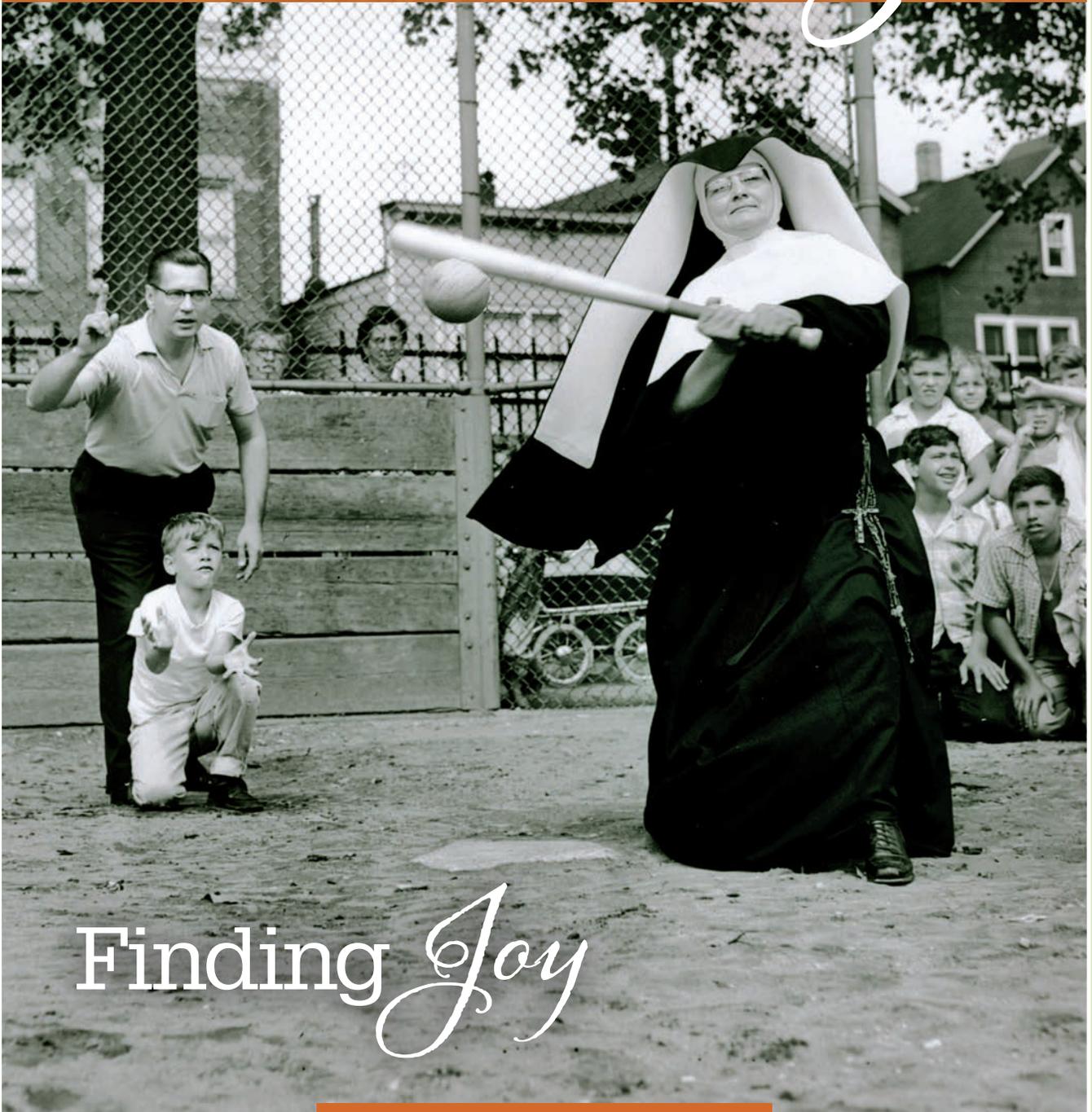


SPRING | SUMMER 2019



Blessings

School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic-Midwest Province



Finding *Joy*

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH EDUCATION

Forming community is a life-long process. We say yes to the joys and inevitable tensions of creating and recreating community each day. In our efforts to love one another and bear one another's burdens, we experience the reconciling power of our merciful God. Awed by the mystery of God's action in our midst, we gratefully celebrate life. (You Are Sent, C7)

FINDING JOY IN COMMUNITY



The theme of this publication is *Finding Joy*. There are so many places in life where we can find joy. Oftentimes this joy comes from others, from the connections we make as we search for communities where we can live, love and serve to the fullest of our potential.

Community is a core part of life, and it is characteristic of the Christian life. Throughout the early church and to this day, community has been central to our lives. We are called not only to serve those at our door but to seek out those

in need. We work with communities and as a community to address those needs. Together we are a strong force — a force for change, a force for improvement. When we speak with one voice, we are not only louder but we are more credible and influential.

Our congregation's Directional Statement calls us to mission, ministry and community. It calls us to holiness, to love one another, to global awareness, to embrace the call to communion, to once again give our entire lives to God. Our work is a work of communion — communion with God, communion with each other, communion with the School Sisters of Notre Dame, communion with the church and the world. Now, more than ever, our broken, divided and violent world needs our compassion, mercy and inclusivity. Our world needs you, our generous benefactors. Our congregation needs you, our province needs you — needs all of us — to be the light in the world. By sharing with us your time, treasure and talent, you assist us with carrying that light into the future.

Let us together — Sisters, Associates, staff, donors and others — carry on the spirit of our Foundress Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger and of Mother Caroline, the pioneering leader who helped the School Sisters of Notre Dame flourish in America. Let us dare to love, let us open our hearts to a love that gives everything, let us find the joy in all that we are and all that we do.

Thank you for being such an integral part of our community. May God continue to bless you and bring you joy!

Yours in Notre Dame,

Charmaine Krohe, SSND

Provincial Leader, School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic-Midwest Province

ON THE COVER: An unidentified Chicago Sister takes joy in a game of baseball. Do you remember this Sister? We are grateful to anyone who might be able to ID her. Please email the information to communications@amssnd.org.

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School Sisters
of Notre Dame

Blessings is a publication for family, friends and benefactors of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

SSNDs in the Atlantic-Midwest Province express their mission of unity through education, which enables persons to reach the fullness of their potential. "Urged by the love of Christ, we choose to express our mission through ministry directed toward education. For us, education means enabling persons to reach the fullness of their potential as individuals created in God's image and assisting them to direct their gifts toward building the earth." (You Are Sent, Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, C22)

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The School Sisters of Notre Dame are part of an international congregation. They currently minister in 30 countries. "Our internationality challenges us to witness to unity in a divided world; to discover unsuspected ways of sharing what we have, especially with the poor and marginalized; and to search for new channels of service in the international church." *YAS, C26*



The Joy of Being Called

The discernment of a call to religious life is distinct from other kinds of vocational discernment and requires an openness and prayerful listening to the will of God.

Sister Maria Iannuccillo entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1990, when she was 23. Not many women were lining up to become Sisters at that time. "I felt a call — in the same way that a person feels love for someone," she explains.

Her calling came early in life. "I first felt this call when I was 12. I remember feeling upset that God was calling me to become a nun, because I didn't want to be one. When I confided in my mother about this, she said two things to me, 'God does not want you to be unhappy.' and 'Go outside and play.'"

Sister Maria credits her mother, a devout Catholic who prayed daily, for instilling in her the Catholic faith. Maria also participated in the sacraments and Catholic religious education with the Filippini Sisters at her parish. "I remember growing up and being very curious about Sisters. I volunteered to help clean the convent, so I could go inside and see how the Sisters lived!"

Maria was a sophomore at Regis College, fully immersed in her studies and life as a young woman in Boston, when she felt called once again to consider religious life. She had attended a retreat, a day of reflection hosted by campus ministry, and during the time of prayer she realized that something was planned for her. It took Maria months to finally tell someone.

When she shared her interest in exploring religious life for the first time out loud to Sister Elaine Polcari, SSND, Sister Maria described it this way, "I felt kind of an exploding inside. As soon as I said I wanted to take the next step, I felt God pouring peace over me — it was very tangible."

Sister Elaine was very welcoming and invited Maria to various events and introduced her to other Sisters and congregations. "She did not recruit me per se — she was just very welcoming and open."



After two years as an SSND affiliate, Maria entered the postulancy at Villa Notre Dame in Wilton, Conn. in the summer of 1990. Over her two years as a postulant, she continued to grow personally and spiritually. Maria was received into the novitiate on August 23, 1992, where she deepened her relationship with Christ. Through solitude, prayer, study, life in community, and ministry experience, she got to know more fully the aspects of SSND life, including the vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience.

The discernment process takes time, habitual prayer, and profound honesty. During her discernment, Maria became aware of her own inner spirit and how God was calling her.

"I think we do the best we can to respond to what God invites us to — one step at a time. At each step, I have been called to the next step. It gets clearer, your desire to take the next step. During the difficult times, I have to recommit, and each time it deepens the relationship and commitment."

When asked what sustains her on her spiritual journey, Sister Maria said, "On a foundational level it is God — a relationship with God — sometimes in spite of me. We are called to try to respond to God as best we can. It's a challenge and a gift ... and it's not always easy."

Other sources of support are, "a deep sense of call — a call that deepens with time. Community — with my congregation and other congregations. My whole religious life has been connected to other religious. And my family and friends."

Sister Maria, as one of the younger Sisters in the province, was asked about what she sees the future holding for SSND, "I believe there will always be a place for vowed religious life — it is a separate and distinct call. The SSND charism is still relevant. The world needs transformative education, advocacy and action for social justice — and the striving for unity."

This May, Sister Maria, who is now in her second term as a member of the Provincial Council for the Atlantic-Midwest Province, celebrated her Silver Jubilee. "God has been so faithful," she says.

I remember growing up and being very curious about Sisters. I volunteered to help clean the convent, so I could go inside and see how the Sisters lived! — Sister Maria Iannuccillo





The Joy of Jubilee



This is a time of great jubilation and joy. We celebrate the 3,395 cumulative years of service to God represented on these pages. Sisters' years of profession range from 1939 to 1994. These Sisters are authentic witnesses to the certainty that a life lived in the scriptures shapes a universal heart and rallies the global soul.

It is also a time of Thanksgiving. We rejoice because in the service and consecrated life of Sisters, we are witnesses to justice, tender love and humility.

JUBILARIANS IN THE YEAR 2019

80 YEARS — first vows professed in 1939

Sister Mary Teresa Spodnik

75 YEARS — first vows professed in 1944

Sister Mary Henrice Eckert
Sister Dorothy Hunt †
Sister Mary Petra Klotz
Sister Catherine Manning

Sister Marie Elena McCormack
Sister Zita Merkowsky
Sister Thomasine Ryan

70 YEARS — first vows professed in 1949

Sister Marie Angela Bayne
Sister Mary Jane Buhrman
Sister Mary Martin Colbert
Sister Joan Marie Curtin
Sister Leona Dentinger
Sister Mary Earle Doohan
Sister Kathleen Feeley

Sister Gemma Golino
Sister Bernadine Gutacker
Sister Alfreda Kimpel
Sister Doreen Norman
Sister Jean Phelan
Sister Dorothy B. Rachuba
Sister Mary Marguerite Weiler

60 YEARS — first vows professed in 1959

Sister Marie Bernadette Alfieri
Sister Janice Algie
Sister Mary Clara Beall
Sister Claire Bonneau
Sister Frances Butler
Sister Eileen Casey
Sister Janet Disbrowe
Sister Rita M. Dorn
Sister Rose Mary Dougherty †
Sister Rose Cecile Espinos
Sister Frances Josef Flach
Sister Mary Patrice Geppi
Sister Patricia Glinka
Sister Joan Gluth
Sister Kathleen Groves
Sister Mary Ann Hartnett

Sister Ann Louise Impink
Sister Mary John Francis Kearney
Sister Jeanne Landry
Sister Mary McGrory
Sister Diane McHugh
Sister Donna McHugh
Sister Mary Helenann Nelson
Sister Liliette Ouellette
Sister Mary Josine Perez
Sister Elaine Polcari
Sister Rose Mary Sander
Sister Judith Anne Schaum
Sister Harriet Schnurr
Sister Margaret Mary Strauch
Sister Mary Leonora Tucker
Sister Patricia Ann Warnick

25 YEARS — first vows professed in 1994

Sister Maria Iannuccillo

† (ETERNAL LIFE)

Please visit <https://atlanticmidwest.org/jubilee> for biographies on each of our Jubilarians. To make a donation in honor of a Jubilarian, please visit <https://atlanticmidwest.org/donate-today>.



Jubilarian Reflections

SISTERS SHARE MOMENTS IN THEIR MINISTRIES THEY WILL NEVER FORGET



I Be Aware

*Sister Mary Petra Klotz,
Waterdown, Ontario, 75th Jubilee*

Though I may not always truly see
The SSND spirit which accompanied me.
Though I may not always feel,
I be aware
Of the tender love which has followed me.
Followed me down from north to down south
Making God alive by act and word of mouth.
Peru in its poverty, on coast or on mount
filled me with love for their spirit so sound.
Chosen by lot for a stay in Japan
I walked over war-ravished land.
The SSND Sisters have been in service there
Loving the people with hearts that care.
Though the only SSNDs in the land of Asia
It doesn't hinder their spirit on any occasion.
They are willing to risk in a spirit of trust.
To spread God's Good News with a loving thrust.



Being the Best I Can Be

*Sister Zita Merkowsky,
Waterdown, Ontario,
75th Jubilee*

When I reflected on my 75 years of religious life, what struck me was the many blessings I had received from my ministries and also through community life.

One example: My first Communion children had just returned from church from their first Confession. They were all seated quietly when I noticed little Oliver's face beaming with joy. I asked "Oliver, what makes you so happy?" He crossed his arms on his chest and said, "Now my soul is all pure!"

As a religious there were many opportunities for growth in my spiritual life. For this and many other blessings received, I give grateful thanks to God.



The Power of Beauty

Sister Kathleen Feeley, Baltimore, 70th Jubilee

In the summer of 2006, I spent ten weeks in South Sudan, teaching a six-week course in English-teaching for teachers in the elementary Catholic schools in Juba. About 55 men and eight women took the course. Half taught in the morning and met with me in the afternoon, and the other half had the opposite schedule. They walked or biked to or from their school to my classroom in a secondary school. A week before the course started, I visited all the elementary schools and saw their rustic conditions.

On the first day of the first class, student teachers signed in, then walked alongside a table on which I had laid out school supplies. They picked up paper, pens, pencils, erasers, and rulers. Standing at the end of the table, I handed each a two-pocket folder from a stack of various colors. Each teacher accepted the top one and thanked me. But one man, instead of reaching for the grey folder that I was holding out, said to me, "Please, could I have a yellow one?" Yes, of course. He smiled as he walked away with the yellow folder. Then I realized: the yellow folder was a sign of beauty in a city devastated by war and poverty, a dun-colored city strewn with uncollected trash and garbage, bereft of color. And I remembered: our spirits are nurtured by beauty.



The Horse I Came In On

*Sister Bernadine Gutaker,
Wilton, 70th Jubilee*

I was asked to go to the island of Puluqui, Chile, to minister in five chapels to people who had just lost their priest to retirement. There were no pavements in Puluqi, only dirt paths which rain and oxen turned to rutted mud, making travel quite difficult. Even jeeps did not work here; we had to travel by foot. There was one other possibility — a horse. I was not familiar with horses. I did not know how to care for horses, nor did I know how to ride one.

While out walking during summer vacation at Villa Notre Dame in Wilton, I stopped at the house of a nearby neighbor who had horses in his yard. I told him of my need of a horse and was stunned when he told me he was a retired New York City police officer who had trained police officers to ride horses. Over many weeks, he carefully taught me how to care for and ride horses. I then returned to Puluqi and purchased the only horse on the island. Using Spanish and a horse, I continued my ministry.



In Gratitude

Sister Judith Schaum, Baltimore, 60th Jubilee

"Let us continue to serve the Triune God all our lives with joy, to obey him, to love him above all." These words of Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger express the spirit with which I celebrate my Diamond Jubilee. In joy, I express gratitude:

- To all the Sisters with whom I lived in community, for their support and fidelity;
- To all the children, teachers, administrators, and leaders with whom I have had the privilege to minister;
- To my crowd (profession class), my friends, for the sacred bond we share;
- To my family who helps to keep me sane, human and connected.

Finally, I express my deep gratitude to the God who called me to Religious Profession 60 years ago, and I renew my commitment to love and serve our Triune God.



Answering Africa's Call

Sister Mary Martin Colbert, Chicago, 70th Jubilee

My years of ministry in Africa were where I grew up and really learned what it meant to be a School Sister of Notre Dame. I was in the first group of three Sisters who went to Kenya in 1974. The bond that was created among the three of us is enduring — we were the first to go, and we had to deal with a life we could not have known. We didn't have a clue. Each of us absorbed it in our own way.

It was such a different way of life. I loved working with these women who lived so simply. The experience made me the person I am today. When we went to Kenya, our vision was to teach the girls, because we knew they were not being educated. We felt they had a right to more.

The Joy of Being Inspired

Joan Flury Lewczak

INSTITUTE OF NOTRE DAME (IND)
ALUMNA, BALTIMORE

I had School Sisters of Notre Dame as teachers from kindergarten through twelfth grade. At one point, I even considered entering the order, and many of my friends are nuns or ex-nuns.

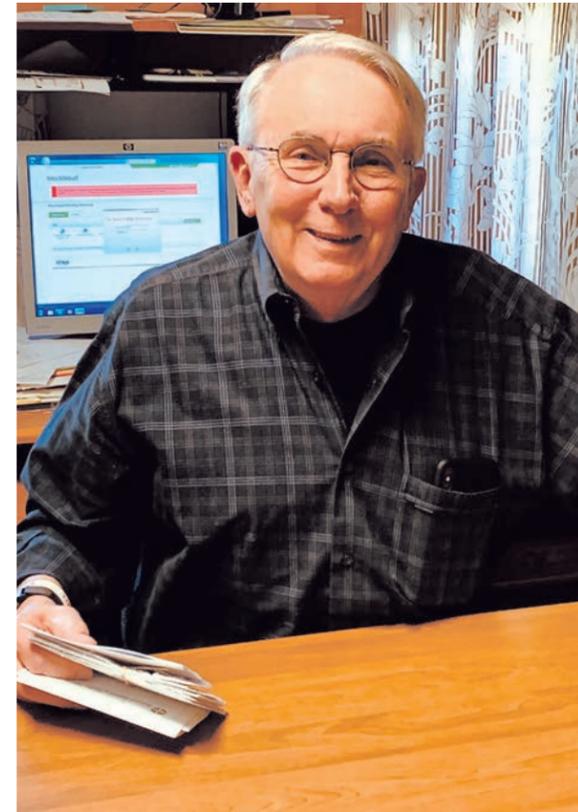
I am so grateful my family allowed me to go to the Institute of Notre Dame. I loved IND. I still do. The Sisters there made me who I am today. They taught us how to conduct ourselves in a proper manner so we could go on to get jobs or continue our education. They sacrificed everything — their families, their lives — to care for us. Back then, Sisters were not allowed to go home to see family except for rare exceptions like if a parent were dying. We were like their family. They helped raise us, and I have always been grateful for that. Their sacrifices made me the woman I am today, so I am very loyal to them.

I have volunteered at Villa Assumpta and did a variety of different things there. When my husband retired, I brought him to volunteer with me. After his death, I asked for donations to the Sisters in his memory. He has a leaf on the Tree of Life at Villa Assumpta.

Mimi Nolan

ACADEMY OF OUR LADY AND MOUNT MARY
ALUMNA, CHICAGO

I went to Academy of Our Lady, Longwood and then went on to Mount Mary College, so I had SSNDs in much of my formation. Sister Ellen Lorenz taught me love of learning, that learning could be fun. Sister Camille was my homeroom teacher during my senior year; she helped us grow up. Sister Carlette helped me learn the beauty of Shakespeare and poetry. When a girl who was losing her pet asked if she would see her dog in heaven, Sister replied, and I have never forgotten this, "Everyone or everything that has taught you to love will be with you in Heaven."



John McKeon

DEVELOPMENT OFFICE VOLUNTEER, WILTON, CT

John's sister-in-law is a School Sister of Notre Dame. In 2002, John was retiring from a career with the New York State government as head of Social Services for 33 years. He was looking to volunteer and talked with her about opportunities at Villa Notre Dame and with the SSNDs. She put him in touch with Sister Grace D'Amico, who was head of Development at the time. The rest is history. "I just enjoy everything about the Sisters," says John, who works in data entry, special event preparation, mailings, and general development support. "Their work, not just in Wilton but around the world, is so humbling to me. They have always been there for my family, and this is just a small way to give back. Years ago, the Sisters learned that my wife and I were having twins. They immediately reached out with meals and babysitting. They would call and say, 'Take your wife out for dinner, we'll watch the babies!' I love it here, and I'm happy to help in any way."

She Believed She Could, So She Did

By Pam Crawford, Notre Dame of Maryland alumna



Lovingly, I caress the seven words, "She believed she could, so she did," for at least the thousandth time. It is a comforting mantra engraved into a silver bracelet given to me by my daughter to honor my 30-year journey at Notre

Dame of Maryland University. In the fall of 2016, after an eight-year hiatus, and with a grant to complete my remaining 22 credits for a bachelor's degree, I returned to class and never looked back. I was "home" again!

At the very beginning of my college experience at the College of Notre Dame (now Notre Dame of Maryland University) in 1988, I was a Registered Nurse employed part-time, a mother of a two-year old daughter, Kerry, and an eternally restless dreamer. Admittedly, I had my hands full, but there was something else out there I just had to discover. I also knew I had to teach my child that women and girls could do anything they dreamed of and put their work, energy and passion into. So I enrolled in Notre Dame's non-credit course, "Developing New Horizons for Women," which met weekly in Fourier Hall. How prophetic the title.

Little did I know then that life events would intervene and delay my quest for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies. Beginning again and embracing just one class at a time, I put everything I had into getting my degree. I forged ahead, always returning to college, my "home," after one disruption or another, one health issue or another, and

sometimes alternating years to help put my daughter through school.

Slowly but surely, three decades later, I did it! I graduated last summer, *summa cum laude*, receiving the 2018 Religious Studies Achievement Award.

As I worked toward my degree, I watched my daughter's love for education grow. At age 28, nine-months pregnant while defending her dissertation, Kerry earned a Ph.D. in Political Science from George Washington University, with a focus on international studies and gender equality issues. She teaches at James Madison University, has authored two books, and is now working on a third while tending to her four-year old son and newborn twin daughters. Whew!

It was only a few years ago that this fierce woman told me that attending with me the classes taught by Sister Sharon Kanis sparked the inspiration to embrace academia as her passion and

her career. "The teacher is there when the student is ready." Little did I realize the incredible impact taking my child to a few Saturday morning classes would have on the rest of her life. My teacher, mentor and advisor, Sister Sharon, should be proud! I'll always remember Sister Sharon's humility, passion and extensive knowledge for the subject she was

teaching, as well as her admonition to me: "Be good to yourself." I'm trying!

Thirty years full of loss, joy, living and learning have flown by. I proudly wore my daughter's undergraduate gown at my NDMU Commencement. May 20, 2018 remains in my heart and soul as one of the peak experiences of six decades of life.



The Joy of Giving

HOW YOU CAN GIVE GLADLY

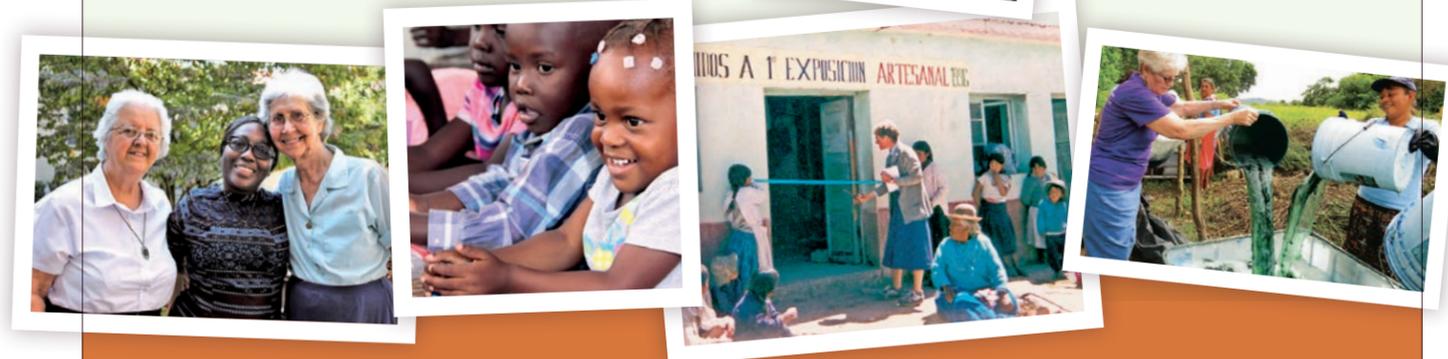


Your prayers and financial support are critical to our efforts in education, advocacy, and action. Motivated to respond to these challenges by the vision of Blessed Mother Theresa Gerhardinger, SSND foundress, we

hope that you will remain our co-workers in mission by making a financial gift to SSND. The Development staff is available to assist you in any way, please contact me with questions or to set up a personal meeting.

Laura Lang

Development Director
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Atlantic-Midwest Province
Villa Assumpta, Baltimore
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*Love gives everything gladly,
everything again and again, daily.*

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, Letter #1, 1822



The Trees of Life

The Tree of Life sculptures located at Villa Notre Dame in Connecticut and Villa Assumpta in Maryland celebrate our donors. Each leaf and stone in the sculpture represent gifts/contributions made by friends, family and alumni to SSND. If you are interested in honoring a Sister or loved ones with an engraved brass leaf, blossom or stone, please contact **Development Director Laura Lang at 410-377-7774 x 1154**. Each tree is located in a central location in these residences where they are seen daily by the Sisters on their way to prayer.

Learn more about the Tree of Life in Wilton at <https://bit.ly/2XrKS0x> or the Tree of Life in Baltimore at <https://bit.ly/2GnhtO3>

Ways of Giving

SSND Card Program



A gift of prayer is a heartwarming way to honor someone's memory, commemorate a birthday or any special occasion.

Learn more about the SSND Card Program at atlanticmidwest.org/posts/ssnd-card-program.

Include the School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic-Midwest Province in your will

Consider naming the School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic-Midwest Province in your will. A planned gift ensures that Sisters will continue in mission far into the future.

For more information, please contact **Cathy Schoonover, 410-377-7774 or cschoonover@amssnd.org**.

Give a gift of stock or donation from your IRA

Your gift of stock or donation from your IRA, will benefit the needs of Sisters. Please contact Development Director **Laura Lang at llang@amssnd.org** to learn more.

Gifts in Kind

The SSNDs occasionally need various supplies and/or equipment. Real property, rare coins and art are all examples of "Gifts in Kind." Please contact **Laura Lang at llang@amssnd.org** to learn more.

The Joy of Traditions

Getting the Gang Together: Octoberfest in Wilton



FOR 21 YEARS, FROM 1988 UNTIL 2009, Octoberfest was a beloved Columbus Day weekend tradition for the Sisters at the motherhouse in Wilton, Connecticut. Buses would come to Villa Notre Dame from as far away as New Jersey and Massachusetts, full of former students of SSNDs and members of parishes where the Sisters had taught or were still teaching.

“Octoberfest was a community thing — our community and the surrounding community,” remembers Sister John Vianney Zullo (pictured near left), who chaired the event for nine years. She would be the first one on the buses to greet the guests as they arrived. “It was a wonderful gathering time. The

buses brought people back, it reunited them with us, and they brought new friends, too. It was nice to have the neighborhood come in, as well. Yes, it was a fundraiser, but it was more of a friendraiser. We met up with students past and present, people we had ministered to. It was very much a reunion. And we did very well for a long time. Twenty-one years — not too many fundraisers go on that long.”

Villa Notre Dame was transformed each year for the event. A variety of theme rooms were created, each run by a different chairperson, both Sisters and Associates. Donations for the different rooms came in throughout the year from neighbors, family and friends. Paschal Hall was the food hall, which honored the congregation’s German roots with traditional food such as knockwurst and sauerkraut, as well as beer. One of the most popular rooms was the Craft Shop. Sisters would dedicate a special week during the summer to come together in Wilton and create enticing items to be sold during the two-day festival.

The Octoberfest Bakery had a variety of homemade goods, including — during the later years — Sister Theodore Baccala from Baltimore baking her famous pizzelle cookies on-site, filling the halls with enticing smells. Hers were not the only popular treats. “Those buses were there right at 10am,” recalls Sister John Vianney. “Sister Barbara would make raisin bread, and the guests would run off the buses to the bakery to buy the bread before it sold out.”

Throughout Saturday and Sunday, visitations to the chapel were available for those who might want to go there for prayer and reflection, or even just to see the chapel’s stunning stained glass windows.

“I loved the event, I loved working with the Sisters, and I loved welcoming our many guests. They were very spirited times,” says Sister John Vianney fondly.

Watch your mailbox for our 2019 Oktoberfest raffle tickets!



In Memoriam

September 2017 – April 2019



Sister Carolyn Andrewes
9/12/17



Sister Julie Wiegard
12/28/17



Sister Ann Therese Weiss
2/8/2018



Sister Mary Bernadetta
Staab, 6/16/2018



Sister Margaret Ann Smith
9/19/2018



Sister Celine Marie Flynn
1/9/19



Sister Rose Mary
Dougherty, 2/28/19



Sister Julita Jelen
4/18/19



Sister Elise Mary Saydah
10/15/17



Sister Joan Hart
1/1/2018



Sister Virginia Sebert
3/4/2018



Sister Mary Alphonsine
Gugger, 6/16/2018



Sister Rita Kittel
9/25/2018



Sister Mary Grace Diebolt
1/10/19



Sister Mary Bruce Wright
3/1/28



Sister Ursula Kelly
11/5/17



Sister Joan Maier
1/6/2018



Sister Elise Diemert
4/12/2018



Sister Theresa Prior
6/24/2018



Sister Dorothy Hunt
10/24/2018



Sister Evelyn Volk
1/14/19



Sister Doris Kresslein
3/1/19



Sister Mary Corda Mullenix
11/16/17



Sister Frederick Mary
Maisel, 1/22/2018



Sister Phyllis Bradtke
4/19/2018



Sister Catherine Goodell
7/11/2018



Sister Constance Baker
12/29/2018



Sister Audrey Marie
Mittelholtz, 1/22/19



Sister Mary Irving
3/11/19



Sister Earl Mary Moores
11/17/17



Sister Helen Kobelsky
1/31/2018



Sister Irene Kelly
5/23/2018



Sister Eugene Marie Geiger
8/8/2018



Sister Margaret Volk
1/7/19



Sister Helen Zettel
2/5/19



Sister Hilda Marie
Sutherland, 3/14/19



Sister Mary Caroleen
Baummer, 12/4/17



Sister Serafine Della Croce
2/2/2018



Sister Orontia Walsh
6/3/2018



Sister Cecilia Reitzel
8/25/2018



Sister Margaret Kenyon
1/8/19



Sister Marie Sulpice Walsh
2/28/19



Sister Joan Bocklet
4/17/19



Goodbye to a Pioneer

Sister Rita Kittel, the last living pioneer of the former Canadian province and the oldest Sister in the congregation, passed away on September 25, 2018, six days short of her 107th birthday. Sister Joan Helm said, "As her former Grade One pupil, I can attest that hers was a life lived fully, and know what a gift she was to us!"

During her 63 years of active ministry, Sister Rita spent 41 years in education — as teacher, principal and librarian in schools within southern Ontario. Then, at age 70, Sister Rita was missioned to Aroland, northern Ontario, an aboriginal community. She ended up spending four years there. Sister Rita retired to Notre Dame Convent in Waterdown, Ontario in 2002, where she ministered in prayer and presence and did tasks for Sister Joan in the archives until she was 100 years old.

Joyful About the Future



I see the future of our congregation as a continuation of our blessed past, serving God's people in helping them become the best people they can be. The challenges of the next decades, whether they be immigration reform or global warming or whatever, need to be addressed in the spirit of Blessed Mother Theresa, beginning with God's love for all and continuing with an inclusive response.

To that end, I see my role as a "laborer in the field," being side by side with others, trying to do my best to love God and to love others. I think the outward signs of vowed life may change, but the critical importance of the vows in community will be, for me, what is essential to this life. The call to

contemplation will have to be seriously considered by those of us who are apostolic communities, because that is one of the elements that young people are seeking in this generation. In short, I think we need to spend more time with the God who loves us.

It comes down to two simple words, God's love. It was God's love that was shared with and modeled for me by my parents and family that nurtured my desire to enter the School Sisters of Notre Dame. And it continues to be God's love which enables me to say that "yes" every day.

Sister Nancy Gilchrist is the North America Vocations Team Director for SSND, as well as a Professor at St. Joseph's College, New York.

If you feel you might be called to a Vocation or know someone who is being called, please email vocations@ssnd.org for more information about becoming a School Sister of Notre Dame.



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is a way of deepening your partnership with the School Sisters of Notre Dame. The Bequest Society is an opportunity for our School Sisters to thank those who have remembered SSND in their estate planning. Bequest Society members are remembered in the Sisters' daily prayers, receive a special blessing during our annual donor appreciation celebration and are invited to SSND special events.

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For further information on becoming a member of the Blessed Theresa of Jesus Bequest Society or to learn how you can give a gift, please contact:

Cathy Schoonover
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School Sisters of Notre Dame
410-377-7774 or cschoonover@amssnd.org.

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