



Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother
U.S./Caribbean Province
Provincial Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SISTERS OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER CELEBRATE 125 YEARS

Oshkosh, Wisconsin -- On February 16, 2008, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Assisi, opens a year-long celebration of their 125 years of service to God and the Church.

The international Franciscan order began when Mother Frances Streitel left her native Germany and arrived in Rome on February 16, 1883. She had been waiting for God to give her the opportunity to fulfill what she discerned as her vocational call--to unite the active and contemplative life in a new foundation. On February 18th she wrote: "You shall see that the Lord will let His work prosper and there will be beautiful fruits ripening on this new tree for Holy Church. God be glorified." The new foundation, with just a few sisters following contemplative practices and serving the abandoned children and sick in their homes in Rome, began to flourish giving "beautiful fruit" for 125 years.

By 1889 the sisters had their first mission in America, St. Francis Hospital in Wichita, Kansas. From there they established hospitals, schools or orphanages in Wisconsin, New Jersey, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. At the same time other houses were opened in Italy, Germany, and Austria. In the 1950's when Pope Pious XII called for religious congregations to become missionaries, the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother responded and established houses in Brazil and the West Indies. More recently, in 1993, the sisters began work in the Dominican Republic and in 2006 opened a new mission in Tanzania, Africa.

The U.S./Caribbean Province of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, with offices in Oshkosh., Wisconsin, announces that a variety of events celebrating their 125th anniversary will occur throughout the province during the year of celebration--within the Dominican Republic, Grenada, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago and the United States:

- Sisters and the SSM Associates, lay women and men who have affiliated with the sisters on their spiritual journey since 1983, will gather in geographic locations, February 15 - 17, 2008, to celebrate their contemplative spirit, recall cherished memories, and acknowledge those who planted "the seed" of faith in their lives.
- During the year sisters and associates will celebrate their "presence" at local celebrations in: Denville and Camden, NJ - Milwaukee, Oshkosh and central/northern Wisconsin - Wabasha, MN - Tulsa and Broken Arrow, OK - Wichita, KS - Roswell, NM - Gouyave, Grenada - Vieux Fort, St. Lucia - Chaguanas, Trinidad - Santiago and Elias Piña, Dominican Republic.
- A reunion of sisters, associates and former members is scheduled in July 2008 in Oshkosh, WI.
- Marian Health System, sponsored by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, with health services through Ministry Health Care (Wisconsin, Minnesota), St. John Health System (Oklahoma), Via Christi Health System (Kansas) and St. Clare Hospital (New Jersey) will celebrate their foundations throughout the year. Special acknowledgement of their sponsor will occur during "Mission and Values Week" in September 2008.
- Before the close of the year, the province will announce a special outreach project in thanksgiving for all those who touched the lives of the sisters during their 125 years of service.
- The year will close with local celebrations during the weekend of February 14 - 15, 2009.

Please refer to the attached document, "Historical Background - Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother - U.S./Caribbean Province," for information concerning the presence of SSM in your diocese or location.

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