

OSF HealthCare hosts Sesquicentennial Opening Mass

For The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis

(Wednesday, October 28 | PEORIA, Illinois) – A century and a half of faith, service and compassionate care was celebrated Wednesday, October 28, as OSF HealthCare marked the 150th anniversary of the founding of The [Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis](#).

On October 28, 1876, the founding Sisters arrived in Peoria, Illinois, establishing what would become a legacy of serving others with the greatest care and love. Today honors The Sisters' commitment to their faith and the communities they serve.

To commemorate this historic milestone, OSF HealthCare is hosting special events and Masses across its regional Ministries. A private Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated Wednesday in the Main Chapel of OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, with The Most Rev. Bishop Louis Tylka of the Diocese of Peoria presiding.

The Mass offered an opportunity to reflect on the past 150 years of the OSF HealthCare Ministry, giving thanks to God for the generations of Sisters and Mission Partners who have carried its Mission forward.

For Sister Agnes Joseph Williams, O.S.F., Major Superior of The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis and chairperson of the OSF HealthCare Board of Directors, the anniversary is a powerful reminder of the faith and sacrifice of the founding Sisters.

"We feel it in our hearts. The day makes us remember our founding Sisters and how they came from Germany to Iowa to Peoria, not knowing or having anything. They solely relied on God to direct them and to help them," Sister Agnes Joseph says. "And how all of our Sisters, for the 150 years, have done exactly the same thing. God has not disappointed us, He promised He would be with us, and we're here to serve His people."

While much has changed over the last 150 years, The Sisters' commitment to their founding Mission remains steadfast. That Mission continues through the dedication of OSF HealthCare Mission Partners, who carry out the Sisters' vision of compassionate care each day.

"Our message remains the same, to serve with the greatest care and love. God's blessings will be with us. Our Sisters are faithful to God and the Church. We continually provide training and resources so our Mission Partners understand our Mission and how important it is," Sister Agnes Joseph says. "They're doing God's work, taking care of His people who are in so much need."

The anniversary celebration also recognizes the many individuals who have helped preserve and advance the Sisters' Mission, including those who have spent the last two years preparing for this historic occasion and the commemorative year ahead.

"I'm very thankful for all of God's love, mercy and graces over the last 150 years, and the next 150 to come," Sister Agnes Joseph says. "And to all of our Mission Partners who every day are out there, serving God's people and doing His work. Especially thank you to the committee of many people, who for the last two years, have been preparing for this day and this coming year."

As OSF HealthCare celebrates 150 years of its founding Sisters' legacy, the milestone serves as both a reflection on the past and a renewed commitment to continuing their Mission of serving others with the greatest care and love.

Learn more about the history of OSF HealthCare and The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis at osfhealthcare.org.