



# DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY



*“O, it was beyond description”*



## GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN



**Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton** would become the first United States born Catholic saint.

Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton founded the Roman Catholic community of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Joseph’s here in 1809 (after 1850, called Daughters of Charity). The sisters played a prominent role during the Civil War as nurses and human service workers, providing compassion in an otherwise violent and painful epoch. They continued Mother Seton’s ministry of charity, bringing solace and healing to the wounded of both armies, sometimes at their own peril.

Father James Francis Burlando, C.M., and a group of twelve sisters, taking “baskets of things for the wounded, bandages and other necessities,” were among the first from outside Gettysburg to provide help after the battle. One of the sisters remarked that there was not a woman

in sight: “On reaching the Battle grounds, awful! To see the men lying dead on the road some by the side of their horses. O, it was beyond description, hundreds of both armies lying dead almost on the track that the driver had to be careful not to pass over the bodies. O! This picture of human beings slaughtered down by their fellow men in a cruel civil war was perfectly awful.” The sisters



**Father James Francis Burlando, C.M. (1814-73)**

set up headquarters in McClellan’s Hotel (now The Gettysburg Hotel) to provide nursing services. More than 600 sister nurses from twelve separate religious communities served during the Civil War. Among the sister nurses from four communities with American hospital experience, approximately 270 Daughters of Charity rendered nursing care and spiritual assistance to the wounded of both armies at more than sixty sites in fifteen states.



**St. Joseph's Academy and Central House of the Daughters of Charity (1867)**



**Harpers Weekly illustration.**

*Photos courtesy of Daughters of Charity Archives, Emmitsburg*