

Saint CLARE

➔ BEACON FOR A NEW HEALTH CARE REALITY

St. Clare was born in 1194 in Assisi, Italy, the daughter of an Italian count. From her earliest years, Clare was devoted to prayer. When St. Francis came to preach at her church in Assisi, his inspiring words enkindled a flame in her heart. On the night of Palm Sunday, March 20, 1212, she left the luxury of her father's castle to follow a life of profound faith, unwavering courage and enduring compassion — all in service of others.

Like St. Clare, we have chosen to follow a different path as we replace SSM St. Joseph Hospital of Kirkwood with an innovative health care campus in southwest St. Louis County. Our vision:

We will fundamentally reinvent the health care experience from the ground up for patients, physicians and staff to achieve breakthrough results in satisfaction, patient safety, clinical outcomes and operating performance.

SSM St. Joseph Hospital's staff also endorsed a "Declaration of Innovation" with these commitments:

- ➔ ACT COURAGEOUSLY
- ➔ BE BOLDLY CREATIVE
- ➔ LEAVE OUR BIASES, ASSUMPTIONS AND OLD HABITS BEHIND
- ➔ LEARN FROM OTHERS AND ADVANCE THAT LEARNING
- ➔ SEEK THE TRANSFORMATION OF HEALTH CARE

Because the events of St. Clare's life so embodied these commitments, there is no one better than St. Clare to be our beacon of light as we create a new health care reality for those we are so privileged to serve.

— *continued on back*

clear
brilliant
bright

➔ ACT COURAGEOUSLY

On the night Clare secretly left her home, she proceeded to a humble chapel, where St. Francis and his disciples met her with glowing torches in their hands. Clare then laid aside her rich dress, and St. Francis clothed her in a rough tunic and a thick veil. Thus, the young Clare vowed herself to the service of Jesus Christ.

Her family was furious. Her family, who had expected Clare to marry into wealth and prestige, even tried to drag her home by force. But with courage beyond her years, Clare held her own, and her family finally relented, allowing her to live the life to which she was called.

➔ BE BOLDLY CREATIVE

“LIVE a SIMPLE LIFE and REACH OUT TO THE POOR THROUGH a DEEP, ABIDING LOVE OF THE SAVIOR” — CLARE OF ASSISI

Clare formed her own community of sisters — the first community of the Order of Poor Ladies, better known as the Poor Clares. Throughout Europe, wherever the followers of St. Francis established their mission, there, too, were the Poor Clares. Depending solely on alms, with complete faith in God providing for them, the Poor Clares — to this day — have been a visible and dramatic witness to their faith.

St. Clare and her companions had no written rules beyond the vow of absolute poverty given them by St. Francis. So radical, so impractical was this vow for cloistered women that Pope Gregory demanded that the sisters give up this principle. Clare firmly refused. “Holy Father,” she said, “I desire not to be absolved from the obligation of following Jesus Christ.” Filled with admiration, the pope agreed with her view and gave his blessing to what is called the “Rule of Clare.”

➔ LEAVE OUR BIASES, ASSUMPTIONS AND OLD HABITS BEHIND

Walking barefoot, sleeping on the ground, abstaining from meat, and speaking only when necessary were unheard of

habits for women of this time. Yet, Clare and her companions practiced these sacrifices in the name of God, and to be more available and generous in their service to those in need.

Clare let go of her privilege and wanted only to serve. She tended the sick; she anointed the feet of her sisters when they returned footsore from begging; and she daily served others at the table.

➔ LEARN FROM OTHERS AND ADVANCE THAT LEARNING

It is likely that without St. Clare, the Franciscan movement would not be as it is today. She and her sisters gave a steady presence to the early followers of St. Francis and helped them remain faithful to his vision. For centuries, her love of Christ, poverty, prayer and penance has provided guidance and inspiration to the Franciscan family and people of all faiths.

➔ SEEK THE TRANSFORMATION OF HEALTH CARE

Transformation was the constant theme of Clare’s life. Her widowed mother and sister joined Clare’s way of life. So, too, did Blessed Agnes, daughter of the King of Bohemia, who established a convent of Clare’s order in Prague, herself becoming a Poor Clare. And, as it was for Francis himself, Clare’s mission from Jesus Christ was ultimately to “rebuild the Church.” Similarly, the hospital that will bear Clare’s name is being designed to fundamentally reinvent the health care experience.

➔ a FOUNDATION OF STRENGTH

SSM St. Joseph Hospital’s history of providing quality health care and devoted community service, begun in 1954 under the leadership of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, forms a deep and strong foundation on which to advance our mission. The hospital’s rich CSJ and SSM heritage is embodied in the hospital’s theme: Proud of our past. Passionate about our future. That heritage of strength and confidence is our bedrock for the beacon of a new health care reality, so wonderfully named after St. Clare of Assisi.

O WONDROUS BLESSED CLARITY OF CLARE! IN LIFE SHE SHONE TO A FEW; AFTER DEATH SHE SHINES ON THE WHOLE WORLD! ON EARTH SHE WAS A CLEAR LIGHT; NOW IN HEAVEN SHE IS A BRILLIANT SUN. — POPE INNOCENT IV