



BECAUSE *we are* CATHOLIC

Stella Maris: Caring for the Sick for More than 60 years

Yesterday was World Day of the Sick, an annual observance initiated by Pope John Paul II in 1992 that encourages people to pray for those who suffer from illness and for their caregivers. The day provides an important opportunity to reflect on how integral the ministry of caring for the sick is to the Church.

For more than 60 years Stella Maris, a nonprofit, long-term care facility in Timonium, has provided health and residential services for the care of the elderly from retirement through the end of life.

“We work very hard here to promote the mission and the core values of the Sisters of Mercy which are dignity, hospitality, justice, excellence, stewardship and prayer,” said Sister Karen McNally, RSM, and the Chief Administrative Officer at Stella Maris. “We go from the well elderly to the aging to the terminally ill. We also do rehabilitation services so there is a broad spectrum with inpatient and long-term care. We have every service for the elderly except assisted living.”

While Pope John Paul II was influential in making World Day of the Sick a reality, Archbishop Francis Keough was prominent in making Stella Maris happen. Known as the Archbishop of the poor due to his dedication to orphans and the aged, Keough invited the Sisters of Mercy to administer Stella Maris in 1953. Today it is a 412-bed facility, the second-largest long-term care facility in Maryland.

“His vision was to provide all of the Archdiocesan services on one property,” added McNally. “In the late 1940’s, he purchased the property from the Lanahan Family. There were a lot of orphanages in the city and he combined all of them into Villa Maria at the time. He then built Stella Maris for services for the elderly. In 1953, there was no funding for services for elderly. That was prior to Medicare and Medicaid so money was raised through campaigns in the

Archdiocese. He was a visionary. We have tried to continue that philosophy of always trying to be ahead of the game.”

McNally has been a major player as Stella Maris has grown and adapted to the changing landscape of health care. She arrived in 1969 as a staff nurse and climbed the corporate ladder as Director of Nursing, assistant administrator, associate administrator, Chief Operating Officer before being promoted to Chief Administrative Officer in 1997.



Sr. Karen McNally, RSM

“I try to make a difference in lives. Not only to our patients but to the families and our employees,” McNally said. “When we started to see health care services for the elderly were focusing from inpatient to community based, we started the hospice program in 1983. We were the fifth in the country and the second in the state to be Medicare certified for hospice. We had to start a home health agency in order to do that. That began our outreach for services in the community. Stella Maris is meant to be home away from home for those who cannot be at home. We worked to make it as much as a home as possible and will continue to try to do that. On any given day, we have 370 to 380 patients that we are caring for to transitional and long-term care.

“Our mission statement tells the whole story. Like the Sisters of Mercy before us, we witness God’s healing love for all people by providing excellent clinical and residential services within a community of compassionate care.” [For additional information click here.](#)

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MARYLAND SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC.