

History of the Society of Mary

The Society of Mary (Marianists), an international Catholic religious order of brothers and priests, was founded in 1817 in France by Blessed William Joseph Chaminade. The Society of Mary, together with a religious order of women, the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, and numerous affiliated lay groups, form the Marianist Family.

The Marianists first settled in the United States in 1849 in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. In 1908, this American Province was divided into two: the Province of Cincinnati and the Province of St. Louis. The Cincinnati Province was divided in 1948 to form the Pacific Province and again divided in 1961 to form the New York Province. On July 1, 2002, the four Provinces united as the Province of the United States, headquartered in St. Louis.

There are more than 300 professed members serving in the Province of the United States, which includes communities and ministries in India, Ireland and Mexico. Province ministries include sponsored universities, high schools, middle schools and primary schools; parishes, retreat centers, and programs of spiritual formation; works of social justice and environmental integrity; service to the Marianist Family, formation, administration and art.

In 1898, the Marianists opened their first school in the St. Louis Archdiocese. The school was Sts. Peter and Paul. Today, the Marianists sponsor three high schools: Chaminade College Preparatory, St. John Vianney High School and St. Mary's High School. The Marianists have one retreat center, the Marianist Retreat & Conference Center, Eureka, Mo, and one parish, Our Lady of the Pillar.