



NEWS RELEASE

November 18, 2022

Communications Contact: Fr. Daniele Muscolino
d.muscolino@ssmd.ca | 705-495-1501

DIOCESE WELCOMES RELIGIOUS SISTERS TO ELLIOT LAKE *Religious Sisters to provide spiritual and health care at St. Joseph General Hospital*

ELLIOT LAKE, ON - Bishop Thomas Dowd of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie announced Thursday evening that a partnership with the St. Joseph General Hospital Elliot Lake (SJGHEL) will see five Catholic Sisters support hospital patients with both spiritual and health care.

The nuns, from the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus, who provide care in several countries in Africa, Europe and North America, will arrive in Elliot Lake in the near future to begin ministry within the local hospital.

The work of the Congregation, originally beginning in Nigeria in 1923, was first welcomed to Canada in 2005 by the Catholic Archdiocese of Saint Boniface in Manitoba. Since their arrival in Manitoba, the Sisters have done pastoral work, particularly in Indigenous communities, as well as worked in schools and in health care as nurses.

“Our invitation to Sisters of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus to Elliot Lake was to help meet the needs of the local community,” said Bishop Dowd. “The Church has a role to play in providing care to all peoples, and this is just one way that the Church can contribute our support to hospital patients and staff alike.”

“SJGHEL is thrilled to be a part of this forward-thinking initiative,” stated Jeremy Stevenson, CEO of the St. Joseph General Hospital, “this innovative partnership will be a wonderful addition to both our hospital and all those we serve. I am confident that our community will welcome the Sisters with open hearts.”

“The Sisters are excited to arrive in Elliot Lake to begin our new ministry,” said Sister Victoria Alapa, the regional superior of the Congregation in Canada. “I had a chance to visit Elliot Lake last summer and I was touched by the welcome we have already received from the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie and St. Joseph’s General Hospital.”

The Sisters will establish their convent at the rectory of the former Sainte-Marie church, after some renovations are completed.

An exact start date for the Sisters at St. Joseph General Hospital will be announced at a future time.

- 30 -

Additional Information for Media:

About St. Joseph’s General Hospital

St. Joseph’s General Hospital has provided care for the residents of Elliot Lake and the North Shore since 1958. We are a multi service organization that operates an Acute Care Hospital, Long Term Care Home and Drug & Alcohol Treatment Centre. As a Catholic Healthcare Organization, their Mission is to build on the legacy of its Founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie, and continue the healing ministry of Jesus, serving all who come for care.

About the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus

The Congregation of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus is an international Congregation of Sisters, founded by Mary Mother Charles Magdalen, a religious Sister of Charity who came to Nigeria in 1923. The Congregation of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus were invited to Canada to be a presence in the Archdiocese of St. Boniface (Manitoba, Canada) in 2005. The Sisters have been involved as caregivers to elementary school children in local Catholic schools; caring for retired priests in care homes, Registered Nursing in hospitals and ministering to the First Nation people in rural northern communities. Their involvement in different aspects of Pastoral Ministry in different parish communities has made a great impact on faith and community. Website: <https://hhcj.org/>

Contacts: **Fr. Daniele Muscolino**
 Communications Contact
 d.muscolino@ssmd.ca
 705-495-1501

Online: www.dioceseofsaultstemarie.org

Photo Caption: The Sisters of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus in Canada.
(Photo supplied by the Sisters).

