



SND USA

FALL 2023



Hilton Fund Helps Fuel Global Missions



ALSO INSIDE:

Microfinancing Program Empowers Buseesa Community

UPDATE: East Africa Delegation

Sharing the Global Missions Story with Parishes



SND USA

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On the cover: Activity abounds in East Africa as part of SND USA Global Missions.

CORRECTION: In the book, Sisters of Notre Dame of Cleveland, by Sister Eileen Quinlan, SND, a photo caption was omitted. On page 47, the photo of Erieview Catholic High School was taken by Frank Dutton. Our sincere apologies.



l-r: Sister Regina Fisher, *Toledo, OH*; Sister Leanne Hubbard, *Thousand Oaks, CA*; Sister Margaret Gorman, *Chardon, OH*; Sister Shauna Bankemper, *Covington, KY*; Sister Patricia Garrahan, *Chardon, OH*

LETTER FROM **SND USA PROVINCIAL TEAM**

Dear Friends,

The Sisters of Notre Dame continue to support the legacy of our missionaries from India and the United States in Africa and Papua New Guinea. Native sisters are now taking the lead, thanks to their strong education for administrative and ministry responsibilities. The ongoing formation of new members and the establishment of the Associate program in Africa are signs of growth and development. Sisters minister in formal and non-formal education for women and children; skill-development training for women for self-employment; microfinancing and income-generating programs in collaboration with the government; health education and health services; legal aid services to ensure justice through law; and organizing women's empowerment groups. Through education, hard work, and a desire to serve their people, SNDs are changing lives, helping families achieve greater economic independence, and sharing God's love and provident care.

In this issue of *SND USA*, you will read about how the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters helps fuel our global missions, and how one man's vision resulted in a thriving microfinance program in Uganda. Sister Christine Syombua, Superior of the East Africa Delegation, updates readers about the various ministries underway in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. Through the Missionary Cooperation Plan (MCP), parishes across the United States are invited to partner with SND to support our global missions.

As American sisters, we are excited to share the good works of our sisters across the globe, especially in the rapidly growing Church in Africa. The efforts of many people enable these prayerful, inspired women to make a difference. Thank you for your prayer and generosity that help our missions continue to flourish.

Gratefully,

The SND USA Provincial Team



Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters Helps Fuel Global Missions

Conrad N. Hilton, a visionary American businessman responsible for building the first global hotel empire, was a dedicated philanthropist committed to world peace. In 1944, he established the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, naming it as the primary beneficiary of his estate. In his Last Will and Testament, he acknowledged the good works of Roman Catholic Sisters, which led to the creation of the separate Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters. This separate fund, established in 1986, supports the apostolic work of Roman Catholic Sisters around the world, focusing on help for all disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

The Hilton Fund for Sisters has 11 primary focus areas: women, children and families, anti-trafficking, alternative energy, leadership conferences, healthcare, clean water/food and agriculture, homelessness, literacy, immigrant/refugee services, and education/communication. Today, the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters is led by Sr. Gina Marie Blunck, SND, and has made grants to 771 women's religious congregations in 160 countries, totaling more than \$162,000,000.

East Africa Missions Back Story

SND missionaries from India arrived in Tanzania in 1992 and US sister missionaries came to Uganda in 1994. Since then, support for East Africa's educational, social outreach and women's empowerment ministries has come from the US, India, Germany, and the SND Congregational Fund in Rome. The needs across East Africa are great, and very few of the ministries are self-sustaining. While most of the tuition and program fees are covered by donors, families are expected to pay a small portion. Some can afford to pay only with in-kind offerings such as chickens, a sack of beans, or firewood. The number of sisters has grown from these

Sister Grace Silayo, a novice in Tanzania, studies SND Spirituality.

Candidates to become sisters are pictured at the Zinduka Women's Center where they live.



first missionaries to now include 84 vowed members, with more novices entering every year. Given this rapid expansion, the SND USA and East Africa Delegation leadership teams recognized the need to invest in capital

improvements to the facilities and to the programming in East Africa, namely in the areas of financial and environmental sustainability.

“A new borehole supplies water to our schools in Buseesa, Uganda. This borehole also supplies water to the parish and villagers, helping to strengthen the relationship between the SNDs with villagers and the parish.”

*-Sister Christine Syombua, SND,
General Delegation Superior*

Hilton Fund for Sisters Grants

Each grant takes between 18 months and two years including planning, application, implementation, and reporting. The Hilton Fund for Sisters has three application cycles per year, and congregations can submit one application per country during that cycle. A grant writing team, consisting of several African sisters, working in collaboration with Jen Coito, Associate Director of Mission Advancement in Thousand Oaks, California, representing the SND USA Mission Advancement team, reviews the needs for capital improvements in the various ministries and determines which projects to pursue. The team takes into consideration the funding guidelines of the Hilton Fund for Sisters (or other foundations), past grants

already received, and the availability of a local sister to implement the grant objectives and oversee the day-to-day work. Depending on the project, this can involve working with contractors, securing equipment, arranging for delivery and installation of materials, and troubleshooting any challenges that arise. In the last two years, the SND East Africa Delegation has received eight funded applications from the Hilton Fund for Sisters, totaling more than \$170,000.

“The grant money we have received from the Hilton Fund for Sisters has been a great help in our work in East Africa,” exclaims Sister Christine Syombua, SND, General Delegation Superior. “Hilton has given us money for water purification. A new borehole supplies water to our schools in Buseesa, Uganda. This borehole also supplies water to the parish and villagers, helping to strengthen the relationship between the SNDs with villagers and the parish. They are no longer walking several kilometers to fetch water as before. Furthermore, students, teachers, and sisters enjoy fresh vegetables from our compound farm.”

Hilton funds are also being used to create fishponds in Mpala, Uganda. “Though we have not yet started harvesting the fish, we are looking forward to doing so within three months,” Sister Christine reports. “The Mpala community has built three fishponds and a protective wall around the area, turning a swampy area of property that had been a mosquito breeding ground into a source of healthy food. We are hoping to get enough fish to feed the sisters and children at Notre Dame Nursery School. In addition, fish will be sold below

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The Zinduka Women's Center organized outreach for orphaned children as part of their Women's Day celebration.



Children in Buseesa, Uganda



Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters Helps Fuel Global Missions

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market value to the poor, with the proceeds supporting the outreach of the Sisters of Notre Dame in the region.”


In Tanzania, Hilton funds also have the sisters smiling. Students and sisters now enjoy pure drinking water in Arusha thanks to these funds which have provided a borehole and water purification plant. “Currently, we are making greenhouses and water tanks at our Aloysia Home in Tanzania where children from an incredibly challenging environment live. Once completed, those projects will help towards a sustainable mission there,” says Sister Christine. “Our children will enjoy pure water and fresh vegetables.”

The Simanjiro mission in Maasai land, Tanzania, will also soon have a clean water supply through a Hilton Fund for Sisters grant received in 2023.

The Hilton Fund for Sisters has identified the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a basis for this

funding, with a specific focus on the impact of Catholic sisters on education and empowerment programs, environmental issues affecting quality of life, health care, and access to safe food and water. Many of the recent projects have involved access to safe food and water as a means of empowering vulnerable women and children. Every ministry in East Africa, even those in urban centers, relies on the collection and purification of water for hydration, cooking, irrigation, cleaning, and bathing.

Global Missions Today

Pioneer missionaries in the 1990s had limited means of communication, although they managed to send letters and updates regularly. Over the past 25 years, electricity and the internet have become available in many parts of Africa, although they can be unreliable and weak. Through the marvels of technology, SND USA has been able to connect over email, Zoom, Facetime, and WhatsApp with SND global missionaries doing inspiring work across the world. For the past three years, the Mission Advancement Office has hosted live Zoom events with East Africa mission donors and supporters from around the world. These talks are now archived at www.sndusa.org/africazoom. Viewers will learn about the impact of recent gifts as well as the future needs of the Delegation — all from the perspective of the sisters who are leading the way. 

EAST AFRICA ZOOM
ARCHIVED PRESENTATION

The Sisters of Notre Dame from Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya gave a live update on August 12, 2023 to donors around the world.

View the recording at www.sndusa.org/africazoom
Come to learn and be inspired!



Microfinance Program Empowers Buseesa Community



How one man's vision impacted lives of Uganda villagers

Buseesa is a rural community in western Uganda in East Africa which borders Kenya, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Most Buseesa residents are subsistence farmers who toil and sweat each day to earn a meager average daily income of only \$1.25. Typhoid fever, transmitted by contaminated water, is one of the leading causes of death in Uganda, and for several decades the Sisters of Notre Dame of the United States have supported projects to improve access to clean water, such as the successful installation of several shallow wells and an associated water infrastructure. These wells reduced the hours women and children were spending to collect water for use in their homes.



In 2008, Anguma Ben, an economics teacher at Notre Dame Academy in Buseesa, asked the Sisters of Notre Dame for help in starting a microfinance program in Buseesa. The request was forwarded to Sister Kristin Battles, SND in Thousand Oaks, California who shared this need with her community. In response, Nicholas Smith came to see Sister Kristin, initially to teach at one of SND's schools. The passionate young man was somewhat familiar with the needs of Buseesa

because his father and a group of parishioners from St. Julie Billiard Parish in Thousand Oaks had visited the mission in Buseesa a year before and had held several fundraisers to help support the mission. Nicholas wanted to get involved.

A recent graduate from the University of California at Santa Barbara in Business Economics and Global Studies, Nicholas volunteered to help initiate a microfinance program in Buseesa. In 2009, Nicholas traveled to Uganda, staying with the Sisters of Notre Dame, and in collaboration with Anguma Ben and Kyakuha Winnie, the secretary at Notre Dame Academy, began to put the program's structure in place.

"My parents raised my siblings and me to be conscious of our privilege. We grew up doing things like volunteering in homeless shelters, going to Mexico to build homes, etc.," Nicholas states. "I always knew I wanted to do something related to economic development during my gap year before my masters. I offered to teach, but SNDs wanted teachers to stay longer than I could. They asked if I knew about microcredit...and so began the journey."

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Sister Paulyne Tubick, a missionary to Uganda

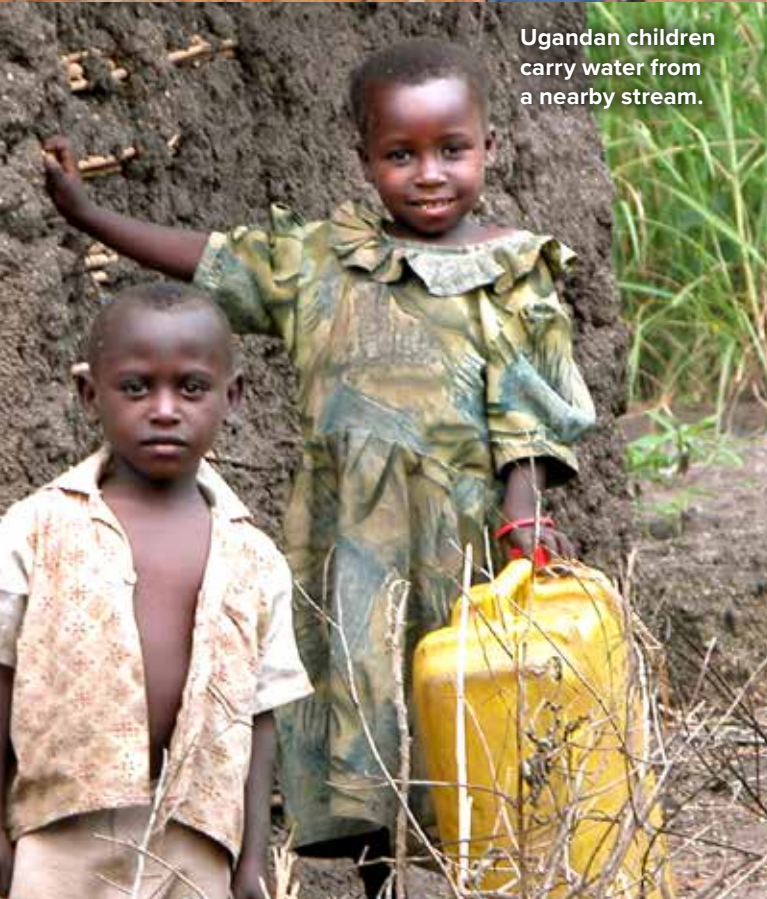


Microfinance Program Empowers Buseesa Community

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“In its nearly 15 years of operation, the microfinance program is a success, serving approximately 1,400 people with millions of dollars disbursed and repaid...”

- Nicholas Smith



Ugandan children carry water from a nearby stream.

Established in March 2009, the Buseesa Community Development Center (BCDC) began as a group-based loan program that offered microloans of about \$100 in value to rural farmers and shopkeepers in the Buseesa region. Nicholas explains, “The aim of the program is to have entrepreneurs expand their income-generating activities by receiving investment capital, using what Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus called ‘social collateral’ (in lieu of physical collateral), whereby people form loan groups and make their loans conditional on the repayment of fellow group members. Microcredit works because people don’t like living in poverty. It empowers them to help themselves and others while giving them financial independence in some cases.”

Nicholas, Ben, Winnie, and Sister Anita Marie Stacy, SND became the founding board for the BCDC – a project independent of the Sisters of Notre Dame although Nicholas says the sisters were instrumental in the beginning. Sister Anita Marie served as a board member and treasurer for several years. “Sister Anita Marie was the fourth leg of the BCDC table. We became great friends,” says Nicholas. “She cares so much about the community and helped in any way possible to support the BCDC. I could not have done it without Sister Colette Theobald, SND either. The convent dinners and fierce board games were greatly appreciated.”

“In its nearly 15 years of operation, the microfinance program is a success, serving approximately 1,400 people with millions of dollars disbursed and repaid,” he exclaims happily. “The loans helped borrowers increase their capacity to earn more income by providing them with the necessary capital to invest in income-generating activities.”



Microcredit meeting underway in East Africa



Nicholas continues, “By increasing families’ capacity to earn more income, borrowers are in a better position to meet household needs, such as health care and education.”

“Since BCDC’s founding, borrowers have utilized loans in a variety of life-changing ways,” Nicholas describes. “Some have built their first brick homes, replacing their former mud and stick homes. Others increased their ability to pay school tuition fees while most were able to augment their assets, including land and animals. Many have improved their health by eating more nutritious meals.”

He adds, “Primarily, loans were used to help farmers plant more. However, 10 to 20 percent of the loans are used for their shops – selling household goods and beverages, hair styling, bicycle/motorcycle repair, etc.”


Nicholas completed an assessment on the impact of the Buseesa Community Development Center’s microcredit program as part of his Ph.D. in International Relations from American University.

As part of his doctoral research, Nicholas was afforded the opportunity to map the Uganda Martyrs Parish in Buseesa, Uganda. “This turned out to be an eye-opening experience. It revealed how the more remote villages are even more impoverished,” he says. “Two of the villages were so poor and disconnected, my friend and I were the first foreigners to visit them,” Nicholas shares. “One of the villages had a ‘school’ consisting of one class in a mud and stick room and two 12” X 12” chalkboards nailed to a tree.”

In 2014 BCDC began construction of a primary school named Deirdre Ann Academy (named in honor of Nicholas’ mom to honor the way she raised him) to serve children from these villages. The new school educates children from nursery through primary levels.

That same year, Nicholas recruited a group of 20 nurses, pharmacists, and providers from Northern California to come to Buseesa to provide health services. “Each day the nurses traveled to various villages and treated residents for malaria, worms, typhoid fever, HIV/AIDS, and a wide range of other ailments. More than 1,100 people were seen in one week.” The next year, a second group of medical personnel arrived, and visitors were housed at St. Julie Mission. Emily Rymland, a nurse practitioner and member of the team of nurses who came to Buseesa, was inspired to raise funds to open a year-round health care clinic in the area.

“In addition to the nursery and primary school, we then built a clinic and maternity ward, plus a school farm and wells to support the community in Kiryabicooli,” Nicholas says.

In November 2021 Nicholas and his team handed off operations to the local community. “It was their turn to manage things, and they are doing a stellar job,” reports Nicholas. The BCDC is now run by a local board with operations managed by Tusabe Tadeo, a former student of St. Julie Model Primary School in Buseesa. 

UPDATE:

East Africa Delegation



“Most of the sponsored children do very well in studies and end up furthering their education at universities and becoming successful in life.”

- Sister Christine Syombua, SND,
General Delegation Superior

The East Africa Delegation ministers in three countries: Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. In areas of these countries, Sisters of Notre Dame participate in education and social outreach ministry, pastoral work and catechesis. Joyful, enthusiastic, and committed, Sister Christine Syombua, SND, General Delegation Superior, is excited to share with our readers recent accomplishments within the East Africa Delegation and their vision for the future.

EDUCATION & SOCIAL OUTREACH MINISTRY

Currently, the Sisters of Notre Dame own and operate six nursery schools: two in Uganda, three in Tanzania and one in Kenya. The sisters also own and operate five primary schools: one in Uganda, three in Tanzania, and one in Kenya. Additionally, they minister in three secondary schools: one in Uganda, one in Tanzania and one in Kenya.

“We also collaborate with the Salesians of Don Bosco in running a secondary school in Tanzania owned by them,” Sister Christine adds. “Last November, we opened a new mission in Kenya where we are entrusted with a girls’ secondary boarding school owned by the diocese.”

The sisters offer formal as well as informal education classes “to lead people from darkness to light,” Sister Christine says. The sisters work with people in

rural villages, encouraging parents to allow their little children to get an early education, and empowering young girls who have dropped out of school due to early pregnancies or child marriages to continue their education. “We usually equip these young girls with job-oriented skills,” Sister Christine says.

“We empower many rural village women through self-help groups, microcredit loans, and small income-generating projects. The children from socio- and economically- deprived families are given intellectual empowerment to attain dignity and better lives for the future,” Sister Christine adds.

There are many uplifting stories from SND schools in East Africa. Sister Christine shares a few of their daily challenges and joys:

“We have a young lady who is completing her bachelor’s studies in law this year. We pay the tuition fees for her and assist her with all the requirements. Her parents died of AIDS, leaving her an HIV-positive orphan at the age of four. Since then, we have journeyed with her, providing all she requires, including medical attention.”

“Years ago we had a boy with no parents and no one who could pay his school fees. The Sisters of Notre Dame assisted him with the school fees and all other requirements. He is now a pharmacist working in a very big hospital.”

Photo left: SNDs provide nursery school education in remote villages of Tanzania, where no schools exist.

“We had a girl whose father died and whose mother abandoned the child, leaving her under the care of her poor grandmother. The grandmother had no resources to care for the child. We were called to pick her up. The girl had gone two days without food. After admitting her to our Aloysia Home, we gave her the right medications and diet. She is now in class one and progressing very well.”

PASTORAL WORK & CATECHESIS

The Sisters of Notre Dame continue to assist in different parishes in the three countries, teaching catechism, Sunday school, and caring for many other diverse needs. One sister, trained as a nurse, ministers in a hospital owned by the Congregation of Our Lady of Apostles.

HELP FROM MANY FRIENDS

The East Africa Delegation receives financial support from a variety of sources including the Hilton Fund for Sisters, individual donors and parish groups, and the SND Congregational Fund. Most of the money received from individual donors comes in the form of restricted donations. “We always make sure we use the money given for the designated purpose,” insists Sister Christine. She says most individual donors sponsor the education of children in their various schools. “Most of the sponsored children do very well in studies and end up furthering their education at universities and becoming successful in life.”

The Hilton Fund for Sisters supports the Zinduka Women’s Center where girls and women learn the art of sewing. “We were able to get very good sweater-making machines and wool through the Hilton Fund,” says Sister Christine. “The girls and women are learning a variety of skills at the Center. Once their training is complete, they can find employment or stick to self-employment for their daily bread.”

SND schools in Kenya are using Hilton grant money for solar installations in the school and convent. “Once this is done, we will reduce our escalating electricity bills,” Sister Christine adds. “It is hard


to explain the impact Hilton funds have made in our East Africa missions. We are extremely grateful for this help. Indeed, we are making small steps toward the sustainability of our missions here.”

“The SND Congregational Fund is also a great help in our formation houses,” continues Sister Christine. “These funds make it possible to sustain our vocation programs. Many young women are joining our SND congregation every year. The SND Congregational Fund assists in educating temporary professed sisters who can complete their high school studies and continue on in their bachelor’s studies. Through this help given by our SND congregation, we are able to educate and equip sisters for our schools and other ministries,” she says.

CONCLUSION

Since becoming General Delegation Superior, Sister Christine has witnessed much success and continued growth in East Africa. The Delegation is currently constructing a convent and chapel in Arusha, Tanzania. Property has been acquired in Karen, in the Catholic Diocese of Nairobi, Kenya, where the sisters hope to see a new Catholic diocese established.

“We are 84 sisters in the East Africa Delegation: 49 sisters are temporary professed, and 35 sisters are perpetually professed. We have 15 novices, 20 postulants and 22 candidates. The oldest sister in our Delegation is 44 years old. Since we have many new vocations, we have a lot of hope that we will continue getting vocations and expanding our ministries. The East Africa Delegation is full of life because of the youthfulness of all the members,” Sister Christine concludes.

“We have many stories to tell, and we thank God for all the help we receive from diverse sources. We are glad we can touch the lives of many needy people. When I think of our mission in Africa, I see great growth in the future. I see a Delegation that will be able to sustain its members and mission. This is my prayer.” 

Future Goals of the East Africa Delegation

- **Become self-sustaining**
- **Boost present ministries to reach sustainability level**
- **Extend services to more needy people**
- **Complete major renovations at some convents**
- **Ensure an adequate supply of clean water for all SND schools and convents**
- **Educate more sisters in order to equip them for ministry**
- **Become a province**
- **Open new ministries**





Rome, Italy

Home to SND General Government

Rome, Italy is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, due to its archaeological and artistic treasures, unique traditions, magnificent panoramic views, and beautiful villas and parks. As the heart of the congregation, the SND international leadership team, or General Government, is fittingly located in Rome, close to the center of Catholicism. The Motherhouse community is comprised of an international group of sisters from a variety of countries throughout the SND world.

The SND General Government is made up of the following members;

- **Sister Mary Ann Culpert**, Superior General
(Toledo, OH, USA)
- **Sister Maria So-Wha Kwak**, First Assistant General
(Incheon, South Korea Province) The responsibility of the First Assistant General is to assume leadership if the Superior General is unable to fulfill her duties for some reason. The First Assistant assumes the governance of the Congregation until a new Superior General is elected.
- **Sister Mary Kathleen Burns**, Assistant General
(Los Angeles, CA, USA)
- **Sister Maria Nonata de Aguiar Bezerra**, Assistant General
(Passo Fundo, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil)
- **Sister Mary Karuna Matthew Kunchirakkattu**, Assistant General
(Patna, Bihar, India)
- **Sister Mary Prabha Jesudhason**, Assistant General
(Bangalore, Karnataka, India)

This leadership team was elected by the General Chapter for a six-year term. They can be re-elected for another six-year term.

According to Sister Mary Ann Culpert, SND, Superior General, the leadership team includes the Superior General and five Assistants General. The Superior General works to create a spirit of love and unity in the Congregation and ensures that the apostolic mission of the Congregation is pursued and furthered throughout the world. She does this by convening meetings of the eight Provincial Superiors, East Africa Delegation Superior, and the General Government; sends frequent communications to all the sisters; and makes sure the directives of the General Chapter, held every six years, are carried out throughout the Congregation. The Assistants General work together with the Superior General and share duties that promote the well-being of the entire Congregation. They focus on various important projects and programs to benefit the Congregation, such as formation of new members, education, JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation), finance and other areas. The General Government meets every few weeks to discuss current and future plans, make needed decisions and provide guidance to each of the provinces and delegation. Throughout their six-year term, they visit all nine provinces and the East Africa Delegation to learn first-hand about the various ministries and projects in each region and ensure that the spiritual and material needs of the sisters are met.



(l-r) Sisters Karuna Matthew Kunchirakkattu, Nonata de Aguiar Bezerra, Kathleen Burns, So-Wha Kwak, Prabha Jesudhason, and Mary Ann Culpert

“Our overarching task is to implement the Congregational Plan 2022- 2028 developed at the General Chapter in October 2022,” explains Sister Mary Ann. “This plan addresses four key themes that surfaced at the General Chapter: Care for Creation, Synodality, Global Networking, and Sustainability for Mission.”

“Each of these areas includes more detailed directives and recommendations that each province will carry out in ways appropriate to its cultural and social realities. For example, in the ‘Care for Creation’ theme, each province will be enrolling in the ‘*Laudato Si* Platform,’ a worldwide initiative to carry out Pope Francis’ vision for caring for our common home as presented in his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si*. This initiative includes very specific activities and actions that each province will develop and implement so that the Sisters of Notre Dame worldwide are doing our part to address the needs of our planet and people,” states Sister Mary Ann. “The Global Networking theme will seek ways to connect congregational members and collaborators through a variety of ways that will help us strengthen our SND identity through increased virtual and in-person

“Our overarching task is to implement the Congregational Plan 2022- 2028 developed at the General Chapter in October 2022.”

- Sister Mary Ann Culpert, SND

conferences and meetings as well as enhancing our media literacy based on Gospel values.”

Sister Karuna Kunchirakkattu, SND, originally from Kerala, one of the southern states of India, says, “Being on the leadership team, I want to foster, care, nurture, and create the sacred space that will ensure communion, collaboration, and synodality among ourselves and within the congregation. I want to bring to the group my personal skills and gifts. I hope that my special interest and expertise in the field of formation and spirituality will be an added gift as we continue to make our formation program an integrated and contextualized one.”

Sister Karuna believes the greatest strength of the SND congregation is the constant desire of its

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Rome, Italy

Home to SND General Government

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members to live the spirit and charism of the congregation in a tangible way in this changing world. “The internationality and interculturality of our congregation unite us as one body as we continue the mission of the Church.” Today, she believes the SNDs are called to listen to God in the outcry of the migrants, the indigenous, the women, the poor, the sick and the elderly.

“The SND missions in the world should be among the people who need us the most,” Sister Karuna states. “Our prophetic vocation calls us to go to the peripheries to uphold the sanctity and dignity of all human life, and to be agents of healing in the broken humanity and vulnerable creation. Our missions are needed among those who are marginalized, victims of violence, exploitation, and abuse. Hence, we can live a spirituality of communion to bring peace and reconciliation among the most vulnerable.

Sister Karuna shares a personal success story:


“I believe that a little bit of success lies in everyone, but I would call my success story one of the ‘touchstones’ of my life. As a young sister in my teaching ministry, I had a student in my class who had lost his father when he was very young, and his mother was completely blind. The social environment and the family situations were not very conducive for him to excel in his studies. He was a big challenge for me when I was an inexperienced teacher. Often, he would be absent from class and not interested in studies. In the beginning, my tendency was to give up on him, but the earnest desire of his mother to educate him challenged me to fulfill his mother’s dream.

“I began to accompany him closely, gave him extra classes after the school hours, and supported him whichever way I could. Day by day, he showed

progress in his studies, and after two years he got the ‘best citizen’ award of the class. He graduated

with a very good result and continued his higher studies. Today, he is the manager of a renowned company. As a good human being and responsible person, he took care of his mother and educated his siblings and continues to support other poor students who need financial help. Though it is a small success story, it always motivates me to reach out to others in love, especially to those who are vulnerable. I learned that the greatest good we can do for others is not to share our riches with them, but to reveal their own.”

Sister So-Wha thanks the Notre Dame community in the United States. “Thank you for your prayer, interest, support, encouragement, and friendship. You are part of the Notre Dame journey and Notre Dame story. Your interest and support in our work extends to all the countries we serve, as we are all connected. On our website (snd1.org), you may find more interesting stories of our sisters’ work worldwide.”

Sister Nonata concurs, “I would like to thank all of you who read this magazine and who support the Sisters of Notre Dame in the United States. The Sisters in the United States are well known for their commitment to education, solidarity with the poor and marginalized, and care for our planet Earth. I greatly admire their work, and I am very appreciative and grateful for all the work and ministries carried out by SND USA and their many lay collaborators.” 

“The internationality and interculturality of our congregation unite us as one body as we continue the mission of the Church.”

- Sister Karuna Kunchirakkattu, SND

Sharing the Global Missions Story with Parishes



Since the late 1930s, Missionary Cooperation Plan (MCP) speakers have visited parishes across the United States to share the story of global missions. Bishop William A. Griffin, auxiliary bishop for the Newark Archdiocese and then archdiocesan director of the Society for Propagation of the Faith, devised the plan to help solicit funds for global mission efforts. In this way, MCP took the burden off pastors who previously received requests from missionary organizations around the globe. Sister Marie Clarice Bates, SND, a missionary in India from 1960 to 1968, returned to Chardon, Ohio to take charge of the SND Mission Office and began the congregation's participation in MCP in 1969.

Today, MCP provides an annual opportunity for Catholic parishioners across the U.S. to welcome global mission speakers and learn about and help support global missions. MCP is typically administered by each Diocesan Missions Office under the auspices of the local bishop.

This year the Sisters of Notre Dame were invited to speak at 37 parishes within 16 dioceses across the United States including Beaumont and San Angelo, Texas; Grand Rapids and Detroit, Michigan; Indianapolis, Indiana; Manchester, New Hampshire; San Diego, Sacramento and Los Angeles, California; Metuchen, New Jersey; Erie, Pennsylvania; Springfield, Illinois; Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia; St. Petersburg, Florida; and Lexington, Kentucky.

"I sent a letter in June to more than 150 dioceses throughout the United States and asked if one of our sisters could participate in their MCP Program," Julie Grazia, Advancement Office Manager/MCP Coordinator, says. "If we are accepted, the diocese picks a parish or parishes for our sisters to speak at during Sunday Mass, about our Global Missions in East Africa or Papua New Guinea. Money collected at the Mass is sent to the diocese which then sends us 90 percent of the money collected." Last year, the Sisters of Notre Dame raised more than \$150,000 through participation in this program.

Sister Jaculin Manders of Toledo began volunteering as an MCP speaker several years ago. "In the beginning, I spoke mainly about our SND missions in Papua New Guinea and India – Papua New Guinea because that mission was started by the former Toledo province, and India because of the letters we received from Akbar (the mission dog) when I was in elementary school. I wanted

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Sharing the Global Missions Story with Parishes

continued from page 13

to go to India right then ‘to save all those pagan babies’ when I was only nine years old.”

Sister Valerie Sweeney served as Director of Notre Dame Global Missions from 1996 to 2010. “In that role, I visited our missions in India six times and those in Africa twice, usually for six weeks at a time,” she states. “Those were life-changing experiences! I was able to meet many of our missionary sisters personally, and I visited all the locations where we ministered in the areas of education, health care, and social work. I saw first-hand the amazing work they did with and for the people, especially the poor and vulnerable.”

Sister Valerie began giving mission appeals as an MCP speaker in the early 1980s and continues to participate in MCP today. “I have always found the congregations where I speak welcoming and generous in their response. By our baptism, we as Americans and Catholics are called to be missionary disciples — to care for our

sisters and brothers at home and around the world. We have much we can share with them and much we can learn from them. Some of the most joyful, faith-filled, and generous people I have ever met were those living in the poorest circumstances in villages in India.”

“This summer a young boy named Aaron decided to

donate the proceeds from his ‘Lemonade Stand for a Cause’ to our missions,” Sister Valerie shares. “It’s exciting and humbling to see the creative ways people get involved. MCP offers an annual opportunity for parishioners to learn about and help support the missionary outreach of the Church, and it provides much-needed income for mission groups who share about their work. It’s a win/win situation of blessings for everyone involved.”

“A congregation which is not missionary dies inside,” Sister Jaculin asserts. “This is now my approach in speaking -- sharing the missionary spirit that has characterized our loved Notre Dame congregation from the very beginning. I will talk about each of our various mission countries. Many are surprised to learn that several of our former missions have established a global mission on their own. To me, this is the missionary spirit that will keep our congregation alive and well!”

Sister Jaculin says, “I hope my presentations and stories will spark the missionary spirit in the people who hear me. There are many ways to be missionaries, and the more we can spread the word, and the Word, the better.”

Sister Marya Czech, of Toledo, Ohio, began speaking in the second year of the MCP; her first assignment was St. James Parish in North Miami. “The parish had morphed from all Caucasian to Cuban refugees and then Haitians. The pastor was Haitian and had a particular ethnic measure of each group, making my experience truly multicultural,” she says. Sister Marya typically speaks to parishioners about India, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Oceania where education is an important process of decolonialization as countries attempt to come into their own as members of the global community.

“As young women enter religious formation as Sisters of Notre Dame, it becomes imperative that THEY decide what their countries need most. We Americans have

“I hope my presentations and stories will spark the missionary spirit in the people who hear me.”

- Sister Jaculin Manders, SND



In Santa Barbara, Sister Lisa Megaffin met Sharon and Tim Kearin; Sharon graduated from St. Michael’s School in Independence, Ohio, and Tim, from Notre Dame Academy Elementary in Los Angeles.


SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME GLOBAL MISSIONS PROGRAM SUMMARY

given them education. They are now the visionaries who identify the needs of their own people. In East Africa, the greatest need is literacy. So, our sisters become the educators of their own people by founding teacher training programs,” Sister Marya explains, showing an aspect of how global mission donations are being used. “As our congregation ages back home in the USA, new SNDs in our missions represent the new growth of both the Church and our order.”

MCP speaker Sister Lisa Megaffin, of Thousand Oaks, California, says, “I have been humbled by the encouragement and support of those I’ve met. They so often express gratitude for the sisters’ personal sacrifices and commitment to those in need in Africa.”


Sister Lisa states, “The most memorable words were from the late Fr. Gerard Hayes, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Houma, LA, who said ‘For those of you who have been part of our parish for many years, you know what I am going to say. Please listen carefully to this mission appeal, go home, pray over it, and discuss what your contribution will be as a family. Then, at the end of the month, if you cannot pay your bills because of the gift you have made, come back to me. I will personally refund your contribution to you—not from the parish accounts, but from my own finances. And just so you know, in all my years of making this promise, no one has needed to come back and ask for a refund. Our God will not be outdone in generosity.’”

“We appreciate the hospitality provided by pastors, parish staff and all parishioners as they welcome our MCP speakers,” concludes Mission Advancement Office Manager, Julie Grazia. “Through the generous contributions of the many faithful throughout the United States, our global mission outreach continues to have a significant impact. We welcome all opportunities to speak at parishes interested in learning more about global missions.”

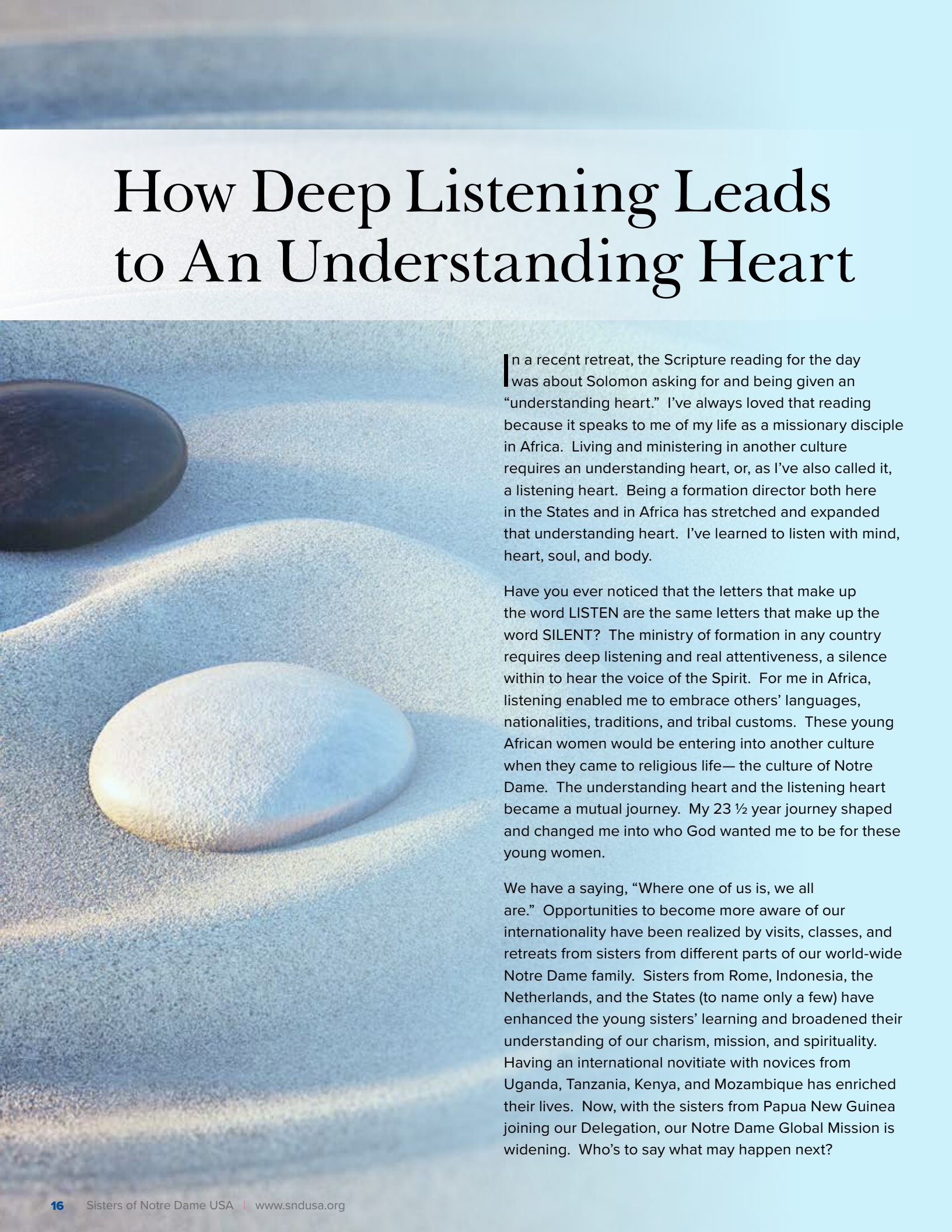
*If you would like to learn more about SND global missions, please call Julie Grazia at 440.279.1178. 

Sincere thanks to the many individuals who supported SND Global Mission programs through a gift to the annual Missionary Cooperative Plan (MCP). The SNDs working in these mission countries have accomplished much in the last year! Here are a few highlights:

- In Tanzania, Africa, the Zinduka Center purchased embroidery and weaving machines to create and sell a wider variety of uniforms and clothing. They have trained women to use these machines, and maintenance workers who service and repair the machines.
- Due to the sisters’ proven track record of educational success across East Africa, the Bishop of Meru, Kenya entrusted a struggling diocesan high school to SNDs. They are charged with improving test scores and the educational outcomes of the students, and with fostering positive social and emotional development in the students. The students come from the semi-nomadic Samburu tribe.
- Many native African sisters have completed college and graduate school to prepare them for leadership roles within the ministries of the African delegation. For example, Sr. Mary Sunday in Uganda received a B.S. in Child Development and Protection. She studied the intersection of child protection interventions, the legal system, parenting skills, and psychology on the educational successes of Uganda children. Sr. Sunday and her counterparts now possess essential skills to respond to the social-emotional and educational needs of the children they serve in East Africa.
- As a response to deforestation in East Africa, limitations are being placed on burning wood as a means of purifying water. In each school in Uganda and Tanzania, SNDs are installing water purification systems for water that is piped from boreholes. This is both healthier for the sisters, children and staff as well as a protection for the environment that limits pollution. These systems were funded by grants and donations from SND partners in the United States.

Thank you for your generosity to the Missionary Cooperative Plan and your interest in the international mission priorities of the Sisters of Notre Dame. 

How Deep Listening Leads to An Understanding Heart



In a recent retreat, the Scripture reading for the day was about Solomon asking for and being given an “understanding heart.” I’ve always loved that reading because it speaks to me of my life as a missionary disciple in Africa. Living and ministering in another culture requires an understanding heart, or, as I’ve also called it, a listening heart. Being a formation director both here in the States and in Africa has stretched and expanded that understanding heart. I’ve learned to listen with mind, heart, soul, and body.

Have you ever noticed that the letters that make up the word LISTEN are the same letters that make up the word SILENT? The ministry of formation in any country requires deep listening and real attentiveness, a silence within to hear the voice of the Spirit. For me in Africa, listening enabled me to embrace others’ languages, nationalities, traditions, and tribal customs. These young African women would be entering into another culture when they came to religious life—the culture of Notre Dame. The understanding heart and the listening heart became a mutual journey. My 23 ½ year journey shaped and changed me into who God wanted me to be for these young women.

We have a saying, “Where one of us is, we all are.” Opportunities to become more aware of our internationality have been realized by visits, classes, and retreats from sisters from different parts of our world-wide Notre Dame family. Sisters from Rome, Indonesia, the Netherlands, and the States (to name only a few) have enhanced the young sisters’ learning and broadened their understanding of our charism, mission, and spirituality. Having an international novitiate with novices from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Mozambique has enriched their lives. Now, with the sisters from Papua New Guinea joining our Delegation, our Notre Dame Global Mission is widening. Who’s to say what may happen next?

Our charism called these young African women and me. A wonderful avenue opened for me when I arrived in Kenya. After I presented the Associate Program to the sisters in our three African countries of Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, it became apparent that what I had dreamed of being part of in the States would now become a reality in Africa. With time, energy, and a desire to share our charism with others, the SND Associate relationship was born in Kenya. In 2016 the first six men and women entered the year of formation. That year increased their desire to make their Covenant. A fire was ignited and now there are six groups of more than 48 Associates, and the story doesn't end there.

As missionaries prepared to leave Africa, we saw how our African sisters assumed leadership roles and became more fully involved in the mission of the church, society, and especially in the lives of our Associates.


With time, energy,
and a desire to
share our charism
with others, the
SND Associate
relationship was
born in Kenya.

- Sr. Annete Adams

Many of these men and women knew the Sisters of Notre Dame only from seeing them in church or interacting with them in their small Christian communities. As many have shared, "As we came to know you better and share with you, we see so much joy and simplicity and we feel a part of the Notre Dame family."

That Notre Dame family spirit is contagious, and every Associate feels it and shares it among themselves and with every new Associate who becomes part of this life-giving reality. Knowing there are Associates all over the

world gives them a greater understanding of our charism. They realize they, too, have a part in proclaiming God's goodness and provident care. Sharing their life journey, their prayer experiences, and what they are learning from their faith sharing groups gives each one the impetus to continue to grow, knowing we all share similar realities. Each one will readily admit, "I am different since I became an Associate. My life choices are different, how I am in relationship with family and friends has changed and my relationship with God has grown deeper."

My prayer each day leads me to deep listening. As I sit in silence, I, too, like Solomon, pray for that understanding heart. I am reminded of a song we sang many years ago that still rings true today: "Where in the world but here in Notre Dame, can we come so close to God?" 



Sister Annete Adams, SND

Sister Annete Adams was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio and graduated from St. Francis High School in Cleveland. She earned a Master of Education from the College of Notre Dame in Belmont, California. After teaching for 25 years, Sister Annete volunteered and was missioned to East Africa where she served as teacher, Formator and Delegation Secretary in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. Presently, Sister Annete is a Spiritual Director, and volunteers at Doors of Hope Geauga, a home for homeless families. She is also active on several Boards and contributes time to a project of the Mission Advancement Office.



JPIC INTERNATIONAL AFFECTING GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

“The pursuit of justice, peace and integrity of creation permeates all aspects of our lives. We want to include these in the criteria we use for discerning our relationships, ministries and commitments. In so doing, all our choices will be marked by Gospel values”

- General Chapter 2008



(l-r) Katie Drager, Sister Nonata de Aguiar Bezerra and Ann Clark, at Notre Dame Center, Chardon, Ohio

During her visit to the United States this summer, Sister Raimunda Nonata de Aguiar Bezerra, SND, Coordinator of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) international, reports impressive gains around the globe. Born and raised in Brazil, Sr. Nonata is a member of Brazil's Passo Fundo Province. Sister Nonata and JPIC international are based in Rome, where she has worked for the past 8 years.

Prior to coming to Rome, she ministered in Acre, a state in northern Brazil, as coordinator of catechesis for adults and children, and as professional development provider for teachers in rural schools. There, she also worked in the Brazilian jungles, bringing books to village children by boat. She currently serves as a representative of the non-government organization (NGO) UNANIMA at the United Nations and is a member of the International Union of Superiors General (U.I.S.G.). Finally, she is a member of "Um Grito pela Vida" anti-trafficking Network.

Sister Nonata has an extensive travel itinerary planned through 2023, visiting Peru, Papua New Guinea, China, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

"Since taking the JPIC international coordinator position within the SND congregation, I have met with all nine SND international provinces and the East Africa Delegation. My role as JPIC coordinator is to stay connected with each province and their JPIC office," Sister Nonata explains.

"In many nations where sisters minister, we are actively providing education and outreach to assist migrant and refugee families, and individuals who are trafficked, homeless, and incarcerated," states Sister Nonata.

"I believe JPIC's first priority is education. Once educated, people become more aware of their human rights," insists Sister Nonata. "From our congregation's beginning, SNDs educated not just boys but also girls, which was radical for the times. Education will bring about global change."

Sister Nonata says another top priority is the implementation of Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter, the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, which will help empower Catholic institutions, communities, families, and individuals to live the message of *Laudato Si'* and its call to an ecological conversion. Pope Francis encouraged and challenged everyone in his encyclical letter, *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home*, "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). *Laudato Si'* inspires people to find a

"I believe JPIC's first priority is education. Once educated, people become more aware of their human rights."

- Sister Raimunda Nonata de Aguiar Bezerra, SND, Coordinator of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) international



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," wrote Pope Francis.


"I see the developing countries leading the way in response to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform," Sister Nonata says. "Green energy programs are underway in these countries that allow all people to participate."

Katie Drager and Ann Clark, Co-Directors of the JPIC Office for SND USA, concur.

"Many of the 'green' efforts across the United States are only available to wealthy individuals – like purchasing electric cars and solar panels, but anyone can participate in simple actions like recycling, composting, or energy conservation for example."

Sister Nonata says that Care for Creation, immigration, and concerns for the needs of women, children and families will also remain priorities in the coming years. "People, nature, the environment, and creation include everything and everyone. Immigration is directly connected with war, health care, jobs, homelessness and human trafficking," she states.

"The JPIC office in the United States is doing a good job with education, advocacy and direct action. I'm amazed at what you do," she says, looking at Drager and Clark.

"While we cannot change the whole world, we can change where we are," she encourages. 



SND USA English Study Program Supports Global Missions

Four Sisters of Notre Dame from Brazil, South Korea and Indonesia are participating in the first-ever English Study Program hosted by SND USA. They are Sister Maria Cristina Ines Backes, a hospital administrator from Passo Fundo, Brazil; Sister Vania Maria Dalla Vecchia, a religion teacher from Canoas, Brazil; Sister Maria Franselin Kewa, a human resources officer at a hospital in Pekalongan, Indonesia; and Sister Marie Oh-Song Kwon, a religious educator in Seoul, South Korea. All of these sisters were recognized for their leadership skills.

Cemetery, and more. They will also visit the sisters in Toledo, northern Kentucky, and Southern California.


The sisters arrived the first week of August and will stay in the U.S. through the end of January. “Since this is not a course for academic credit, they couldn’t get student visas, so a six-month tourist visa was the best we could do,” explains Sister Eileen Quinlan, the English Study Program lead teacher. “All the sisters in the SND USA province will share their experience of English and SND/American cultures. Four sisters assisted the students as they adjusted to living at the Chardon Center: Sisters Karita Ivancic, Joanne Keppler, Barbara Knuff, and Carol Marek.”



Sister Eileen says the sisters say their morning and evening prayers together in English. “Possibly the greatest learning is occurring as they engage in conversations with the sisters during community meals, at recreation, watching television, and sharing stories,” considers Sister Eileen.

“I only know a little bit of English now,” says Sister Cristina. “Sister Eileen is a wonderful teacher. Since the Sisters of Notre Dame are an international congregation and English is the primary language, it is important that I learn to speak it.”

Sister Oh-Song agrees. “I was taught English in elementary school, middle school and high school in South Korea, but I need more instruction. It is very meaningful to be in the United States. I feel there are more similarities than differences in our cultures.”

“Six months really isn’t long enough for language mastery,” admits Sister Eileen with a smile, “but it’s a start. And immersion may prove as effective as more formal classwork.” 

“Possibly the greatest learning is occurring as they engage in conversations with the sisters during community meals, at recreation, watching television, and sharing stories.”

- Sister Eileen Quinlan, English Study Program Lead Teacher

The program includes course/textbook/digital materials from Pearson Learning which are designed for adult students learning American English. Students will learn basic vocabulary, usage, phonetics, culture, conversation, and writing. They will read some books about SND history, enjoy a heritage tour of SND congregation’s beginnings in Cleveland 150 years ago, visiting St. Peter, St. Stephen, Ansel Road, Mount St. Mary, St. Joseph

IN THE NEWS

NSNO Presents National Awards

The National Sponsorship and Network Office recently presented awards recognizing outstanding contributions of SND Network employees and volunteers who exemplify the mission, vision and charm of the Sisters of Notre Dame. The Transformative Leadership Award recognized employees or volunteers in the SND national network who inspire hope and excellence as they lead others to a fuller, freer life. The Gospel Witness Award recognizes employees or volunteers who give witness to Jesus' spirit of compassion, hope and joy. The Fr. Bernard Overberg Award, or the "Teacher of Teachers" Award, recognizes exceptional, inspirational impact on the formation and professional learning of teachers.

Fr. Bernard Overberg "Teacher of Teachers" Award Winners



Jenny Chirico, Lial Catholic School, Whitehouse, OH



Trish Sanders, Notre Dame Academy, Toledo OH (seated center)



Stan Hirsch, La Reina High School & Middle School, Thousand Oaks, CA



St. Claire HealthCare professionals David Gross receives the Transformative Leadership Award, and Shellie Wilburn-Smith, receives the Gospel Witness Award

2023 Transformative Leadership Award Recipients

- **Mr. Jim Deputy** – Principal, Clearwater Central Catholic High School (Clearwater, FL)
- **Mr. David Gross** – Administrative Director for Education and Research and Director of Northeast Kentucky Area Health Education Center, St. Claire HealthCare (Morehead, KY)
- **Ms. Jayden Julian** – Human Resources Coordinator, St. Charles Community (Covington, KY)
- **Mr. Dick Williams** – Director of Finance and Human Resources, Notre Dame Academy Schools (Los Angeles, CA)

2023 Gospel Witness Award Recipients

- **Sr. Mary Luann Bender** – Mission and Ministry Coordinator, St. Charles Community (Covington, KY)
- **Ms. Sue May** – 4th/5th Grade Teacher, St. John's School (Delphos, OH)
- **Ms. Kara Passow** – Director of Faith Formation, St. Mary School (Chardon, OH)
- **Ms. Shellie Wilburn-Smith** – Behavioral Health Unit Program Director, St. Claire HealthCare (Morehead, KY)

2023 Fr. Bernard Overberg Award Recipients

- **Ms. Jenny Chirico** – Middle School Teacher, Lial Catholic School (Whitehouse, OH)
- **Mr. Stan Hirsch** – Math Teacher, La Reina High School and Middle School (Thousand Oaks, CA)
- **Ms. Trish Sanders** – Visual and Performing Arts Teacher, Notre Dame Academy (Toledo, OH)



SND Associates

Judy and Gary Tetzlaff and Patricia Guzman (shown to the left) recently became SND Associates in Thousand Oaks, California. They share the SND charm with their families, parishes, and other communities. To learn more about the SND Associate Program, contact your regional SND Center or visit our website at www.sndusa.org/engage.

IN THE NEWS

“Women Deliver” Conference

Opening new horizons to empower women

Sister Gina Marie Blunck (shown in the photo, second from the left in the bottom row) was among thousands of global leaders and women religious attending the Women Deliver 2023 Conference in Kigali, Rwanda in July. She urges religious sisters, all leaders and advocates attending the Women Deliver Conference to learn about Rwanda’s achievements over the last decades and apply them in their various fields of work or ministries. She says the Hilton Fund for Sisters has for years funded sisters in their ministries to reach out to more vulnerable people, including women and girls in society.



Second Zelig’s Home welcomes residents



Sister Kate Hine at Zelig’s Home

Zelig’s Home has expanded from one home to two! The first Zelig’s Home, located in Garfield Heights, Ohio, opened in 2020. The second Zelig’s Home opened this spring in Lakewood, Ohio. Both sites are former convents.

The heart of the mission remains the same at both locations: to offer a caring

community that empowers pregnant and parenting women to take positive and effective action on behalf of themselves and their children by providing physical, emotional, spiritual, and professional support.



From left: Sr. Jane Nesmith, SBS, Sr. Juanita Shealey, SIW, Sr. Kendra Bottoms, SND and Sr. Anita Baird, DHM

Racism in the Catholic Church and Religious Life

Sister Anita Baird, a member of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, asked more than 260 people from 22 communities of women religious, parishes, and non-profit organizations in attendance at the Notre Dame Center in Chardon, Ohio this summer to look more closely at racism in the Catholic Church and religious life. Through a collaboration with the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland, SND USA has embarked on a multi-year process of education, discussion, and discernment around the issue of racism and the history of racism in the Church and religious congregations.

Congratulations, Sister Kaitlin Marie Morse

Sister Kaitlin Marie Morse made her temporary vows as a Sister of Notre Dame in Chardon on August 5.



Sister Kaitlin Morse and family

Take me out to the ball game

On June 20, sisters, staff, friends, and families in the Toledo region enjoyed watching their beloved Toledo Mud Hens, the Triple A-Affiliate of the Detroit Tigers. Sister Jean Marie Walczak threw out the first pitch as the Hens took on the St. Paul Saints. Although the home team didn’t get the win, the night was a grand slam of fun for sisters and friends!



English Language School in Peru

Sisters Anita Marie and Maria Francine Stacy spent June 28 to July 28 in Salaverry, Peru, with Brazilian Sisters who have a mission there. The initiative gives American sisters an opportunity to see the Peruvian mission, live our internationality, and help with the language school. Sister Adelia Dannus, a Brazilian Sister who translates from Portuguese to English, and vice versa, requested sisters who could enhance the Catholic University of Trujillo's language program by giving conversation classes and sharing their native American accent. Sister Mary Dean Pfahler, from the Toledo region, went in December, followed by Sisters Marie Manning and Theresa Betz, from Chardon, in January and March.

The sisters introduced vocabulary and gave different levels of discussion questions and circulated among the group. They also presented vignettes from some US television series and popular songs which were well-received. Sisters Anita Marie and Maria Francine had time to enjoy community life with the Peruvian missionaries. They traveled to various locales to learn about the history and culture of indigenous people, admired the beauty of the nearby region of Trujillo, and enjoyed delicious Peruvian foods. Most rewarding was the Notre Dame spirit, so alive thousands of miles away.



(l-r) Brazilian sisters Lourdes, Adelia, and Mirian

SNDs Offer Self-Defense Class



Sisters of Notre Dame respond to the needs of the times, and sometimes in unconventional ways! On August 3, the sisters in the Toledo region partnered with Keeping Our Girls Safe (KOGS) to host a self-defense class for sisters and the public at the Lial Renewal Center in Whitehouse, Ohio. KOGS advocates, educates, engages, and empowers against violence towards women. Since its founding in 2016, KOGS has provided free self-defense classes for more than 2,500 women. KOGS is a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame SHINE Coalition, a group of organizations working together to support, honor, inspire, nurture, and empower women in the Toledo region.

"Unfortunately, the times call for awareness and vigilance. While we pray for an end to violence of all kinds, we also want to educate and empower people, especially women, to feel prepared and safe in this world," states Sister Regina Fisher, Provincial Councilor, SND USA, Toledo Region.



Rural Healthcare Student Experience

The 2023 Rural Healthcare Student Experience program, through St. Claire HealthCare in Morehead, Kentucky, provided a powerful opportunity for twelve students from Notre Dame Academy in Toledo, OH; Covington, KY; and Los Angeles, CA; and Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin in Chardon, OH this summer. Students, along with health professionals in hospice and home health care, traveled

to patients' homes and shadowed health providers in the hospital in areas including neurology, pediatrics, and emergency medicine. Students also participated in suturing and heart dissection labs.

SAVE THE DATE



NUN RUN



Nun Run 2024: Celebrating 10 years of Nun-stop Fun!

Run/Walk in California on February 3, 2024 or

Participate in our Virtual Mileage Challenge from anywhere in the world

Supports the outreach efforts of the Sisters of Notre Dame, while encouraging health and wellness for all ages!

www.nun.run. Registration is now open!

A LASTING TRIBUTE

SISTER MARY ESTELLA PERKINS, SND




September 6, 1928 – May 29, 2023

Joan Perkins was the fourth child born to Frank and Stella (Geoffrion) Perkins. Her childhood was spent with three brothers and four sisters attending St. Louis School in Custar, Ohio. Their mother died when Joan was only 10 years old. Joan attended Notre Dame Academy as

an aspirant, graduating in 1946.

Sister vowed her life to God with the Sisters of Notre Dame in 1948. Soon after her profession, she spent eight years teaching grades two and three in Catholic schools in Toledo. Then began more than 50 years in community service at the Notre Dame Provincial House on Secor Road, Toledo; at Lial convent in Whitehouse; and at St. John, Delphos, all in Ohio.

In 2015, Sister became a resident at the Ursuline Center in Toledo and then in 2021 at Rosary Care Center in Sylvania, Ohio. Whether in service or retirement, Sister was an avid reader, who often clipped interesting articles to share. When visitors did not find Sister in her room, they knew her favorite spots were in the library and outdoors. In her prayer-filled retirement years Sister faithfully prayed the rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet as broadcast on EWTN. 

SISTER MARY ROSELLYN THEISEN, SND




April 2, 1945 – August 7, 2023

Baptized Elizabeth Jean Theisen, she was the oldest daughter among three other daughters and two sons of Donald and Irene (Fisher) Theisen. She attended St. Paul School in Norwalk, Ohio, and graduated from Notre Dame Academy in Toledo in 1963, the

same year she entered the Sisters of Notre Dame and received the name Sister Mary Rosellyn.

Sister Mary Rosellyn began teaching junior high students in Ohio at St. Joseph, Fremont and Immaculate Conception, Bellevue but soon moved to schools in Carmel, Muncie and Fort Wayne, Indiana.

In 1980 her ministry became specialized in religious education, and she became the director of religious education in Fremont, Ohio; Carmel, Indiana; and Gesu Parish, Toledo. Having earned a master's degree in Christian Spirituality from Creighton University in 2000, she became the director of Adult Spiritual Renewal in St. Mary Assumption Parish in Decatur, Indiana for six years before returning to Ohio in pastoral ministry at St. Martin de Porres, Toledo. While coordinating the RCIA program in the Teresa of Calcutta Deanery, she directed the Associate Program for the Sisters of Notre Dame as well as assisting in a leadership role for the Toledo Province. In 2019 Sister began volunteering for ministries on the margins, particularly supervising visitations for the Children's Rights Collaborative.

Throughout her life sister's artistry was evident, not only in writing beautiful prayer services and providing artistic meals but also in her welcoming spirit, compassionate and careful listening, openness to diversity, honest feedback, determination, loyal friendships, and peaceful, self-effacing ways. 

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

SISTER JOAN MARIE BUDA, SND




(formerly Sister Mary John Raymond)

August 20, 1935 – June 25, 2023

Joan Buda was the youngest of five children born to John and Mary (Galayda) Buda in Cleveland, Ohio. After graduating from Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish School, Joan attended St. Michael High School, where she first met the Sisters

of Notre Dame. By her senior year, earlier thoughts of a religious vocation led to a prayerful decision. Joan became a postulant in 1953, and at investment received the name Sister Mary John Raymond.

Sister Joan Marie was sent to teach Grade 5 at St. Mary's Warren in 1957, the beginning of a 45-year educational ministry. She earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree from St. John College, Cleveland. Adaptability to new places and a variety of grade levels were all part of the journey. She taught intermediate and junior high students in both rural and urban settings, from Massillon, Randolph, and Canal Fulton to St. Boniface, St. Benedict, and St. Mark, Cleveland. Sister Joan Marie shared her technology skills as a computer teacher and used her artistic talents as an art instructor at Metro Catholic School, Cleveland.

In 2002, Sister came to the provincial center in Chardon, first working in the finance department and then in community services. In 2015, she embraced the ministry of prayer, presence, and praise with characteristic enthusiasm and attention. 

SISTER JOHN PAUL BOBAK, SND




September 20, 1939 – August 29, 2023

Mary Bobak was the first of six children born to John and Pauline (Kmetz) Bobak in Cleveland, Ohio. Mary recalled meeting Sister Mary Padua, her first and second grade teacher. She wrote in her autobiography, "I liked her instantly,

and on the spot I decided I would be a sister." Mary became a postulant on February 2, 1957. As a novice, she received the name Sister Mary John Paul, honoring her parents as well as two of her brothers.

Sister John Paul ministered as a junior high teacher for 16 years at schools in Chardon, Cleveland, Eastlake, Highland Heights, and University Heights, all in Ohio; and in Arlington and McLean, both in Virginia. She earned a BS degree from St. John College, Cleveland; a master's in elementary education from John Carroll University, and certification in elementary administration from Cleveland State University. She served as principal at St. Mary, Avon; St. Peter, North Ridgeville; and St. Francis, Cleveland.

She was a member of the community leadership team as a regional superior, and then as local superior of the Chardon provincial center and the Notre Dame College community. She accepted new ventures as coordinator of the Health Care Center pastoral care team, and as co-director for the SND Associates; in these encounters, hundreds of people were blessed by her smile, her wisdom, and her spirit. 



Sisters of Notre Dame
of the United States

One Heart. One Hope. One Mission.

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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"A goal without a plan is just a wish."

– Antoine de Saint- Exupery

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