

REFLECTIONS

&  
*Connections*



STORIES OF MISSION  
& MINISTRY



**CSA**

Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes  
Promoting Justice, Building Community

# CSA STATEMENT OF MISSION

WE, THE SISTERS OF ST. AGNES, participate in the mission of Christ by joyful service in the Church, always aware that we, too, are among the needy and are enriched by those we serve. Inspired by our founders—by the missionary zeal of Father Caspar Rehrl, the courageous initiatives of Mother Agnes Hazotte, and the spiritual influence of Father Francis Haas—we continue to respond in our own times to those whose faith life or human dignity is threatened.

Rooted in Christ through prayer and worship we serve in both rural and urban settings throughout the United States and in Latin America. We strive to minister with simplicity and hospitality in the fields of

education, health care, pastoral ministry and social service.

We are committed to transformation of the world, the church, and ourselves through promoting

- systemic change for the quality of life
- justice for the economically poor
- furtherance of the role of women in church and society
- mutuality, inclusivity, and collaboration.

Love binds us together, and by sharing our lives and our faith in community, we support one another to live with singleness of purpose: that among us and in our world the Risen Christ be discovered and revealed.

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### PHOTO CREDITS

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# Former Student Learned about

# Leadership and

# Supports Sisters' Ministries

“The sisters have been a part of my life since I was very young, as teachers, administrators, and friends,” shared Sara Andrew, a former student of the Sisters of St. Agnes and long-time financial supporter of CSA ministries. “Their mission focuses on serving people in need with a special emphasis on women and empowerment. They were such a positive example of leadership for me and helped me to understand that women can make a difference in the name of God.”

For the past five years, Sara served as a member of the CSA Development Advisory Board, sharing her talents and expertise as an estate-planning attorney and helping to guide the efforts to build a solid financial foundation for sustaining the ministries of the sisters. “Looking back on my early years, it’s hard to think of a time that I didn’t have daily interactions with the sisters – from my first grade math tutor to my boss at my first job. The sisters have always been there as leaders and role models, living a Christ-centered life.

“Making a strong connection to others and treating people with dignity, compassion, and respect is a common thread that flows through every aspect of their work and their relationships. I choose to support the congregation because the sisters have touched my life personally, and they continue to work to touch the lives of others through their ministries. My work with the board and financial gifts are simple ways that I can be a part of the important work that they do.”



Sara Andrew attended the Catholic grade and high schools in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where the sisters have taught and administered for more than a century. She served on the CSA Development Advisory Board for five years and has been a long-time financial supporter of CSA ministries.





# Monroe Clinic Opens Green Hospital

One of several nature walks for staff, visitors, and community members to enjoy at Monroe Clinic.

Bradford Pear trees in bloom near the exit for surgical patients.

**O**n March 24, Monroe Clinic, sponsored by the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes, opened the doors of its new green hospital. It is one of the first hospitals in Wisconsin to earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, an internationally recognized standard for measuring building sustainability. Highly efficient and environmentally friendly building materials were used throughout the facility. In addition, 5267 tons or 93% of construction waste was recycled.

“The new facility is embedded with the fingerprints of hundreds of employees and physicians,” said Sister Mary



Noel Brown, CSA, executive leader of sponsorship for the Congregation of Sisters of Saint Agnes. “The physical space and features embody Monroe Clinic’s philosophy to heal body, mind and spirit. It also reflects their mission—working together to achieve the highest standards in health care, we create healthy communities through God’s healing spirit.”

“Our two-fold goal was to design a patient-centered and environmentally friendly hospital that supports modern health care, and to enhance the healing process by incorporating art, beauty, and nature throughout the facility,” said Jane Weldon, vice president of mission integration and clinic operations.

The design of the clinic focuses on a connection with nature. Its three rooftop gardens and the panoramic view of rolling hills from patient rooms and the rooftop café offer patients, visitors, and employees a calming and healing vista.

Monroe’s St. Clare Hospital was built in 1939 by the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes. In 1992 it consolidated its services with the Monroe Clinic, becoming known as Monroe Clinic. “What hasn’t changed since the very beginning is the commitment the sisters brought with them to the region—to serve all people, including the poor and vulnerable,” said Mike Sanders, Monroe Clinic president and CEO.



After more than five years of planning and construction, the new hospital at Monroe Clinic opened on March 24, 2012.

## Sister Mary Ann Schippers *Hays, Kansas*



Sister Mary Ann Schippers with her brother in nursing home.

“I would like to go to the highest mountain and shout my appreciation for everything. We have so much in the United States,” Sister Mary Ann Schippers stated when asked about living and ministering in Siberia, Russia, for eight years.

After having been an educator teaching mostly primary grades for 38 years, Sister Mary Ann said “yes” in 1994 to joining two CSA members to live and minister in Russia. “We had very little language preparation prior to leaving. I grew up speaking a little German and the people in the part of Russia we were going to spoke a type of German called ‘Volga German’ in addition to Russian. Going to a foreign mission is a totally unique experience. I am grateful I went—it left a lasting impression on my life,” shared Sister Mary Ann.

Upon returning to the United States in 2001, Sister Mary Ann went back to her roots in Hays, Kansas. For over seven years she worked among the elderly at St. John’s Healthcare Center. “Many elderly are truly the forgotten members in our society,” she said.

“Sister Mary Ann is a presence of grace. She prays with our residents. She walks down the hallways and greets each one by name. She brings her gentle warmth and her smiles to those who need comforting,” said Renee Davison, Administrator of St. John’s.

Currently Sister Mary Ann works for the Senior Companion Program continuing to help the elderly and handicapped.

Discerning the

# Thin Place

In John Shea's *Finding the Thin Place* is the following short story:

*A woman returned from a trip to the isle of Iona. When her gardener heard where she was, he quietly said, "Iona is a thin place."*

*"A thin place?" she asked.*

*"There is very little between it and God," the gardener explained.*



Shea questioned, *"Are there thin places where the usual thickness between the sacred and the profane is only a fine membrane?"*

Indeed, there are moments in life when we experience that fine membrane—waiting for medical test results, or receiving notification of the death of a loved one, those times when we feel vulnerable and we ask, "What if God were in that 'thin place' all along?" Seeking the courage to accept that grace and realizing that we are not alone is finding that "thin place."

Just as the child in the womb rests before moving into the birth canal, we are each "pre-programmed" with an inner knowledge of the need to rest while transitioning from a place of comfort to one of new life and surprises. This is that "thin place" where we find God.

The process of discernment is a similar transition, when we rest before moving from darkness to light, from cloudiness to clarity, from doubt to certainty. It is in those places and at those times that we learn deep within our beings that there is very little between ourselves and God.



# CSA and Human Trafficking

It should come as no surprise that CSA would be on the forefront to work against human trafficking. Already in 1889 the sisters provided safe shelter to German women traveling alone lest they be exploited after arriving by ship in Lower Manhattan.

Since 2001, when CSA and six other congregations established UNANIMA International, a non-governmental organization (NGO) at the United Nations, its focus on women and children was carried out through anti-trafficking work, especially the “Stop the Demand! Campaign.”

To formalize their commitment to anti-trafficking work, on the Feast of St. Agnes, 2007, CSA took a corporate stance, meaning that they publicly stated, “The Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes stands in solidarity with the victims of human trafficking and takes a corporate stance against the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation.”

Despite efforts around the world, the demand to buy sex continues to increase. Pornography, prostitution, and human trafficking are all connected. The average length of time from downloading child porn to sexually assaulting a child is one year (*Gail Dines*). Porn is a \$4 billion a year business and rates of addiction to porn (now at 20%) continue to rise.

The average age of a girl entering prostitution is 12-14. There are now more domestic girls trafficked than those brought into the U.S. from foreign countries.

Wherever prostitution exists, legally or illegally, human trafficking increases. Major contributing factors have not changed, they are poverty and patriarchy.

We can focus on reducing the demand to buy sex.

[http://www.csasisters.org/pdfs/justice/what\\_can\\_i\\_do.pdf](http://www.csasisters.org/pdfs/justice/what_can_i_do.pdf) offers suggestions.



## Associates

### Explore “The Christian Contemplative Tradition”

In Hays, Kansas, a group of twenty CSA associates and sisters has met regularly to explore a program titled “The Christian Contemplative Tradition.” There are 24 topics drawing from the wisdom of such spiritual leaders as Catherine of Siena, Meister Eckhart, Thomas Aquinas O.P., Thomas Merton, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Augustine, and others.

“As we have met I think we have all become inspired to include a contemplative stance in our prayers and daily actions. In our discussions we have shared that letting go and surrendering to the NOW is a vital part of our spiritual growth and one of the ways to come to God,” said Carol Heiman.

Contemplative prayer is the opening of the mind and heart - one’s whole being to God. It is a process of interior transformation. The practice of contemplation dates back over 2,000 years. For associate Sheila Boos, it has been an acknowledgement that we are all called to be holy. “Through our time together we understand that prayer, love, and service to others are some of the ways we can live God’s call in our lives.”

According to Janice Collins, “We are committed to ongoing spiritual development and personal growth. This program has deepened my prayer and made me aware not to be so involved in the world that I lose my Christian identity.”



Seated left to right: Sister Mary Louise Pfannenstiel, Sister Paul Ann Dinkel, Sheila Boos, Millie Karlin, and Janice Collins. Standing left to right: Sister Ronald Meis, Dolores Leiker, and Sister Mary Ann Schippers.



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**Ways to connect with CSA:**

CSA web site:

<http://www.csasisters.org/>

What's Happening at the UN:

<http://whatshappeningattheun.blogspot.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)

Some Call Me Sis:

<http://somecallmesis.blogspot.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)

Streams 'N Stirrings, Sister Jean:

(in the front page of our web site)

Vocation E-Newsletter

(in the front page of our web site)

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/csasisters?sk=wall>

(in the front page of our web site)

YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/TheCSAChannel>

(in the front page of our web site)



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Please take a moment and share your responses to the following questions. Your insights will better enable us to continue to share the CSA story in the best way possible. An addressed envelope has been provided to return your response to us.

How long have you been receiving publications from the  
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes?

less than 5 years    more than 5 years    more than 10 years

What publications did you receive in the past? Circle any you recall:

*Women of Spirit*, or *Blessings*, or *JustPeace*, or *Sponsorship Update*

Over the past year the above four publications have been combined  
into one titled *CSA Reflections and Connections*.

Do you read *CSA Reflections and  
Connections*?

Yes    No    Sometimes

Do you share it with friends or family?

Yes    No    Sometimes



Please comment :

CSA's *Reflections and Connections* is

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I offer the following suggestion(s):

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Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

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Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for taking a few minutes to share your  
observations with us!**

To fill out the survey online, visit: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dE1XMEITc2M4NnREYWJQaUFRbDQ2MkE6MQ>  
Or email [csaadmin@csasisters.org](mailto:csaadmin@csasisters.org) for the survey link.