



founding and history

of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine



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Introduction

The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine is a congregation of women religious who, since their founding in 1851, have carried forward a faith-based legacy of high-quality, compassionate care.

In 1982, the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine established the Sisters of Charity Health System to provide the direct oversight and stewardship of the congregation's sponsored ministries. The establishment of the health system brought the sponsored ministries together, ensuring a solid base for mission development and encouraging increased collaboration with laity. Today, the Sisters of Charity Health System sponsors more than 20 health and human services organizations in Northeast Ohio and South Carolina.

This document provides critical information about the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine's charism, mission and history, which includes more than 160 years of responsive ministry and a quest for social justice.



Our Founders: The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine

PHILOSOPHY

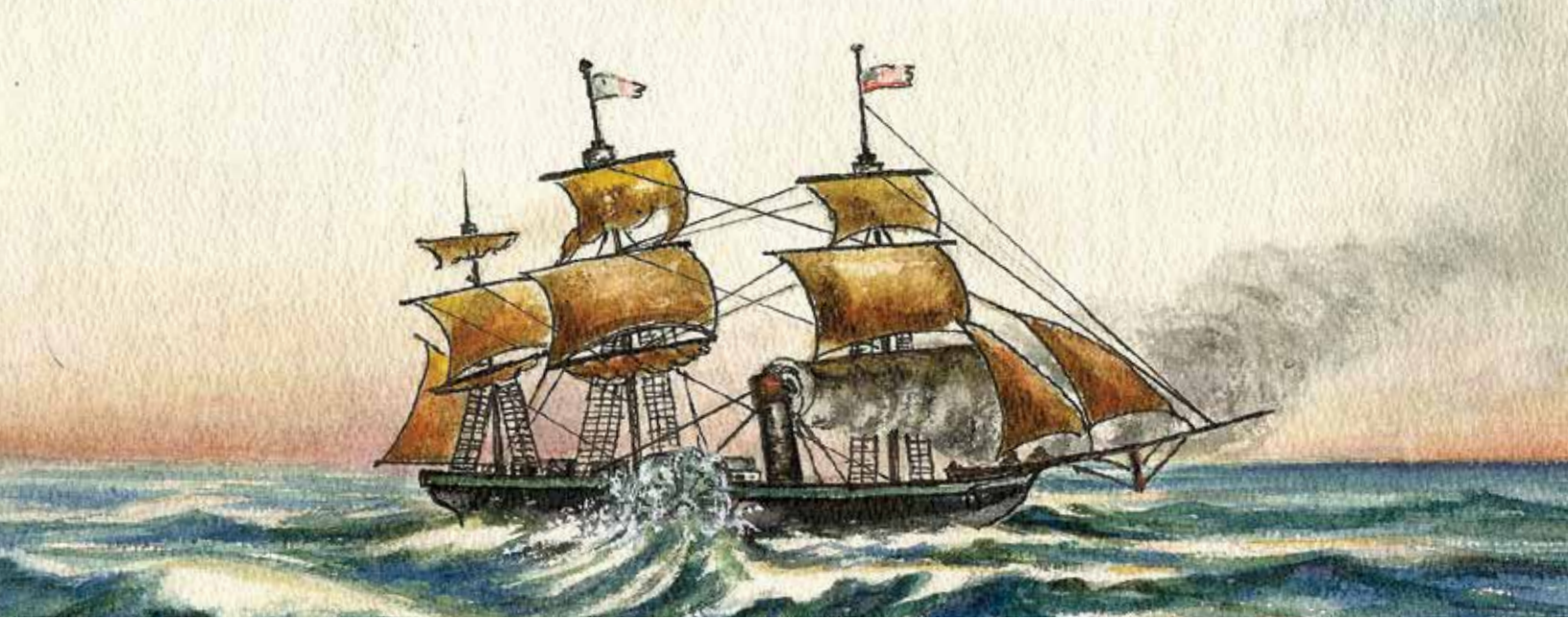
Through health and human services ministries, the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine seek to meet the needs of our times by expressing Christian concern for the sick, suffering and dying; by manifesting love, truth and justice for the persons we serve and with whom we work; and by promoting the advancement and application of new knowledge, which will promote health and quality of life.

– Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine

CHARISM

We, the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, participate in the mission of the Church by living out the charism of charity in our life of apostolic service. In our openness to the needs of others and in our willing response, we attempt to reflect, as a Congregation, a unity of purpose achieved through our ministry and supported by our prayer and life in community. Our ministry is focused on people, particularly those who are spiritually, socially, psychologically, physically or materially neglected in any way.

– Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine



A History of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine

PIONEERING LABORS: 1851-1901

“Surely I can do this for God. I am free. No earthly tie binds me. Yes, I will go to America and care for the little Indians,” reasoned 24-year-old Mademoiselle Louise Brulois, a postulant in the Augustinian Sisters at Saint Louis Hospital, Boulogne sur Mer, France. No matter that Cleveland, Ohio, in 1851 was nearly as devoid of Indians to convert as it was full of immigrants with ship fever and forgotten orphans to be cared for, Louise had finally decided to leave her beloved country and go with her superior to America.

The Most Reverend Amadeus Rappe, first Bishop of Cleveland, long aware of the need for establishing a hospital staffed by Sisters, had tried unsuccessfully in his native France to obtain Sisters. Finally directed to Sister Bernardine Cabaret, superior of Saint Louis Hospital, he found her an enthusiastic volunteer.

Though the Sisters at the hospital were reluctant to let her go, they responded to Sister Bernardine’s spirit of sacrifice and unanimously remitted the remainder of her term as superior. Having earlier secured the assistance of Sister Françoise Guillement, she had now convinced Louise Brulois and another postulant, 20-year-old Cornélie Muselet, to join in the missionary venture.

Beginning their two week trip across the Atlantic on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1851, the four missionaries, with little more than chapel furnishings and boxes of linen destined to be made into sheets and bandages, spent their stormy trip learning the rudiments of English.

EARLY HARDSHIPS

Bishop Rappe, eagerly awaiting the Sisters' arrival, had written in the spring, "Come, my children, I have now prepared a place for you. On it is good spring water and good fresh air." The house on the eight acres, though, was still occupied on October 10 when the Sisters came to Cleveland. However, the Ursuline Nuns, who had come to the city from Boulogne just the year before, received them as guests and provided religious training for the postulants.

Within two weeks, Sister Bernardine and Sister Francoise, advised by the Bishop, began living with individual families so that they could better visit the sick and poor in their homes. Cleveland's first public health nurses were soon a familiar sight in the city, and people called them "angels" because of their white habits.

By March 1852, the Sisters were able to move into their small, two-story frame house in the fresh air of the country, Ohio City. In August, they opened Saint Joseph's on the same site, the first public hospital in what later became part of the city of Cleveland.

The encounter with the hardships of a pioneer land, an unfamiliar language, a historically severe winter and failing health were perhaps the reasons why Sisters

Bernardine and Francoise obtained permission to return to France in September 1852. Cornelia and Louise, who had become Sister Saint Joseph and Sister Augustine, strengthened themselves with the Scriptural injunction that those who put their hand to the plow and look back are not fit for the kingdom of Heaven and decided to remain in Cleveland.

FIRST AMERICAN SUPERIOR

Bishop Rappe then turned to Sister Ursula Bissonette, an Ursuline novice, for assistance in continuing the work he had begun, which had already attracted two more young women. As a laywoman, Sister Ursula was well known to Bishop Rappe from her work in the Sandusky area, particularly instructing First Communion classes. In addition, she had worked with the cholera victims in the epidemic of 1849, gathering orphans and widows and caring for them in an abandoned house until the disease passed. Sister Ursula made her profession as a Sister of Charity in the chapel of the Ursuline convent on October 21, 1852—adding a fourth vow to devote herself to works of charity—and in the afternoon became, at age 35, the superior of the new American community.



Under her direction, the Sisters continued their work with the sick, and in order to care for children left by deceased patients, built an addition to the hospital. To support the orphanage, the boys were taught tailoring and carpentry and, with the Sisters, weekly pulled their wagon to deliver suits and cassocks for the clergy and furniture to the West Side Market.

HOSPITALS AND ORPHANAGES

By 1856, a number of considerations forced the closing of Saint Joseph Hospital, and the entire building was used by the orphans until Saint Vincent Orphanage was completed in 1859. Later, additional room was again needed for the orphans and 100 boys and several Sisters moved to Saint Louis Orphanage, Louisville, Ohio.

The original convent continued to house a few patients and the elderly remaining from the hospital until the present Saint Vincent Charity Hospital was opened in 1865. The hospital had long been discussed by Mother Ursula; Doctor Gustave E. Weber, a prominent retired Army surgeon; and Bishop Rappe, who finally purchased the property for \$10,000. Though Mother Ursula did not live to see the building completed, her spirit of sacrifice remained with the Sisters who willingly gave their pillows to furnish the hospital while they slept on straw. “Charity toward the poor,” said Bishop Rappe at the dedication, “was ever to be the motto of the hospital.”

To continue this charitable service, the hospital added a school of nursing. To staff the pharmacy, two Sisters became the second and third women in Ohio to be certified by the State Board of Pharmacy. Sister Augustine, long since aware of more than Indians in America, headed the hospital while Sister Saint Joseph continued to direct the orphanage.

On a cold winter’s night in 1873, a widow about to deliver a child was taken in and the Sisters began Saint Ann Hospital and Infant Home, first near Saint Vincent Charity Hospital and later on Woodland Avenue. Encouraged by Bishop Richard Gilmour, the

Sisters cared particularly for unmarried mothers and neglected infants.

“Donation Days” for this new work were added to the continual door-to-door begging trips of the Sisters, which the people of Cleveland and the surrounding areas gave to generously; however, the money never seemed quite enough to meet the growing demands for the care of the sick and needy.



- 1 Mademoiselle Louise Brulois who became Sister Augustine
- 2 The Most Reverend Amadeus Rappe, D.D., Cleveland’s first bishop
- 3 Mother Joseph Muselet, CSA, one of the founding members of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine
- 4 The Sisters’ first residence in Cleveland’s Ohio City neighborhood
- 5 St. Joseph’s Hospital opened in 1852, Cleveland’s first public hospital
- 6 Sister Ursula Bissonette, the first Superior of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine
- 7 In 1856, Saint Joseph Hospital was closed and the building was used as St. Vincent Orphanage. The ministry to orphans continued.
- 8 Sisters caring for babies at Saint Ann’s Hospital and Infant Home in 1911



EXPANDING MINISTRIES: 1901-1951

Though by the turn of the century, Sister Saint Joseph, the last of the pioneer Sisters, had died, she had lived long enough to see a community of more than 100 Sisters of Charity of Saint Augustine establish a new motherhouse in Lakewood, Ohio. From this center, the expansion of the works of health, education and social services in Cleveland and other areas continued during the next 50 years, even though the requests for the Sisters' service far exceeded their ability to respond. Nevertheless, the Sisters made significant contributions in the development of the health care field.

Providence Hospital, Sandusky, and its nursing school were staffed by the Sisters from its beginnings in 1902 until 1922 when Sandusky became part of the Toledo diocese. A bequest from a wealthy woman and her brother, who had seen the need, led to the opening of Mercy Hospital in Canton in 1908. Later, another donor provided for the establishment of Little Flower Hospital for Children near Mercy.

In 1916, Bishop John Farrelly, desiring a school of nursing at Saint John Hospital on Cleveland's west side, requested the Sisters to assume administration and staffing of the 26-year-old hospital, which had just been rebuilt.

Prior to the opening of Saint Thomas Hospital, made possible by the financial contributions of the people of the area, Akron was the largest city in the country without a Sisters' hospital. In addition to directing and staffing the hospital and nursing school in 1928, the willingness of the Sisters in 1939 to respond to a new need caused St. Thomas to be the first general hospital to open its doors to Doctor Bob Smith, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, when he brought his first patient there.

About the same time, Bishop Emmet M. Walsh of Charleston, South Carolina, had traveled more than 120,000 miles seeking a congregation of Sisters to establish the first Catholic hospital in the state. Circumstances led him to the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, who extended their service to South Carolina and opened Providence Hospital in 1938.

BEGINNINGS OF THE EDUCATION MINISTRY

Although the education of orphans had been undertaken from the early days and was under the supervision of the diocesan superintendent of schools, other elementary and high school education was not begun until 1922 when Bishop Joseph Schrembs formally requested the Sisters prepare themselves to staff schools. Saint Augustine Academy, enrolling students from kindergarten to sixth grade, was established on the Motherhouse grounds in 1925 and classes extended to high school the next year. By the time the Sisters celebrated the 75th anniversary of their coming to Cleveland, grade schools in Cuyahoga Falls, Ashtabula, Amherst, Harrisburg, Maximo and Cleveland were part of their apostolic ministry.

INITIAL EXPANSION INTO SOCIAL SERVICES

Established to organize the charitable services of the diocese on a sound financial basis, the Catholic Charities Corporation freed the Sisters from the constant struggle of trying to raise sufficient funds while caring for the sick and unfortunate. One of the first acts of Catholic Charities in 1925 was to relocate all the orphans cared for by the Sisters at Saint Vincent and at Saint Louis Orphanages on 180 acres in Parma, Ohio, which became known as Parmadale, the nation's first cottage-plan home for dependent children.

The years surrounding the centennial of the Community witnessed the expansion of Saint Vincent Charity and Saint Thomas Hospitals; the building of Timken Mercy Hospital and subsequent consolidation of Little Flower Hospital with Mercy; and the development of a new Saint Ann Hospital separate from De Paul Infant Home. In addition, Sisters continued on the faculty of Saint John College School of Nursing; engaged in Confraternity of Christian Doctrine work in parishes and missions; and cared for preschool children at Saint Edward Home, across from Parmadale. The growing needs of the Community were met by the purchase of 350 acres in Richfield for a new Motherhouse, completed in 1957, to train the young Sisters and care for the retired.



- 1 St. Augustine Convent in Lakewood, Ohio
- 2 Mt. Augustine in Richfield, Ohio
- 3 Principals of Saint Augustine Academy

WIDENING HORIZONS: 1951-2012

If the first 50 years of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine were those of birth and beginnings, the second half century saw growth and expansion. Amid the complexities of the late twentieth century and the twenty-first century, these 62 years were marked by maturity and evaluation.

Pope John XXIII, in opening the Second Vatican Council in the fall of 1962, called the whole Church to renew itself in order “to be found increasingly faithful to the gospel of Christ.” The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, like all religious communities, revitalized themselves by returning to the original inspiration of its founders, making necessary adjustments in their living and service, adapting to the conditions of the times.

VATICAN II TAKES ROOT

Through frequent prayer and countless meetings, the painful, but often times illuminating struggles of the Community brought forth changes in internal governmental structure and policy, lifestyle and spirituality initiated to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ to others. Much of the discussion and experimentation ultimately found expression in the new Constitutions of the Community, approved in 1985, which have been revised and updated to reflect a deepening understanding of mission and ministry. Faithful to Vatican II directives to renew and update in the mid 1960s, the Sisters began intensive continuing education in pastoral and sacramental theology, spiritual renewal, psychology, ethics, canon law, leadership training and communication skills. Efforts to carry out the principles of collaboration and subsidiarity were seen in various structural changes in the selection and election of Community leaders, in committees and commissions, open forums, assemblies, chapters, community weekends and newsletters designed to solicit the views and ideas of the Sisters to work toward consensus on major issues. While some of these structures and experiences were designed for the internal renewal of the Community, others (such as a process developed in 1985 to take a corporate stance on public issues, the statement on ministry to people

with AIDS issued in 1988, and the stance for peace in 1990) helped open the Community to new needs.

RENEWAL OF COMMUNITY LIFE

To “encourage and promote the continued integration of prayer life, community living and ministry,” Sisters also began experimenting with various ways to live a healthier, more integrated community life. Some Sisters moved away from large residences directly connected with their place of ministry and lived with smaller community groupings in ordinary homes or were part of intercommunity living. Others remained in the convents connected with their apostolic service, but all worked to develop and enhance a community life that “provides an environment of faith, simplicity of life and responsible stewardship, thus witnessing to the integration of Gospel values in life and ministry.”

Recognizing the mutuality between the Sisters and lay people who share the CSA charism (gift) of charity, an Associate program was initiated in 1985. Open to lay women and men, married and single, Associates participate in a variety of ways in the life and charism of CSA. The Sisters and Associates believe that by uniting with others in prayer and ministry, they share more deeply in the Kingdom of God.

REDIRECTING MINISTRIES

“Nourished by a long tradition of meeting the needs of the Diocese of Cleveland,” the Sisters, in their philosophy, recommitted themselves to works of health, education and social service, but “sought to direct their energies to those existing and emerging needs that are most critical.” For example, changing social patterns no longer required a large home for unwed mothers; thus, in 1973, De Paul Home was donated to the Bishop of Cleveland to be used for continuation of social services.

The declining birth rate and consequent financial difficulties, which resulted in the sale of Saint Ann Hospital in 1973, provided a unique way of preserving the original purposes of the founding Sisters while meeting new needs. The Saint Ann Foundation, a public foundation, was created from the sale. All income generated from the original \$8.2 million principal and from new donations and bequests is used for grants to support programs that improve the quality of life, particularly in Northeast Ohio. As the Saint Ann Foundation celebrated its 25th anniversary, a major funded project was on kinship care, which focused on invited proposals to assist grandparents in caring for children. From 1974 through 2005, Saint Ann Foundation awarded more than \$32 million in grants and, most notably, in 2002 launched a Collaboration in Ministry Initiative involving religious communities seeking to strengthen their ministries into the future.

Seeking to maintain secondary education for girls on Cleveland’s west side, yet aware of limited Sister personnel, the Community in 1975 arranged a transfer of the operation and administration of Saint Augustine Academy to the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, who leased the buildings until 2005. In 1987, the academy convent was leased to the same community for use as an early childhood learning center. The CSA presence remains through the ownership of the property and ongoing planning for the best utilization of the facilities, which today

The recommitment of Christian service to people called for by Vatican II demanded an evaluation and redirection of institutions.



Sister Henrietta Gorris, CSA, worked with community leaders to help those displaced by the Hough neighborhood riots of the 1960s.

houses Lakewood Catholic Academy, an elementary school formed by the merger of three Lakewood Catholic schools and Centering Space, a CSA ministry offering prayer, listening and direction.

The shift of students out of Catholic schools together with the recognition that children were not the only ones in need of religious instruction caused the Sisters in the 1970s to begin to work full time in parish school of religion programs and total parish religious education. In some places, Sisters collaborate in team ministry approaches to respond to parishes’ various needs. Sisters are involved in parish ministry and religious education in several

parishes in the Diocese of Cleveland. Support of education continues through donations to various secondary schools and to the Catholic Educational Endowment.

EXPANDING GLOBAL AWARENESS

Beginning in 1976, when the Chapter approved a motion to support in prayer and to investigate the possibility of a CSA going to the diocesan mission in El Salvador, the Sisters expanded their vision to embrace global issues. Experiencing Third World conditions, supporting refugee families, writing letters to government officials about life issues, sending medical supplies and financial aid to disaster areas, establishing CSA properties as peace sites, educating about ecological concerns and supporting the abolition of the death penalty have been a few of the activities of the Sisters. Locally, following the Hough riots in the Cleveland inner city in the 1960s, Sisters worked in housing and other social services projects there, which continue under dedicated lay people. A CSA Sister who served on the diocesan mission team in El Salvador returned to start a Catholic Worker house in the Akron area, which today has added additional homes and support services.

Within the Community, a gift and donation committee was established in 1976, with funds now budgeted annually. The Sisters are able to request monies for various small projects that improve the quality of life or support evangelization efforts. These funds have financed in whole or part everything from a teenager's drug rehabilitation costs to food and supplies for victims of natural disasters. In addition, the generosity of many benefactors to the Sisters has enabled monies to be expended for services at Catholic Charities' institutions, special ministry needs of the Sisters, and social justice issues related to health, education and social services. Also, Community funds have been invested in projects such as Cornerstone, with the interest going toward low-income housing and Partners for the Common Good.

In some cases, the recommitment of Christian service to people called for by Vatican II demanded an evaluation and redirection of institutions. Thus, increasingly aware of the religious, moral, legal and financial responsibilities and complexities in sponsoring institutions, especially health care facilities, the Community began in 1969 to include lay men and women on the boards of trustees, to hire lay people to fill administrative positions when qualified Sisters were not available, and to develop a formal sponsorship statement, which included a focus on faith obligations, mission and values programs, and pastoral care. With changes in nursing education, Timken Mercy Medical Center, now Mercy Medical Center, merged its diploma school of nursing with Walsh College in 1981, and St. Vincent Charity Hospital merged its nursing program with Ursuline College in 1985, thus strengthening Catholic nursing at the bachelor's degree level. Both hospitals continue to provide clinical experiences for the nursing students.

HEALTH SYSTEM CREATED

The most significant development in the health care facilities was the 1982 establishment of CSA Health and Human Services, a system created to strengthen each of the CSA-sponsored facilities and to ensure that the charism and philosophy of the Sisters are implemented and enhanced in the institutions and programs within the system. The mission of CSA Health and Human Services is to "promote stronger collaboration, cooperation and sharing of resources among the sponsored hospitals and organizations, as well as encourage the development of new programs and services in response to unmet health and human services needs."

In an effort to carry out this mission in the challenging and rapidly changing world of health care, the CSA Health System (now called the Sisters of Charity Health System) in 1995 established three 50-50 partnerships with an investor-owned health system. Though this sale of 50% interest, which fully continued the Catholic mission of the CSA hospitals,



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has now been dissolved, it enabled Sisters of Charity Foundations to be established in Canton, Cleveland and South Carolina with total assets of more than \$200 million.

These three foundations, along with the Saint Ann Foundation, reaffirmed and expanded the Sisters' mission and ministry of service to the poor and vulnerable. In 2006, the Saint Ann Foundation merged with the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland, where it continues to live on through the annual Saint Ann Legacy grant program focused on the needs of women and children. Each foundation has a unique local perspective on addressing the root causes of poverty. Affordable housing, early childhood education and fatherhood engagement are areas of significant investment by the foundations, which seek to make

long-term change in the communities they serve. Among other initiatives in each respective community, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland has championed the Housing First approach, which provides housing stability as a first step so that residents are better able to address their other needs. The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton has championed the belief that every child deserves a good start in life and that all families should have access to high-quality early education and care. And, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina has championed supporting communities that strengthen the engagement of fathers with their children and families as they improve the emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of fathers and subsequently that of their children.

In addition to the hospitals and foundations, the health system has also developed social service outreach ministries in each geographic area to provide services and programs for the underserved, including the Early Childhood Resource Center, Healthy Learners, Joseph's Home, and the South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families.

MULTI-PURPOSE MOTHERHOUSE

In the ongoing evaluation, which marked all the Community's ministries, the Sisters examined their own resources and beginning in 1971, Mt. Augustine, the Motherhouse, opened its facilities and grounds for religious, cultural and educational activities, and increased the Sister staff to serve these individuals and groups. The facilities, programs and 230-acre grounds—part of several natural resource conservation plans—have been especially conducive to prayer. A House of Prayer functioned there in the 1970s, and a Hermitage dedicated to prayer for justice and world peace was erected in 1982, marking the 25th anniversary of Mt. Augustine.

In the 1980s personal, psychological and physical pre-retirement and retirement planning; a financial needs analysis; studies on the use of CSA properties within the Community; and inter-congregational discussions at the diocesan level all contributed to the decision to redirect a portion of the Motherhouse to a new ministry.

When the 140th anniversary of the Community was celebrated, construction began for Regina Health Center, a \$7.5 million innovative health care and assisted living facility for religious, priests and laity who wished to live in a God-centered environment of care. The renovation of a portion of the existing Motherhouse building and others provided an 81-bed skilled and intermediate care nursing unit and a 73-bed assisted living unit that opened in 1983 with a full range of geriatric services for retired female and male religious. Additional nursing beds and other services



Chapel at Mt. Augustine

have been added more recently. A unique aspect of this project is the collaboration with other religious communities and diocesan officials in the assessment and planning for this intercommunity residence. As the diocesan newspaper editorial stated, “The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine have once again demonstrated the foresight, careful planning and compassion that have made them a model of health care ministry.”

The center of the spiritual life of both the Sisters and the residents of Regina Health Center is the Holy Family chapel. In 2005, a major renovation of the chapel was completed by the Congregation, which not only incorporated changes to accommodate liturgical changes of recent years, but also improved the lighting, sound system and seating for the residents, many of whom are wheel-chair bound.

The mission of Regina Health Center continues as a ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System. Similarly, in 2001, the Sisters of Charity Health System and the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati began an innovative collaboration to enhance elder services in Bedford, Ohio at Light of Hearts Villa, a residential care center founded by the Vincentian Sisters of Charity in 1989. Today, Light of Hearts Villa provides a supportive residential environment for nearly 100 seniors.



The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine's Mission Continues

Although the number of Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine may be smaller, their vitality and initiative for establishing new services continues the long tradition of meeting emerging needs. Examples include the Open House in Cleveland for persons with AIDS and their families, now merged into other programs; the Interfaith Wellness Center in Irvine, Kentucky, for health needs in Appalachia; the Catholic Worker House in Akron, particularly for Spanish-speaking immigrants; Joseph's Home, a short-term residence for homeless men in the Cleveland inner city who have been released from the hospital; and Centering Space for spiritual reflection—all of which were begun by the Sisters and their collaborators in the last few decades.

Aware of the unique contribution of dedicated lay women and men who minister with the Sisters, the Caritas Service Award was established as part of the 150th anniversary celebration of the Community to honor an “individual who embodies and exemplifies the CSA charism to an outstanding degree” and is given every four years.

For the Sisters of Charity, the years since 1851 have been times of constant evaluation and overwhelming efforts to be faithful to the Lord in the midst of change. As the numbers of Sisters decline and ages increase, as institutions once firmly planted close or shift direction, and as responsibilities for community life and ministry challenge, the Sisters have tried to see this period as a special gift. This grace strengthens them to be true sharers in Christ's ministry, which to all earthly eyes seemed to be a challenge to serve God's people. In spite of difficulties and struggles, the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine's responsible and creative stewardship of Community resources, increased collaboration with others in ministry and an expanded world vision have been the hallmarks of these past decades. The Sisters of Charity, extending their gift of charity, continue to consciously plan for the future, setting goals with compassion toward the needs of people and a mature faith in the providence of the Lord.

More than 160 years of the history of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine record founders' names, significant firsts and completed buildings. Service since 1851 reveals loving women firmly committed and freely giving, who have attempted to extend the work of Christ on earth. Underlying both the history and the service have been the physical hardships of the beginning, the material sacrifices of the growth and the spiritual struggles of the maturity of the Community. Yet, the call of the Father, which is reflected in Christ and nourished by the Spirit, continues to find a response in the Sisters of Charity, who, out of the traditions of the past, find meaning for the present and hope for the future.



The Sisters of Charity Health System

The Sisters of Charity Health System strives to embody the spirit of the founding congregation through our mission, vision and core values.

MISSION OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY HEALTH SYSTEM

In the spirit of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, our mission is to extend the healing ministry of Jesus to God’s people.

VISION OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY HEALTH SYSTEM

The Sisters of Charity Health System is a beacon of hope devoted to healing and addressing the unmet needs of individuals, families and communities through a network of innovative services.

THE HEALTH SYSTEM’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CONGREGATION

The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine established the Sisters of Charity Health System in 1982 to support the Congregation in carrying out its mission in health care, education and social service. The following directives relate to the relationship between the health system and the Congregation:

- The Congregation encourages members of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine to use their gifts in governance, management and other service roles within sponsored ministries.
- New leadership within the system is oriented to the Congregational leadership, the history of the Congregation, and the hopes and dreams of its future.
- An integral component of the orientation of all staff within the health system is telling the story of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, its mission and philosophy of ministry.
- The Congregational Leader is informed of major events within the health system prior to the information being made public. She then notifies the local Bishop. Examples are a change in leadership of an acute care hospital, major layoffs and others.
- The traditions of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine are an integral component of ministries’ activities.

THE HEALTH SYSTEM'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH

As a Catholic-based organization, we remain intimately connected to the Church. In June 2007, the Vatican approved a request to restructure the sponsorship of the Sisters of Charity Health System to a new Public Juridic Person (PJP). This action shifted corporate decision-making authority from the exclusive scope of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine (CSA) to the new PJP, which is governed by both CSAs and laity and is directly accountable to the Church. Most importantly, the new canonical structure guarantees the preservation of the Sisters' mission and the Catholic identity of their sponsored ministries into the future.

CORE VALUES OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY HEALTH SYSTEM

Compassion: Displays a profound sense of interconnectedness by:

- Responding to needs, pains, sufferings and losses of others with concern, empathy and support
- Treating all persons we serve and with whom we co-minister with dignity
- Exhibiting an attitude of acceptance and forgiveness
- Listening with empathy and attention
- Serving as a catalyst for change, especially for the disenfranchised

Courage: Dares to take risks that our faith demands of us by:

- Speaking out on issues that challenge our mission and Catholic identity
- Making difficult decisions with integrity and in a timely manner
- Promoting economic, political and social conditions to support the fundamental rights of all individuals that enable them to meet their potential and achieve the common good of society
- Addressing institutional problems or system issues quickly, objectively and directly

Respect: Values dignity and sacredness of life from conception through death by:

- Treating individuals and their families with profound respect and utmost regard
- Responding to human need by addressing the physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of the person
- Ensuring that diversity exists at all levels
- Being trustful by keeping confidences; being truthful, direct and sincere; apologizing for misunderstandings, inconveniences or mistakes

Justice: Develops right relationships internally and externally by:

- Responding to the needs of the time to ensure excellence of service and exceptional quality
- Acting as responsible stewards of all resources
- Addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable
- Treating employees justly and respectfully
- Advocating with providers, insurers and elected officials to secure the human right to health care

Collaboration: Promotes inclusive, compassionate and collaborative relationships by:

- Encouraging interaction internally and externally to empower others for service
- Fostering and sharing of gifts and talents within our institution and larger community
- Facilitating dialogue and networking with individuals and organizations
- Encouraging collaboration and mutual accountability
- Promoting a sensitivity to diversity in planning and implementing programs, hiring practices, advertising and other customer service initiatives

A COMMUNITY OF MINISTRIES

The Sisters of Charity Health System serves Northeast Ohio and South Carolina through the following ministries:

HEALTH CARE MINISTRY[°]

Mercy Medical Center
cantonmercy.org

Providence Hospital
Providence Heart & Vascular Institute
providencehospitals.com

Providence Hospital Northeast
providencehospitals.com

St. John Medical Center*
stjohnmedicalcenter.net

St. Vincent Charity Medical Center
stvincentcharity.com

Independent Physician Solutions
independentphysiciansolutions.com

FOUNDATION MINISTRY

Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton
scfcanton.org

Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland
socfcleveland.org

Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina
sistersofcharitysc.com

ELDER CARE MINISTRY

Light of Hearts Villa*
lightofheartsvilla.org

Regina Health Center
reginahealthcenter.org

OUTREACH MINISTRY

Building Healthy Communities
sistersofcharityhealth.org

Catholic Community Connection*
catholiccommunityconnection.org

Early Childhood Resource Center
ecresourcecenter.org

Healthy Learners
healthylearners.com

Joseph's Home
josephshome.com

South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families
scfathersandfamilies.com

[°] *The hospitals each own supporting organizations, including physician practices and development foundations.*

* *Joint ventures with partners*



The call of the Father, which is reflected in Christ and nourished by the Spirit, continues to find a response in the Sisters of Charity, who, out of the traditions of the past, find meaning for the present and hope for the future.



SISTERS of CHARITY HEALTH SYSTEM

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine

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