

Amalgamation and Governing Structure

On the 1st of January 1871, the four Convents were amalgamated under central authority by Bishop Gillooly, himself a Vincentian, with the sanction of the Holy See and the consent of the Sisters. The Superiors resigned their office to the bishop. A newly titled Reverend Mother would, during her period of office, govern all the houses present and future in the Diocese, through the ministry of local superiors to be nominated by her. The first Superior General was Mother Joseph Jones. The governing body was to be a Council, consisting of Rev. Mother, the Assistant, the Bursar and the Mistress of Novices. St. Patrick's Convent became the Motherhouse. A central novitiate was established in Sligo. The Bishop would make a pastoral visit once every three years. His administrator would audit the account books. This system prevailed until 1969.

Continued Expansion within the Diocese

After this amalgamation other foundations followed. Boyle, Castlerea, Strokestown and Mullaghmore all responded to the same ongoing needs for education and caring for the poor. The Sisters came to Summerhill, Athlone to establish and run a Girls' Industrial School, which later became an orphanage and schools. Nursing Sisters were greatly welcomed to work in the Workhouse and later in St John's Convent in Sligo, in the Castlerea Union Hospital and the Sacred Heart Hospital Roscommon. In these hospital settings, accommodation was provided by the Boards of Governors and later by the Health Boards.

Mullaghmore, beside the ocean, was founded to provide rest and respite for the Sisters. Over the years the Sisters continued to live and work in the spirit of union and charity, becoming self-sufficient while constantly updating and improving buildings and facilities. All devoted themselves to prayer, reflection, with days of recollection and retreats in Advent and summer.