

ATRIUM TOUR

(16) Our Lady of the Angels Stained-Glass Windows

Oldenburg Sisters of St. Francis

The Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana, are a congregation of Catholic women religious founded in 1851 by Mother Theresa Hackelmeier, who arrived from Vienna, Austria, to minister to German immigrant families. Rooted in the Franciscan tradition, they are dedicated to prayer, community life, and service, guided by values of justice, reconciliation, and peace. They follow the Rule of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and seek to respond to the “needs of the world” through Gospel-centered living.

The sisters established both Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception and Marian University (originally Marian College), which relocated to Indianapolis in 1937. Their ministries have extended across education, healthcare, parish life, and social services.

The Oldenburg Franciscan Sisters began their ministry in Ohio in 1876 when they accepted their first school, St. Clement. Within fifty years, they were serving in 25 schools throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. In 1926, marking the 50th anniversary of their arrival in Ohio, the sisters were invited to found a secondary school—Our Lady of the Angels High School. Their association with OLA continued for 56 years, until the school’s closure in 1984.

Our Lady of the Angels High School

In September 1926, Archbishop John T. McNicholas asked Mother Clarissa Dilhoff, Superior General of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana, to establish a high school for girls in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

In July 1927, Archbishop McNicholas formally announced a new educational initiative that created a centralized archdiocesan high school system. Under this plan, Cincinnati parishes became “tributary” to designated central high schools for both boys and girls. The girls’ high schools included:

- St. Mary High School – Opened in 1908 and originally staffed by diocesan priests, it became an all-girls school in 1927 when the boys transferred to Purcell High School. In 1963, it was renamed Marian High School and placed under the leadership of the Sisters of Charity. Marian later merged with Purcell High School in 1981.
- Seton High School – Founded in 1854 as Mount St. Vincent Academy by the Sisters of Charity, it was renamed Elizabeth Ann Seton High School in 1927 following the arrival of girls from Elder High School.
- Regina High School – Opened in 1928 under the Sisters of the Precious Blood. It closed in 1977, with students transferring to Marian High School, Mount Notre

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Dame, or Our Lady of the Angels.

- Our Lady of the Angels High School (OLA) – Also opened in 1928 and operated by the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg. When it closed in 1984, Roger Bacon High School became coeducational.

To establish Our Lady of the Angels, the Sisters of St. Francis purchased land in St. Bernard from Bernard H. Wess for \$65,000. The school was designed by architect Henry P. Hess of St. Louis, with George Michaelis of Indianapolis serving as general contractor.

Groundbreaking took place on July 16, 1927. The cornerstone was laid on October 4, 1927—the Feast of St. Francis—and the school was formally named *Our Lady of the Angels*. The 1929 *Domina Angelorum* yearbook describes the occasion:

“The solemn procession of clergy, religious, and school children formed at St. Clement School and moved to the site of the new building. Here, in the most solemn manner, His Grace performed the ceremonies prescribed by the Church. The many voices then united in singing ‘America’ and a hymn to Our Lady. Father Juvenal Berens, O.F.M., then delivered an eloquent address on Catholic education.”



Constructed at a cost of \$700,000, the building was completed in less than a year. It was officially dedicated on August 28, 1928, in a ceremony presided over by Archbishop McNicholas.

Principals of Our Lady of the Angels High School:

- Sr. Mary Lawrence Giering (1928–1934)
- Sr. Cephas Keller (1934–1941)
- Sr. Marie Dillhoff (1941–1947)
- Sr. Hortense Fougrousse (1947–1953)
- Sr. Therese de Lourdes Galm (1953–1960)
- Sr. Marie Dillhoff (1960–1962)
- Sr. Alethea (Natalie) Lamping (1962–1970)
- Sr. Jean Marie Cleveland (1970–1979)
- Sr. Marie Kathleen Maudlin (1979–1982)
- Sr. Anita Brelage (1982–1984)

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The windows are dedicated in loving memory of **Doris Kuszler, a 1951 graduate of Our Lady of the Angels High School**. Born in 1933 on her father's birthday, Doris was a proud retiree of Procter & Gamble, where she worked for 34 years. She was a longtime volunteer at The Lord's Bounty and Mercy Franciscan Terrace, and a devoted member of St. Clare Church since 1940.

Doris embraced life with enthusiasm, humor, and deep Cincinnati pride. She loved the College Hill Historical Society, the Bengals, house and garden tours, jazz concerts at Xavier University, Sunday hikes with the American Walkers (for whom she served as editor of *The Pedometer* for 12 years), and reading *The Cincinnati Enquirer* from front page to last. She also enjoyed ushering at the Shubert and Taft, listening to WLW radio, shopping at thrift stores, watching *Jeopardy!*, and playing cards with her cherished classmates from OLA's Class of 1951: Margie, Joan, Jan, Mary, Jackie, and Cathy. She was also known for her affection for Bud Light and Fuzzy Navels.



A graduate of UC Evening College and a member of Phi Kappa Epsilon, Doris loved to travel. Among her favorite adventures were trips to the Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, Alaska, and Europe, where she once visited 11 countries in 22 days. She also treasured river cruises on the American Queen and the Riverboat Explorer Barge with her Llanfair friends. Above all, Doris loved the Cincinnati Reds. From the age of 14, when she learned to score baseball games, she followed the team with unwavering devotion.

Born too early to become the kind of professional female sportswriter she might have been, Doris nevertheless found joy in writing a monthly column for a New York **Giants** fan newspaper before the team moved to San Francisco. One of her fondest memories was a cross-country train trip to California and Las Vegas with Barney Rapp's Redleg Rooters. She also cherished visiting the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown for the induction of Sparky Anderson, Tony Perez, and Marty Brennaman, and she proudly attended both the first and last games played at Riverfront/Cinergy Field.

Doris passed away on August 22, 2023.