



Benedictine Bits

Saint Benedict's Monastery and a Health Care Legacy



In addition to expanding the Benedictine Order, establishing schools, and caring for orphans, the Sisters of Saint Benedict's Monastery also founded what we know today as CentraCare St. Cloud Hospital. Deeply devoted to answering the call to care for the sick and elderly, the Benedictine Sisters opened the doors of St. Benedict's Hospital in 1886 with a commitment to "be open to all people irrespective of creed." On April 14 of that same year, a deadly tornado struck Central Minnesota, leaving many injured in its wake. The people of St. Cloud were grateful for the Sisters skill and unwavering care to the tornado victims. This devastating event firmly established their impactful reputation as health care providers. Due to limited capacity, St. Benedict's Hospital quickly became obsolete, paving the way for a new hospital in 1890 renamed St. Raphael's Hospital. Here, the Sisters opened the School of Nursing in 1908 to train the first Sisters and lay nurses for professional licensing. Again, growth fostered the need for another new hospital. With faith, the Sisters borrowed the vast sum of \$2,000,000 (equivalent in 2021 to \$29,557,288) and dedicated the current hospital located on Sixth Avenue North on February 9, 1928, naming it St. Cloud Hospital. In the 1960's the Sisters separately incorporated St. Cloud Hospital from the Benedictine Order and then deeded ownership of the hospital's land, buildings, and equipment for one dollar. Although the Benedictine Sisters gave the hospital over to the civic community, they remain a presence in health care through the continued membership of two Sisters on the corporate board.

