

VOL. XXVI NO. 4  
SUMMER 2021



# *Vision & Challenge*

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Please remember to recycle your copy after reading.

# A Message from *Mission Advancement*

Dear Friends,

As this is being written, we are starting to see many signs of new life, especially the normality of a post-pandemic world. Those months of “safer at home”, closed businesses, televised worship from a parish near or far, online or hybrid school—somehow, we are emerging from our own 21st century twilight zone.

In this edition of *Vision & Challenge*, we are pleased to share several formal ministries of Sisters of Notre Dame within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. We often see those who are out front, but as we well know, there are those whose daily work is behind the scenes. Regardless, in making our vows, we state, “I commit myself to serve the Church in the apostolic mission entrusted to this congregation.”

This apostolic mission also includes our outreach to global missions, sponsored by our congregation or partner ministries. In particular, we are excited to report that the pump water system is now operative in Buseesa, Uganda. Words are inadequate to express our heartfelt gratitude to the hundreds of donors who have made it possible! We recognize the many financial challenges and uncertainties of this time, so we are even more grateful that you have included us in your philanthropy, in support of our general needs, retired folks and global missions.

As daughters of the Church, we share the sentiments expressed in the Mission Statement of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles: “We dedicate our parish communities and our schools, institutions, ministries, and organizations to fulfill this mission under the loving patronage of Mary, Queen of the Angels.” The photo on our front cover is the statue of Mary, Queen of the Angels that graces the entrance to our cathedral. May she always hold you in her fond embrace.

Gratefully,

*Sister Mary Lisa Megaffin, S.N.D.*

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

*Demonstrating the beginnings of post-pandemic joy are these  
SNDs: seated are Sr. Jan Marie Villalobos, Sr. Antoinette  
Marie Moon, Sr. Mary Amy Hauck. Standing are Sr. Marie  
Paul Grech, Sr. Anna Maria Vasquez, Sr. Gina Marie Blunck,  
Sr. M. Rebekah Kennedy, Sr. M. Joan Schlotfeldt, Sr. Shawn  
Marie Doyle and Sr. M. Leanne Hubbard.*



# Water Flows in Uganda

After more than two years of fundraising and planning, fresh water has arrived in Buseesa, Uganda. Buseesa residents depend on the cyclical rainy and dry seasons to survive. The seasons have become unpredictable, with the dry season lasting longer and longer. St. Julie Mission ran perilously low on collected water the last several years. All local residents, the Sisters, teachers, and students have devoted more time to retrieving and storing water. This is time taken away from classes, studies, and employment. In the midst of a global health pandemic, the need for reliable access to safe water has been of utmost importance.



Following months of delays due to a strict COVID 19 lockdown in Uganda, Ugosolar arrived at St. Julie Mission in October of 2020. Water engineers uncovered a significant water source 90 meters down, beneath a layer of granite rock. During the remainder of 2020, a holding tank, solar panels, some piping, and an inverter to bring the water to the holding tank were installed. The water flows by gravity to various locations including three schools, teachers' housing, the parish, and a site for villagers to collect water. The pump, solar panels and inverter are in place and are working but some of the piping and connections are still in the works.

Prior to the grand opening, the Formation House (where 10 candidates for entrance to the Sisters of Notre Dame live with their teachers) ran out of water. Even though the water system had not officially opened, the engineers immediately connected the Formation House to the tank. This accommodation saved the young women from walking a long distance from a local borehole with 20-liter jerry cans. This was just the first of what will assuredly be many examples of people's lives being improved by the new water system.

The priceless gift of water is now possible through the generosity of many individuals and the following organizations:

Conrad Hilton Fund for Sisters

FSC Foundation, Inc.

Holy Trinity School, San Pedro

St. Bartholomew Parish, Long Beach

St. Dominic School, Eagle Rock



WHOEVER DRINKS THE WATER I SHALL  
GIVE WILL NEVER THIRST; THE WATER  
I SHALL GIVE WILL BECOME IN HIM A  
SPRING OF WATER WELLING UP TO  
ETERNAL LIFE. – JOHN 4:14





# As an apostolic community, we participate in the life of the local Church...

“Go to California and build a house of love.” With these words, 11 Sisters of Notre Dame were missioned to Los Angeles from Cleveland in 1924. Today, the SNDs and Associates minister in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, home to 4.3 million Catholics in 288 parishes, with Sunday Eucharist celebrated in 42 languages. Southern California is synonymous with diversity—beaches, aerospace, immigrants, entertainment media, mountains, technology, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, deserts, and each of these realities also represents an opportunity to radiate God’s goodness and provident care—a true house of love.

These excerpts from the Mission Statement of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles resonate with the SND mission:

*We, the People of God of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, accept our mission to continue the redemptive work of Jesus Christ....We are one with the Catholic Church throughout the world, in communion with the pope.*

*...We commit ourselves to build a community of faith and love. With Christ, we bring good news to the poor.*

*We commit ourselves to eliminate the many faces of poverty in our midst— spiritual, economic, and moral.*

*With Christ, we uphold the dignity of human life. We commit ourselves to cherish each person and to be faithful stewards of God’s creation. With Christ, we affirm the bonds that unite us. We commit ourselves to remove the barriers that divide. We dedicate our parish communities and our schools, institutions, ministries, and organizations to fulfill this mission under the loving patronage of Mary, Queen of the Angels.*



Artwork by  
Sr. M. Leanne Hubbard

The Sisters of Notre Dame are privileged to engage in various ministries. Although the SNDs have a rich heritage of Catholic education, especially in schools, recent times have found a broader meaning to education. This article features SNDs who are missioned within the broad category of “Archdiocese of Los Angeles.”

## **SR. M. ANNCARLA COSTELLO, CHANCELLOR OF THE ARCHDIOCESE**



Sr. M. AnnCarla Costello

Assuming the position of Chancellor of the largest Archdiocese in the United States in July, 2021, Sr. AnnCarla Costello has had the opportunity to embrace her new ministry even in the midst of the pandemic. Having served as the Vicar for Women Religious between 2004 and 2011

she was happy to return to minister in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in her new capacity as Chancellor. Unlike her previous ministry in the Archdiocese where her focus was specific to women religious, in her new role as Chancellor she is gaining a bird’s eye view of the breadth of services the ministries of the Archdiocese provide to God’s people. In that role, she provides leadership in the administration of the Archdiocese as well as oversight of the various departments in the Archdiocesan Center that serve the 288 parishes comprising the Archdiocese... Additionally, Sister sees herself as the “cheerleader-in-chief,” supporting personnel in various departments so that they may minister as effectively as possible as missionary disciples of Jesus to the people of our Archdiocese and beyond...



**SR. M. DOMNIC JONES & SR. M. GRACE LEUNG,  
MARRIAGE TRIBUNAL STAFF MEMBERS**



*Sr. M. Domnic Jones*

With many years' experience, Sr. Domnic and Sr. Grace are part of the Church's effort to offer healing and hope to the victims of failed marriages. The Marriage Tribunal examines these situations to determine whether the individuals in certain instances may be free to remarry. As explained on the

Archdiocesan website, "Faithful to Catholic tradition, we maintain the innate dignity of marriage and the Gospel's prohibition against arbitrary and unwarranted divorce. At the same time, we live in an imperfect society in which divorce is a common reality. In accord with Canon Law, all previously married individuals (Catholic or not) have the right to seek clarification of the canonical status of their previous marriage(s)."

On a day-to-day basis, the sisters are engaged in various forms of communication with those involved in the process, as well as priests, deacons and lay staff assisting with the cases. Sr. Domnic believes that "compassion is a prerequisite for anyone working in the Tribunal. We are dealing with people who have experienced difficult marriages and painful divorces and now we are asking them to relive those memories. We try to help them bring closure to this painful chapter in their lives and to see that through God's goodness and provident care, new and hope-filled relationships may be possible."

**PRIORITIES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE  
OF LOS ANGELES**

- Fostering cultural diversity and Catholic identity
- Education in the faith
- Promoting vocations
- Strengthening marriages and families
- Building a culture of life



*Sr. M. Grace Leung*

Sr. Grace also noted how amazed she is by the faith of the people of God, and "how open people are when they talk to me about their life stories and the stories of their marriages. It is a blessing to be a listener... and a privilege to help people find their way back to God and the Church. I am always surprised if I receive a thank you note or even an invitation to a wedding!"

**SR. M. JOYANNE SULLIVAN, MASTER CATECHIST**

Continuing the SND tradition of religious education, Sr. Joyanne has ministered in adult faith formation at Sacred Heart Parish in Ventura and St. Dominic's in Eagle Rock. Her experience has prepared her well to be a teacher of teachers. As a master catechist, she trains Catholics to be catechists, who share the faith, form disciples of Jesus, and prepare individuals for the sacraments. In addition to the catechists' initial training, Sr. Joyanne is responsible for guiding the renewal of their certification to teach religion in Catholic schools or parishes.

What Sr. Joyanne finds unique are parishioners' multicultural backgrounds and their diverse spiritualities. The Ventura families include farm workers and ranch owners, representing both strongly liberal and strongly conservative spiritualities. Eagle Rock and the surrounding pastoral region is home to Koreans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Vietnamese and Armenians, among others. The employment schedules of the parishioners who work in health care, emergency services and the



*Sr. Joyanne Sullivan (second from left) is shown with parishioners of the St. Dominic's community.*

entertainment industry create challenges in planning adult faith formation activities. Sr. Joyanne is most grateful for the support of her pastors, especially for opportunities to learn innovative programs that have enhanced her own spirituality and have provided background to share with the catechists and the many individuals who are entrusted to their care...

**SR. M. FRANCES WAHL,  
ONE MISSION ONE FAITH TEAM MEMBER**

As a seasoned high school religion teacher, Sr. Mary Frances has expanded her ministry outreach over the years to include service as a Master Catechist. She also has become a team member for One Mission One Faith, a new program offered by the Office of Religious Education of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. It is a basic ministry formation process for anyone who serves in the life of the Church. For example, recent participants have been lectors, cantors, choir directors and those engaged in young adult ministry.

The program goal is to assist participants in their growth as missionary disciples of Jesus and their formation as parish ministers. Participants learn to share their faith in Jesus Christ with greater clarity and confidence. As Sr. Frances explained, "Team members are not so much sources of information, but we are companions as the participants grow in the knowledge of their faith. Application of their learnings is a priority, and it is interesting with learners ranging from young adults to senior citizens." Topics are varied, such as Scripture,

Mary and the saints, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, the sacraments, Catholic Social Teaching, servant leadership, communication and conflict resolution.

**SR. M. LEANNE HUBBARD,  
THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION FOR  
ARCHBISHOP JOSÉ GOMEZ, CO-CHAIRPERSON**

Theology is faith seeking understanding. Every new age of history calls Christians to look at the eternal mysteries of Christianity through new lenses. For Sr. Leanne, this dynamic represents creative fidelity to our call as Sisters of Notre Dame, and to her ministry as Director of Pastoral Formation and Associate Professor of Pastoral Studies at St. John's Seminary. Questions emerge: How do we remain faithful to the original Gospel in the light of so many new realities? She commented, "Being a member of the Theological Commission stretches my imagination and my own faith, and keeps me faithful to being a life-long seeker of God and his will for us."

This group meets several times a year, but with so much turmoil in the world recently, meetings have been more frequent. There are 12 members, representing theologians from St. John's Seminary, Loyola Marymount University, the University of Southern California and parish priest-theologians. After study of common writings, the group engages in dialogue that sheds greater light on current events and avenues of both secular and theological thought. These conversations inform the members' areas of study and practice, as well as the ministry of Archbishop Gomez.



Missioned by the church, we take part in her work of evangelization. In our common mission, we devote ourselves to our apostolic ministries as a way of leading people to the fullness of human and spiritual development. As an apostolic community, we participate in the life of the local church and use the diversity of graces and gifts given us for the building up of the reign of God.

**CONSTITUTIONS OF THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME**



# Hamza, “the joy of my life”

In the last few years, the Sisters of Notre Dame have discovered creative approaches to meeting the needs of English as a second language students. With many years of educational experience, the SNDs soon conquered the high-tech world of videoconferencing for linguistic outreach.

Sr. Shirley Marie McGovern describes Hamza as “the joy of my life.” Hamza’s family emigrated from Afghanistan to Southern California, and he is currently in third grade. Sr. Shirley tutors Hamza twice a week via Zoom, helping with his language skills. She has found that he learns best by reading Scholastic story books—humor, non-fiction or historical fiction. Her method is simple--she shows the text on the computer screen and he reads it to her aloud. At the end of the story, they discuss what he read and she is able to check for comprehension. Hamza’s conversational English is better than his oral reading. For example, in reading a book about skates, he sometimes goes off on a tangent, telling stories of his own skating escapades.

Through the invitation of Sr. Ann Carla Costello, board member for the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (Cast), Sr. Anna Maria Vasquez has become a personal tutor. Cast is a Los Angeles based nonprofit organization whose mission is to end modern slavery and human trafficking through comprehensive, life-transforming services for survivors, and to advocate for groundbreaking policies and legislation. Cast supports survivors through every phase of their journey to freedom—counseling, legal resources, housing, mentorship, education and leadership training. To protect their clients, Cast keeps their identity and circumstances confidential—so the following details summarize a survivor’s situation:

“Rosa” was born in the 1990’s in Mexico, came from an abusive situation, and found herself to be homeless and unemployed in Los Angeles. With Spanish as her first language, she wanted to improve her language skills, so Sr. Anna Maria’s personal lessons in conversational English have been most helpful. Four times a week, Sr. Anna Maria meets with Rosa via Zoom for a 90-minute lesson. Using books written by teenagers, such as *Finding Hope*, they read aloud and discuss vocabulary and comprehension. For a fun activity, Sr. Anna Maria sends Rosa newspaper cartoons without words, and Rosa writes a story about the picture. Since Rosa is also interested in faith, Sr. Anna Maria provides her with animated bible stories as an introduction, followed by an adult version for a more mature understanding.

English is the official language of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Since 2014, the SNDs have hosted a 10-month English Language Program at the Motherhouse for sisters throughout the Congregation who wish to learn English. The program includes instruction as well as a total

immersion environment in English to facilitate daily use of the language. Over 50 sisters have participated. As a follow up, the participants are partnered with a native English speaking sister from the United States with whom they meet regularly via videoconference to continue practicing their language skills.

Sr. Mary Amy Hauck is partnered with Sr. SoWha Theresa Hong, of South Korea. Sr. Theresa has been a middle school Chinese teacher at Bak-Mun Middle School, and



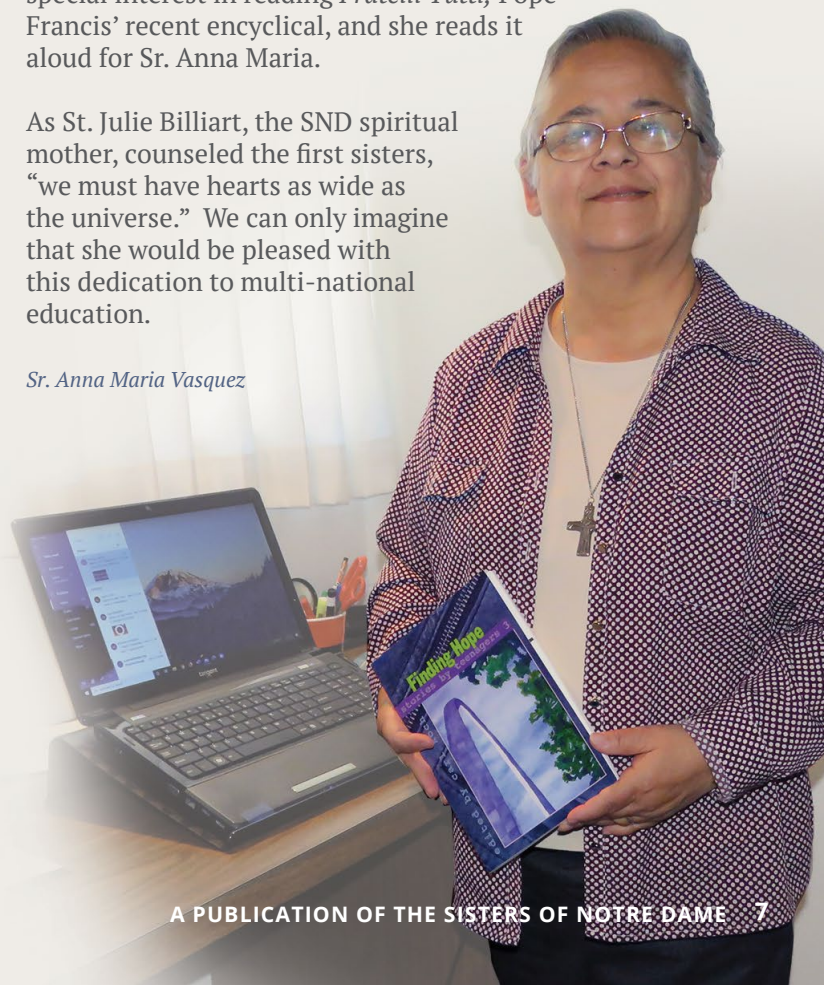
Sr. SoWha Theresa Hong

is now in parish ministry. One of the assignments Sr. Mary Amy gave her was to create and narrate a video describing her role in religious education and in training altar servers. She has also narrated “Jeju Island 101,” the story of her family home.

Sr. Anna Maria meets with Sr. Maria Claret Han of South Korea each week. In addition to practicing English, they discuss family, culture, and SND life. Sr. Maria has a special interest in reading *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis’ recent encyclical, and she reads it aloud for Sr. Anna Maria.

As St. Julie Billiart, the SND spiritual mother, counseled the first sisters, “we must have hearts as wide as the universe.” We can only imagine that she would be pleased with this dedication to multi-national education.

Sr. Anna Maria Vasquez



# The Grapevine

## RECOGNIZING THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN EACH PERSON

Notre Dame Academy in Los Angeles has always taken great pride in their extraordinarily diverse community. Head of School Lillian Paetzold remarked, “The events of this year demonstrate the need to take a more relevant and intentional support for the diverse groups within our community.” Since last June, the NDALA community has worked tirelessly to build a foundation for a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative including new programs: a Black student union; a diversity council composed of faculty and staff that reflect the diverse backgrounds of the student body; and an online networking platform for alumnae to connect. NDA hosted training and devoted 10 weeks of theology curriculum to understanding bias. The

Diversity = Fact  
Equity = Choice  
Inclusion = Action  
Belonging = Outcome



school community participated in studies promoting DEI topics and, to ground their efforts in the Catholic faith, studied “Open Wide Our Hearts,” the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ pastoral letter against racism. Lillian recently presented these efforts to other SND sponsored institutions around the country via Zoom.

Her presentation reinforced the school’s philosophy that “through respectful listening and a recognition of the presence of God in each person, the walls that separate us dissolve and a welcoming environment that builds unity and community emerges. By remaining true to our Catholic heritage and faith, and to the charism and principles of the Sisters of Notre Dame, our community stands firmly rooted in our commitment to social justice and in the work that needs to be done.”

## 2021 JUBILARIANS

With gratitude for the gift that these sisters have been to the Church and to all humankind, we joyfully announce their jubilee celebration. Depending on pandemic restrictions, it is tentatively planned for Saturday, October 16, 2021.

We honor

*Jubilee of Grace – 70 years*  
Sr. Mary Antonine Manning

*Golden Jubilee – 50 years*  
Sr. Mary Amy Hauck  
Sr. Mary Rebekah Kennedy

*Ruby Jubilee – 40 years*  
Sr. Mary Deborah Giles  
Sr. Mary Frances Wahl

*Diamond Jubilee – 60 years*  
Sr. Mary Joanne Wittenburg

Sr. Mary Dominic Jones  
Sr. Mary Joan Schlotfeldt  
(2020 Jubilarian)

Further information will be available in the coming months. Contact Lisa Stupar at [lstupar@sndusa.org](mailto:lstupar@sndusa.org) to request updates.

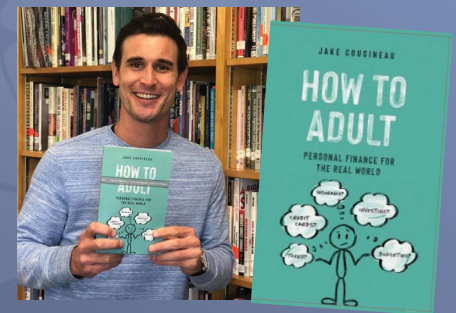
## PLANNED GIVING

With deep gratitude, the Sisters of Notre Dame wish to acknowledge these individuals for recent bequests we have received: Roland Chabot, long-time SND friend from Thousand Oaks, and Norbert Sutter, brother of the late Sr. Mary Joan Sutter. A bequest is a way to leave a legacy for years to come. Please consider including the Sisters of Notre Dame in your will or estate plan. 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 the Regional Office. Thank you and be assured of our prayerful remembrances. Your thoughtful generosity will touch the hearts of those in need for years to come.



## NOTRE DAME ACADEMY SENIOR WINS CALIFORNIA MOCK TRIAL ART AWARD

Congratulations to Grace Kim who earned first place in the California Mock Trial Art Contest. As part of NDA’s Mock Trial team, Grace observed and depicted the courtroom scenes during the competition. Her work was chosen from among hundreds of submissions from student artists statewide. She is planning to study art and/or art history on the collegiate level.



## HOW TO ADULT

La Reina English, ESL, and financial literacy teacher Jake Cousineau recently authored a book called *How to Adult: Personal Finance for the Real World*. The book aims to teach young adults the foundational topics of personal finance: paying for college, budgeting, taxes, credit and credit cards, investing, and many more.

“Working with my students inspired me to write the book. They learn so much in my financial literacy course, but I wanted to create a text they can take with them to consult as they navigate through the financial realities of adulthood. I hope the book is a valuable resource that helps them avoid the missteps so many of us make.”

La Reina students are featured in both the epigraphs and “How It Works” section of each chapter. This great introduction to practical finances is available on Amazon.