



School Sisters
of Notre Dame

Trust & Dare

2020

A photograph of two African women, likely nuns, smiling and posing in front of large palm fronds. The woman on the left is wearing a white habit and a white shirt, while the woman on the right is wearing a blue shirt and a white headscarf. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS IN AFRICA

BRINGING SSND TO A NEW CONTINENT

Responding in
South Sudan

Mission and ministry
in Latin America

Serving immigrants
at the U.S./Mexico border

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Trust & Dare is a publication for family, friends and supporters of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in the Atlantic-Midwest Province, Central Pacific Province and the Province of Africa. It is coordinated by SSND Collaborative Communications.

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Cover: Province of Africa Sisters Patience Age and Terngu Sule enjoy Palm Sunday 2020 in Soma, The Gambia.

Dear Friends,



There is no human help, God's help is still possible.' (Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger Letter #714, May 30, 1847.)

This year has been a very challenging and grace-filled time for our worldwide community and for us as School Sisters of Notre Dame. 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. 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 among us. 'Where

Blessed Theresa and Mother Caroline clearly showed us by their words and actions that they were women of prayer who lived well-integrated and holistic lives in accordance with their world reality at the time. By their example, we are challenged and motivated to deepen our own relationship with God, to continue to respond to the critical needs of our time and to appreciate, and be committed to, authentic community living.

In this issue of *Trust & Dare*, you will read about how SSND from the United States, Canada and Europe, motivated by Vatican II and inspired by the charism (contagion of love) of Mother Theresa, courageously ventured into the continent of Africa and other mission territories to witness to Christ through transformative education. Fifty years later, we are blessed with a richness of diversity in our intercultural communities, shaped by a global vision and a shift in perspective.

The SSND charism made a great impact in Africa, and this cannot be underestimated in the annals of history. This gift of fire continues to be fanned into flames and to attract many young women to be its bearers. We are very grateful to all the Sisters who have served in Africa from the former provinces of St. Louis, Dallas, Mankato, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Wilton, Chicago, Canada, Bavaria and Poland on whose shoulders we stand tall today.

Pope Francis has invited all the baptized to be missionary disciples of Christ, our reference point. He calls us to speak and to act as messengers who go to the peripheries of our society to make disciples by our own lives. How open are we as messengers? As we live with and minister to people of diverse cultures, how inclusive have we been in our love and service? In what specific ways have we been fanning into flames the charism of our foundress?

We continue to be grateful for your prayers and the many ways you support our mission.



Sister Oyin-ozza Rosemary Asishana, SSND
Provincial Leader, Province of Africa

A dream fulfilled

At this critical turning point in the sacred history of creation and humanity, we have heard our deep desire to trust and dare.

(Love Gives Everything, Directional Statement, 24th General Chapter)

With you, our partners in mission, we are all carriers of Blessed Theresa's vision to educate, empower and transform persons to reach the fullness of their potential. **Together we have kept the dream alive for more than 165 years since Blessed Theresa began planning for missions in Africa.** As early as 1855, it was her desire to send Sisters to work in Africa and negotiations began for a mission in Khartoum, Sudan. Due to sickness and the hardship on the continent, her dream would have to wait.

The desire for SSND to go to Africa formally materialized in 1970 following Vatican II when African bishops extended invitations for Sisters to provide education on the continent. By 1974, SSND were ministering in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria. Today there are 85 Sisters ministering in the Province of Africa, 71 of whom are native-born African women.

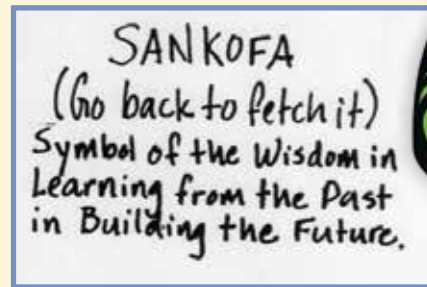
During the congregation's early years, Blessed Theresa turned to generous friends and family for financial support. In modern times, faithful donors have continued to help carry forward the SSND mission through ministries directed toward education. The legacy of Blessed Theresa – transforming the world through education, giving special emphasis to women, young people and those who are marginalized – is alive and well because of you.

Renewed in our commitment following the 24th General Chapter, we continue "directing our resources and ministries toward education that transforms and calls us to eliminate the root causes of poverty and injustice." Even in the midst of a pandemic, we try to model and support responsible and loving behavior as we share our talents and resources so that others are able to contribute positively to the common good.

We are most grateful for your support to the Province of Africa, the Atlantic-Midwest Province and the Central Pacific Province. Your prayers, interest, encouragement and financial contributions are a testament to your commitment and partnership with us.

Some donors give monthly or annual cash gifts, while others provide stock and appreciated assets. Still others provide for future gifts by making a legacy gift on behalf of their family and the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Like other gifts, a legacy gift can be used to support our Sisters in retirement and in active ministry. Legacy gifts include bequests, life insurance and retirement plan gifts, charitable gift annuities and trusts of various kinds.

If you have any questions about making a gift or would like additional information, please contact the Development office for your province listed to the right. **Together, we can make a difference.**



The Akan People of Ghana believe the past serves as a guide for planning the future. They believe that there must be movement and new learning as time passes so the knowledge of the past must inform our present reality.

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Our Mission

is to proclaim the good news
as School Sisters of
Notre Dame,
directing our entire lives
toward that oneness
for which
Jesus Christ was sent.



The Province of Africa celebrates the installation of the third Provincial Council, August 28, 2019 (the Feast of St. Augustine) in Accra, Ghana.

In many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, women like to dress alike for special occasions. In these pictures you can see the cloth that was created especially for the beginning of the new Province of Africa. It contains our own SSND symbol and has a border with a Ghanaian symbol for God.

Trusting and daring in Africa since 1970

A new continent for SSND

The parents of Sister Mary (Marie Daniel) Dooley wanted her to join a local congregation. Why join an order that “goes all over the place?” she recalled them saying. Yet, Sister Mary became one of the first School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) to go in mission to Africa. Like Blessed Theresa and Mother Caroline, she opened a new continent for SSND.



Sister Mary (Marie Daniel) Dooley, far right, boards the African Star enroute to Monrovia, Liberia in October 1970.

A native of Cambridge, Mass., Sister Mary departed in October 1970 for Liberia. She was one of four SSND who had all been on assignment at St. Saviour Church in Brooklyn, N.Y. when they felt the call to Africa. The St. Saviour parishioners raised the necessary funds for transportation, books, supplies and construction of a boarding school for the Sisters to teach and house up to 35 girls in Liberia.

Initially, it was not considered a good idea to venture into a new continent, with all the other changes following Vatican II. But after months of prayer and discussion, it was decided the Sisters could follow where the Spirit was leading them. “The pull was strong. It had to be of God,” said Sister Mary.

The Sisters ministered in Liberia over the next five years, then were replaced by four other SSND. By then, SSND had established missions in other African countries as well (see side bar). Sister Mary went back to the U.S., but returned to Liberia from 1978 to 1981. SSND left Liberia for good in 1990, during the first civil war.

Today, Sister Mary continues to be drawn to meeting the needs of women and girls, working with immigrant women from Guatemala and Haiti in Indiantown, Florida. Remembering the day she left for Africa, she said, “The exact same feelings that I had then, I have now - the uncertainty about what lies ahead, the inability to see family.” But as she’d tell her 1970 self, “Do not be afraid. With everyone pulling together it will be okay.”

Called to be there

Originally from Blue Earth, Minn., Sister Mara Frundt had Africa on her mind since she was a child in the 1950s. Her family subscribed to the Maryknoll Magazine, and reading it deepened her desire to go to Africa. Part of her discernment in choosing a congregation was seeking one that would offer international missions.

After taking final vows in 1974, she volunteered to be one of the first SSND to go to Kenya that same year. Eventually she spent 36 of the last 46 years there. “I grew into adulthood in Africa. I was formed by the culture and the people. It is hard to know who I would be now without that experience,” said Sister Mara.

Sister Mara served in formal education and pastoral ministry in Kenya for 14 years. She left in 1989, but returned to Kenya nine years later to start a new mission. In 2011, she was asked to become novice director in Ghana until 2015, when all SSND provinces consolidated their novitiates in Rome. At that point, she went back to Kenya and served as postulant director until 2019.

SSND in Africa

Liberia (1970-1990)
 Algeria (1972-1974)
 Sierra Leone (1973-present)*
 – except 1997-2007
 Kenya (1974-present)*
 Ghana (1974-present)*
 Nigeria (1974-present)*
 The Gambia (1990-present)*
 Tanzania (1998-2000)
 South Sudan (2008-present)**

**Countries served by the Province of Africa*

***See story on page 7*

“We were invited to Kenya to empower the African congregations; it was not a priority to think about ourselves as SSND. With the girls asking [to become SSND], we began

to realize we were called to be there,” Sister Mara mused when reflecting on the development of SSND vocations in Africa.

Companions on the journey

Like Sister Mara, Sister Antoinette Naumann felt called to a foreign mission, since she had observed other sisters going to East Asia when she was a novice. During a year of discernment following seven years of teaching in Iowa, she responded to the 1979 provincial request for Sisters to go to Sierra Leone. She arrived in Sierra Leone in 1981, where she taught in a secondary school. By 1989, several young female students were asking to become SSND. Sister Antoinette was called to open the first novitiate in Sunyani, Ghana.

Sister Grace Okon from Nigeria was one of the first novices at Sunyani, arriving the second year the novitiate was open. It was her first time away from home, the first time out of her country.

“It was a journey of faith. I did not know where that journey would lead me but knew God was there. At first, I was homesick. It was my first Christmas and Easter away from home,” recalled Sister Grace.



First assembly of SSND missionaries in Nsawam, Ghana in 1981.



Left to right: Sister Antoinette Nauman with Sisters Ruth Mose and Sarah Tanjo in Bumbuna, Sierra Leone, 2016.



Sisters rejoice at the establishment of the Province of Africa on August 28, 2011. Sister Antoinette Naumann is in the second row, second from the right. Sister Grace Okon is in the second row, fifth from the right. Sister Mara Frundt is in the back row, fourth from the right.

Life in community gave her strength. “I was encouraged by the Sisters from the U.S. who were even farther from home. They are women of faith, which made them strong. They trusted and dared, and gave their entire life to accompany us on our journey. We would not be here without them.”

Sister Grace made her First Profession in 1993, among the first native-born Sisters to do so. Today there are 72 SSND who were born in Africa.

First District, then Province

By the 1990s, with African Sisters taking final vows, the SSND presence in Africa was solid and growing, as multiple provinces invested in their respective mission locations in each country. The need arose for one unifying body of leadership on the continent. Sister Antoinette was then called to lead the establishment of the District of Africa in 1996. She served two three-year terms as district leader. Eventually returning to Sierra Leone for several years in parish ministry, she retired in 2018, upon celebrating her 60th jubilee.

“I am humbled to be chosen to do the things I have done. I was amazed I could do it!” said Sister Antoinette. Because of her experiences, she imparts this life wisdom, “Don’t be too hard on yourself. Trust and be vulnerable.”

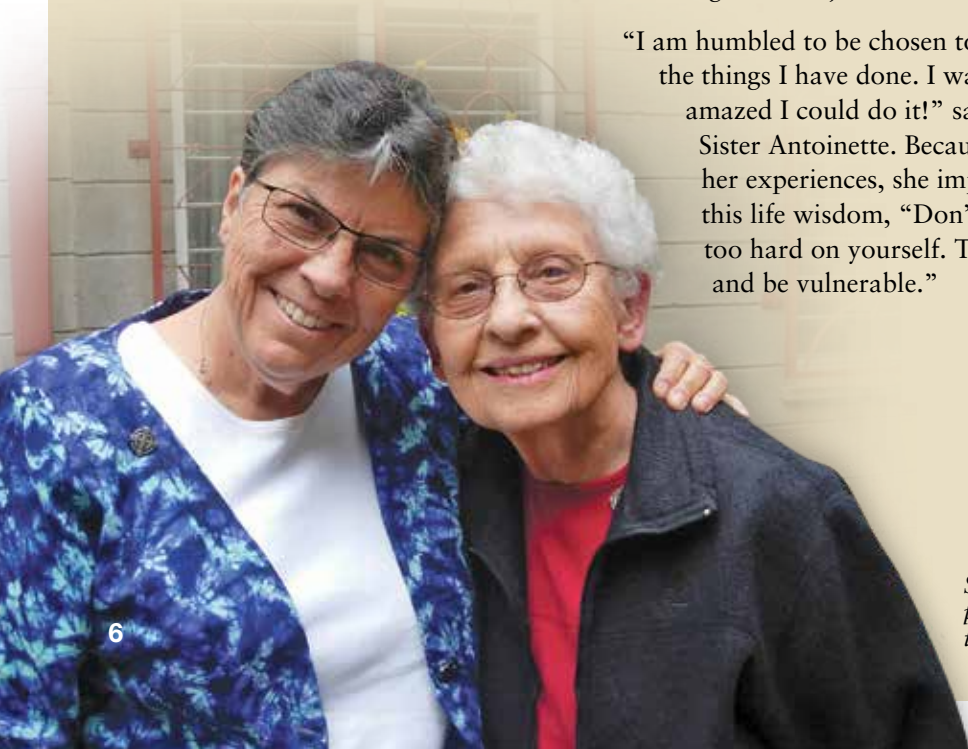
Just 15 years after being formed, the district was poised to become a separate province within the congregation. Sisters Mary, Mara and Antoinette were present to take part in the dedication of the new Province of Africa in 2011. “I was thrilled to see young African women with such joy on their faces, well-educated and passionate about what they are doing,” said Sister Mary. Sister Grace was installed as a province councilor.

SSND in Africa today

At the peak, around 1988, there were 42 SSND from North America serving in Africa. Today there are less than 10 still present on the continent.

“There is a lot more ahead [for the Province of Africa] than behind. The majority of SSND vocations are coming from Africa; seven of the nine newly professed SSND are from Africa. It gives us hope,” said Sister Mara, who will become the novice director in Rome.

“The future is in God’s hands. Who will answer God’s call? I pray there is another Theresa, another Caroline,” said Sister Antoinette.



Sister Mara Frundt, left, says goodbye at the Kisumu postulancy as Sister Maris Simon leaves in 2015. They were two of the first SSND to go in mission to Kenya in 1974.

Responding in South Sudan

In central Africa, South Sudan is the world's newest nation, formally declaring independence from Sudan in 2011 after six years of autonomy and more than 20 years of war. Just two years after gaining independence from Sudan in 2011, South Sudan descended into a devastating five-year civil war that killed hundreds of thousands of people, forced millions from their homes and plunged parts of the country into famine, among other atrocities.

In February 2020, a transitional coalition government was set up as a significant step to create peace in a country ravaged by conflict. Yet, according to the United Nations, the current peace is extremely fragile. High-level corruption is rampant, militias are being armed and civilians deliberately starved. More than half of the nation's population of 12 million face food shortages.

Aware of the urgent and critical needs of South Sudan and the desire to respond boldly, the SSND General Council had hoped to open an interprovincial community in Juba, the South Sudan capital, in May 2020. However, the pandemic and accompanying travel restrictions postponed those plans.

Four SSND, each from a different province, have nevertheless discerned their readiness to answer the congregational call to create an interprovincial community in South Sudan: Sisters Rose Ngacha (Province of Africa), Ruth Karina Ubillus Agurto (Province of Latin America and the Caribbean), M. Dominica Michalke (Bavarian Province), and M. Teresa Lipka (Polish Province). When it is safe for them to do so, the four Sisters will attend a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, meant to be a time of bonding and preparing for missionary life in a new country and culture. They will then begin their new mission in Juba.



Sister Barbara Paleczny with tutors at Solidarity Teacher Training College, Bor, South Sudan. Sister Barbara lived in South Sudan from 2009-2020 as a member of Solidarity with South Sudan.



Clockwise from top left: Sisters Rose Ngacha, M. Dominica Michalke, M. Teresa Lipka and Ruth Karina Ubillus Agurto have answered the congregational call to open an interprovincial community in Juba, South Sudan.

Let us remember these Sisters in a special way as they prepare for their new lives in South Sudan. May they know of our love and prayerful support as they respond to this new call of the congregation.

The Juba mission will be under the direction and guidance of the General Council for now. SSND have ministered in South Sudan in the past years as part of the Solidarity with South Sudan, a project sponsored by the Union of Superiors Generals.

Let us remember these Sisters in a special way as they prepare for their new lives in South Sudan. May they know of our love and prayerful support as they respond to this new call of the congregation.

Mission and ministry in Latin America

Reaffirming the ties between evangelization and charity for the poor, School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) from various areas that are now part of the Atlantic-Midwest and the Central Pacific provinces, bravely set off for South and Central America to educate and advocate.

In 1915, eleven School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) from North America responded to a request from the Redemptorist Fathers to work in formal education in Puerto Rico, establishing the first mission outside the continental U.S. Eventually, SSND from the U.S. and Canada would open missions in Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Puerto Rico.

Over the years, SSND from Europe also established missions and then formed three provinces in Latin America: Porto Alegre, São Paulo and Argentina. The extended missions from the North America provinces formed the District of Latin America in 2000. By December of 2012, the provinces and district joined to form the new Province of Latin America and the Caribbean (ALC). Today, SSND in the ALC province minister in Argentina, Brazil, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico and Italy.

The following Sisters provide a glimpse into SSND life in Latin America.



Sister Marty Kimpel

Sister Martin de Porres (Marty) Kimpel, originally from Canada, was one of the first SSND to go to Bolivia, in 1961. Together with three more SSND, they opened a mission in La Paz where they taught in three schools.

One of the biggest impacts the Sisters made in Bolivia was in San Miguel, a large urban area that also encompassed 10 rural mountain villages where approximately 1,300 families lived. A medical doctor envisioned bringing water from the mountains into the villages. Through the efforts of two Sisters who were ministering there,

the Provincial Council of what was then the Canadian Province offered to finance the water project.

The raw material and technical support were provided, but each village had to organize themselves to do the work. This was to help them assume responsibility for the project and teach them how to organize themselves for future endeavors.

Sister Marty followed the mission from Bolivia to Peru, where she stayed on and off for 33 years. Today, her ministry is prayer and presence in Waterdown, Ontario.

Sister Linda Wanner

SSND first went to Guatemala in 1962. Sister Linda Wanner was a dedicated teacher and principal at Catholic grade schools in Minnesota until 1980. Then she answered a call to missionary work in San Lucas Tolimán, Guatemala where SSND had begun numerous social programs to respond to the needs of the people. Sister Linda served the next decade in educational administration where she guided, trained, and encouraged the native educators to take on the challenge of education where resources were very limited. After returning to the U.S. to complete a master's degree in theology and divinity, Sister Linda went back to Guatemala. She devoted 16 years to teaching scripture and theology as a professor at the major seminary for missionary priests, also serving as academic dean for 14 of those years.



Sister Marty Kimpel and Sister Marcella Reitzel, among the first SSND to go in mission to Bolivia in 1961, are greeted by local children.



Sister Linda Wanner with her music group, Rondalla Luquena, that played at 7:30 a.m. Mass on Sundays at San Lucas Tolimán, Sololá, Guatemala.

In 2005, Sister Linda was appointed to the District of Latin America leadership team for a five-year term, followed by five years as administrator of a Jesuit retreat center in Mixco, Guatemala. Currently, Sister Linda is back in the U.S. supporting the development activities of the Central Pacific Province.

“I am truly grateful for having the opportunity and privilege of knowing what it means to be a member of an international congregation and appreciate the gifts each culture and Sister brings in living out the charism of Blessed Theresa in our world,” said Sister Linda.

Sister Yvonne Nosal

Since 1976, Canadian Sister Yvonne Nosal has served in many roles in Latin America, now residing in Peru as a member of the ALC province. “I lived four years on the barren mountainside in the northern section of Lima, Peru, where I learned to listen and accompany the people in their joys, sorrows and struggles to obtain the basic necessities, such as water,” she said. “Getting to know the people, studying a new language, as well as adapting to a distinct lifestyle in the midst of such poverty, was a time of learning, growth and many challenges.” Sister Yvonne also worked

in Bolivia and Brazil, returned to Canada a few times, and even served at the Generalate in Rome for five years. Peru, though, kept calling her back.

“In 1998, I was invited to return, to work in 19 villages and 30 schools where much destruction, damage and flooding had been caused by the rains of El Niño,” she remembered.

“This certainly was a favorable opportunity to deeply experience the living out of our history, spirituality, multiculturalism and internationality of our Congregation and the charism of Blessed Theresa, not only in our religious community but also in the educational community.”



Sister Yvonne Nosal sends greetings from Lomas Altas, Jicamarca, Lima, Peru, where she is keeping safe during the pandemic.

Sister Dorothy Young

Sister Dorothy Young, a nurse practitioner from Maryland, was sent to Colquench, Bolivia, in 1982 to assist with medical needs in the community, which had no water or electricity.

“We were able to build a two-room *posta* (clinic),” recalls Sister Dorothy. “I taught two young men to become *sanitarios* (nurses). Between us we were able to take care of about 10 communities that did not have medical service. In 1991, Colquench advanced to the point of having electricity and water, so we knew it was time to move on.”

Ending up in Anchallani.

Sister Dorothy quickly set to work on creating a clinic in the village. “The medical needs were profound, and we really needed a space where we

could see and treat the people,” she explained. “The villagers were willing to give us a piece of land and build the clinic. It is still operating with two young men that I trained, and about five years ago a doctor joined the staff.”

After 22 years in Bolivia, Sister Dorothy returned to the U.S. for health reasons caused by the altitude. “How good God has been to me. My heart gave out physically, but it has never given out for love of my people in Bolivia,” said Sister Dorothy.



Sister Dorothy Young is now retired and living in the Chicago area.

To learn more about the expansion of SSND into Latin America, visit <https://www.sturdyroots.org/history/expansion/latin-america>.

SSND in Japan, Guam and Nepal

More than 840 SSND from the Central Pacific Province live and minister in the central part of the United States, as far as the Pacific Coast, and also in Austria, Italy, Japan, Nepal and the U.S. territory of Guam, which is why the province is called the Central Pacific Province.

The Region of Japan integrated into the Central Pacific Province in 2013, but the SSND were originally sent from St. Louis, Missouri, to Kyoto, Japan, in 1948. Today, SSND serve in five ministries in Japan, Guam and Nepal, including:

Notre Dame Elementary School in Kyoto, Japan, founded in 1954. The school nurtures each student's potential, and teaches students to have a global perspective and compassion for the poor.



Students from Notre Dame High School in Guam participate in Kakehashi "bridge" activities in Japan. The goal was to build bridges between Guamanian culture and the Japanese culture.

Notre Dame Jogakuin Junior and Senior High School in Kyoto, Japan, founded in 1952. The school for girls promotes high achievement tailored to individual learning styles and cultural awareness.

Kyoto Notre Dame University (KNDU) in Kyoto, Japan, founded as a four-year women's college in 1961 by the SSND; the graduate programs are open for both men and women. Affiliated with two sister universities in the U.S. (Notre Dame of Maryland University in Baltimore and Mount Mary University in Milwaukee), KNDU also offers exchange agreements with other universities across the globe.

Notre Dame High School, Guam, in Talofofo, Guam, was founded in 1968. Empowering the whole person, the school encourages collaboration, instills leadership, promotes dedication to service, and inspires passion for justice and peace in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Notre Dame School in Bandipur, Nepal, was founded in 1985. This kindergarten through post-secondary equal opportunity school for boys and girls provides high-quality education for students from disadvantaged families.



Students welcome SSND to Notre Dame School in Bandipur, Nepal. Left to right: Sumee Gurung, Samarpan Gurung, Yojana Thapa Magar, Ashmita Vk, Susmita Gurung, Ashmita Koirala.



Four Sisters from the Central Pacific Province leaving St. Louis to go to Japan in 1948. Left to right: Mother Evangela Wagner (Provincial); Sisters Eugenia Laker, Mary Paul Niemann, Vivienne Hazelett and Richard Ann (Mary Louise) FitzGibbon.

Serving immigrants at the border

The history of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) in the United States is inextricably connected to the immigrant experience; SSND initially came to the U.S. to respond to the educational needs of German immigrants. For more than 170 years, SSND have served immigrant communities through education and other ministries.

The SSND constitution *You Are Sent* calls Sisters to “work actively, especially in our local situations, to eliminate the root causes of injustice in order to realize a world of peace, justice, and love.” (*You Are Sent* #17)

The Atlantic-Midwest Province adopted a corporate stance on Comprehensive Immigration Reform in 2014 and the Central Pacific Province did so in 2018. The corporate stances not only permit Sisters to stand as one on this important and pressing issue of human dignity, but also provide direction and structure for education, reflection and action on this critical concern.

Today, many SSND minister in immigrant communities through formal education, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, outreach efforts, housing programs, social services, mental health, advocacy and pastoral care in parishes, centers and shelters.

During the last year, SSND have volunteered to help with the intake of immigrants in conjunction with the Catholic Diocese of El Paso, Texas. The diocese runs a shelter in a former warehouse with approximately 125,000 square-feet that can house up to 1,500 refugees at a time, but the number varies widely. Asylum seekers arrive day and night after being processed and released by the United States immigration authorities.

Sisters helped in any way they could, including cleaning, cooking, organizing, shopping, driving and making phone calls. Many of the Sisters did not speak the two common languages - Spanish or Portuguese – but they found other ways to connect. After intake, Sisters helped guests schedule showers, select a change of clothes, call relatives or sponsors and arrange transportation to a location to live until their immigration hearing.

The Salvation Army provided meals through a mobile kitchen. The shelter

included a children’s playroom with toys and coloring supplies. The goal was for refugees to leave for their next destination within one to three days.

“My experience in El Paso, Texas, was indeed a journey of the heart for me,” said Sister Carol Jean Dust. “It began with the heartfelt contributions of Sisters and friends before leaving St. Louis, the heartfelt joy of Sisters sewing cloth bags for the refugees, and the heartfelt prayer of so many to accompany us daily.”

For more than 170 years, SSND have served immigrant communities through education and other ministries.



Left to right: A volunteer assists Sisters Jean Ellman and Leah Couvillon in sorting clothes for distribution to immigrants at the U.S. border with Mexico in El Paso, Texas.

Sister Carol Jean Dust prepares sandwiches for immigrants at the U.S. border with Mexico in El Paso, Texas.



Inspired by SSND



Marcus Adama Kabore with Sister Leonora Tucker on the occasion of her 60th jubilee in Wilton, Conn., May 2019.

“The School Sisters of Notre Dame have had, and continue to have, an immeasurably positive impact on my life.”

Marcus Adama Kabore

I was born in Burkina Faso in West Africa and moved to Liberia with my family when I was a child. In 1990, I was a student at Bishop Juwle High School in Zwedru, Liberia, a school run by the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND), that was forced to close when the civil war broke out. When it became apparent that my life was in danger and I had no way of fleeing to safety, Sister Leonora Tucker literally saved my life by risking her own to take me to Cape Palmas in the southeastern corner of Liberia. From there, I crossed the border and was able to join my family in the Ivory Coast, where we lived as refugees.

In 1994, I reunited with Sister Leonora at the refugee camp in Buduburam, Ghana. Through the generosity of the SSND and of Michelle Quinn, who began her connection with SSND in 1941 and who welcomed me into her family, I completed my high school education in Ghana. During my last year there, I was unsure what the future held. Then one day Sister Leonora asked me, “What if you were given the opportunity to attend university in America?” My answer was, “Absolutely. Yes!”

On March 7, 1997, I arrived in New York, where I met my American family, together with Sister Petronilla Killigrew. The rest is a story of successful adjustment to a new country; education that included a BA and an MBA from Sacred Heart University; and continued support from my African family, my family in the U.S. and my SSND family.

Today I am a U.S. citizen, an entrepreneur, and a resident of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, where I live with my wonderful wife, Susan, and our son, Christopher, an absolute go-getter.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the SSND. The Sisters instilled in me a love of learning and the value of kindness. They also taught me that it is my responsibility, as the recipient of so many blessings, to give back to others. The SSND remain an integral part of my life and I check in regularly with Sister Leonora. I cannot imagine what my story would have been like without them, but I know for certain that the School Sisters of Notre Dame have had, and continue to have, an immeasurably positive impact on my life. I am, and will forever be, abundantly grateful to them.

Academy of Our Lady Alumnae Association

The Academy of Our Lady (AOL) Alumnae Association was first created in 1897, when 14 graduates of the all-girls school in Chicago (also known as Longwood for the neighborhood in which the school was located) formed an alumnae group, agreeing to hold two meetings per year, one of them a reunion. As the school grew, so did the Alumnae Association. When AOL closed in 1999, the Alumnae Board agreed to continue as an adjunct group to support the local ministries of the School Sisters of



Academy of Our Lady Alumni Board members (from left) Liz Hamer O'Connor '67, Kathy Gallagher Sedlack '55 and Faith Kilburg McNamera '48 visit Michelle McCullough '77 at the 2019 Ridge Park Art Fair and Festival in Chicago.

Notre Dame (SSND) and to keep AOL's spirit alive. The Board continued meeting in the convent on the grounds of the school until the Sisters left the campus in 2007. St. Margaret of Scotland parish, located near the former AOL campus, currently provides the Board with a room for their materials.

Until 2007, a Sister served as Alumnae Relations Coordinator. Currently, Sister Miriam Patrick Cummings, an alumna and former AOL principal, attends the annual October AOL reunions. She brings greetings from the Sisters and their thanks for AOL alumnae support of SSND ministries. Alumnae Sisters often attend this event, too. The charter school that now owns and occupies the former AOL campus welcomes alumnae for a visit on reunion day, one of the most special parts of the day.

The ever-faithful Alumnae Board represents classes from the 1940s through the 1990s. The Board meets monthly, except in winter. The Alumnae Association also has a website, www.AOLAlumnae.org, which offers, among other features, historical AOL photos.

Jeannette & Bill Sheridan

Jeannette Sheridan has known the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) since 1955 in Houston when she started as an eighth grader in a new school, which was founded by SSND.

The oldest of four children, Jeannette felt a call to religious life as a young girl. "I always wanted to be a Sister," she said. "They seemed so special."

Because of her wish to become a Sister and her family's closeness to the SSND, she traveled as an Aspirant to St. Louis to attend Notre Dame High School in 1956. "I know it seems crazy now," said Jeannette. "But it felt very natural and right at the time." She continued her education at Notre Dame College, also in St. Louis.

It was a long way from Texas to St. Louis, but Jeannette thrived. "My education from grade school, high school and college is second to none," she said. She also recalls as a postulant, in addition to college classes, playing softball games and square dancing in full habits; it was hot, but also a lot of fun.

Jeannette professed First Vows in 1962. She began teaching in Corpus Christi, Texas, and lived in a community with six other sisters, two of whom became mentors and life-long friends. She was then sent to Baton Rouge, La., where she taught in the state's first integrated high school. It was challenging but she again had wonderful mentoring. "I learned to teach from the SSND and as an SSND," she said.

With the changes following Vatican II, Jeannette discerned she needed to leave the congregation. The love and support she received from her Sisters helped her transition.

Jeannette returned to Texas and continued teaching. She met her future husband, Bill, on a blind date over the Christmas holidays in 1970. They got engaged at Easter and married in July 1971.

After two children and three grandchildren and an active life in their parish and community, Jeannette and Bill are now retired, enjoying their family, friends and pets. "My grandchildren are my ministry," said Jeannette.



Bill and Jeannette Sheridan, long-time supporters of SSND, enjoy time together with family in Alaska. Jeannette has had a relationship with SSND since 1955.

Faces

of School Sisters
of Notre Dame in
prayer, ministry
and community



Sister Charmaine Krohe visiting Haiti in September 2019 to meet with families who have been served by the province's partnership with Beyond Borders.



Sister Louise O'Connor volunteers to help students through the English Tutoring Project located in St. Louis, September 2019.



International members of the Congregational Communications and Technology Team (CCTT) meeting in Rome in August 2019 to finalize a new communications plan for the congregation.



Left to right: Sisters Maryanne Ekam, Carolyn Anyega and Ejura Michael at the SSND convent in Bwaim, The Gambia in February 2020.



Sisters Judith Sambu (left) and Lilian Gor visit ongoing construction of the SSND convent in Likuyani, Kenya.



Sister Addie Lorraine Walker and friends enjoy a fun meal at St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa, Mississippi, following the 2019 Mass of Appreciation, October 19, 2019.



Sister Mary Oliver Hudon (left) catches up with Limèteze Pierre-Gilles at an Associates gathering in Wilton, Conn., last summer. Sister Mary Oliver was one of the Florida Sisters who encouraged Sister Limèteze to become a SSND.



Sister Barb Linke leads campus employees, area students (from St. Mary's Visitation and Notre Dame of Milwaukee) and local citizens in song during a public prayer for peace at Notre Dame of Elm Grove in Elm Grove, Wisconsin, on the International Day of Peace, September 25, 2019.



Sisters enjoy the new provincial house in Accra, Ghana.



Sisters and lay staff at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Mankato, Minn., participate in the 8th Annual Pedal Past Poverty for Partners for Affordable Housing on Saturday, February 22, 2020. The group took the prize for the most money earned, which was \$26,024.00.



Sister Adria Turrill, 96, gets a beauty treatment from Sisters Connie Carrigan and Justine Nutz at Villa Notre Dame in Wilton, Conn., April 2020. Almost 80 shampoos, trims, settings and stylings have been offered since the end of March, lifting spirits during the pandemic.

Sister Juliana Wangao ministers as a lab technician at Holy Spirit Hospital in Makeni, Sierra Leone.





School Sisters
of Notre Dame



Sisters in Saint Louis formed a Corona Chaos Committee for Morale and Mental Health which planned “Wacky Wednesday” events for SSND in residence at the Sancta Maria in Ripa campus. Here the theme was Spring Flower Fling. Everyone dressed in floral attire and played various rounds of an alphabet game using names of flowers, trees, plants.

Finding peace during the pandemic

These past several months have been unique, challenging, frustrating, depressing and a blessing all at once. We are still in the midst of a global health crisis, requiring unprecedented social distancing: orders to stay at home; the closing of schools and public venues; cancellation of large events, gatherings and liturgical celebrations; restrictions on travel and visitation of loved ones at their birth and their death. It is uncertain how long this “new normal” will continue and the long-term impact it will have on so many levels.

As women religious living in community and “sent to make Christ visible by our very being,” we are challenged to help each other, and those we serve, while keeping our distance. We asked ourselves: How can we “be women of peace, hope

and love” and ease the anxiety, the fear, the heartbreak and the loneliness without being present in person? As “educators in all we do and are,” what lessons are we learning from this situation and how can we share those lessons?

A webpage was created to collect responses to these questions from the SSND community. It offers prayers, reflections and resources as a source of encouragement and support in the spirit of oneness with our God and with one another as all humanity copes with the pandemic. We hope that it brings you some peace.

Please visit ssnd.org/covid-19.

