

The Sisters of Mercy have remained a beacon of hope in the face of adversity and a vivacious spirit in a traditional religion. They have reminded us that powerful change is only accomplished through action; and that in the quiet times of prayer and contemplation, we can find the strength within ourselves to begin acting.

The design of these three panels is meant to illustrate the impact that the sisters have had specifically on the community of Pittsburgh. The foundresses sweep across every panel and tower above the city, emphasizing their lasting influence and urgent need to serve. The mix of softness in their eyes and smiles is coupled with the strength and determination to move forward as their habits drift behind them. In the left panel at the very top, there is an outline of Mount Mercy. Above the outline rests the North Star, a representation of God guiding the sisters to where they are needed next. This outline is mirrored with that of the city of Pittsburgh in the bottom right, a contrast of past and present and a way to represent their constant action and relevance throughout time. In the bottom of the middle panel, there is a paper doll chain – an innocent representation of our community. Next to the chain on the right is the silhouette of a person receiving the stars that the Sisters have been sprinkling.

In the original design of the coat of arms created by Sister Clare Besterman for Mount Mercy, she includes a five-pointed star at the very top. She wrote that the significance of the star was heavenly wisdom, and I wanted to incorporate her meaningful designs into my own. Across the panels, the sisters bestow heavenly wisdom and kindness onto the people of Pittsburgh, encouraging reflection, serving the community, paying attention to the critical concerns, and changing hearts and minds through works of mercy.