



Dominican Sisters
Grand Rapids, Michigan

For Immediate Release

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**DOMINICAN SISTERS ~ GRAND RAPIDS CONTINUE THEIR LEGACY:
BLESSING AND REDEDICATION OF AQUINATA HALL FOR LONG-TERM ASSISTED LIVING**

Another Strategic Step in the Sisters' New Healthcare Ministry

GRAND RAPIDS, MI April 19, 2013 . . . On Wednesday, April 24, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm, on the Marywood Campus, the Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids will host a private, official blessing and rededication of Aquinata Hall as a long-term, assisted living community for the Sisters as well as community neighbors. The Most Reverend Walter Hurley, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids, will bless the recently transformed and refurbished Aquinata Hall as a residence for the Dominican Sisters and other older adults throughout Grand Rapids.

This is another strategic step in the Sisters' new ministry of healthcare. In 2011, they collaborated with Porter Hills in launching Marywood Home Health, where healthcare and other services are provided for people who wish to remain in their own homes while receiving licensed nursing care, rehabilitation therapy, health monitoring, and personal care. A unique aspect of Marywood Home Health is the spiritual companionship provided by the Dominican Sisters.

These new ministries are part of a long-term, strategic vision for utilizing the spacious Marywood campus to meet the healthcare, spiritual, social and life-long learning needs of the Dominican Sisters and the greater Grand Rapids community. This vision allows the Sisters to share their legacy with West Michigan by repurposing the spacious Marywood campus into an intergenerational community that offers programs and activities for all ages and living options designed to meet the needs of area seniors.

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Funds will be raised through the **Marywood Legacy** Campaign, which will support the transformation of the Marywood campus into a state-of-the-art healthcare destination capable of providing care for Sisters and other West Michigan seniors. The Sisters will also announce a lead gift to the Legacy Campaign of \$1 million from local philanthropist and long-time supporter of the Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids, Peter Wege. Mr. Wege is providing an additional \$500,000 as a challenge gift to the community in that he will match, up to \$500,000, donations made to the Legacy campaign by members of the community.

Commenting on the **Marywood Legacy** campaign and blessing and rededication of Aquinata Hall, Sister Maureen Geary, Prioress of the Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids, said: "More than 135 years ago, when the Dominicans first came to Michigan, our focus was on education but now it encompasses pastoral care, teaching and outreach, counseling and prayer ministry along with our emerging focus on healthcare. With the care needs of our Sisters increasing, we are developing a plan to repurpose the Marywood campus to address these changing internal needs, which correspond to the similar and growing healthcare needs of the greater Grand Rapids community. We are in a unique position to help address the needs of both populations."

The Aquinata Hall long-term assisted living community – a licensed "Home for the Aged" -- has 45 rooms – 15 on each of the three floors. It offers moderately priced residential options for area seniors, 60 years or older, in addition to the Dominican Sisters who also live there. Each floor of Aquinata Hall offers a community dayroom with fireplace, laundry accommodations, an exercise room and nursing station. Each of the 45 rooms includes a bathroom and beautiful living space. All Aquinata Hall residents will have access to a large central dining area, chapel, beauty salon and a three-story atrium. One of the three floors is dedicated to residents with memory loss.

Aquinata Hall is a state-of-the-art assisted living community with individualized and evolving care plans for its residents that focus on the physical, spiritual, and emotional care each requires. Many of the residents are active in both the Marywood and greater Grand Rapids communities.

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The mission of the Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids is that of Jesus Christ – to be God's saving grace in the world. This has been their endeavor since their beginning in 1877 as teachers and care givers to children. Since then they have continued to teach and to care for people through partnerships with nonprofit agencies and work in hospital ministries, social service agencies and hospice care. They have created works of art, been leaders in liturgical reform and fostered life in parishes and communities.

For more information about the Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids, Aquinata Hall, or the **Marywood Legacy** Campaign, please contact Mary McLoughlin at (616) 698-0748, marytmcl@aol.com, or Kristin Gootjes at (616) 745-8452, kgootjes@bretongroup.com.

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