



SAINT JOHN VIANNEY CENTER

HISTORY 2026

Founded in 1946, Saint John Vianney Center (SJVC) is the longest running, internationally renowned, and premier Catholic behavioral health and addiction treatment facility and resource center in North America for Clergy and Religious.

The Center provides professional programs and services, spiritual experiences, 24/7 nursing supervision, and educational wellness programs to assist Clergy and Religious in living a healthy lifestyle in mind, body, and spirit.

The Center's beginnings include the 1946 purchase of the 175-acre McIlvaine Estate in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, at the request of Monsignor William Kavanaugh and Dennis Cardinal Dougherty of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The main residence was converted from a family home to a private hospital, and the program was placed under the patronage of Saint John Vianney, an especially humble and forgiving priest known as the "Curé d' Ars," a famous confessor in France known for his devotion to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In 1974, individual psychotherapy was initiated at the Center, followed by spirituality groups, music and art therapy, and specialized classes. Outpatient services also began providing assessments and therapy. Accreditation from The Joint Commission was awarded in 1989, and the facility maintains this accreditation and its state licensures today, with its most recent re-accreditation in 2025.

In the mid-1990s, the programs moved from a medical model to a residential milieu. In September of 2000, the Center instituted a four-tier approach to treatment to allow residents to move between programs and receive a continuum of care. This was followed by the development of the Complex Extended Stay program aimed at assisting those with chronic behavioral health needs to function at their optimal level. Since 2009, the Consultation, Education, and Outreach Department has provided consultations, facilitation, workshops, convocations, and retreats on a wide variety of topics promoting wellness and prevention for Clergy and Religious worldwide.

In 2012, SJVC expanded its offerings with the introduction of our Co-Occurring Disorder (COD) program, now called the Holistic Recovery Program, which addresses those broken by the burdens of addiction, and behavioral health issues, treating the mind, body, and spirit of each person. A thorough aftercare program offered through our Continuing Care Department operates to support, monitor, and follow up with discharged residents.

In 2020, SJVC became independent, governed by our Board of Directors, while continuing to shepherd our brothers and sisters in Church ministry through life's journey and difficulties, and to aid and restore their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

In January 2024, Saint John Vianney Center expanded to the West Coast joining with Kairos Psychology Group, an industry leader in professional Outpatient Behavioral Health Care Services in the California Bay Area. Now with bi-coastal offices, SJVC can provide Outpatient Services to a broader range of Clergy and Religious through our care network.

In December 2025, SJVC celebrated the newly built and opening of our Annex building. The Annex offers much needed space for resident sessions with modern conveniences and audio-visual upgrades in the Good Shepherd Hall. The Annex also has a conference room, staff breakroom, and fourteen offices.

2026 commemorates Saint John Vianney Center's 80 Years of Hope and Healing for Clergy and Religious. It has been our honor and privilege to journey with those who minister to the Church providing care, support, and resources to attain and remain healthy in mind, body, and spirit.

SJVC continues to be responsive to the diverse and evolving needs of our brothers and sisters in ministry and to provide the highest quality of care and outreach services to Catholic Clergy, Consecrated Men and Women Religious, and Clergy of other major Christian denominations so they can serve the people of God in their best health.