



Episode 11: The 635

Thank you for continuing to journey with us on your Dallas Road Trip! While today's landmark- Catholic Charities of Dallas- is located in Dallas proper, it's impact and presence can be found all throughout the greater-Dallas area.

Catholic Charities of Dallas is an organization, located within our diocese, known for being aligned with the most vulnerable in our communities, helping them to journey toward "hope, independence, and a better life"¹. CCD embodies the Gospel through the Works of Mercy- providing assistance through pregnancy and parenting services, infant adoption, immigration legal services, food pantries and food drives, homeless shelters, support for refugees, and disaster relief (just to name a few!). A memorial wall located in the 2017 CCD headquarters tells the following story of CCD history.

Before Catholic Charities was officially founded in 1941, faithful Catholics carried out charitable works in the Dallas-area where they found need. Initially, the care of children was a major concern of the young, Dallas Catholic Community, as the 19th century brought devastating, epidemic diseases to Texas which had steep death tolls and left many children without the care of their parents. In 1873, Father Joseph Martinere, a circuit-riding missionary priest, was appointed pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Dallas. Thomas Lafayette Marsalis, founder of Oak Cliff and a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, donated eight acres of land in the new suburb "to be used for charitable purposes." Father Joseph knew the perfect use for this land, and

¹ <https://www.ccdallas.org/about-ccd/our-mission/>

with permission from the Bishop of Galveston (the diocese to which the area belonged at the time) built an orphanage on the land.

In 1890, Bishop Thomas Francis Brennan was named the first Bishop of Dallas. Despite a heavy debt, he was determined to furnish and open an orphanage. He called upon a group of Catholic women- the Lady Promoters of the Orphanage- to get the job done and that's exactly what they did! Through fundraising efforts including a festival in City Park and a fundraising booth at the State Fair, the Lady Promoters, along with Father Joseph, were able to make possible the dedication of the St. Mary's Orphanage on July 19, 1891.

Another group of persons emerged on the scene in Dallas in 1913: refugees from the Mexican-American war. Many lived in shacks or boxcars in the area north of the Courthouse now known as the West End. The area was also called "Frogtown", because of the croaking frogs in the nearby Trinity Bottoms. Sister Brendan O'Bierne, of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, became aware of the influx of Mexicans and began an outreach to the growing colony that ultimately would develop into the Marillac Center, which has since been moved adjacent to Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Dallas. Sister Brendan became known as the Angel of "Little Mexico."

Numerous additional efforts continued in the Dallas area through the work of the Catholic Church to provide for those in the community who suffered due to homelessness, poverty, or hunger. It eventually made sense to combine these efforts under one spearhead of the "Catholic Charities of Dallas." Catholic Charities then served as the liaison for these services and the Community Chest of Dallas.

Catholic Charities is an expression of our Catholic faith of which you can truly be proud and in which you can be involved! Catholic Charities works closely with our parishes and Catholic community in order to ensure those in need of life-saving and life-altering resources have access to them. Catholic Charities offers many beautiful ways for you to be in solidarity with the vulnerable members in our community. We encourage you to check out their website or contact them directly to explore your options.