

Building On 147 Years: Sisters Of Third Order Of St. Francis Continue Their Legacy

by Shelli Dankoff

December 19 2023 3:01 PM

The Catholic Diocese of Peoria was established in 1875. Bishop Louis Tylka serves as the ninth Bishop of the Diocese of Peoria. The Diocese serves nearly 135,000 Catholics across 26 counties located in North Central Illinois. The Diocese of Peoria has 156 parishes, 13 hospitals, 36 Catholic elementary schools, six Catholic secondary schools and two Catholic PK-12 schools. More information can be found at cdop.org.

Building on their 147-year legacy, The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis have aligned with the Diocese of Peoria to create a Diocesan Public Juridic Person. This step ensures OSF HealthCare continues as a faithful Ministry of the Catholic Church and serves all with the greatest care and love.



“The Sisters have always had a special and collaborative working relationship with the Bishops of Peoria,” said Sister Judith Ann Duvall, O.S.F., Chairperson of the Boards, OSF HealthCare. “At this time in our history, it seems to be a natural transition and part of God’s plan for the sponsorship of our health care apostolate to be under the sponsorship of the Diocesan Public Juridic Person.”

OSF Healthcare Ministries (Diocesan PJP) will assume sponsorship and sole corporate membership of the OSF Healthcare System and ensure that it maintains faithful adherence and continuity as a Catholic Ministry in the tradition and charism of the Founding Sisters. The OSF Healthcare Ministries Board will consist of the five OSF Sisters currently serving on The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis Governing Board and the OSF Healthcare System Board, of which Sister Judith Ann Duvall, O.S.F., serves as chair for both.

“The care of the sick is an important part of the mandate that Christ gave to his disciples. The hard work of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis has resulted in an extraordinary array of health care organizations that reflect and embody the care of the Church and the love of Christ for the sick,” said the Most Rev. Louis Tylka, Bishop of Peoria. “As Bishop of the Diocese of Peoria, I am committed to play a significant role in continuing their dedicated work as a way of assuring the Good News of Christ through their example.”

Operationally, nothing will change across OSF HealthCare or OSF HealthCare Foundation for Mission Partners (employees), patients, or donors. Establishing the Diocesan PJP is anticipated to be completed by fall of 2024.

OSF HealthCare is an integrated health system founded by The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis. Headquartered in Peoria, Illinois, OSF HealthCare has 16 hospitals – 10 acute care, five critical access, and one transitional care - with 2,131 licensed beds throughout Illinois and Michigan. OSF employs nearly 24,000 Mission Partners across 150+ locations; has two colleges of nursing; operates OSF Home Care Services, an extensive network of home health and hospice services; owns Pointcore, Inc., comprised of health care-related businesses; OSF HealthCare Foundation, the philanthropic arm for the organization; and OSF Ventures, which provides investment capital for promising health care innovation startups. In 2020, OSF OnCall, a digital health operating unit that includes a hospital-at-home, was established. OSF OnCall delivers care and services when, where, and how patients prefer to receive them. Fortune has recognized OSF HealthCare as one of the most innovative companies in the country. More at osfhealthcare.org/.

