



**Remarks and Blessing
The Most Reverend Paul J. Swain
Bishop of Sioux Falls
October 4, 2019**

***On the Blessing and Dedication of Avera on Louise,
a specialty hospital and clinic***

May I first say how sad I was to learn of the destruction caused by the recent tornadoes. But also how impressed I am with the sacrificial efforts of so many to assure continued and new patient care despite the destruction from the September 10 storms. It reflects the resiliency with which Avera staff have gone the extra mile to fulfill your mission to carry on the healing ministry of Christ. Thank you for that sacrifice and that witness. Be assured of my continued prayers in this time of restoration and diocesan availability to assist in any way.

It is a pleasure for me to be here today and to have the privilege of blessing this impressive specialty hospital and clinics. What an architecturally beautiful and people-friendly gift this is to Sioux Falls, to South Dakota, and to the region. Clearly sensitive listening, creative thought, and courageous decision-making has brought this facility to fruition. Its greatest days of course are ahead, when it becomes not just a beautiful building but a beautiful place for medical care, spiritual support, and reassuring consolation for patients and families. It truly is a symbol of the healing ministry of Christ and, therefore, also a sign of hope.

This accomplishment is a reminder of the commitment of the Benedictine and Presentation religious sisters who, for more than a century, have chosen to be instruments of healing and hope. It has resulted in the Avera health system which serves so many, especially the poor and vulnerable, with dignity and respect. It is a beautiful and practical expression of our core value to respect life from conception to natural death.

I am especially impressed with the commitment of Avera to assure quality health care in the rural areas of our state and diocese and to innovate and incorporate the ever-changing technology to do so.

The Presentation sisters, at the request of Bishop Thomas O’Gorman, opened McKennan hospital in 1911. At that time it had 45 beds. Bishop O’Gorman had previously encouraged the Benedictine Sisters to enter the health ministry in Yankton, which they did in 1897 with the opening of Sacred Heart hospital with 30 beds. It was the beginning of an ever-growing and multi-campus ministry based on Catholic Christian values. What foresight and courage they had;

how proud they would be in the fruits of their leap of faith. Building on that history, what foresight and courage all who made this facility and campus possible have.

At the dedication of that first building at McKennan, Bishop O’Gorman reminded them, and his words remind us, of our mission ever ancient, ever new. He said¹:

This hospital is as broad as the spirit of Christ. If every duly-licensed physician is admitted to its halls, so also every patient of any denomination can seek here relief. Illness is the only effective passport. . . Doctors of the body and doctors of the soul will find here the perfect democracy of Christianity.

Bishop O’Gorman dedicated that first building here in Sioux Falls “to the glory of God, [and] to the service of suffering humanity . . . May all within these walls,” he prayed, “be blessed, the sisters and the nurses in their merciful work, the patients in their suffering, the physicians and surgeons in their science and skill¹.” His words ring true today. It was and is an optimistic charge. And so as we rejoice in the present, we remember those who over the years and with such sacrifice have made this day and this health center possible.

Disease and illness in their diversity are crosses; yet they can bring us together as family and friends, they can bring out the best in us and reconnect us with God who is love. Thank you to all who have made this day possible, thank you especially to the medical personnel who will make this building a living house of love.

I now have the privilege of continuing what Bishop O’Gorman began over 100 years ago, and bless this special and sacred place dedicated to healing, to health care, to life, and to hope.

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.
May the Lord Jesus, who empowered His disciples to heal the sick and bring them relief and hope, be with you all.

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, God, our Father.
Through your Son you commanded your people
Who walk in the newness of life to care skillfully, pastorally and compassionately for the sick.
Bless + this Avera on Louise Specialty Hospital and Clinics.
By the grace of your Holy Spirit make it a house of hope and a center of love, reflecting Christ’s love for the sick and the vulnerable.
Grant to all who come here for treatment an awareness of your loving presence and that of Mary, Mother of the Afflicted, and of us all.
May patients, medical personnel, administrative and support staff, families and friends be granted courage when afraid, patience when afflicted, hope when discouraged, and when alone the assurance of the support of your holy people.
May peace abide in this place of healing.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen
(The building is now blessed with holy water)

Concluding blessing:

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing:

May God bless you in every way and grant you hope all the days of your life.

May God guide you and give you strength.

May God fill your heart with peace and lead you to eternal life.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



PAUL
By the Grace of God and Favor of the Apostolic See
BISHOP OF SIOUX FALLS

With praise to Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
let it be known that on Friday, October 4, 2019,
the Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi,
in Sioux Falls, I solemnly blessed the

Avera on Louise Specialty Hospital and Clinics.

Given at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, this fourth day of October,
in the year of Our Lord two thousand nineteen.

+ Paul J. Swain

Most Reverend Paul J. Swain
Bishop of Sioux Falls

Matthew K. Althoff

Mr. Matthew K. Althoff
Chancellor