



SND USA

FALL 2022

Care for Our Common Home



ALSO INSIDE:

Connected in the Web of Life

Regional Updates



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Photos by Sister Mary Seton Schlather



LETTER FROM **SND USA PROVINCIAL TEAM**

Dear Friends,

Ah, autumn. As Lee Maynard wrote, “I loved autumn, the one season God seemed to have put there just for the beauty of it.” Amidst the cascade of changing autumn leaves, tantalizing scent of apple spice, and crisp hint of cooler days ahead, may this season be one of reflection, comfort, and inspiration for you and your loved ones.

In this issue of *SND USA*, we are excited to share with our readers how Sisters of Notre Dame are responding to Pope Francis’ encyclical letter, *Laudato Si’, Care for our Common Home*. Although trained as a scientist, Francis consistently reminds us that environmental degradation is the symptom of a deeper human and spiritual crisis. He encourages the whole human family to contribute to holistic, global solutions. The *Laudato Si’* Action Platform will support and empower communities, families, and individuals to make changes in the way we treat our common home.

Since the congregation’s beginning, the Sisters of Notre Dame have focused on caring for those on the margins, particularly underserved women and children. Today, we continue in this mission, recognizing that care for the natural world is an urgent and integral part of Catholic social teaching. Although the problem is global, Pope Francis invites each of us to discover what we can do about it right in our daily lives. In this issue you will read about an SND Associate who has taken up beekeeping to help improve the health of her community, and about one local SND community that made a series of small changes in their life together.

We hope you feel encouraged and energized reading this issue. Please join us as we take steps together to live in deeper relationship with God, with our neighbor, and with the earth itself. “There is reason to hope that humanity at the dawn of the 21st century will be remembered for having shouldered its grave responsibilities” (LS 165). Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support.

Gratefully,

The SND USA Provincial Team

LAUDAT

“Once we start to act, hope is everywhere.

So instead of looking for hope, look for action.

Then, only then, hope will come.”

– Greta Thunberg




O SÍ

Care for Our Common Home

Imagine a world where our oceans are clear of harmful debris and where whales, dolphins, manatees, sea turtles and all marine life can safely frolic and thrive. Imagine a world where clean, fresh air fills the lungs of people of all nationalities and regions throughout the globe. Imagine a world where majestic glaciers continue to serve as water reservoirs and sentinels of climate change. Imagine a world where weather patterns remain generally consistent, so fewer droughts, hurricanes and flooding disrupt food production, damage ecosystems, and threaten lives. Imagine.

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“Christians, in particular, realize that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith.”

- Pope John Paul II

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As environmental damage escalates across the globe, this idyllic vision may seem unattainable today. But Pope Francis encourages and challenges everyone in his encyclical letter, *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home*, to not lose hope. Pope Francis states, “Faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet . . . I urgently appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet” (LS 3). He reminds us that change is impossible without motivation, education and a conversion of heart and mind.

Caring for the environment is not a new concept. Since the beginning of time, God called humanity to be a good steward of the earth, to be one with nature. In Genesis, God “created man from the dust of the earth,” and God called humanity “to cultivate it and keep it.” The encyclical’s title, “*Laudato Si'*” (“Praise be to you my Lord, with all your creatures”), comes from St. Francis of Assisi’s prayer, “Canticle of Creatures”, in the early 1200s. Saint Francis’ boundless love for animals, nature and the poor resulted in his becoming the patron saint of ecologists. Pope Paul VI referenced the earth’s ecological ruin as “a tragic consequence” of unchecked human activity. “Due to an ill-

considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming, in turn, a victim of this degradation,” Pope Paul VI warned in 1971.

Science quantifies the facts of what is happening to our planet—the disappearance of biodiversity, rising temperatures, shortage of resources, etc.—but science does not calculate the ethical or spiritual consequences of these facts. Our faith tells us that we are created from the earth, and when we die, we return to the earth. Our faith demands that we care not only about the earth, but also about all the people who inhabit the earth.

Pope John Paul II said that “Christians, in particular, realize that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith.” God’s act of creation is a gift which we are to open and explore, then pass down to future generations, not open, use up and throw away.

Sister Margaret Gorman, SND USA Provincial, shares, “The Sisters of Notre Dame are embracing the Pope’s *Laudato Si'* Action Platform and sharing it with our many ministry and community partners



because we are all called to live in solidarity and care for God's creation. This is at the core of what it means to be Catholic. Through this learning process, we are taking steps to understand our impact on the planet and inviting others to join with us in this process."

The origins of environmental problems require not only scientific solutions but also a change in the human approach to living in the world. Pope Francis again encourages everyone to come to a place of deep reflection along with action. He wants us to become aware of the ethical and spiritual dimensions of how we relate to one another and to the natural world. He reminds us that this is not a simple solution. We need to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing (LS 9). Pope Francis quotes Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church, that we must "learn to give, and not simply give up."

Pope Francis considers St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Xavier and St. Ignatius of Loyola to be

excellent role models who showed people how inseparable the bond is among concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.

In a joint statement in 2021, Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby called on people to pray for world leaders. Together, they urged everyone to "listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor." They also challenged everyone to examine their behaviors and take concrete actions before it is too late. "This is a critical moment. Our children's future and the future of our common home depend on it," says Pope Francis.

Laudato Si' inspires people to find a greater balance in their daily lives, and in their relationships with one another and with the natural world. "The destruction of our environment is extremely serious, not only because God entrusted this beautiful world to us, but because human life itself is a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement," states Pope Francis.

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“Despite the devastating effects of climate change, the good news is we can still bring balance to our lives and to the earth.”

- Katie Drager, codirector of the JPIC Office for SND USA



WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR COMMON HOME?

Pope Francis does not rely only on religious leaders for information. He also listens to scientists from around the globe in their description of current threats as well as future concerns regarding the environment. He turns to philosophers and sociologists to understand the impact our environmental carelessness has had on human life and society, as well as the global inequity of the environmental crisis.

Today, the speed of human activity contrasts dramatically with the naturally slow pace of biological evolution. Let's consider some irrefutable facts:

- We have become a throw-away culture. Each year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated, much of it non-biodegradable, highly toxic and radioactive. Our beautiful landscapes are now covered with trash. People's health has been irreversibly affected.
- Climate warming is being accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level, an increase of extreme weather events, and the loss of many animal species. Deforestation, depleting fossil fuels, melting polar ice caps, and increased production and consumption are all causes of global warming.
- Economic, social, environmental, and political impacts of climate change are proliferating worldwide. While climate change has global impact, its effects on developing countries and the "least of these" are already far more devastating than on developed countries.
- Fresh drinking water is indispensable for human life. Contamination of water from chemicals, climate change and our mono-agricultural system is adding to international water scarcity.
- The loss of forests and woodlands means the loss of species that are important, not only as food, but for curing disease and other uses.
- The cement, asphalt, glass, and metal cities of today deprive people of physical contact with nature. People of color, migrants, refugees, and others live in the most deteriorated or industrialized areas.

According to Sister Kathleen Ryan, co-chair of the SND USA Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) National Office Advisory Council, "We cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. The deterioration of the environment and society disproportionately affect the most vulnerable people on the planet. For instance, the depletion of fishing reserves hurts small fishing communities without the means of replacing those resources."

"Despite the devastating effects of climate change, the good news is we can still bring balance to our lives and to the earth," says Katie Drager, co-director of the JPIC Office for SND USA. "We need to understand the interconnectedness of nature and how we live. All things are interwoven. Our activities, such as our water usage, meat consumption, automobile use, and even thermostat setting—as simple as they may seem—can impact people across the globe. The public letter from Pope Francis is addressed to everyone—not just Catholics—around the world because everyone can play a part in curing our planet."

INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

What is Integral Ecology?

Integral ecology means that everything is interconnected. Using technology alone to solve climate troubles—without concern for the common good and spiritual understanding—treats only the symptoms. There is also a relationship between the ecological crisis and the human crisis.

The human crisis, just like the ecological one, comprises a wide range of issues affecting the human family, from extreme poverty, social and

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racial inequality, human trafficking, poor working conditions, mass migration, and many more. Greed disguised as growth drives the market to produce cheaper goods, resulting in unfair labor practices, poor working conditions, weak environmental standards, and so forth, pushing people and the earth to the edge, while adding to poverty, hopelessness and dissatisfaction, and finally leading to anger and violence.

None of these problems can be solved without tackling the others. Integral ecology shows us that the ecological crisis is not simply a series of problems to be fixed, but rather a symptom of something that goes much deeper. At the heart of the ecological crisis lies a deep human and spiritual crisis, in that we have forgotten who we are and from where we have come. Nature is not something separate from humankind, or a mere setting in which humans live. Rather, humanity is part of nature, included in it, and in constant interaction with it.

Pope Francis' letter tells us a person of faith should act responsibly regarding creation.

LAUDATO SÍ ACTION PLATFORM

As a result of this encyclical and the enormous following of people from every denomination and nation, the Vatican and its Dicastery for Integral Human Development created a *Laudato SÍ* Action Platform. This is an online program to help empower Catholic institutions, communities, families, and individuals to live the message of *Laudato SÍ* and its call to an ecological conversion.

The Sisters of Notre Dame's Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) National Office, working with the international SND congregation and with individuals and institutions across the globe, has made a commitment to enroll in this platform and begin to evaluate what we can do to impact change and sustainability.

"Everything must be connected to change—the way we treat the earth, one another, and all of creation. Since the Sisters of Notre Dame are focused on caring for those on the margins, our congregation's focus is already right on point. Just as we have been focused on anti-racism and anti-trafficking work in the United States, we are responding to the call for healing our relationship with earth itself," explains Sister Maria Nonata de Aguiar Bezerra, global head of JPIC for the Sisters of Notre Dame.

Drager agrees. "While science has understood the existence of integral ecology and the interdependence of biodiversity for many years, Pope Francis' integral ecology is a holistic approach to address political, social, economic, and environmental problems. The notion of integral ecology attempts to capture the connection between humanity and the environment, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how we arrived at the current climate, health, and world crisis, and proposes a framework through which to address these issues moving forward."



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“One example from Pope Francis’ letter reminds us that the damage being done to the earth predominantly by the Global North (United States, Europe, Russia and China) is most severely experienced by the Global South (Central and South America, Africa and Oceania). This reveals a grossly unequal relationship of power. Consequently, the Global South is not only a direct economic victim of the North, but also an indirect environmental victim of the economic activities of the Global North,” Drager explains.

“Integral ecology is both a concept and an action,” Drager explains. “Pope Francis, through the Vatican’s JPIC Office, created the *Laudato Si’* Action Plan to carry out this conversion to integral ecology and to create a tipping point or critical mass for change. The *Laudato Si’* Action Platform is created for families, individuals, parishes, dioceses, religious congregations, educational institutions, and healthcare organizations – one platform used around the world in developed and developing countries.”

The Action Platform can be summarized in three key components: REFLECT, ACT, and EVALUATE.

Reflect

Pope Francis has called us to a “profound interior conversion.” This is a process, not a single action, that will take place over seven years. Each person or organization will begin with an online self-assessment about daily living, creating a baseline from which to see progress across the seven *Laudato Si’* goals. Before completing the self-assessment, you may want to reflect on and gather this information:

- **Cry of the Earth:** What is your electricity usage, other fuel usage, water usage, number of trees cut/planted in past years? How is your land used and protected?
- **Cry of the Poor:** How are you responding to the cry of the poor through direct service and/or advocacy?

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*“The effects of the
present imbalance can
only be reduced by our
decisive action, here
and now” (LS 161).*



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- **Ecological Economics:** How are you making investment decisions – divestment from fossil fuels, socially responsible investing, and insurance?
- **Sustainable/Simple Lifestyles:** How do you regulate electricity and water usage? How do you regulate car and fuel usage or transportation costs? How do you eat – meat consumption, plant consumption, composting? How much waste do you produce? Do you have a commitment to avoid Styrofoam or single-use plastics?
- **Ecological Education:** How are you educating yourself about sustainability?
- **Ecological Spirituality:** How do you engage in prayer around The Season of Creation (September 1 – October 4)? Do you pray with nature and how are you connected with the earth?
- **Community Engagement and Participatory Action:** How do you engage with your community in sustainability endeavors?

This self-assessment summary can provide a snapshot of your carbon footprint, your impact on the earth. It is designed to stir reflection and inspiration about the ways we can effect change for the future of the planet.

A quick and easy way to calculate your own carbon footprint is to visit the Global Footprint Network, an independent think tank founded in 2003, whose aim is to develop and promote tools for advancing sustainability. They offer a simple online quiz at www.footprintcalculator.org which is designed to help people start to think of all the ways they use natural resources in daily living, and the impact of that usage on our planet.

Act


In writing *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis tells us, “The effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now” (LS 161). A summation of your self-assessment answers will suggest actions and resources to help you implement those actions. You will choose from the action(s) of greatest interest to you or come up with your own actions best suited to your spiritual, social, and practical needs.

SEVEN GOALS OF LAUDATO SI ACTION PLATFORM



- 1. Response to the Cry of the Earth:** a call to protect our common home for the well-being of all.
- 2. Response to the Cry of the Poor:** a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on earth.
- 3. Ecological Economics:** acknowledges the economy is a sub-system of human society which itself is embedded within the biosphere, our common home.
- 4. Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles:** grounded in the idea of sufficiency and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy.
- 5. Ecological Education:** rethinking and redesigning formal and informal educational practices in the spirit of integral ecology to foster ecological awareness and transformative action.
- 6. Ecological Spirituality:** springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us “discover God in all things,” both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities.
- 7. Community Resilience and Empowerment:** an open, listening, and conscious journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels.

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“Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation and to bring balance to the planet.”

– Ann Clark, co-director of JPIC in the United States

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The most important thing to keep in mind is why you are taking this action. The Action Platform challenges us to develop new ways of living and working together, focused on our interconnectedness with each other and with our planet.

Evaluate

As we act, we begin to see the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us. We encourage you to complete the same self-assessment annually to reveal your progress along this journey toward integral ecology.

With each assessment, you can reflect on your actions, which can serve as motivation to continue your efforts and renew your commitment to change. It can also provide an opportunity to consider how the process is changing who you are and how you see your place in the world.

Sectors

Who is called to participate in these goals? Families/individuals, parishes/dioceses, educational institutions, healthcare, religious congregations, economic sector, organizations/groups (like NGOs). *In other words, YOU!*

“The projections of a climate-changed future are not inevitable. Many of the problems and solutions are known to us now, and ongoing research continues to provide new solutions,” declares Drager. “We are called to be co-creators. Our lives and our planet are gifts from God. We must work from a place of love and compassion in accordance with our faith, as encouraged in *Laudato Si’*.”

Ann Clark, co-director of JPIC in the United States, concurs. “*Laudato Si’* is an insightful document that offers all the world a challenge to recognize our connectedness. And it is in recognizing our interdependence that we can make real commitments and changes to heal our planet and our world. When our planet is sick, so are we; when our planet is healthy, so are we.”

Sister Kathleen adds, “A true ecological approach to improve the environment must always be a social approach, integrating questions of justice in debates on the environment. Consequently, we must hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Inequality affects not only individuals but entire countries.”



Sister Kathleen continues, “We must account for commercial imbalances resulting in a disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over time. The export of raw materials from developing countries to satisfy markets in industrialized nations causes local harm, such as in Africa where resulting gas residues from gold mining have devastated farming. Similarly, the export of solid waste and toxic liquids from industrialized nations to developing countries causes significant harm to their natural resources.”

RAISING AWARENESS

The Sisters of Notre Dame are committed to raising awareness of the environmental challenges, including how such awareness relates to faith. “Denial, indifference, or a nonchalant resignation to this problem must not continue,” Clark urges. “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation and to bring balance to the planet.”

Pope Francis calls on all people to see and understand the connections between climate change and other environmental issues, particularly humanitarian and social issues such as immigration, racism, trafficking, and access to healthcare, especially for the poor and marginalized. “As we continue to work on the action steps to implement the SND Corporate Stance Against Racism that was endorsed in February 2021, we will be especially mindful of addressing the intersection of climate, racism and immigration,” Drager adds.

Personal action may include composting, limiting single-use purchases, and reducing meat consumption, which some sisters and associates began as an initiative this spring. “We need to appreciate the beauty that exists around us and within us and in every part of creation. Seeing people live without water and basic things like roads and trash pickup in Uganda helped me to realize that we are shielded in the United States from the ugliness witnessed around the world,” Drager recalls. “If we had to deal with our own garbage, see it pile up, try to burn it or bury it, maybe we would buy less.”


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WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Today, all humanity is being called to rethink priorities and return to a balance between nature and the practice of our daily living. This means rethinking what is truly needed and committing to daily acts that will improve the planet. Advocating for change and practicing a healthier lifestyle are certainly positive steps forward. Additionally, reaching out to the poor and marginalized, particularly those affected by global changes, is something everyone can do. Join JPIC initiatives publicized on the SND website, sndusa.org.

“In order to take action, we need first to educate ourselves and love ourselves and one another,” Drager insists. “We need to find balance and connectedness and unity. We understand harmony in music as the different instruments interdependently working together to create beauty. We must create harmony within our world, each doing our part to bring about a healthier, beautiful planet.”

Sister Kathleen concludes, “In some countries, there are already positive examples of environmental improvement: rivers that had been polluted for decades have been cleaned up; native woodlands have been restored; landscapes have been beautified thanks to environmental renewal projects; advances have been made in the production of non-polluting energy and in the improvement of public transportation. These achievements demonstrate how men and women are still capable of intervening positively. For all our limitations, gestures of generosity, solidarity and care abound each day. Let’s be examples of love.”

Future issues of SND USA will report on how the SND community is working to improve our planet. For more information on how you can participate alongside the sisters, please contact Katie Drager, JPIC co-director, at jpica@sndusa.org. To see more of Sister Rose Marie Tulacz’s photography, visit www.sisterrosemarietulacz.com. 



“For all our limitations, gestures of generosity, solidarity and care abound each day.

Let’s be examples of love.”

- Sister Kathleen Ryan, co-chair of the SND USA Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) National Office Advisory Council



5 Factors that Make Giving Feel Good

Many of us devote our time, talents and contributions to our favorite charities because it's the right thing to do and we want to make an impact. Sharing our generosity also provides us with an immense feeling of satisfaction.

Giving makes us feel good because of its effects:

- 1. Makes a real difference.** Sometimes “thank you” doesn’t convey how much we truly care. Financial support of a cause enables you to make a powerful impact, and volunteering allows you to see your impact firsthand.
- 2. Reflects our values.** We all want to be part of a community that shares our values. Showing support, either through gifts of time or finances, can extend your personal connection and give you a sense of belonging. It also reinforces your own belief system.
- 3. Serves as inspiration.** Your generosity may inspire others to follow your lead. Engage loved ones in discussions about your passions and encourage them to join you in volunteering or raising funds.
- 4. Creates an everlasting impact.** You have an opportunity to leave your mark on the world. Planning a future gift—such as one in your will or trust—helps ensure that generations to come will benefit. It can also help protect the causes you love beyond your lifetime.
- 5. Recognizes individuals.** We are often inspired to give back by people who have touched our lives. Tribute gifts are a way to honor those individuals.

If you'd like to learn more about how the benefits of your generosity can impact the ministries of the Sisters of Notre Dame, please contact your local Mission Advancement Representative below to learn more.

COVINGTON, KY:

MARGIE SCHNELLE | mschnelle@sndusa.org

THOUSAND OAKS, CA:

SISTER LISA MEGAFFIN | lmegaffin@sndusa.org

TOLEDO, OH:

KERRI ROSE-ROCHELLE | krochelle@sndusa.org

CHARDON, OH:

CARRIE HIGGINBOTHAM | chigginbotham@sndusa.org



Bee Smart

SND Associate Connie Ehrnschwender is deeply committed to helping the environment. While her husband Jeff and son Eric initially began beekeeping 20 years ago as a hobby, it is only recently that the family came to realize the significant contribution bees play within the environment. Their Hamilton, OH bees can travel up to a five-mile radius, helping pollinate their bucolic neighborhood. Because of the current bee shortage in the United States, local farmers are grateful for the activity of the Ehrnschwender bees.

“The honey is delicious. It’s especially awesome when we have enough to share with family and friends. But what’s most meaningful to us is what beekeeping does for our environment and the farmers around us,” Connie exclaims with a smile.

Beekeeping has not come without its challenges. “We realized, a few years back, Jeff is allergic to bee stings!” Connie says. “We didn’t want to stop, so he actually did an immune-venom therapy.”

“There have been quite a few bee stings along the way,” Jeff admits with a laugh.

A three-pound package starter kit of bees is 10,000 bees.

A queen can lay 1,000 eggs a day, but a bee’s lifespan is only 30 to 60 days.

“Beekeeping might be a really wonderful hobby for some of the Sisters of Notre Dame,” Connie considers. “We’ve offered to help sisters in Covington, KY get started and be their go-to people once they are set up. It’s on the table.”

“I always had a strong connection with the Sisters of Notre Dame. My aunt, Sister Mary Rosetta Conrad, had a huge impact on my life. She was always my favorite aunt,” Connie states. “At her funeral, Sister Jean Marie Hoffman looked at me and suggested I become an SND associate. I just love the sisters—not only their grasp on spirituality, but just living; it’s so authentic,” Connie passionately describes. Connie has been an associate for four years. “Becoming an associate was literally life-changing for me,”

Connie states. “When I get anxious, and feel scared, I get afraid of the unknown. But I always go back to this beautiful mindset of the sisters, their motto, ‘How good is the good God’, which is a quote from St. Julie Billiart, and how God is in control,” she adds.

In addition to beekeeping, Connie is a member of the SND USA Care for Creation

team in Covington, KY. The Care for Creation team is a national group of 20+ sisters and associates from across the country working to help the province move toward integral ecology. Team members have researched and discovered other ways they can positively impact the environment as individuals. One outcome: they recently launched Meatless Mondays.

“Though this didn’t seem like a big change at the time, it helped us understand how much eating meat contributes to global warming overall,” Connie said.

“The production of meat, particularly beef, has a large impact on the environment through the methane that cows release as well as the amount of water and other resources that it takes to produce meat.”

Getting Meatless Mondays implemented involved convincing people of the environmental benefits and spreading awareness that

going meatless for one day a week was good for the environment and could have a positive impact on an individual’s health, Connie says.

“Action by only 25 percent of a population is needed to support a norm change. That’s enough to push it in that direction. If 25 percent of people composted or reduced plastic use, then their friends and other people around them may say, ‘Oh, okay, maybe I could do that, too,’” Connie says. She encourages more people to participate in positive environmental changes.

Connie has committed to support Pope Francis’ mission of caring for our common home, as outlined in *Laudato Sí*. “The thing I admire so much about Pope Francis is he wrote *Laudato Sí*, around seven years ago. But for him, to have that kind of grasp on these issues at that time, and now today it’s still very real, and probably even more relevant; that stands out to me about the wisdom of this current Pope we have,” Connie says.

Connie believes everyone can implement the principles of *Laudato Sí* in their lives. “There are little things we can do as individuals—such as composting, planting trees, and eating less meat—that can help and are easy to implement in our lives.”

**If you are interested in learning more about the SND Associate Program, please call the SND Associate Coordinator in your local area or visit www.sndusa.org/engage.*



SND Associate Connie Ehrnschwender

“There are little things we can do as individuals—such as composting, planting trees, and eating less meat—that can help and are easy to implement in our lives.”



CONNECTED IN THE WEB OF LIFE

Sister Susan Marie Reineck, SND



Sister Susan Marie Reineck has ministered in education and administration.

Currently she serves as the Community Coordinator for the Sisters of Notre Dame in the Southern Region.

Sister volunteers at Guardian Catholic School as a tutor and at Holy Rosary Church in Jacksonville, Florida with liturgical environment.

Many years ago, while taking an early morning walk around my childhood neighborhood, I became breathless at the sight of the largest spider web I had ever seen, shimmering like myriads of diamonds from the morning dew and sunshine. The wonder of its magnificence drew me to walk closer to observe one small spider and a few insects that were already entangled in the wispy web. How could such a small insect accomplish such a masterpiece of design and beauty with the sole purpose of obtaining its food for survival? This question and image became bookmarked in my memory for future reference and reflection. Many years later this amazing experience connected me with the writings of Pope Francis.

Recently, after reading and discussing Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si': On Care of Our Common Home*, a group of sisters were challenged by Francis' compelling words:

The created things of this world are not free of ownership: "For they are yours, O Lord, who love the living" (Wis 11:26). This is the basis of our conviction that, as part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect. (#89)

Pope Francis was challenging each of us to undertake caring for and restoring creation, which seemed impossible. Surely these responsibilities were meant for people with the intelligence, power, and influence who could develop plans for significant and lasting change. However, the sisters with whom I share community in the urban core of Jacksonville, Florida, changed my outlook. They helped me realize the importance of doing what you can, and the truth that no effort was too small.

WE HAVE CHOSEN TO
LIVE SIMPLY AS WE
CONTINUE TO FIND
WAYS TO RECYCLE,
REFILL, REPURPOSE,
REUSE, REPAIR, AND
RETHINK WHAT WE
NEED AND WHAT
WE CAN GIVE TO
OTHERS.

Years ago, we hoped to plant flowers and a vegetable garden in the approximately 200 square feet behind our convent, which could also serve as a small space of creative beauty for our personal reflection. However, the ground was all sand! So, we decided to compost. We deposited eggshells, and fruit and vegetable peels into a large hole in the back corner of our yard, covered it with shredded paper and leaves—and waited. Eventually, energy from Florida's year-round sunshine decomposed our waste and produced rich compost!


The miracle of growth in our small garden evokes feelings of wonder and awe. Bees and butterflies flit around the blossoms of native flowers and homegrown vegetables and pollinate our lemon tree. Over time, we've added potted herbs which season our food and nourish our spirits. Instead of forcing non-native, high-maintenance grass to grow in our yard, we allow low-growing native ground

cover which produces small white flowers that attract beautiful butterflies!

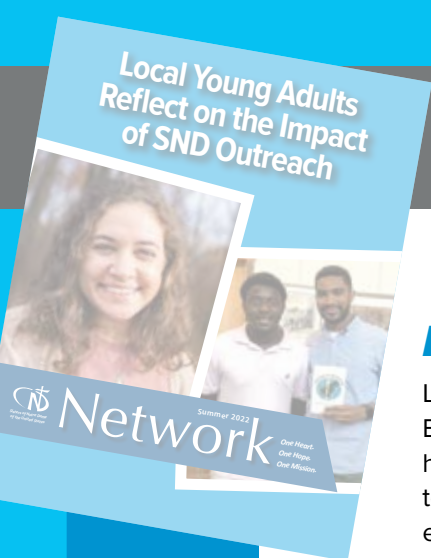
In addition to gardening, we turned our attention inside to find new ways to care for the environment. We made simple changes such as replacing large, plastic containers of laundry soap and softener with biodegradable liquidless detergent laundry sheets, Borax for whitener, and reusable dryer balls in place

Sisters of Notre Dame practice composting in the Chardon region.

of softener; small, washable cloths serve as dish covers and/or wipes replacing paper towels, glass containers for storing left-over food and glass jars for other storage items; reusable grocery bags for shopping. We began using personal water bottles, bar soap and LED lights; digital newspapers and our most recent discovery—the “loofah plant,” which is growing in our garden. This plant replaces our plastic dish scrapers and serves as vegetable and body brushes.

Caring for our small garden and discovering ways of restoring our one earth allows us to respect and enjoy the wonder of creation. Together, as Sisters of Notre Dame united with our Associates and everyone who has their gifts to care for our common home, let us continue to encourage one another to build the magnificent web of our Creator's divine plan for our one world and beyond! Just like the small spider who created a magnificent web of both beauty and necessity, so too can we accomplish beauty and usefulness in the way we live our own lives. 





Chardon, OH

Beautiful Cleveland!

Located at Coit Rd. and Woodworth Ave. in East Cleveland, OH, Sisters of Notre Dame have joined East Cleveland (EC) residents to help beautify the neighborhood, while encouraging urban farmers to grow organic vegetables and herbs in EC Grows Community Garden.

There are 65 garden beds, varying in size and cost. The EC Grows team provides whatever is needed: seeds (all organic), soil, compost, water. There are some tools, and farmers are encouraged to bring their own. Farmers use city water from the hydrants, and Garden Captains water all the beds on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Farmers are encouraged to bring raw fruit and vegetable waste, coffee grounds, eggshells, shredded newspaper, leaves, grass cuttings which are added to the compost bin.

This year farmers have planted a variety of flowers and vegetables from indeterminate seeds (continuous harvest) to determinate seeds (ripen all at once). The fall harvest will include spinach, collards, leaf lettuce, broccoli, radishes, onions, garlic, and cabbage. All the produce is not sold but shared.

Sister Marie Manning is one of the urban farmers. She says, "I began in 2017 as a gardener and am now also a fundraiser, obtaining grants and donations." She is joined by Sister Kathleen Tobin who also tends a large garden in the SND Chardon courtyard.

For more information on how you can get involved, please contact Sr. Marie Manning at mmanning@sndusa.org.



EC Grows Community Garden farmers/volunteers.



Christmas in July

The Sisters of Notre Dame sponsored a fun afternoon for employees with a celebration of "Christmas in July." The event included a gift exchange, music, dancing, a dunking booth and plenty of delicious food.



Join a team with One Heart, One Hope and One Mission!

Careers we offer:

Food Services: Dietary Aides | Cooks

Healthcare: LPN/RN | Nurse Aides/STNA

Facilities: Maintenance | Grounds | Housekeeping

Administration: IT | Finance | Human Resources | Advancement

We offer our employees a rewarding environment, as well as opportunities for personal and professional growth. View open positions and submit your application online at [Careers.sndusa.org](https://careers.sndusa.org) or email hr@sndusa.org.

Hiring in four locations: Chardon, OH; Toledo, OH; Covington, KY; and Thousand Oaks, CA

60th Annual SND Chicken BBQ

Thousands of community members enjoyed a delicious meal that included barbecue chicken, coleslaw, potato chips, and a hearty slice of apple pie along with lighthearted camaraderie at the 60th Annual SND Chicken BBQ held on Sunday, September 25. This major fundraising and friend-raising event was once again a tremendous success. The sisters would especially like to thank everyone who joined them on this day celebrating 60 years of food, fun, and friendship! This yearly tradition would not be possible without the generous support of our many corporate sponsors including Goldman Sachs & Co., LLC, Preston Superstore, PNC Financial Services Group, Notre Dame Schools, Sanson Produce, Margaret W. Wong & Associates LLC, and Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP, just to name a few. We hope to see everyone back again next year!





Thousand Oaks, CA

Celebrating with Grateful Hearts

Representing 550 years of consecrated religious life, 10 Sisters of Notre Dame were honored on July 30, 2022. Depicted here are Sister Judeen Julier, Sister Karlynn Werth, Sister Betty Mae Bienlein, Sister Florette Adams, Sister Jolisa Lazaro, Sister Ann Carla Costello, Sister Regina Robbins, Sister Marie Paul Grech, and Sister Joann Schlarbaum.



Sister Kathleen Burns, not pictured, also celebrated in Rome. View the livestream and see photos of the celebration at <https://sndusa.org/celebrating-californias-jubilarians/>.

REGIONAL UPDATE



Anne displays her creations at a local craft fair.

Caring for Creation with Succulent Artistry

An Interview with Anne Interrante, SND Associate

How did Succulentry begin?

When my grandmother passed away in 2015, I decided to carry on her gardening tradition. While she specialized in roses, I have chosen drought-tolerant succulents. What started as a hobby has become a business for me and my family. With more than 50 types of plants in my backyard, I now design and sell arrangements in the Ventura County area. I came up with the name Succulentry, derived from "succulent artistry".

Why do you think succulents are currently an important industry for California?

It is well known that California is dealing with its third year of drought. Strict water conservation measures have challenged residents and businesses to find alternatives to traditional landscaping. Succulents are water-wise and provide color and variety to the landscape around our homes. Further, they are easy to propagate.

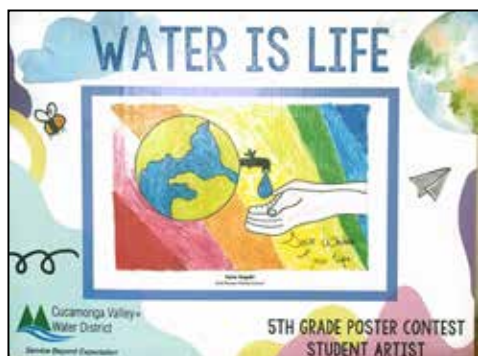
Do you see a connection between your faith and this venture?

I find that my garden is like a sacred space, and working there helps me to re-charge and re-center myself. I believe this connects me to my faith as God would want me to care for and be in awe of the nature around me.

Learn more at www.succulentry.com

Inspiring Conservation

The SNDs offer special congratulations to Sana Yaqubi, a native of Afghanistan, now living in Rancho Cucamonga, California with her family. Sana received a Certificate of Recognition from California State Senator Rosilice Ochoa Bogh, honoring her water conservation poster, which demonstrated “her creativity and commitment to bettering the community.” Sister Shirley Marie McGovern and Sister Julie Marie Arriaga are members of the on-line tutoring team for the Yaqubi children who are learning essential skills in reading, writing and speaking English.



Sister Colette Theobald and Sister Rita Schroeder took a carload of plants to Our Lady of Peace.



Keane Au proudly nurtures his seedlings.

Delights from an Urban Garden

In celebration of *Laudato Si'*, Sisters of Notre Dame delivered more than 100 tomato plants to the students at Our Lady of Peace, an elementary school in urban Los Angeles. Sister Rita Schroeder spoke to the students about Pope Francis' invitation to care for the earth. The Sisters provided instructions on how to take care of the plants. Sister Louise Marie Hlavac, a teacher at Our Lady of Peace, noted, “The children have been so excited to plant, water and watch their tomatoes grow. For some students, having fresh tomatoes was a new experience. What a blessing to have them experience God’s creation from a personal perspective!”

Make the Nun Run a Healthy Habit!

Kick off 2023 by participating in our 9th annual 1-mile, 5K, and virtual mileage challenge. This unique, fun-filled event raises much-needed money for the outreach efforts of the Sisters of Notre Dame, while encouraging health and wellness for all ages. Our participants range in age from newborns to 92-year-olds. Join us for community spirit, engaging exhibitors, and a professional road race. Special thanks to all our previous participants!

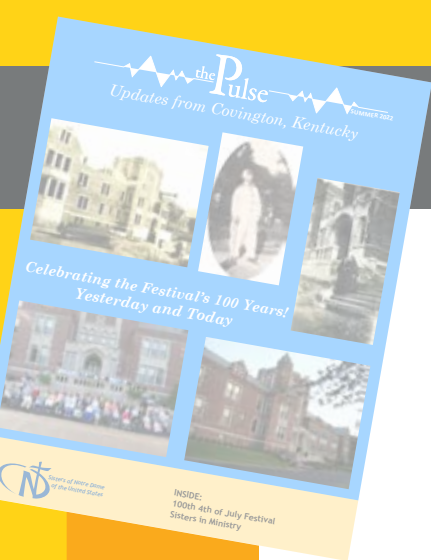
Ways to Get Involved

- Run/Walk in California on February 4, 2023
- Participate in our Virtual Mileage Challenge from anywhere in the world
- Invite friends and family to join a team
- Become a fundraiser or volunteer
- Advertise your business
- Reserve a booth at the Community Service Fair

For more information visit: www.nun.run.

Registration is now open!





Covington, KY

Memorial Mass

A Memorial Mass for the deceased Sisters of Notre Dame and SND associates will be held on Sunday, November 6 at 9:30 a.m., followed by a reception and continental breakfast. This year's theme is "Those we love remain with us for love itself lives on." If you would like to attend please call Margie Schnelle at 859-392-8229 or email mschnelle@sndusa.org.



Jubilee 2022

On Sunday, October 8, 2022, nine Covington Sisters of Notre Dame celebrated their jubilee.

JUBILEE OF GRACE (70 years): Sr. Christa Marie Fox, Sr. Mary Paul Ann Hanneken, and Sr. Marie Sand. **IRON JUBILEE** (65 years): Sr. Mary Michelyn Beckerich, Sr. Marylyn Ehrman, and Sr. Mary Rachel Nerone. **DIAMOND JUBILEE** (60 years): Sr. Florette Marie Adams, and Sr. Mary Catheryne Geoppinger. **GOLDEN JUBILEE** (50 years): Sr. Mary Judeann Lueken. This was a special celebration of the jubilarians' special anniversaries and all they have accomplished since professing their vows.

View photos and read the Jubilarians' biographies at www.sndusa.org/regions.

Celebrating 100th Anniversary of 4th of July Festival

Sisters of Notre Dame Covington welcomed family, friends, and neighbors to their 100th Celebration of the 4th of July Festival. It was a beautiful day full of sunshine and smiling faces. It was so wonderful to see everyone back together again enjoying the great food, fun games, variety of auction items, and the musical entertainment.

We thank everyone for supporting us through sponsorships, donations, volunteering, and spending time visiting with us.



Toledo, OH



REGIONAL UPDATE

Sister LaReine-Marie Mosely began a new ministry this fall as the Associate Professor of Catholic Systematic Theology and the Miller Chair in Human Dignity at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. She also will be working with the University's Center for Catholic Studies. St. Mary's was founded by the Brothers of St. Mary (Marianists).

For Fall Semester Sr. LaReine-Marie is teaching two Introduction to Theology classes. She said, "I am excited to be here and am looking forward to experiencing the Marianist spirit and sharing with students, faculty, and staff our SND spirit!" Upon learning the school mascot was the Rattlers however, she added that her leather boots are on order!



Connecting Kids to Meals is an organization that provides over 6,000 hot meals a day to hungry children throughout Northwest Ohio during the summer months. The executive director of CKM, Wendi Huntley, is a Notre Dame Academy alumna and good friend to SND. Sr. Carol Gregory and Sr. Sally Bohnett spent some time helping to box up supplies for lunches and learning more about the needs of children in the area.

Congratulations to the five novices, originally from Papua New Guinea, who professed their first vows on August 20, 2022. They will continue in ministry and education as part of the East African Delegation.





The sisters at the SND Center have enjoyed sending out birthday cards this year! If your birthday is in the Toledo Region database, watch for your birthday card and send in your birthday prayer request. The sisters feel blessed to pray for your birthday wishes!

Congratulations to our 2022 Jubilarians! **JUBILEE OF JOY** (75 years): Sr. Bernadette Schafer, **JUBILEE OF GRACE** (70 years): Sr. Corese Floyd and Sr. Rosalee Halm, **IRON JUBILEE** (65 years): Sr. Gertrude Ann Mueller, Sr. Agnes Rose Tscherne and Sr. Mary Magdalen Westrick, **DIAMOND JUBILEE** (60 years): Sr. Elayne Bockey, Sr. Del Ray Bogner, Sr. Margaret Foos, Sr. Fredricka Kollsmith, Sr. Jan Lonsway, Sr. Nadine Mathias, and Sr. Myriam Powell, **GOLDEN JUBILEE** (50 years): Sr. Joyce Bates and **RUBY JUBILEE** (40 years): Sr. Teresita Richards.



On September 29, Sisters of Notre Dame hosted the inaugural SHINE Women's Summit. Women of all faiths and backgrounds gathered at the Valentine Theatre in downtown Toledo to support, honor, inspire, nurture, and empower each other. Watch for more detailed coverage of this event in the next issue of SND USA Magazine.

The Toledo Region SND Administrative Office moved to 1656 Henthorne Drive, Suite 200, Maumee, OH 43537 in September. Sr. Alice Willman, Sr. Richarde Kaufman, Sr. Regina Fisher and, of course, the Toledo maintenance team led the way for a smooth transition for the staff.



A LASTING TRIBUTE

Covington Region



SISTER MARY DOLORES GIBLIN

(Formerly Sister Mary Padraic)

June 4, 1937 – April 23, 2022

Sister Dolores taught at St. Aloysius Orphanage; St. Agnes in Bond Hill, OH; St. Martin; St. Peter and Paul; Our Lady of Fatima in Alabama; Bishop Brossart High School; Notre Dame Academy in Covington, KY.

She served as an archivist for 10 years at Notre Dame Academy Alumnae office at Notre Dame Academy, Covington. Her out-reach activities included Co-Chairing SND Women's Retreats; Jail ministry, including support groups for families of the incarcerated.

Chardon Region



SISTER JULIE MARIE GILMORE, SND

(Formerly Sister Mary Maurene)

October 2, 1934 – May 17, 2022

In 1955, Sister Julie began her ministry of education at St. Michael School, Canton, OH, as a 4th grade teacher. After eight years as a teacher at St. Vitus, Gesu, St. Stephen, and Our Lady of Mt.

Carmel parish schools, Sister Julie was appointed principal of St. Paschal Baylon School in Highland Heights, OH. Over the next 27 years, she was principal at Notre Dame Elementary School, Chardon; St. Margaret Mary, South Euclid; Immaculate Heart of Mary, Austintown; and St. Louis, Cleveland Heights. She spent 11 years as a Regional Superior. The past 21 years found her volunteering at Metro Catholic School, Cleveland, OH; Notre Dame Skills Lab, Chardon, and UH Geauga Medical Center.

Chardon Region



SISTER MARY JOANNE BONCZEK

(Formerly Sister Mary Ann José)

July 31, 1938 – May 25, 2022

Sister Joanne initially taught junior high students at St. Gregory the Great School in South Euclid; St. Mary, Elyria; SS Cyril & Methodius, Lakewood; and St. Francis of Assisi, Gates Mills, all in Ohio. In 1968 at

St. Michael School, Cleveland, Sister Joanne taught grade 8 and directed the high school choir. The following year she was appointed principal of the elementary school in addition to classroom teaching. Next, she was appointed Diocesan Elementary School Coordinator for the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia. After six years as School Coordinator, Sister served as principal at St. John School, Warrenton, Virginia, and Our Lady of Lourdes School in Dunedin, Florida. From 1994-2000 she was local superior of the provincial center in Chardon, OH. For the next 17 years, Sister Joanne ministered at Food for the Poor in Donor Relations and as Senior Development Advisor in Florida. For the past four years, Sister Joanne shared community life at the provincial center, first as pastoral care assistant and then helping with Health Care activities.

Chardon Region



SISTER HELEN MARIE GREGOS

(Formerly Sister Mary Therese Martin)

August 11, 1933 – July 2, 2022

Sister Helen taught for six years in parish elementary schools in Cleveland and Massillon. In 1961 she was assigned to Julie Billiart School in Lyndhurst, OH, which focused on students with special learning

needs. In 1972, Sister Helen Marie was assigned to Notre Dame College, South Euclid, OH, as Coordinator of Special Education. For 30 years she developed new programs, trained and supervised special education teachers at the graduate and undergraduate levels. During this time, she served for six years as curriculum director at Julie Billiart School. In 1999, upon retiring from the college, she worked at Notre Dame Skills Lab, as a tutor at Metro Catholic School, and as a teacher-mentor for the Diocese of Cleveland.

May our deceased sisters rejoice in God's everlasting love.

Chardon Region



SISTER JEANNE MARY NIEMINEN

(Formerly Sister Mary Jane Frances)

December 25, 1928 – July 8, 2022

Sister Jeanne taught primary grades for 45 years. She ministered in 19 different schools, from the Cleveland area to Massillon, Lorain, and Canton, and in Washington DC, Virginia, and Florida. In 1978, she

worked with a team of sisters to write the Christ Our Life religion series for Loyola Press. In 1985, a summer program for newly arrived Vietnamese refugees turned into years of volunteer work with adult literacy. Upon her retirement from classroom teaching, Sister Jeanne Mary spent 14 years as a tutor at Notre Dame Skills Lab.

Chardon Region



SISTER MARGARET FRIEL

(Formerly Sister Mary John Patrick)

May 17, 1937 – July 23, 2022

For 60 years Sister Margaret "Marg" Friel was involved in educational ministry. She taught at 11 different schools between 1957 and 1996, in Cleveland, Eastlake, Elyria, Euclid, Highland Heights, Independence, South Euclid, and University Heights,

OH. For 18 years following, she ministered as director or assistant director of Early Childhood Learning Centers at St. Therese in Wilson, NC; St. Basil Campus in Brecksville, OH, and Notre Dame Elementary Preschool, Chardon, OH. After several years as a tutor at ND Skills Lab and the Legacy Project, Sister Marg assisted the Pastoral Care Team and the Activities Department in the Health Care Center. For the past six years in the Mission Advancement Office, Sister Marg established and maintained a personal connection with donors, making hundreds of thank you calls and writing thousands of birthday cards.

Toledo Region



SISTER ARLENE MARIE HOFFMAN

(Formerly Sister Mary Bernerd)

December 17, 1934 –
July 16, 2022

Sister Arlene Marie taught primary grades in Toledo for a short time, but is best remembered as an outstanding seamstress in

the Province sewing room, a ministry she held for 35 years. Her sewing was not routine or mechanical; her heart went into the fabric, and it became prayer. After retiring from the sewing room, she volunteered in the school library at Sacred Heart School in New Smyrna Beach, FL. Sister then spent eight years in hospitality and homemaking at Lial Renewal Center in Whitehouse, OH, along with two years at St. Joseph School and Parish in Erie, MI. Sister was a food service assistant at the Provincial Center for several years until moving to the SND Center in Whitehouse, OH.

Thousand Oaks Region



SISTER MARY FRANCELIA KLINGSHIRN

November 11, 1917 –
August 11, 2022

Sister Francelia spent many years as a teacher and principal in Ohio and Washington, D.C. Coming to California in 1962, she served as teacher and administrator at St. Matthias

Elementary in Huntington Park and Our Lady of the Assumption in Ventura. In 1981, Sister Francelia became the founding principal of Sacred Heart School in Ventura, a position she held for 16 years. She also served as an elementary school supervisor and provincial superior. As provincial, she was responsible for the design and construction of Notre Dame Center. Ever the educator, Sr. Francelia later taught English to immigrant adults needing language proficiency and served on the committee that designed California's Associate program.



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SND USA National Office

13000 Auburn Road, Chardon, OH 44024

SND USA Regional Offices

1601 Dixie Highway, Covington, KY 41011

1776 Hendrix Avenue, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

1656 Henthorne Drive, Suite 200, Maumee, OH 43537

www.sndusa.org

Chardon Office Prayer Line

440-279-1163 or prayersCH@sndusa.org

Toledo Office Prayer Line

prayersTO@sndusa.org

Covington Office Prayer Line

859-291-2040 or prayersKY@sndusa.org

Thousand Oaks Office Prayer Line

prayersCA@sndusa.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

In Person Events

Silent Retreats

In Chardon, OH – Nov. 18 - 20

For more information, contact Sister Jenny Zimmerman at vocations@sndusa.org.

Weekend Retreat with Professional Artist, Brother Michael (Mickey) McGrath, OSFS

DATE: Friday, Oct. 21 - 23, 2022, 7 p.m. until noon on Sunday

LOCATION: Lial Renewal Center, 5908 Davis Road, Whitehouse, OH

COST: \$50 (includes food) | Overnight: \$65 (Registration due by Oct. 14)

For more information or to make reservations visit lialrenewalcenter.org.

All Souls Mass

DATE: Nov. 2 – 4:30 p.m., SND Center

LOCATION: Chardon, OH

Memorial Mass

DATE: Nov. 6 – 9:30 a.m.

LOCATION: St. Joseph Heights Chapel, Covington, KY

To attend, contact Margie Schnelle, 859-392-8229

Dan Schutte Concert and Retreat “Our Hearts are Hungry”

CONCERT DATE: Nov. 4 – 7:00-9:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Lial Renewal Center, 5908 Davis Road, Whitehouse, OH

COST: \$20 (Deadline to RSVP is October 20th)

RETREAT DATE: Nov. 5 – 9:00 a.m. - noon

COST: \$25 (Deadline to RSVP is Oct. 20)

For more information or to make reservations visit lialrenewalcenter.org.

Nun Run 9th Annual 1-mile, 5K, and Virtual Mileage Challenge

DATE: Feb. 4, 2023

LOCATION: Thousand Oaks, CA

For more information visit www.nun.run. Registration is now open!

Online Events

Monthly Faith Sharing

Second Friday of the Month - 8:00 p.m. ET

Book Study: Our One Great Act of Fidelity

Tuesdays: Sept. 13, Oct. 11, Nov. 1, and 22 – 7:30-9:00 p.m. ET

Facilitated by Sisters Jolene Flynn and Ruth Lubbers

Book Study: Following Jesus: Finding Our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety

Wednesdays: Sept. 14, Oct. 5, 26, Nov. 16 – 7:30-9:00 p.m. ET

Facilitated by Sisters Kelley Rush and Jenny Zimmerman

Book Study: Discerning the Will of God

Mondays: Sept. 19, Oct. 10, Nov. 7, Dec. 5 – 7:30-9:00 p.m. ET

Facilitated by Sisters Jenny Zimmerman and Val Roxburgh

Advent Evening of Reflection

Sunday, Nov. 27 – 7:30-9:00 p.m. ET

With Sister Mary Therese Dugan

Advent Podcast Series

Tuesdays, Nov. 29, Dec. 6, 13, 20 – 7:00-8:30 p.m. ET

With Sister Mary Therese Dugan

The Chosen Christmas Special

Sunday, Dec. 11 – 7:00-8:30 p.m. ET

For more information and registration, contact Sister Jenny Zimmerman at vocations@sndusa.org

Updated information about other events can be found at: sndusa.org/category/events/