

## Sr. Mary Pierre O'Regan O.S.F.

Eileen O'Regan was born on 19th March, 1902, in Liskennett, Granagh. She had one sister Kitty and seven brothers - Michael, Jimmy, Tom, Steven, Richard, Joe & Billy.



In 1920, at the age of 18, she left Ireland for America, as she recalled “to accomplish things for God in the mission fields.”

She was drawn to the Franciscan Sisters of Philadelphia because among their various apostolates, was the care and education of the American Indians.

Upon entering the religious life as a member of the Third Order of St Francis, she was sent to a novitiate located at St. Josephs' Academy, Pendleton, Oregon.

This was located in close proximity to the St. Andrew Indian Reservation.



Her initial introduction to the health care field occurred when an acute shortage of personnel arose and all the novices were assigned to St. Anthony's Hospital.

Her Community members were impressed with her performance in the hospital and decided that they wanted her to go to nursing school

As Sr. Pierre explained, “ in those days the Community was a lot like the Army, you went where they told you !”

The class began training to be nurses and three years later they graduated.

Sr. Pierre and one other nun were the only English speaking people in the German hospital and despite the language difficulty, she took and passed the Oregon State board exams and became a registered Nurse.

1919 St. Josephs Hospital,  
Nth Caroline St., Baltimore.



So completely did she become a “hospital nun ”, that she worked her way from student nurse in a small Midwest hospital to become Administrator of St. Josephs’ Hospital, Baltimore, (250 bed facility), in 1939. Slowly she and the staff began building other hospital services adding a pathology lab, a general lab and a night clinic for children.

The New,  
St. Josephs.



In 1947 Sr. Pierre was missioned to Trenton, New Jersey to plan and oversee the building of St. Francis Hospital, where she spent nine years. She said it was hard to leave St. Josephs because they had done so much and she felt such a part of it.

St. Francis, Trenton,N. Jersey.



Today.



In 1956, Sr. Pierre was asked by her Mother Superior to return to Baltimore and close her beloved St. Josephs!! She was heartbroken to have to do this and prayed to the Lord ‘ to help her’ .

A lot had changed in the nine years she had spent away. The surrounding neighbourhoods were broken and industrialised, other hospitals had been built which were taking care of the poor. The hospital licence to operate in the old Civil War vintage building had been removed because of fire code violations.

The Community of Sisters did not have the resources to fix the building and the poor in the area could not help them either.

When Sr. Pierre informed the medical staff that the decision had been made to close St. Josephs – wheels were put into motion by the dedicated staff to bring the building up to snuff & meet fire safety standards.

‘ A miracle happened’ said Sr. Pierre, help came from everywhere, people you would never expect came together to see that the old building was brought up to standard and the licence re-issued.

Now Sr. Pierre faced the next challenge, how to build a new home for St. Josephs Hospital ?

Sister explained that ‘ she knew that the best people to help plan the most functional hospital, were the people who would be working in it everyday. So she asked them to make their recommendations & she would take their ideas to the builder , that’s how it was built’.



Today.

Nine years later, 1965, the staff moved into a newly completed main building, a nursing school, a new residence, a separate power plant and maintenance building. Sr. Pierre's room, was directly over the ambulance entrance, which was a perfect vantage point to keep an eye on all activities. She did admit she was 'a little on the strict side', but she always wanted things to be just so. She was known to set her clock at different times of the night to have a wander around and would hold her rosary beads, so that she couldn't be heard coming !!! She considered it 'the best room in the house' and reluctantly gave it up when the new convent building was completed.



By 1972 the new convent building was added to the main hospital as well as a 17 bed Acute Care Centre, a 24 bed Psychiatric Unit & EKG / EEG Labs, at a cost of \$8,000,000.

All this was accomplished with little or no fanfare and along with a bit of Irish wit & humour, she won the respect of the low and mighty.

Present Day,  
St. Josephs.



In October 1972, she was named ‘ Woman of the Year’ to recognise her wonderful contribution to the community.

“ There is no one more deserving of this honour” said Margaret Adams, chairperson of the selection committee. Sr. Pierre, while displaying all the talent and acumen necessary to build two new hospitals worth millions of dollars and to keep another operating on bailing wire and sheer fortitude, epitomises all the nobler attributes of “ womens liberation” – and did so long before the term became the “ in ” thing.

When congratulated on her accomplishments, Sister replied: “I can take no credit for this. God performs miracles all the time and He had this plan for me to carry out. He gave me the people to help. I simply worked through God and people. ”



Cardinal Sheahan once described Sister as having “a beautiful French name and a still more beautiful Irish brogue ”.

In 1973, Sr. Pierre celebrated her Golden Jubilee, as a member of the Third Order of St. Francis. In 1975, at the age of 73 she moved to Assisi House nursing home in Aston, Pennsylvania, where she continued to assist with nursing duties up to the age of 86.

She passed to her eternal reward on 8th Nov, 1996, at the age of 93.

May her peace be rich and everlasting.

Go dtuga Dia solas na bhFlaitheas di.