

St. Mary's Hospital joins largest non-profit health system

By Karen M. Franz

"Think National" is the informal slogan of the Daughters of Charity National Health System, a newly formed network that includes Rochester's St. Mary's Hospital.

The system consists of 43 facilities, making it the second-largest investor-owned health network in the nation. Taken together, the hospitals have 14,691 beds, more than any similar system.

Thus, if the Daughters of Charity "think national," they have great power, said Sister Irene Kraus, president and chief executive officer of the system.

Sister Irene visited St. Mary's on Friday, January 9, to introduce the hospital staff to the system's philosophy and the advantages it holds for member hospitals.

Combined purchasing, a combined savings of \$1 million through the formation of a "captive" insurance agency, increased cooperation and other innovations will strengthen the economic position of the order's ministry, Sister Irene explained.

Through the system, member hospitals "can link service with profit, service with commerce, ministry with industry. We cannot operate without both," she said.

"Our system wants to be market-driven, but it needs to be mission-driven. No



Sister Irene Kraus

(financial) margin means no mission."

For St. Mary's outgoing president and chairman of the board Sister Mary Alice Roach, the system's biggest advantages are "the support and expertise of the kinds of people who are involved in this system on the national, regional and local levels."

Daughters of Charity hospitals had previously received similar but less-extensive benefits through a central purchasing office and the meetings of regional associations. Yet, as Sister Mary Alice put it, "meeting is one thing, but being able to call on someone's expertise is another."

Although membership in the system was mandatory for Daughters of Charity hospitals, Sister Mary Alice said she had long supported the formation of such a network. "I don't think any hospital can stand alone today," she said.

"I personally feel (the system) is well-received," Sister Mary Alice continued. "It's a positive step for the Daughters to take. I think it's going to help broaden our vision for the future. The real goal is to help us continue to fulfill our mission. If we didn't have a mission that identified us with the poor, we might not even need to do this."

The Daughters of Charity — whose official motto is "The charity of Christ compels us" — were founded in Paris in 1633 by St. Vincent dePaul. In 1639, the Daughters took over the administration of St. Jean Hospital in Angers, France. "So you see, we've been in hospital administra-

tion for over 350 years," Sister Irene remarked.

Noting that Pope John Paul II had instructed the Daughters of Charity to maintain their identity "come wind and high waters," Sister Irene explained that the order's identity "is service, but service in the 20th century.

"We must have a system," she continued. "Our heritage must be preserved, enhanced." And without a system, some of the Daughters of Charity hospitals might not survive.

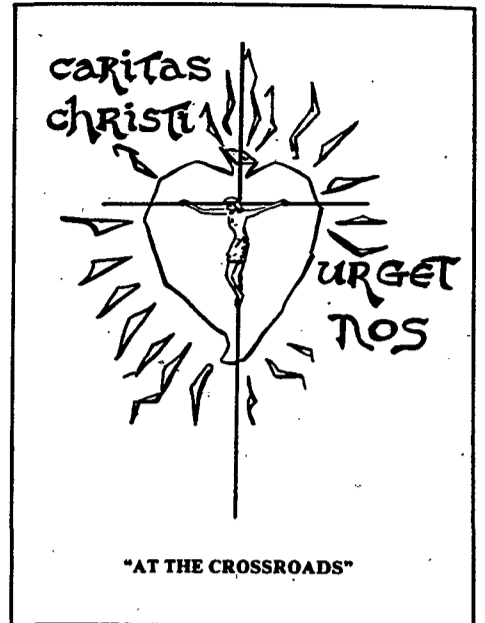
Likening individual hospitals to parts of a ship, Sister Irene noted that although the engine or rudder would sink if tossed into the sea alone, they would float if they worked together.

Thus, Sister Irene said, the mission of the Daughters of Charity National Health System is to create an integrated organization that will ensure the survival of the order's hospitals; to function as a not-for-profit system committed to Gospel values; to demonstrate a special concern for the poor; and to be faithful to the examples of St. Vincent dePaul, St. Louise de Marillac and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

In order to fulfill this mission, a task force of 15 sisters worked for a year and one-half formulating a plan to be submitted to the five provincial superiors of the order. One of the task force's primary objectives was to design a system that contained as little bureaucratic red tape as possible.

"We don't want a bureaucracy," Sister Irene explained, "but we do have to realize that no individual is greater than the whole."

Therefore the system allows member hospitals to retain the ability to make quick decisions without getting approval at several levels, Sister Irene said. This type of management was developed so as not to stifle "motivated, innovative, creative people" who might feel they had no say in an



operation whose policies are dictated from above, she said.

Decisions will be made at the lowest possible levels, she noted, and the system's structure centralizes power at the level of the local hospital's board of directors, transferring to these local boards some power that had previously been held at the regional level.

Even so, Sister Mary Alice acknowledged that member hospitals will encounter some drawbacks in the new system. "Some things we're going to have to give up," she said. "We're not going to be able to make some decisions independently."

But Sister Mary Alice isn't concerned about this slight loss of autonomy, because, as she observed, Sister Irene has been a hospital administrator since 1955, and knows "what it's like to be on the front line."

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Area churches celebrate King's dream

Because Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a man of faith as well as a civil rights leader and advocate for social change, church communities around the diocese are marking his birthday by scheduling events throughout the month of January.

City and county officials have appointed a Martin Luther King Jr. Greater Rochester Festival Commission to coordinate events in Monroe County. The commission has chosen as its theme "A Community Uniting through Love."

The commission has suggested several ways individuals can celebrate on Monday, January 19, the national holiday designated in honor of Dr. King's birthday. Suggestions vary from flying the American flag to turning the car lights on at noon, from reflecting on the principles of racial equality to personally pledging to help achieve peace and freedom through nonviolent social change.

Listed below are a few of the highlights of this year's celebration.

January 15

Fifth annual Martin Luther King Jr. Banquet; Rev. Derrick King, a nephew of Dr. King and alumnus of Colgate Rochester Divinity School, featured speaker; Mapledale Party House, 1020 Maple Street, Rochester; 6:30 p.m.; call (716)271-1320.

January 16

Second annual Martin Luther King Jr. Lecture; Dr. Aldon D. Morris, featured speaker; Colgate Rochester Divinity School auditorium, 1100 S. Goodman Street; 3 p.m.; free; call (716)271-1320, ext. 250.

Assembly of song and drama; Nazareth Academy, 1001 Lake Avenue; 1:50-2:30 p.m.; free; call (716)458-8583.

Parishes sending buses to Washington for annual life march

It's not too late to make reservations to attend the 14th Annual March for Life on Thursday, January 22, in Washington, D.C.

Buses will leave Wednesday evening from several Genesee Valley and Southern Tier-area parishes, including St. Theodore's, Gates; St. John of Rochester, Fairport; and St. Margaret Mary, Apalachin. The Knights

of Columbus are also sponsoring Catholic high school students who want to make the trip.

For information or reservations, call Dee Dries, (716)334-7562; Pat Brockmyre, (716)425-2937; Patty Gabello, (607)757-9720; or Jim St. George at the Knights of Columbus, (716)436-8240.

January 18

Gospel songfest; Aeon Baptist Church, 175 Genesee St.; 6 p.m.; free.

Commemorative Peace March to Atlanta (N.Y.); 1:30-4 p.m.; begins at Cohocton Presbyterian Church; ends at Atlanta Presbyterian Church (5 miles) with refreshments and worship service.

January 19

Monroe County Interfaith Service; Rochester Riverside Convention Center; 9 a.m.-noon; worship, reception, brunch; call (716)271-1320.

January 22

"Martin Luther King Jr. — We Are the Dream;" dramatic performance by Al Eaton; Rochester City Hall Atrium, 30 Church Street; 7:30 p.m.; free; also January 21 at 8 p.m. in Xerox Auditorium; tickets, \$10; also televised by WHEC-TV, Channel 10, January 23 and January 24; call (716)546-5670.

January 25

International worship service; Rev. Leslie Braxton, guest minister; University of Rochester Interfaith Chapel; free; call (716)275-4321.

For more complete information about any of these events or a more complete listing, contact the Martin Luther King Jr. Greater Rochester Festival Commission at (716)275-7212.

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