

Vision & Challenge

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WINTER 2021

A publication of the Sisters of Notre Dame, California | One Heart • One Hope • One Mission

Celebrating 20 years of SND Associates





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Pandemic restrictions were followed for all photography during that timeframe.

Please remember to recycle your copy after reading.

A Message from *Mission Advancement*

Dear Readers,

Repeatedly we see that life is like a tapestry. Although recent months may appear as the dark threads of the global pandemic, we do have opportunities to notice the colors of everyday life, both bright and metallic, colors perhaps taken for granted. In some ways, the contents of this Vision & Challenge have a tapestry-like appearance.

We see the green of the genuine energy and enthusiasm of young adults. A number of Sisters and Associates of Notre Dame are privileged to journey with them as they seek a meaningful spiritual life in the midst of so many other opportunities. Their photos and stories certainly provide a much-needed dose of hope!

California's SND Associates have brought so much to our way-of-life and a colorful array to our tapestry for the past 20 years. We congratulate our pioneer Associates who made their covenant in 2000! This issue of Vision & Challenge includes some of their perspectives as they took the risk to follow God's call. Those who have subsequently joined also contribute many gifts to our SND life and ministries. They represent a variety of nationalities and cultures—African-American, Chinese, Cuban, Filipino, Indonesian, Mexican, Samoan to name a few. Their education and professional backgrounds are also diverse, from law enforcement to sales to nursing to engineering to education. They improve the community at large through food banks, bereavement counseling, non-profit leadership, spiritual formation, parish service, prison ministries, pastoral outreach and much more. What a privilege it is to share our SND heritage with them—we are all certainly enriched by the many colors they bring to us and to the world!

And finally, the lives of consecration and service of Sr. Antonine Manning and Sr. Joann Schlarbaum are the golden highlights of our tapestry. They reflect God's goodness and provident care to the thousands entrusted to their care over the years. Congratulations to these inspiring SNDs and thank you for the gift that you are to the world!

Each of you, as our cherished spiritual friend, is a unique thread in the tapestry of SND life and ministry. Your encouragement and spiritual and financial support are deeply appreciated. I truly hope that you sense a vibrant community spirit in these pages. Together, individual threads make up a beautiful tapestry. Thank you again for sharing with us **ONE HEART, ONE HOPE, ONE MISSION.**

Gratefully,

Sister Mary Lisa Megaffin, S.N.D.
Sr. M. Lisa Megaffin, S.N.D.

Thanking Sr. Joann Schlarbaum *an icon and a legend at NDA*

The community of Notre Dame Academy, Los Angeles recognized Sr. Joann Schlarbaum during their Founders Day Celebration. The day started with a virtual tribute with Sisters of Notre Dame Zooming in from across the country. They shared special memories to mark her retirement from NDA. During a rosary prayer service, Sr. Joann shared with the students, “The rosary is like a kaleidoscope mirroring life with its lights, shadows, and myriad of colors.... The kaleidoscope of life with its ups and downs is worth living!” The day concluded with a car parade and food drive supporting South Central Los Angeles Ministry Project (LAMP).

Lilliam Paetzold, President of Notre Dame Academy Schools of Los Angeles, reflected on the impact of the Sisters of Notre Dame, especially Sr. Joann, on her own life and the school community.

“I started coming to NDA as a baby when my cousins were enrolled here in the 60’s. My family had just emigrated from Cuba. This school offered them a place to nurture their Catholic faith. With so much that was unfamiliar, this place and the SNDs were like a piece of home in a foreign land.

Many of my favorite memories are here with the sisters. When my cousin (also an NDA graduate) got married, I remember coming here as a little girl to take pictures on the convent lawn with the entire wedding party and the SNDs.

Our last stop for trick-or-treating every year was the convent door, a nonnegotiable tradition. They taught me in just about every year from first through twelfth grades. They were there with me



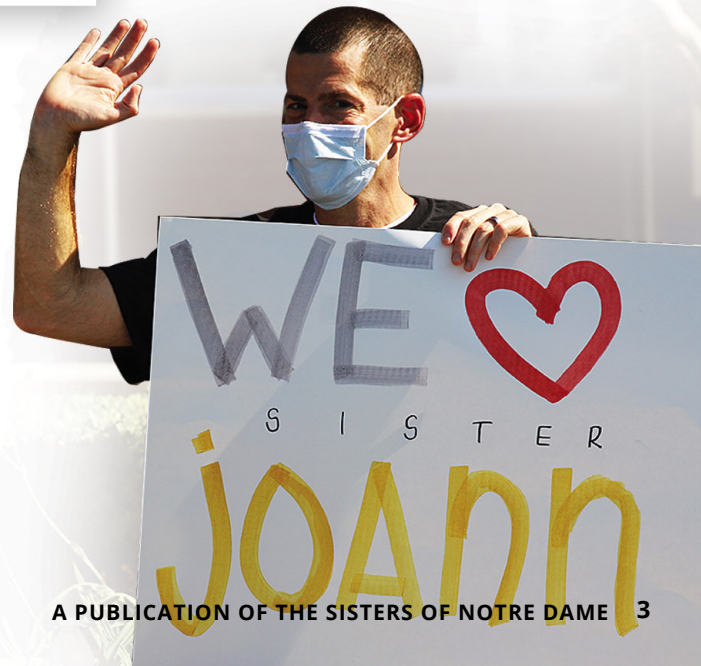
SR. JOANN, YOU ARE TRULY AN ICON,
A LEGEND AND A SPECIAL PERSON TO
THE NDA COMMUNITY! THANK YOU
FOR RADIATING GOD’S PROVIDENTIAL
CARE, MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN
THOUSANDS OF LIVES... YOU ARE
DEARLY LOVED... WE ARE ETERNALLY
GRATEFUL TO YOU...
AND YOU WILL BE MISSED.



when I received my first communion, confirmation and two NDA diplomas. When I came back to work at NDA, I framed my diplomas for my office because I was so proud to be home again. Much to my surprise, I noticed for the first time that my high school diploma was signed by Sr. Joann, since she was the provincial then.

Sr. Joann, although you never were my teacher, you led and cared for the other sisters who taught us, so indirectly you were influential in my life. My daughters and nieces also benefited from your care, just as so many girls who have had the honor and blessing to know you and experience the love and care of a Sister of Notre Dame.

You have been a lifesaver for us in so many ways, from sewing costumes for the drama department, assisting in the office, supporting students in the Student Learning Commons, speaking at prayer services, breaking an Instagram record, and watching over all of us with your prayers.”



Celebrating 20 years of SND Associates

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY FOR THE SND ASSOCIATES IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT OUR PIONEERS' PERSPECTIVES. Over the years, collaboration with the laity created many opportunities to share SND spirituality. Nevertheless, the universal call to holiness emphasized by Vatican II set the stage. In 1998, Srs. Mary Amy Hauck, Regina Robbins, Francelia Klingshirn and Rebekah Kennedy researched and designed such a program for the California province, which became the first Associate program for the SNDs in the United States.



Sr. Antonine Manning is surrounded by Tom and Nancy Grasmehr at a community gathering.

Associates make a covenant to share in the mission of Jesus Christ, through the SND spirituality and mission. As appropriate, they participate in the sisters' prayer, community life and ministry, while maintaining their existing commitments such as family, parish and workplace.

This article is a virtual roundtable discussion with several of the original Associates. With grateful hearts, they also acknowledged the late pioneers Vicki Godar and Nancy Grasmehr. Meet the participants:

Sr. Cristina Marie Buczkowski

During her year of Associate formation, Sr. Cristina heard God's call to join the SNDs. Today, she serves as an administrative assistant at Our Lady of Victory School in Compton.

Annabelle Gordon

Now retired from Air France, Annabelle Gordon lives in

Thousand Oaks and is a devoted volunteer in various ministries at St. Julie Billiart Parish in Newbury Park.

Tom Grasmehr

A parishioner at St. Paschal Baylon in Thousand Oaks, Tom maintains his 30-year, weekly Cursillo grouping. He is also a cyber-prayer-messenger, regularly emailing the prayer requests of his large circle of friends.

Lois Harrion

Currently, Lois Harrion is a Nursing Education Consultant in private practice and is a staff member of the Spiritual Care Department at Community Memorial Hospital in Ventura.

Prudiel Libatique

Prudiel is a Word Processing Lead for Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP, in Los Angeles. He also serves as the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) coordinator at St. Peter Claver Parish in Simi Valley.

Andrea Fuchs Petzi

As the owner of AF International School of Languages and AF International College, Andrea had many opportunities to network within the SND world. Since 2019, she has been happily retired.

How did you first come to know the SNDs?

Sr. Cristina: As a young adult leader at St. Mary Magdalen in Camarillo, I coordinated events at the parish and deanery level. Sr. Kathleen Burns, the SND Vocation Director at that time, joined our activities. The young adults (including me) loved her ... she had a way of connecting with us, explaining theology and leading us in spiritual reflection.



Sr. Cristina Marie Buczkowski has devoted many years to the education of younger children.

Andrea: I came to know the sisters through Sr. Mary Amy Hauck, my student in one of my German classes at Moorpark College in 1994-95.

Lois: I was introduced to the SNDs by one of my nursing graduates, Sr. Mary Bernadette

Pendola. As a student, she shared information about the sisters and their work.

Tom: My sister, Wilma, attended St. Stephen's School in Cleveland many years ago...and our daughters, Gayle and Wendy, attended La Reina High School.

Who first introduced you to the idea of becoming an SND Associate?

Annabelle: Sr. Jolisa Lazaro, then serving as the Director of Evangelization at my parish, St. Anthony's in Long Beach, invited me to consider this opportunity.

Sr. Cristina: Sr. Kathleen introduced me to this new venture that would not only "feed me" spiritually, but also help me be part of something larger than my current ministry.

Prudiel: And Sr. Kathleen also encouraged me. She was involved in young adult ministries—who can say no to Sr. Kathleen!

Since Association was such a new concept for the SNDs and our friends and colleagues, what thoughts/wonderings did you have when you first reflected on this opportunity?

Annabelle: I wondered what type of commitment would be required—financial, time, talent? My prayer life was stagnant, and I wondered if becoming an Associate, with a connection to women of prayer, would refresh my relationship with God.

Andrea: I had been discussing the concept of a "Third Order" or association with Sr. Mary Amy in 1998. We both agreed that something like this would be beneficial



Annabelle Gordon greets fellow Associate, Nancy O'Sullivan.

to anyone who wanted to share the SND spirit. When the Associate program became a reality, I was most eager to join.

Lois: During the orientation, I had the opportunity to meet several of Sr. Bernadette's co-sisters and I immediately felt their infectious enthusiasm! The comfort I experienced in becoming an SND Associate was a "Godwink," my Lord's way of letting me know that this is a part of His plan for me.

Prudiel: My first thought was "I don't belong!" I had no obvious spiritual connection, nor charismatic affiliation (I thought) and certainly, the wrong gender!

Since 2000, what opportunities and graces have you experienced that confirmed your decision to become an Associate.

Lois: Personally, one of my most precious accomplishments is the act of forgiveness. Through some of my many Associate experiences I learned that forgiveness is a life-long process that requires continuous attention and work.

Sr. Cristina: I still remember when we learned about the SND charism—proclaiming God's goodness and provident care. As I listened it came to me that I could be the one presenting that topic because it so resonated with me. During that formation period, my heart and mind were opened to hear and accept God's call to enter the community. The rest is history. I made my covenant as an SND Associate in June 2000 and entered the community that August!



Sr. Mary Amy Hauck with her German teacher, Andrea Petzi

Tom: Through so many spiritual growth opportunities and the genuine community spirit, Nancy and I felt very assured that we made the right decision. In 2000, Nancy wrote this testimonial: “Becoming an Associate has been a powerful part of my faith journey. Knowing more about the work of the sisters...makes me proud to be associated with them, especially in their global efforts. The respect and love of the people here in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles for the SNDs is well-deserved. I also learned how much fun these sisters have within their community, and how wonderfully they take care of each other and the many people they know and serve.”

How have you experienced the grace of being a hope-filled presence in the world?

Andrea: During my 50+ years as an educator, I was fortunate enough to meet many international students not very aware of the role God plays in everyone’s life. Also, having had three Sisters of Notre Dame on my teaching staff between 1997 and 2004 was a blessing, with their enormously positive influence. They made my schools a very special place! Many of the students remarked how they were touched by the sisters’ spirit of care and compassion.

Annabelle: Through my participation in the SND Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation initiatives, I have experienced a greater awareness of our call to heal the world.

In a world in need of peace, what do you hope for in the future as an SND Associate?

Sr. Cristina: As we read the “signs of the times,” especially the pandemic chaos, we need the Associates to discern their role in proclaiming God’s goodness and provident care TODAY. Their lived experience, voice, and spiritual strength and energy are great resources for God’s people—whatever and wherever the need.



Sharing some laughter are Sr. Jolisa Lazaro, Associate Prudiel Libatique, and Sr. Jane Marie McHugh.

Annabelle: One blessing of being an Associate is the spirit of community that I so cherish! When it was time to relocate from Long Beach, I had many options. I realized that close to my Associate community, located primarily in Ventura County, would be a great place to call home. I hope that my relationship to the SNDs and the Associates

continues to bring peace to my soul so that I, in turn, can radiate that peace and joy to others.

Prudiel: I simply hope to be able to endure the race with grace, courage and humility. That in the end, I will have reached a deeper, more authentic relationship with Christ.

In conclusion, the Sisters of Notre Dame congratulate the pioneer group of Associates, and the many who have come after them. Together, we are deepening our relationship with God through prayer, we feel impelled to be radical disciples of Jesus, and we are moved to solidarity with the poor and marginalized. In the words of the late Sr. Mary Therese Kirstein, “Our Associates always teach me so much!”

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Celebrating the jubilee of Sr. Bernadette Pendola are Lois Harrion and her husband, Milton.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT
BECOMING AN SND ASSOCIATE,
CONTACT SR. LISA MEGAFFIN AT
LMEGAFFIN@SNDCA.ORG**

Palpable & Contagious Joy

“Contagious Joy” is the overwhelming sentiment expressed by young adults who encounter the Sisters of Notre Dame through Christus Ministries. Since 2013, SNDs have provided individual spiritual direction and small group guidance on the 4-day Caritas Retreat and Ignatian guided retreats, meeting young adults from diverse backgrounds in the process. One young woman commented on the consistent care that the Sisters have shown her, with no pressure to join the community.

Newlywed Jaclyn Guerrero shared, “Even though I obviously was not called to religious life, when I see the Sisters together it inspires me to strive for that kind of deep, meaningful connection with those around me. I see what they have with each other and I want that with my own community- my husband, family, and close friendships.”

SND Associate Tam Lontok, who helps coordinate the Caritas Retreat shared, “When I think of the Sisters of Notre Dame, the Spanish term ‘querencia’ comes to mind. It is a place where others feel safe and a sense of home to draw spiritual strength and inspiration.

Their joy, openness, experience, courage, wisdom, and deep faith attracts me and many others to love and follow God more intimately.”

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Christus Ministries has reached more than 1,000 young adults through virtual prayer series, helping them encounter God in fresh, tangible ways. One recent topic was *The First Spiritual Exercises*, based upon the book of the same name by Fr. Michael Hansen SJ, a method of offering elements of St. Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises in which retreatants follow a daily program of meditations and meet once a week for two hours of prayer, sharing, and sacred listening. The charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame is rooted in Ignatian Spirituality, and Sr. Kelley Rush, Sr. Valerie Roxburgh, and Sr. Jenny Zimmerman have each brought their own Ignatian wisdom to these reflections.

ThiThoa Ton, a Christus staff member, commented on how impressed she is that Sr. Val consistently stays in touch with the groups she has served. “I hear from people all the time how Sr. Val texts or calls to check in on them.

Her outreach and genuine concern for them continues. She is such an inspiration to me.”

For Fr. Tri Dinh, SJ, the SNDs reflect Jesus’ call of the apostles in the Gospel of Matthew. He sees the SNDs “catching” young adults up in their own joy in following Christ. He says, “They are drawing young people deeper into the life of God, and from there a sense of vocation follows. Their joy is palpable and contagious.”

What is Christus Ministries?

A Jesuit affiliated non-profit that empowers young adults, families & parishes to grow spiritually, change lives & transform communities.

FOUNDED: 2013, Los Angeles

BASED IN: Los Angeles, California

SERVING: Alaska, California, Idaho, Hawaii, Texas, and online.

SNDs & ASSOCIATES INVOLVED: 11

On the January 2020 Caritas Retreat, young adults observed the supportive and playful interaction among Srs. Ann-Marie Borgess, Val Roxburgh, and Kelley Rush.



SND Associate Jen Coito co-founded the ministry with Fr. Tri Dinh, SJ (second from right). Also pictured here are Martin Ngo, SJ, ThiThoa Ton, and Sr. Jenny Zimmerman.

Happy Birthday Sr. M. Antonine Manning

The community of La Reina High School & Middle School celebrated the 90th birthday of Sr. Mary Antonine Manning on Monday, November 23.

Sr. Antonine was a pioneer member of La Reina's faculty in 1964, and the school's second principal. The ceremony included good wishes from Mr. Tony Guevara, President and Sr. Regina Robbins, Dean of Mission. The ASB officers presented flowers and other gifts from the student body.

In her thank you remarks, Sr. Antonine said... "I'm really overwhelmed to see you here...it's such a joy for me. I'm so



Emma Martin, La Reina's ASB President, presents sunflowers to Sr. Antonine.

grateful for the beautiful words... But this is not just for me, it's for the Sisters of Notre Dame and everyone in the history of La Reina over these 56 years. La Reina has always had great students and parents supporting us—thank you!"

"I have a little secret for you. If you want to have a life that is filled with joy and peace, there are two things I want to suggest you do. First, have constant gratitude—be grateful every single day. Gratitude to God, your parents, your school, your fellow students—gratitude to everyone. Before you go to bed, write down all the things you are grateful for that day. And the second thing I want to suggest is consistent kindness—kind in thoughts, words and deeds. I promise you that you will be a happy and peaceful person."

"I will these gifts to you—from myself and from the Sisters of Notre Dame. I am your praying sister, and I will continue to pray for you even after you graduate. Thank you again for this beautiful tribute, not just to me, but to the Sisters of Notre Dame. Thank you and God bless you!"

Remembering Sr. M. Sheila Fay 1933 - 2020



Sr. Mary Sheila was born in 1933 in Waterloo, Iowa and her family moved to California several years later. She and her two younger brothers were blessed with a Catholic education

through high school. Sheila earned a scholarship to Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, earning a BA in Mathematics. Knowing the SNDs as her elementary school teachers at St. Rose of Lima in Maywood, she joined them when she felt called to religious life.

During her 44 years in secondary education, Sister had the distinction of ministering as a teacher, counselor and/or administrator in all four of the province's high schools. In 1996, she spent the summer in Poland teaching English to young sisters. She also treasured her 15 years as a volunteer reader

at Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic. Sr. Sheila's soothing voice and ability to read mathematically complicated textbooks were invaluable!

Perhaps Sr. Sheila's most endearing quality was her ability to listen. She gave each person her full attention and wise advice. Each came away feeling supported and loved. When Sr. Sheila entered hospice this spring, she wrote a letter of gratitude to the SND community, family, friends, former students and colleagues. Their responses of love and gratitude filled her with abundant joy. Repeatedly, Sr. Sheila was characterized as a woman of great wisdom and dignity whose advice and encouragement guided many.

Dying as she lived, Sr. Sheila went home to God very peacefully early in the morning of September 18. The Sisters of Notre Dame are confident that her gracious example of a woman of faith will influence many generations.

The Grapevine

PUMP WATER SYSTEM UPDATE!

After almost 2 years of planning and fundraising, the SNDs are excited to share the news that a borehole in Buseesa, Uganda is yielding fresh, clean water. Sr. Colette Theobald sent a message in early December that the first phase of the project is complete and successful. Next steps involve a storage tank, trenches to pipe the water to the storage tank, a pump and its solar panels, a structure around the area and distribution of the water to various areas. Thank you to everyone whose donations and prayers will benefit more than 22,000 people in and around St. Julie's Mission!

I WILL SPEND MY HEAVEN DOING GOOD ON EARTH.

Sr. Therese of Lisieux, affectionately known as the Little Flower, often said that she would "spend her heaven doing good on earth." This goal is for anyone! Please consider including the Sisters of Notre Dame in your will or estate plan, supporting the causes that have been important during your lifetime. You might also name the SNDs as a beneficiary on a bank account or retirement account. Our legal title is "The Sisters of Notre Dame." For further information, please contact Sr. Lisa Megaffin at 805-917-3714 or 805-402-8623. Thank you and be assured that you will be doing good on earth for generations yet to come.

Jan 30th - Feb 6th 2021



SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME

NUN RUN

To Heaven on Foot - St. Julie Billiart

HOW MANY STEPS DOES IT TAKE TO GET TO HEAVEN?

Our hybrid Nun Run is running and walking the 6,344.43 miles from California to Rome! Participants are logging miles during the week of January 30-February 6. Visit www.nun.run to get involved or donate.

Thank You