

Introduction to the Sisters of Life/Mother Agnes Mary, SV

Founded in 1991 by John Cardinal O'Connor, the late Archbishop of New York, the Sisters of Life is a religious community of consecrated women who, by way of a fourth vow, are dedicated to the protection of the sacredness of human life.

Living in seven convents, five in the Archdiocese of New York, one in the Diocese of Bridgeport, CT, and one in the Archdiocese of Toronto, Canada, the community has 44 professed sisters, 16 novices and 7 postulants from all over the United States, Canada and New Zealand.

The primary work of the Sisters is prayer on behalf of vulnerable human life. A contemplative/active community, almost half of their day is dedicated to Eucharist, contemplative prayer. The active works of the community are varied and growing. These include: a mid-town Manhattan convent - a "Holy Respite" - where pregnant guests are welcomed to live in the spiritual environment of a religious house; the Sisters' Visitation Mission - a phone mission assisting pregnant women who call by providing, through Co-Workers, the material and emotional support they need to choose life for their children. Entering Canaan Retreats serve men and women who have suffered from abortion. The Dr. Joseph R. Stanton Human Life Issues Library and Resource Center includes in its holding the research of the late Dr. Stanton, a veteran pro-life doctor. Through Villa Maria Guadalupe Retreat House, located in Stamford, Connecticut, the Sisters host a variety of retreats, in particular for those dedicated to the labor of building a culture of life.

Among the first group of women to respond to John Cardinal O'Connor's inspiration for the Sisters of Life was Mother Agnes Mary, then a professor of clinical psychology at Columbia University in New York. Now in her fifteenth year as Superior General of the community, Mother Agnes has been richly prepared by God for her consecrated mission, having spent her professional life in the field of psychology, specifically in family intervention, mother/child relationships and special-needs children. Responsible for anchoring this new religious community in its charism and guiding it to holiness, Mother Agnes is often called on across the country to share the message of reverence for human life, the gift and patrimony of the Institute she leads.