

GOOD NEWS FROM AFRICA



Autumn 2020



I take this opportunity to thank each of you our *Partners in Mission* for the ways you reach out to our SSND ministry in Africa. This year of 2020 has been a very challenging one and yet a grace-filled time for us as School Sisters of Notre Dame. As a council, it has also given us more quality time for reflection and prayer.

As our world and its entire people continue to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic, we are restricted to where we can go and whom we can meet. However, this time has also stirred up the spirit of greater solidarity especially with the vulnerable. The rapid spread of COVID-19 across borders has had a great impact on every aspect of our lives and ministries and has caused us to significantly rethink our identity as global citizens. We stand together as one family seeking to secure and ensure the continuity of our collective existence as humans. The pandemic has reawakened our conscience to human interconnectedness, underscoring the inescapable reality that what affects one affects all. It has led us to greater solidarity and bondedness. 'Where there is no human help, God's help is still possible.' (Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger Letter #714, May 30, 1847.)

We have been able to visit all of the communities of SSND in Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria as the countries eased restrictions. Plans are now underway for visits to The Gambia and Sierra Leone. Though there have been upswings of cases Africa has not experienced the devastating number of deaths other parts of the world are seeing. Perhaps this is due to the young age of the population and generally good support in following medical precautions.

This year is a very significant year for us as a Province. On October 20, 1970, the charism of Mother Theresa touched the continent of Africa in Liberia, which is 50 years ago. As we celebrate our Foundation in Africa, we celebrate the great love, faith, hope, courage, humility, commitment and faithfulness to living the mission. From those small beginnings to the flourishing Province of Africa founded August 28, 2011. This is a mystery of God working in us, among us and through us. With 85 Sisters currently serving in diverse ministries our Sisters now live and work in 25 small communities. Eight young women will begin their Novitiate in Rome in on February 2, 2021 and eight postulants will soon begin their discernment for religious life in the formation house in Kisumu, Kenya.

Through you, we have been able to reach out to many, alleviate some pain and suffering, give hope and share life and God's love. . May God continue to bless your efforts, bless your families and those you care about as you continue to support our SSND mission. Sr. Oyinoza Asishana, Provincial Leader



In this issue of Good News from Africa, we want to share with you some of the developments related to the Pandemic in Africa in our ministries. We wish to invite you to be a part of our Advent and Christmas prayer. We congratulate Jean Bornholdt as the winner of the African Quilt raffle.

A NEW WAY OF MINISTERING DURING COVID – 19 PANDEMIC

The deadly Coronavirus pandemic has accorded us the opportunity of listening to the voice of God and responding in a new way to God's continuing call (YAS Const. #3). At this critical time in our history, together with my sisters in community, I was able to discern a new way of being for our students, parents and the teachers with whom I work.

Many schools have been using technology to achieve their goals. So we too, thought it wise and a necessary tool to support the learning of our students. Anything that is new is mostly accompanied by fear of the unknown, so this was the case with me and others concerning the use of Zoom for the online classes. Initially, some of our teachers preferred the use of WhatsApp but in the end, everyone better appreciated the use of Zoom. The use of virtual classes for instructions became an empowering tool for myself and our teachers. I learned to be more patient because sometimes the poor network could be challenging to teachers and to the students in their homes. Often, rescheduling classes was the best option in order to make up for the lost time due to poor network reception.

Another blessing of embracing this newness was my gradual skill acquisition in the areas of typing, use of Microsoft Word, Excel and Publisher. Undoubtedly, my desired outcome would not have been achieved without the help of others, sisters in community and teachers. Learning together was exciting, as everyone was always willing to assist another and to ask for assistance when needed. The teamwork gave us a desired outcome during the assessment, which the students achieved at the end of the two phases of the program. One of the most interesting parts of this empowerment was seeing those teachers who initially were being helped with their power point presentations and downloading of notes on the website, becoming technologically savvy and enjoying the fun while working. The fears that we once had gave way to the joy of gaining new knowledge! Conclusively, our openness to learn together bonded us. I strongly believe that UNITY is STRENGTH, because undergoing

the ICT training alone would not have given me as much joy as compared to doing it with other teachers. Again, in the process of empowering others we became the best of ourselves at the skills we had already acquired.

Sr. Lucy Etim, Notre Dame Girls Secondary School, Urua Edet Obo, Nigeria





Our gift to you this Christmas is our prayer for Hope, Peace, Joy and Love in your hearts, in your family, in your neighborhood and in our world. Your special prayer requests may be listed on the top flap of the enclosed return envelope. All the School Sisters of Notre Dame of the African Province will be praying with you through the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple on February 2nd 2021. Each year our Christmas appeal is for the education of our African SSNDs. Thank you for your generosity. End of Year gifts are also deeply appreciated!



Wishing you a Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year for 2021!

School Sisters of Notre Dame
Province of Africa
PO Box 16415
St. Louis, MO 63125

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
St. Louis, MO
Permit No.495



Good News From Africa tells the story
of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone,
and The Gambia.

© 2010 All rights reserved.

Publisher: Rosanne Rustemeyer, SSND
314-633-7051 ssndafrica@gmail.or

Design: Genevieve Cassani, SSND
gcassani@ssndcp.org

Layout: Angie Been, Murray Print Shop
angie.been@murrayprintshop.com

Congratulations to Jean Bornholdt of Richfield, MN!



Jean is the winner of “**Twilight Stars**”! We are very happy to report that the proceeds from the Great African Quilt Raffle will go a long way in furnishing the new Retreat and Conference Center at the Provincial House in Accra. As God continues to invite and call young women to join in the Mission of SSND in Africa, this center will serve SSND and other religious congregations as well as lay ministers in the Church. Thank you to everyone who participated in our drawing this year for “**Twilight Stars**”. Special thanks to Sr. Josephine Niemann, the designer and quilter.