 1927, the Franciscan Missionary Brothers were officially welcomed into the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

That same year, we acquired the St. Joseph's Hill property outside Eureka, restored the buildings that had been abandoned 15 years earlier, and began accepting residents who needed continual nursing care. St. Joseph's Hill soon was operating beyond its capacity and, with public support, a new building was constructed and dedicated in 1948 by Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter of St. Louis.

Some 30 years later, a second facility -- Price Memorial -- was built on a gently sloping hill in Eureka. This new nursing home was dedicated in September 1981 by Archbishop John L. May.

Today's Franciscan Missionary Brothers are steeped in proud and solemn traditions of the past. Their apostolic endeavors range from supporting the needs of nursing home residents, to those afflicted with HIV and other disenfranchised people--as well as as

their work in maintaining and operating the Black Madonna Shrine and grottos, which welcome thousands of visitors each year.

Such endeavors have deep roots that can be traced back through the ages -- and through a long tradition of dedication and compassion.

Additional information on Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Missionary Brothers appears on this website in the sections entitled "[Road to Brotherhood](#)" and "[Diamond Jubilee](#)."