



## Cluster: a Dominican journey in faith

### A Brief History of the Cluster Process

Each of the uniting seven congregations embarked on this journey in faith we called “Cluster” for various reasons and at different times. Some had longstanding congregational directives to pursue collaborative endeavors; others accepted the invitation to discuss the options with the simple notion of keeping the door to possibilities open. All of our congregations at one point or another looked to our future and realized that we might better serve our mission by joining others who share our common call.

The Cluster initially arose through the Dominican Alliance, a collaboration of Dominican Sisters in which our congregations all participate. As a result of discussion at an Alliance meeting, leaders from the Akron and Columbus congregations began conversations about doing more together. Soon, New Orleans St. Mary expressed an interest and was invited to join in the conversation. These three congregations initially formed the Dominican Cluster.

In March 2001, the Leadership teams of the original congregations began meeting regularly to discuss ways to collaborate and share internal ministries. They formulated a mission statement and appointed a committee to coordinate these efforts.

In the summer of 2003, other congregations of Dominican Sisters were invited to explore the possibility of becoming part of the Cluster discussions. The Eucharistic Missionaries of New Orleans soon joined

the group, followed by the Kentucky, Oxford, and Great Bend congregations. Representatives from each congregation soon served on the coordinating committee and its various subcommittees working on tasks to move the Cluster exploration forward.

The seven congregations embarked on a seven-cycle discernment process designed to engage all Sisters. Through congregational meetings, intercongregational gatherings, study materials, reflection booklets, prayer rituals, and many other avenues, we explored together the ways we could collaboratively advance our common mission. We discussed facets of Dominican life and mission, shared our dreams and fears, and brainstormed ideas for structures that could address our needs.

After years of prayer, discussion, and discernment, the congregations held Chapter meetings in the spring of 2007, where each congregation voted in favor of petitioning the Holy See for permission to form a new congregation together. With the congregational decisions made, each Sister was then asked to make a personal decision through a Statement of Intent process. The results of these, along with various other required documents, were sent in a petition to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in Rome at the end of September. The letter of approval was dated November 7, 2007 – the Feast of All Dominican Saints.

### *Dioceses and Archdioceses Where We Live and Minister*

Baltimore, MD • Baton Rouge, LA • Beaumont, TX • Boston, MA • Brooklyn, NY • Brownsville, TX • Carcassonne (France) • Chicago, IL • Chimbote (Peru) • Cincinnati, OH • Cleveland, OH • Columbus, OH • Davenport, IA • Denver, CO • Detroit, MI • Dodge City, KS • Fort Wayne-South Bend, IN • Gallup, NM • Gary, IN • Grand Island, NE • Green Bay, WI • Hartford, CT • Houma-Thibodaux, LA • Jackson, MS • Kaduna (Nigeria) • Kansas City-St Joseph, MO • Lafayette, LA • Lansing, MI • Las Cruces, NM • Lincoln, NE • Louisville, KY • Mayagüez (Puerto Rico) • Memphis, TN • Milwaukee, WI • New Orleans, LA • New York, NY • Ogdensburg, NY • Oklahoma City, OK • Omaha, NE • Palm Beach, FL • Philadelphia, PA • Phoenix, AZ • Pittsburgh, PA • Portland, OR • Providence, RI • Pueblo, CO • Saginaw, MI • St. Petersburg, FL • Salina, KS • San Pedro Sula (Honduras) • Santa Fe, NM • Seattle, WA • Shreveport, LA • Springfield, MA • Springfield-Cape Girardeau, MO • Toledo, OH • Tucson, AZ • Wheeling-Charleston, WV • Wichita, KS • Worcester, MA • Youngstown, OH

# Seven Communities Unite

The Leadership Teams of the seven communities recently decided that Columbus, Ohio, would be the location for the administrative offices of leadership, finance, communications, development, information technology, and human resources. In addition, it has been determined that the state where the new congregation will be civilly incorporated will be Kentucky. The name of the new congregation and the locations of other ministerial departments have yet to be deter-

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mined. These decisions and others are being addressed collaboratively during this interim period before the formation of the new community. A Transition Team, comprised of one representative from each congregation, is coordinating the work of moving forward the process toward union.

The official foundation date for the new congregation is planned to be Easter Sunday 2009. The first General Chapter (canonical meeting for congregational decision-making) will be held shortly thereafter, at which, among other decisions to be made, a new Leadership Team will be elected.

Currently, our congregations have a combined 730 vowed Sisters and about 500 Associates (women and men who share in the mission of the congregations but do not take vows) serving in 36 states and in Puerto Rico, France, Honduras, Peru, and Nigeria.



**The seven prioresses/presidents prayed for their congregations before signing the documents to be sent to Rome.**

## Our Combined Sponsored and Supported Institutions

Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, CT – *founded by the Columbus congregation*

Catholic Health Initiatives (health care system of 60 hospitals, including three *founded by the Great Bend congregation*) in Denver, CO

Cedar Park Place (apartment housing for low-income seniors in Great Bend, KS) – *founded by the Great Bend congregation*

Clausen Manor (Alzheimer's special care center in Waterford, MI) – *founded by the Oxford congregation*

Crown Point Ecology Center (earth center in Bath, OH) – *founded by the Akron congregation*

Crystal Spring Center for Ecology, Spirituality, and Education (earth center in Plainville, MA) – *founded by the Kentucky congregation*

Dominican Academy (for girls, grades 9-12 in New York, NY) – *founded by the Columbus congregation*

Dominican Conference Center (retreat/conference center in New Orleans, LA) – *founded by the New Orleans St. Mary congregation*

Dominican Earth Center in St. Catharine, KY – *founded by the Kentucky congregation*

Dominican Learning Center (literacy center in Columbus, OH) – *founded by the Columbus congregation*

Fox Manor (independent living apartments for the elderly in Waterford, MI) – *founded by the Oxford congregation*

Heartland Center for Spirituality (retreat/conference center in Great Bend, KS) – *founded by the Great Bend congregation*

Heartland Center for Wholistic Health (health care center in Great Bend, KS) – *founded by the Great Bend congregation*

Heartland Farm (earth center in Pawnee Rock, KS) – *founded by the Great Bend congregation*

Liebenhaus of Contemplation (retreat house in Liebenenthal, KS) – *founded by the Great Bend congregation*

Lourdes Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center (licensed skilled health center for the elderly in Waterford, MI) – *founded by the Oxford congregation*

Martin de Porres Center (outreach/conference center in Columbus, OH) – *founded by the Columbus congregation*

▼ **Mendelson Home for Assisted Living** (apartments for the elderly in Waterford, MI) – *founded by the Oxford congregation*

Mohun Health Care Center (licensed health center for the elderly in Columbus, OH) – *founded by the Columbus congregation*



# Looking Ahead

St. Louis, Missouri, “Gateway to the West,” is becoming the site where pioneering Dominican women religious temporarily encamp during their journey in faith. St. Louis is the site of the Collaborative Dominican Novitiate. And, before petitioning Rome’s approval to combine seven congregations into a new eighth one, 300 of our Sisters met twice in St. Louis for discernment.

Sisters from the uniting congregations will again meet in St. Louis October 30-November 2, 2008, the weekend of All Saints, for a Pre-Chapter Assembly to set directions for our shared life and mission.

Then, on April 14, 2009, we will return with many friends to celebrate with great festivity the founding of the new congregation.

The next day, the first General Chapter (canonical meeting for decision-making) of the congregation will commence, where delegates will meet for seven days to refine our mission focus, approve official governance documents, and elect leadership.

As we prepare for our upcoming events in St. Louis, we are also planning Intercongregational Gatherings in New Orleans and Columbus this summer.

## Timeline at a Glance

<b>June 20-22, 2008</b>	<b>Intercongregational Gathering in New Orleans</b>
<b>July 18-20, 2008</b>	<b>Intercongregational Gathering in Columbus</b>
<b>Oct 30-Nov 2, 2008</b>	<b>Pre-Chapter Assembly in St. Louis</b>
<b>April 12, 2009</b>	<b>Foundation Day (Easter Sunday)</b>
<b>April 14, 2009</b>	<b>Founding Celebration in St. Louis &amp; at Motherhouses</b>
<b>April 15-21, 2009</b>	<b>First General Chapter in St. Louis</b>

Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena in Gusau, Nigeria – *founded by the Great Bend congregation*

Ohio Dominican University in Columbus, OH) – *founded by the Columbus congregation*

Our Lady of the Elms School (for girls, grades pre-K through 12 in Akron, OH) – *founded by the Akron congregation*

Rosary Academy Learning Center (pre-K through K in Watertown, MA) – *founded by the Kentucky congregation*

Rosaryville Spirit-Life Center (retreat/conference center in Ponchatoula, LA) – *founded by the New Orleans St. Mary congregation*

St. Agnes Academy-St. Dominic School (grades pre-K through 12 in Memphis, TN) – *founded by the Kentucky congregation*

St. Catharine College in St. Catharine, KY – *founded by the Kentucky congregation*

St. Catharine Farm (earth center in St. Catharine, KY) – *founded by the Kentucky congregation*

St. Joseph Hall (apartments housing for low-income seniors in Watertown, MA) – *founded by the Kentucky congregation*



← **St. Mary’s Dominican High School** (for girls, grades 8-12 in New Orleans, LA) – *founded by the New Orleans St. Mary congregation*

St. Mary’s Retreat House (retreat house in Oxford, MI) – *founded by the Oxford congregation*

Sansbury Care Center (licensed health center for the elderly in St. Catharine, KY) – *founded by the Kentucky congregation*

Shepherd’s Corner (earth center in Blacklick, OH) – *founded by the Columbus congregation*

**Springs Learning Center** (literacy center in New Haven, CT) – *founded by the Columbus congregation* ▼



# Seven Communities of Dominican Sisters to Unite

Seven congregations of Catholic Dominican Sisters, with motherhouses in five states, have received permission from the Holy See to unite into one new congregation of Dominican Sisters. The seven congregations are:

Dominican Congregation of St. Rose of Lima (Oxford, Michigan)

Dominican Sisters, Congregation of St. Mary (New Orleans, Louisiana)

Dominican Sisters of Great Bend, Kansas

Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs (Columbus, Ohio)

Dominicans of St. Catharine (St. Catharine, Kentucky)

Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic (New Orleans, Louisiana)

Sisters of St. Dominic of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Akron, Ohio)

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