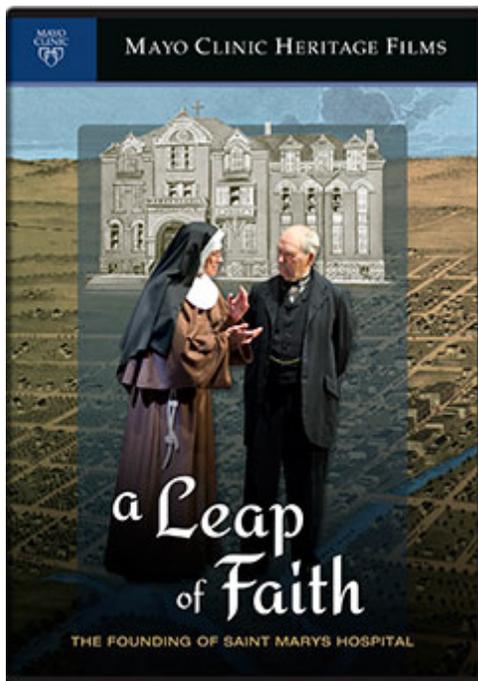




Mayo Clinic Heritage Films Discussion Guide

A Leap of Faith: The Founding of Saint Marys Hospital



On a summer afternoon in 1883, Rochester, Minnesota was devastated by a deadly tornado. The town's leading doctor, William Worrall Mayo, urgently needed help caring for the injured. The Sisters of Saint Francis were teachers, not nurses, but they willingly met the crisis. Several weeks later, the leader of their congregation, Mother Alfred Moes, came to Dr. Mayo's office with a surprising offer. "Doctor," she said, "do you not think a hospital in this city would be an excellent thing?"

A Leap of Faith imagines the meeting of these two strong-willed pioneers and the crucial conversation that changed the history of medicine.

Discussion Questions

1. Mother Alfred's mission was to build and staff Catholic schools. Why do you think she became determined to open a hospital? What qualities does a leader need to set a bold new direction?
2. The Sisters of St. Francis expected to spend their lives as teachers. How do you imagine they felt when told they would now be nurses? How have you approached unforeseen changes in your life?
3. Dr. Mayo was looking forward to retirement and had good reason to think a hospital could not succeed in Rochester. Why do you think he agreed to partner with Mother Alfred?
4. Mother Alfred and Dr. Mayo did not sign a legal contract when they agreed to work together – they shook hands. Why is a sense of trust so important in personal and professional relationships?
5. Dr. Mayo and Mother Alfred came from very different backgrounds. He was a man of science; she was a woman of faith. Why were they able to work so well together?
6. What do you think Dr. Mayo's sons, the Mayo brothers, would have done if the hospital had not been built?
7. What themes do you see in Dr. Mayo and Mother Alfred's collaboration that connect these founders with Mayo Clinic today?