

ST MARY'S HOSPITAL, MULLINGAR

St Mary's Hospital was built as a workhouse in 1841.

In 1896 it was decided that the Sisters of Mercy should establish a community in the Workhouse in Mullingar.



*St. Mary's Hospital
(former Workhouse/County Home)*

Three Sisters were appointed in 1896 as nurses to take charge of the chronically sick, the elderly, unmarried mothers, homeless boys and girls, the mentally and physically handicapped, and management, with a further appointment taking place within a few months for a Sister to take care of the catering department.

In this era, like most establishments of its kind, the hospital in Mullingar was ill-equipped and hopelessly under-staffed.

The Institution in Mullingar consisted of three separate buildings:

- The Fever Hospital
- St. Anne's Hospital
- St. Mary's (County home / workhouse)

The medical officer, together with the Sisters of Mercy and their lay staff, worked untiringly for the welfare of the patients in their efforts to improve conditions at the time.



Entrance to St. Mary's Chapel

Improvements Continue

Sr. Kevin Maher was appointed Matron of St. Mary's in 1959. During this period programmes for modernising were initiated with extended professional care facilities.

The last Sisters of Mercy to serve as Matron in St. Mary's was Sr. Kevin Maher, who retired in 1988, and a lay matron was appointed.

Rehabilitation Unit at St. Mary's 1994

A Sister was appointed as manager to this upgraded unit and served tirelessly in the post until November 2009, when she retired. She was the last Sister of Mercy serving in St. Mary's.



The new St. Mary's Hospital, near completion 2011



St. Mary's old Convent – now used as a Laundry

Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar



Completed new extensions, Regional Hospital, Mullingar 1988 and 1993-1994

In the 1930s, owing to the increase in the number of patients for hospital treatments, and to try to meet healthcare needs of the time, it was decided by the Local Government Department to erect a new County Hospital for Westmeath in Mullingar.

This Hospital opened in 1936. The first built under the Hospital Sweepstakes Scheme, it was regarded as one of the most up to date hospitals of its time. St. Brigid's Convent was built at the same time to accommodate the Mercy Sisters on the hospital staff. A new chapel, St. Brigid's, was built between the Nurses' Home and the convent to accommodate Sisters, nurses and patients. As the general hospital continued to expand and develop as a busy healthcare centre, Sisters were appointed to posts of responsibility. The Sisters in Mullingar remained closely affiliated with the convent in Tullamore, which was their base Community.

In 1971 a Sister came as chief caterer, and supported the domestic staff of the time, practically and pastorally. A Sister who had been a member of staff since 1936 was appointed Matron in 1942 and another Sister assistant matron.

January 1988 saw the completion of a new extension to the General Hospital, Mullingar. A further phase in the extension of the hospital was sanctioned and in process at this time. This extension was completed in 1993 – 1994.



New Extension

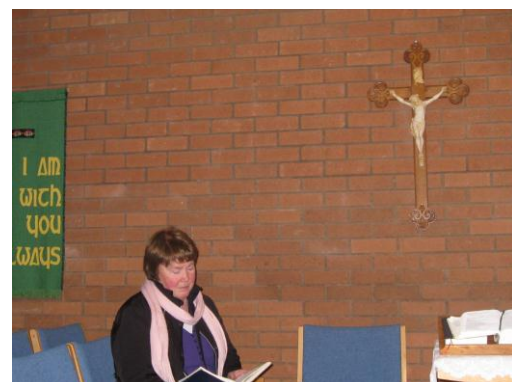


*General Hospital: 1936 Ward 1 & 3
and Maternity Central
2011*

Mercy healthcare ministry continued to develop and expand. The Sisters excelled in their ministry in surgical care and paediatric specialities. One of the last serving Sisters of Mercy retired in 2010.

Chaplaincy/Pastoral Care and Bereavement Support: 1990

In December 1990 a Sister joined the staff of the Regional Hospital, Mullingar. The hospital was now named Longford – Westmeath General Hospital. This Sister, already a qualified RGN and registered midwife and a registered hospital chaplain of the National Chaplaincy Board (1981). She was the first non-ordained female chaplain to serve in the hospital, ministering alongside and in partnership with local parish clergy and other ministers of other faiths and cultures.



Special Services in Maternity



Holy Angels Memorial, financed by the Defence Forces, Mullingar

In collaboration with hospital administration, the viewing room and hospital oratory were re-designed.

End of Life Care Committees were established in partnership with the relevant bodies.

This Sister's first love was service to mothers and babies. In her role as chaplain she drafted and developed new policies and guidelines in relation to loss and grief in maternity. In this way she was of service to mothers and babies.



Hospital Oratory

St. Finian's College, Mullingar



St. Finian's College, Mullingar



Residence where Sisters lived

In 1948 the president of St. Finian's College, Mullingar, requested the support and services of the Sisters of Mercy. For thirty four years from 1948 – 1982 there were always two Sisters in ministry in the college. One Sister was a registered nurse, and served as 'Matron' to the students. The other Sister was skilled in catering / housekeeping. She managed the domestic staff and looked after necessary provisions.