

TRUST & DARE

2021



Who is my neighbor?

Fratelli Tutti inspired stories about
SSND Good Samaritans



School Sisters
of Notre Dame

TRUST & DARE

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: Sister Gail Guelker (left), Donna Lindsay and Donna's grandson tour a building near Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church in St. Louis that will become a child care center. See story page 11.



Sister Celeste Reinhart

dear friends,

In its second year, the pandemic has taken its toll in accumulated fatigue, loss of energy and difficulty tolerating yet another inconvenience. This feeling that we've hit a wall is a valid and common response to the highly irregular circumstances of our times. However, perhaps we are also being invited to have more compassion for ourselves and others.

This issue of *Trust & Dare* focuses on compassion, specifically responding to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" based on Chapter Two of *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship (FT)*, the new encyclical from Pope Francis, released in October 2020. "In the face of so much pain and suffering, our only course is to imitate the Good Samaritan...The parable shows us how a community can be rebuilt by men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject the creation of a society of exclusion, and act instead as neighbours, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good." (FT 67)

The Good Samaritan story expands our hearts to embrace the vulnerable, to see the outcast and the excluded as neighbors. Each day presents opportunities for co-responsibility in bearing the pain of other's troubles and creating and putting into place new processes and change for supporting and renewing our troubled societies. (FT 77)

On the following pages, School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) share their "Good Samaritan" stories of:

- Advocating for human dignity in anti-trafficking efforts
- Encountering mercy in prison and death row ministries
- Seeking the common good with those of other religions
- Responding to neighborhood changes due to racial inequities

In addition, you'll find a report from the United Nations, plus stories of how others have been inspired by the SSND Good Samaritans in their lives.

The Samaritan found an innkeeper to care for the injured man. Together, they were able to restore him to health. We are grateful to you, our donors, for your financial assistance that provides the resources for the Good Samaritan stories found in this issue. Together, we are the innkeeper and the Samaritan caring for our neighbors. 

Sincerely,

Celeste Reinhart, SSND
Provincial Councilor, Atlantic-Midwest Province



Eight of the nine new SSND who made their first profession in Rome, July 2020. Front (l. to r.): Sisters Maureen Wekesa, Lucy Edidiong Afangideh, Maureen Auma; Back (l. to r.): Sisters Lucy Waigwa, M. Sára Geröly, Immaculata N. Nwachukwu, Yamila Brufau, Frances Okafor.

Who is my neighbor?

“Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders.”

– Fratelli Tutti 69

Since the founding of the congregation in 1833, the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) have been committed to God’s call of love and service to our neighbors. SSND Foundress, Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, wrote: “True and sincere love of our neighbor is at the same time the infallible criterion of our love of God.” (Letter #4307, 1868)

In its early years, the SSND congregation responded to an urgent need to educate girls in Bavaria. Only 14 years after its foundation, Blessed Theresa generously answered a request from bishops in North America to send Sisters to teach the children of German immigrants who were arriving there in large numbers. These early missions grew and eventually expanded across the United States (to 34 states and the territory of Guam) and to Canada (to six provinces).

In 1970, the first SSND went to Africa. Today, the Province of Africa encompasses Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and The Gambia.

Through nearly 200 years, the SSND have depended on the assistance of many “Good Samaritans” – supporters and donors who sustain our mission and ministries. Your gifts enable our Sisters and colleagues to continue to respond to urgent needs, locally and globally. We are most grateful for your support. 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 make a legacy gift on behalf of their family and the SSND. 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 Director for your province. 

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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.



(Left to right) Sisters Mary Beth Reissen and Jane Boos, as members of the Human Trafficking Committee in the Central Pacific Province, share a display at the SSND Assembly of the Whole in 2018.

Fellow travelers along the road of life

A different kind of epidemic

The city of Effingham, Illinois, sits at the crossroads of two major U.S. interstates in the middle of the state. For a population of 12,500, there is an overabundance of truck stops, gas stations, restaurants and hotels; a great number of travelers just pass through on a daily basis. There is also a large community of migrant workers providing support for the rural farms surrounding the city. The entire area is highly vulnerable to trafficking of persons, or the buying and selling of human beings for sex or labor. Sister Jane Boos has participated in efforts to educate local community members on the issue.

Sister Jane was born and educated in Effingham, where School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) have had a presence since 1874. After her first profession in 1958, she ministered in

Missouri and other areas of Illinois, returning to Effingham in 2016.

As a member of the Human Trafficking Committee in the SSND Central Pacific Province since 2017, Sister Jane learned about the critical nature of this modern form of slavery. “At first I wasn’t sure why we were addressing this concern,” she recalled. She quickly realized that she could herself be contributing to people who are labor trafficked - by getting food and clothing at reduced prices, for instance.

She further realized that by learning and raising awareness about human trafficking, “we are reaching out to meet unmet needs in an area, especially with the poor and marginalized – just like Blessed Theresa and Mother Caroline did when they first arrived in the U.S.” Especially now, when “one of the greatest needs during the pandemic is

to address human trafficking. Due to increased online activity, people of all ages are being lured over the internet,” said Sister Jane. (See sidebar.)

Most recently, Sister Jane was a spiritual minister at St. Anthony’s Hospital in Effingham, where she talked with her colleagues about human trafficking. “It’s what people don’t say that might give you a clue,” she said, referring to patients who are actually brought in by their traffickers and aren’t allowed to speak for themselves.

When the pandemic restricted her access to the hospital and patients, in her downtime Sister Jane turned to a book study of Pope Francis’ new encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*. “When I prayed *Fratelli Tutti*, I came to an understanding of what real dialogue is: listening compassionately to what the other person is sharing, the truth they share,” she said. “It is important



What you can do about human trafficking:

1. Learn more about ways to protect yourself or your children online.
2. Encourage governments to enact laws and the means to enforce them for the protection of vulnerable people of all ages and to rectify the systemic injustices that perpetuate vulnerabilities.
3. Donate to organizations that support trafficking victims and survivors.
4. Lower the demand! Try to purchase sustainably sourced goods and oppose the use of pornography.
5. Pray for an end to modern slavery in all forms.

As Sisters' ministries changed, there was turnover on the committee. Eventually there were more lay people than SSND. In 2019, the committee ended its work; members were older now, and other organizations were stepping up to meet the need to educate others about human trafficking, such as Talitha Kum (see side bar on page 6).

"I am against human trafficking not only as an SSND but as a woman, a Christian; I just want the world to be better," said Sister Marie. "Everybody has a right to reach their full potential. Our responsibility is not just to reach our own potential but to help others reach their own too."

From next door to around the world

Human trafficking is not just an urban or rural issue, but a global concern. Sister Helen Galadima teaches at Notre Dame Girls Senior High School in Sunyani, Ghana. On the side, she educates herself about human trafficking in order to keep her students informed of the possibilities of exploitation and how they can be more confident in avoiding the traps. She has also had opportunities to be the Good Samaritan in some trafficking situations.

"I met a woman, a mother of two children. While we were talking, I noticed tears rolling down her eyes. She mentioned she had left her husband and children for prostitution, was very worried and wanted to go back to them. I encouraged her to return to her family. It was the beginning of a conversion in the woman's life. There is room for change," Sister Helen explained.

"I had another experience with a young lady with whom I shared the same flight. Upon landing, she turned to me and asked if I could help her complete her arrival form. She could not speak much English, yet we communicated

for all of us to listen to survivors of human trafficking, to get to the cause," Sister Jane added. "I am grateful to survivors who speak out to make us more aware."

Recalling the story of the Good Samaritan, Sister Jane reminds us that we can all relate to each of the characters within us. "We are often the passersby in the story," she said. "I live in a small city; it's common to have blinders on." But she is doing her part to advocate for victims and survivors of human trafficking through educating herself, sharing knowledge and resources with others, contacting legislators to address the concern, helping survivor organizations with financial support and volunteering.

Not a new concern

In 2002, the general superiors of both men and women religious were asked by the Vatican to be involved in alleviating issues around human trafficking.

Shortly thereafter, a SSND Human Trafficking Committee was created in

the former Canadian province. They spent the first two to three years doing research, education and exploration. Sister Marie Taylor was recruited for the committee because of her work with international students. "The perception was that human trafficking was international and external, that people were trafficked into Canada from Asia or Europe. We were not aware how much was happening domestically," said Sister Marie. In Canada, there is a big problem with indigenous women being trafficked within the country. When Sister Marie began to discover this reality, she was shocked.

As the committee grew, they formed groups in urban centers, provided support for women and went to workshops for continuing education. The committee organized an annual conference beginning in 2005, engaging SSND Associates. They also offered many workshops and made presentations at the high schools.



At Notre Dame Girls Senior High School in Sunyani, Ghana, Sister Helen Galadima teaches her students how to keep themselves safe from human traffickers.

somehow. I did help her and she asked me again, ‘Do you know this place?’ I did not. I asked, ‘What brought you here?’ She responded, ‘House help.’ Immediately I realized that she was lost and did not know anyone there. I requested a security officer to help

and guard her. As I left her and even until now, I could not stop thinking about her and pray for her,” shared Sister Helen.

“Some of the trafficker’s tactics are promises of good jobs, inflated wages,

schooling abroad and many others. They come around the town and villages to deceive the people by putting before them the best of life and, in the end, it turns to something different,” Sister Helen warns her students.

“I acknowledge the fact that human trafficking exists in our society in varied ways and it occurs right next door. So we need to know about it and educate ourselves. I educate others where I live and work on the idea of love and respect of neighbor. This is such a fundamental thing that when it is lacking, it pushes individuals to all sorts of wickedness and selfish interests,” explains Sister Helen. “Pope Francis has called us through the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* to be our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, to love and share in the common good. It is time for us to rise up to help in combating human trafficking.”

For SSND resources on human trafficking, including a printable prayer card, visit ssnd.org/shalom/areas-of-concern/human-trafficking. 

“Trafficking in persons and other contemporary forms of enslavement are a worldwide problem that needs to be taken seriously by humanity as a whole: ‘since criminal organizations employ global networks to achieve their goals, efforts to eliminate this phenomenon also demand a common and, indeed, a global effort on the part of various sectors of society.’”

(Fratelli Tutti 24)

Keep kids safe online



SSND is a sponsor of U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) and their monthly Stop Trafficking! e-newsletter. USCSAHT invites you to help stop the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children online. Since March 2020, incidents of child online exploitation have risen 126% according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. To learn more, visit sistersagainstrafficking.org.

International network

Headquartered in Rome, Talitha Kum coordinates the anti-trafficking efforts of 60,000 Religious Sisters worldwide, facilitating networking, communication and formation, according to the strategic planning of the International Union of Superiors General and the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church. Visit talithakum.info.





Sister Jacinta Ondeng (far right) leads a group session at Langata Women Maximum Security Prison in Kenya.

Those most in need of our mercy

Another chance in life

Sister Jacinta Ondeng began volunteering in prison ministry in 2004 as a graduate student in counseling psychology. She was greatly influenced by the movie “Dead Man Walking” and the words of Jesus from scripture: “For I was...in prison and you visited me.” (Matthew 25:35-36)

Providing both personal and group counseling to inmates at Langata Women Maximum Security Prison in Nairobi, Kenya, Sister Jacinta finds prison ministry very relevant to the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) charism to respond to the poor but especially women and children. Most women prisoners in Kenya are from relatively poor backgrounds. Many confess to crimes such as child neglect, theft or assault in their efforts to provide basic needs for their families.

With less education, they are unequipped with how to resolve interpersonal conflicts and may resort to violence and even murder in an effort to defend themselves or to be understood. This can result in a life sentence; there is no death penalty in Kenya.



The SSND community in Nairobi welcomes Jane upon her release from prison after 27 years. (Left to right) Sister Janet Odey, Jane Wangui, Sisters Jacinta Ondeng and Joan Mukhwana.

Sister Jacinta is motivated by her own conviction that “the human person, regardless of how broken they are, still deserves God’s love and mercy. They must be listened to, treated with dignity and given another chance in life. Imprisonment is not only about punishment but an opportunity to rehabilitate an offender so that he or she becomes a useful member of society.”

Sister Jacinta keeps in touch with some of the women long after their release from prison. As one of Sister’s clients, Jane spent 27 years at the prison, having been sentenced to life imprisonment for robbery with violence. In December 2016, Jane was among those lucky to receive a presidential pardon. Although good news, there was no prior preparation for both the inmates and their families for their release.

Jane had not been in touch with her relatives for several years and had no immediate place to go. Sister Jacinta asked the SSND community in Nairobi to host Jane for a few days while other arrangements could be made. “The community’s ‘yes’ to my request opened our own doors of mercy to Jane, providing us with the opportunity to be

Good Samaritans,” said Sister Jacinta. “Jane not only gave us an opportunity to learn from her experience, but also taught us to share love with a stranger.”

Need for love and acceptance

Sister Kathleen Eggering has worked with juvenile offenders in San Antonio, Texas, since 2004. Although not a prison, the Cyndi Taylor Krier Juvenile Correctional Treatment Center is a county facility providing residential therapeutic rehabilitation for 96 youths ages 13-17; sometimes exceptions are made to accept even younger children.



Sister Kathleen Eggering

Sister Kathleen is the chaplain at the Krier Center. Because of the pandemic, she has been limited to offering chapel services via Zoom on Sundays and publishing a monthly newsletter. In “normal” times, she would be offering retreats for the residents several times throughout each year. “They need this because they are totally different on retreat – they let down their defenses,” said Sister Kathleen. “They’ve learned to put on hard shells just to survive.”

Having worked with children since she herself was just 19, Sister Kathleen feels called to this ministry. “These are God’s kids,” she said more than once.

Many of the youth at the Krier Center are gang members. “They’ll say it’s okay to murder because that’s all they know: poverty, neglect, abuse, abandonment, trafficking. They don’t know respect because they have never been respected,” explained Sister Kathleen.

Originally from St. Louis, Sister Kathleen joined SSND in 1954, after her junior year at Rosati Kain High School. Sister started volunteering through the prison ministry at St. Gerard parish in San Antonio, where she had served on and off for many years. This led to her involvement with Bexar County Detention Ministry, a nonprofit organization that sends chaplains into the prisons.

She is often asked, “How can you go there? Aren’t you scared?” She replies, “No! These are children who have been harmed. They need to know love and acceptance, gentleness.” Although she can’t keep in touch once the children leave the center, she takes solace in knowing she played the Good Samaritan along their journey.

Restorative justice

Since July 1, 2020, Sister Eileen Reilly has been a staff member at Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN) in

“All Christians and people of good will are today called to work not only for the abolition of the death penalty, legal or illegal, in all its forms, but also to work for the improvement of prison conditions, out of respect for the human dignity of persons deprived of their freedom. I would link this to life imprisonment...

A life sentence is a secret death penalty.”

(Fratelli Tutti 268)

Washington, D.C., where she works daily to abolish the death penalty in the United States. She previously had been the SSND Shalom contact for the Atlantic-Midwest Province, active in efforts to abolish the death penalty in that role as well. Just prior to starting at CMN, she served as the SSND representative to the United Nations.

CMN was set up 12 years ago to amplify the U.S. Bishops’ voice against the death penalty. “Most Catholics don’t realize the bishops are against the death penalty,” said Sister Eileen. She was hired to broaden and deepen the efforts of women religious in their national efforts. “Sister Helen Prejean was one of the founders of CMN, so the contributions of Catholic Sisters are recognized and valued,” she explained.

Sister Eileen was raised in Massachusetts where there was no death penalty, so she wasn’t really exposed to it or gave it much thought. While working with Shalom, she was contacted by a man on death row. She visited him during his last six months prior to his execution in 2005. This experience “radicalized me on the issue” and was “sobering,” she said.

As an SSND, Sister Eileen has a commitment to serve the poor. “People on death row fit that category. They often have inadequate representation because they cannot afford better. The possibility for mistakes looms large,” explained Sister Eileen.

CMN promotes restorative justice not punitive justice. Instead of figuring out

what law is broken, they look at how to heal the harm. This means that the perpetrator and the victim (or victim’s family) sit down together and dialogue about who is harmed and how to heal.

One recent case involved a woman whose husband was killed by a drunk driver, leaving her to raise three children on her own. She sat down with the driver to seek healing, and was transformed in the process. Restorative justice often helps all to be at peace.

“It takes a lot of preparation and is not taken lightly. The dialogue needs to be highly structured and facilitated. Everyone needs to be willing to enter

the process. Facilitators need to think it out and play out all implications,” reported Sister Eileen.

“This ministry calls me to be very deliberate,” continued Sister Eileen. “The first instinct is always ‘isn’t that terrible, awful?’ But as Sister Helen would say, we’re all better than the worst thing we’ve ever done.”

For resources on restorative justice, please visit catholicmobilizing.org. To read more about Sister Eileen Reilly, visit atlanticmidwest.org or globalsistersreport.org to search for recent articles about her. 



Sister Eileen Reilly works to abolish the death penalty with Catholic Mobilizing Network.



Sister Ejura Elizabeth, second row third from left, gathers with friends and colleagues at St. Edwards School in The Gambia, where both Islam and Christianity are part of the curriculum.

Neighbors of a different faith

“We, the believers of the different religions, know that our witness to God benefits our societies. The effort to seek God with a sincere heart...helps us recognize one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters.”

(Fratelli Tutti 274)

School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) first arrived in The Gambia, West Africa, in 1990. With a population of more than 2.2 million people, 96% are Muslim and 4% are Christian. Sister Ejura Elizabeth Michael has spent the last five years in The Gambia in full-time education ministry. As a Catholic Sister and educator in a predominantly Muslim country, challenges exist.

“I have come to learn that, as Christians, we have fundamental elements to consider when relating with those of different faiths, in this case Muslims,” said Sister Ejura. “Being an SSND has taught me the values of universal love and compassion, which have enabled me to see and accept others for who they are and respect them,” even if they hold different opinions or beliefs.

According to Sister Ejura, “at the end of the day, we are all bound together in our common humanity, because we were all created in the image and likeness of God. We, by our very

existence and relationships, have become co-creators with God.” Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, emphasizes that “there is a drop of God in every one of us and hence, believing this should help us to rise above petty divisions and prejudices,” explained Sister Ejura.

She recognizes, “it is so easy to label people” and clarifies, “not every Muslim is a terrorist. We must not generalize from the fact that some Muslims have used their religion to defend terrorist activities to support the assertion that all Muslims are terrorists.”

There are many areas where common convictions enable Christians and Muslims to work together in The Gambia. In the schools, Christian and non-Christian teachers work collectively to ensure that the students receive a quality education. “During social activities, one cannot tell the difference because religion disappears and humanity takes prominence,” said Sister Ejura.

As minorities, Christians in The Gambia are allowed to practice and spread their faith without hindrance. During celebrations or other liturgical observances, there is a mutual understanding and respect between the Muslim and Christian communities and invitations to participate in each other’s activities. “Living in a predominantly Muslim country has helped me to look at things from a different perspective and has been a privileged opportunity to learn from our Muslim counterparts,” said Sister Ejura.

“I have committed myself to living and teaching the values of respecting and loving others, welcoming differences, and prioritizing the dignity of every human being over his or her ideas, opinions and practices. When people come to understand that they are treated with compassionate love and acceptance, not condemnation and pre-judgement for the faith they practice, they begin to learn to reciprocate the gesture,” Sister Ejura stated. ☪

The People's Church

Founded in 1848, Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church (MHT) was once in a thriving urban area of North St. Louis, settled by German immigrants. Starting in the 1950s, it experienced white flight, poor public transportation and racial tension. However, some residents held on to family businesses and homes, ignored troubling trends and secured the backbone of the community. The heart of MHT has never changed; it is a community that proclaims the Word of God in the local neighborhood.

Against this backdrop, Sisters Janice Munier, Parish Life Coordinator, and Gail Guelker, Mission Advancement Coordinator, serve a diverse population with many needs. "Together, we focus on who we are as a Church," said Sister Gail. "We exist for the purpose of being good neighbors to whomever we encounter."

"It's all about building partnerships," said Sister Janice. "Parishioners want to establish relationships throughout the community, not just in the Church."

Sister Janice has a background in theology and religious education. Sister Gail has a background in education and faith-based community organizing. The two combine their skills to achieve the goals of the parish.

The parish mission statement calls for "supporting each other as we live and celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ." According to Sister Gail, "How we live that out is important. We encourage our parishioners to use their leadership gifts and collaborate with others in the neighborhood."

One of the newest projects that MHT is participating in is the development of a much-needed child care center. A partnership has been formed with Dream Builders 4 Equity, Child Care Entrepreneurship, LinkStL and MHT. The center will offer traditional and 24-hour care, providing essential support for working mothers.

In May 2021, MHT school was closed by the Archdiocese of St. Louis. The Parish Council strongly recommended using the buildings for support of the community such as for a summer leadership program designed by Dream Builders 4 Equity. The parish definitely wants to see the buildings sold to someone who reflects the long history and importance of education in the area.

"We believe our ministry is enriched by the love and engagement of our parishioners and community members," said Sister Janice. "It's built on a history of welcoming all and considering 'who is my neighbor.' We are living out our faith by putting it into action." 



Sister Gail Guelker (left) with Most Holy Trinity parishioner Donna Lindsay and her grandson, tour the building that will become a child care center.



Sister Janice Munier (left) with Most Holy Trinity parishioner Barbara Russell before Mass on Palm Sunday 2021.

"The world exists for everyone, because all of us were born with the same dignity. Differences of colour, religion, talent, place of birth or residence, and so many others, cannot be used to justify the privileges of some over the rights of all. As a community, we have an obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development."

(Fratelli Tutti 118)



INSPIRED BY

School Sisters of Notre Dame



Pete and Patti Rothfork together with their daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren in March 2021. Left to right: Andy Westbrook, Jes Westbrook, Parker Westbrook, Pete and Patti Rothfork, Peyton Linn and Paige Linn.

Pete Rothfolk

“Turkey Pete,” better known as Pete Rothfolk, has been running the family turkey business, founded by his father, for 33 years. Located in Melrose, Minnesota, the business includes eight farms across central Minnesota, a processing plant and a feed mill. They produce more than a million turkeys every year.

Pete and his wife, Patti, have one daughter, Jessica, and three grandchildren. Ten years ago, Jessica and her husband, Andy, started handling the day-to-day operations so Pete could work part time as the asset manager. Four nephews also work on the farm and his grandson is in college preparing to run the farm. The business employs 35 additional employees.

Pete was taught by SSND from grades 1-6 at St. Francis Xavier School in Sartell, Minnesota. His favorite SSND was

Sister Emmanuel Fallenstein, who taught him first grade. “That really was the foundation of everything.” Pete recalled being in Sister Emmanuel’s class when President John F. Kennedy was shot. When asked what Sister Emmanuel did at that time, Pete simply said, “She led us in prayer.”

The Rothfolks support many SSND ministries, but one of the family’s favorites was Li’l Farm in Cambridge, Minnesota. Following the sisters’ retirement in 2020, Li’l Farm closed, but Pete fondly recalled taking his mom to the farm to visit. He enjoyed seeing the kids being active and learning about the animals. Pete was impressed by how many children who were former residents came back, “That told me a lot,” he said.

“Family is number one to us,” said Pete. “We learned at an early age the importance of giving back. The family always donated to charities. The SSND has always been a favorite of ours.”

“The human person, with his or her inalienable rights, is by nature open to relationship. Implanted deep within us is the call to transcend ourselves through an encounter with others.”

(Fratelli Tutti 111)



Michael and Anna Marie Storey were influenced by several SSND who became honorary aunts to their three children.

Michael and Anna Maria Storey

Michael and Anna Maria Storey have both been greatly influenced by the SSND charism.

Anna Maria was educated by SSND at St. Ann’s Elementary School, Notre Dame Preparatory School and the College of Notre Dame of Maryland (now Notre Dame of Maryland University), all in the Baltimore area. She taught English at the Institute of Notre Dame, also in Baltimore, and at Notre Dame Prep, for a total of 28 years. Michael spent his 45-year teaching career in the English department at College of Notre Dame of Maryland, retiring in 2012 from Notre Dame of Maryland University.

Throughout both of their careers in education at SSND schools, they have treasured their relationships with SSND, especially Sisters Maura Eichner, Ruth Miriam Carey, Marie Michelle Walsh and Mary Ellen Doherty, all of who taught Anna Maria, were colleagues with Michael and became honorary aunts to their three children.

Sue Weiskopf

Since 1983, Sue Weiskopf has been an SSND Associate, having become one of the first Associates in the province. At the time, she was teaching at St. Francis Xavier School in Sartell, Minnesota, alongside SSND including Sisters Rose Anthony Krebs, Therese Marie Merth, Janet Mallak

and Joan Bartosh. She recalled an instance when one of her third-grade students was causing trouble. Sister Rose Anthony, whose first-grade classroom was next door, offered to assist. “Sister was an excellent teacher, but also quite firm,” said Sue, who went on to a 30-year teaching career, moving to Iowa after four years in Minnesota.

Sue kept in touch with all the Sisters, but especially Sister Rose Anthony, who eventually went on mission as an educator in Kenya for more than eight years. Sister would tell stories of making classroom stools out of cardboard, or using the backs of can labels for writing paper. As a vendor in the annual SSND Craft Fair in Mankato, Sister Rose Anthony’s resourcefulness has been on full display. “She can make anything out of nothing,” said Sue. “That’s why I know if I donate to her causes, she will find umpteen ways to use the funds.” Those causes include the Province of Africa, which Sue has supported for years.

Sue’s experience as an Associate has been one of “awesome connections.” As a single mother raising two girls, she felt really blessed to have this connection to SSND in her life. “God sent me what I needed. I still feel so close to many of the Sisters,” she said.

Originally from Pocohontas, Iowa, where she now lives, Sue still visits Minnesota often to see one of her daughters, some of her five grandchildren, and of course the Sisters and other Associates. “Being an Associate has filled my life. I have felt supported and I support the SSND mission. They do such wonderful work; the charism is right up my alley!” 



Sue Weiskopf (right) attends an Associates gathering in Mankato (pre-COVID) with fellow Associate Karen Molitor (left).

faces

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



Sisters celebrate Jubilees in Kenya, January 2021: (left to right) Joan Mukhwana, Joyce Nyakwama (25th Jubilee), Oyin-oza Asishana, Marie Denice Houston (60th Jubilee) and Monica Juma.



Cutting the cake at the August 2020 blessing of the new provincial house in Accra, Ghana. (L. to r.): Mr. Francis Abaidoo, Sisters Elizabeth Newman and Oyin-oza Asishana, Mrs. Josephine Abaidoo, Very Rev. John Louis, Sisters Dawida Krzempek and Antoinette Cornelius.



In April 2021, Sister Kay O'Connell (seated) donated her books on SSND history in Wilton, Connecticut, and the early days of the Atlantic-Midwest Province, to the Wilton library. Also pictured (left to right) Selectman Bob Russell; Julie Hughes, Archivist of the Wilton History Room; Elaine Tai-Lauria, Library Executive Director; and Sister Michaela Durkin, SSND, a library volunteer, who arranged the presentation.



In the fall of 2020, Sister Janice Fennewald met with her Nun Buddies, Elizabeth Appelbaum (left) and Maria McAuliffe (right), students at Notre Dame High School, St. Louis.



Sister Pauline Girodat rings bells at Notre Dame Convent (NDC) in Waterdown, Ontario, Canada, in response to a diocesan invitation to pray for an end to the pandemic.



Province of Africa Sisters Juliana Wangao, Sarah Tanjo and Ruth Mose (left to right), graduated in March 2021 from the University of Makeni in Makeni, Sierra Leone.



Sister Maureen Clancy created a candle tribute outside of her home near Chicago following the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg. “We just wanted to express our feelings for a woman who has done so much for so many, especially women and the marginalized.”

Sister Carole Brunner (back) visited Sister Cabrini Ganz (front) at Resurrection Life Center in Chicago on the occasion of Sister Cabrini’s 80th Jubilee.



The main room at the SSND North American Archives in Milwaukee was officially named in honor of Sister Mary Ann Kuttner (left) during a hybrid ceremony in February 2021. Provincial leaders and archivist Michele Levandoski (onscreen) attended virtually, and Sisters Helen Jaeb and Mary Kay Brooks (middle and right) were in person to bestow the honor.

(Left to right) Sisters Luanne Boland, Ginny Grumich, Joan Andert, Gail Guelker and Gen Cassani participated in The Way of the Cross: Overcoming Racism sponsored by the Peace and Justice Commission and the Office of Racial Harmony of the Archdiocese of St. Louis in March 2021.



During the summer of 2020, Sister Joann McMahon (right) tutored Maryan Mohamed (left) for her citizenship test at the Good Counsel Learning Center, Mankato, Minnesota. During the spring of 2021, Maryan Mohamed took her citizenship test and passed.

Sisters in Nigeria held a thanksgiving Mass to welcome their newly professed, Sisters Immaculata Nwachukwu, Edidiong Afangideh and Frances Okafor (left to right) in December 2020.



Sister Beatriz Martinez-Garcia at the United Nations.

Participation in the United Nations

Sister Beatriz Martinez-Garcia became the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) representative at the United Nations (U.N.) in July 2019. Her mission is to collaborate with other NGOs to bring the urgent needs of the global community to the attention of the U.N. Member States. She also informs the SSND congregation of the work of the U.N. and shares ways on how SSND can promote the achievement of the U.N.’s Sustainable Development Goals.

Due to restrictions during the pandemic, Sister Beatriz has been attending U.N. events virtually. “On one hand, virtual meetings allow more people from all over the world to participate in U.N. and civil society events, because nobody has to travel,” says Sister Beatriz. “For example, some of our Sisters from Ghana, Germany, Kenya, Nigeria and Sierra Leone participated virtually in the Commission for

Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women. On the other hand, it is more challenging for NGO committees to contact and meet virtually with Member States.”

No matter where they are conducting their meetings, the U.N. NGOs are taking to heart Pope Francis’ call in the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* to live in right relationship with our sisters and brothers and all of creation. “Since 2015, the United Nations, by adopting the *Transforming our World: Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development*, has been committed to eradicating all forms of poverty, ending discrimination and exclusion, and reducing the inequalities that scourge the world’s poorest and most marginalized people,” said Sister Beatriz. “All the 193 U.N. Member States have pledged to leave no one behind, including our planet. It’s all about relationships.” 

