



# SND USA

FALL 2024



## The Culture of Encounter and Caring



### ALSO INSIDE:

Transforming Grace: A Contemplative Lens to See the World

SND Culture Resonates with SND Associate

Living the SND USA Mission

And more...



# SND USA

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1** A Letter from the SND USA Provincial Team
- 2** Transforming Grace: A Contemplative Lens to See the World
- 4** When the Glass Wall Melted
- 5** Living the SND USA Mission
- 6** SND Culture Resonates with SND Associate
- 8** Sister Valerie Sweeney Demonstrates SND's Culture of Encounter and Caring
- 10** The Culture of Encounter and Caring Comes Full Circle
- 13** Where is Your Will?
- 14** Young Adults Participate in Gethsemani Pilgrimage
- 16** St. Claire HealthCare and University of Kentucky Enter Partnership
- 18** In the News
- 22** Lasting Tributes

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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,

As we enjoy the beauty and activities of autumn, we remind ourselves that God's grace is poured out upon us in every season. May we open our hearts to the inner transformation that leads to peace in our personal lives and in the global community.

In this issue of *SND USA Magazine*, we explore various ways sisters, Associates, collaborators and others demonstrate a culture of encounter and caring in their communities. SND Associate Ingrid Kanics designs playgrounds that are inclusive play environments for all. Sister Valerie Sweeney serves the elderly with compassion and love at Jennings in Garfield Heights, OH. St. Claire HealthCare reimagines its mission, expanding health care services in rural Kentucky. And Sister Joan Schlotfeldt experienced a personal encounter of caring firsthand when a compassionate young man selflessly made a stem cell donation that ultimately saved her life.

Readers will also learn about a recent young adult pilgrimage to Gethsemani in Kentucky: visiting the Abbey, celebrating Mass, and learning about the history of the religious community of brothers. As Sister Ruth Lubbers reports, "It truly was a graced time!"

May each of us continue to experience God's transforming grace in our own lives and the lives of all those we encounter. Thank you for your continued interest and financial support of our ministries.

Gratefully,

The SND USA Provincial Team



This article is part II of a two-part series on Transforming Grace, a five-year initiative being led by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. The first article was included in the spring 2024 issue of SND USA.

# Transforming Grace

## A Contemplative Lens



In 2023, LCWR announced its focus to use the skills that women religious practice in community life to bring about discussion and action that help to establish right relationships with the earth and with all persons. They call this project Transforming Grace. Women religious recognized the need for concrete, intentional changes to respond in a more profound way to the polarization, crises and justice issues we face as a country and in our world. Finding ways to leverage the collective voice of women religious and others in a more collaborative way is the focus of this effort.

Sister Margaret Gorman, Provincial of SND USA; Carrie Higginbotham, Director of SND USA Mission Advancement; Ann Clark, Co-Director of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC); and Katie Drager, Co-Director of JPIC, recently attended an LCWR Conference to discuss ways to integrate and share these concepts with larger audiences. More than 250 social justice promoters, communicators and leaders—representing 87 women’s religious congregations across the country—participated in the conference.

Ann Clark shares, “From their beginnings, sisters have been doing ministry that offers services to people in need. They advocate for change in systems and policies that keep people in oppressive situations.”

She adds, “Now women religious are inviting us all—sisters, associates, lay employees and collaborators—to accompany them on this journey to evolve our consciousness. To learn to pause, reflect and imagine prophetically. To expand on the traditions found in the Church and in Catholic Social Teaching to not only include service and advocacy work, but to go deeper, listen more intently, and open dialogue with others for the purpose of listening and understanding more intentionally.”

LCWR and sisters are inviting everyone to accompany them on this journey to learn the skills to evolve the collective consciousness: to pause, reflect and imagine a more civil discourse.

**“Being heard is so close to being loved that, for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable.”**

– David Augsburger

Carrie Higginbotham asks, “How can these concepts be applied within our everyday lives? How can the viewpoint shift from ‘either/or’ to a viewpoint of ‘both/and’? Embracing these simple skills can help to bridge the divide and give individuals a ‘working guide’ of steps to apply in everyday life.”

# to See the World

The concept of Transforming Grace begins with these components:

- deep listening
- relationship-building
- use of Catholic Social Teaching as a foundation for understanding
- finding common ground among the differences
- asking sincere questions of the other
- being intentional in words and actions
- pausing for deep reflection before acting
- recognizing the power each person holds to put goodness into the world and accepting the responsibility to do so.

Katie Drager explains, “When meeting a challenging situation or person, first take a moment to pause and breathe deeply. Be the one to make an observation that can set some common ground. Ask a sincere question of the person, then listen to learn what that person has to say, not thinking about how you will respond. Then to keep the conversation going and to learn more, ask, ‘Tell me more.’ This is how polarization can be diminished and relationship-building happens.”



*Katie Drager, co-director of JPIC, meets with Carrie Higginbotham, director of mission advancement.*

Drager shares, “I will carry the following quote from David Augsburg with me forever: ‘Being heard is so close to being loved that, for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable.’ We must remember how to listen to one another.”




*Ann Clark, co-director of Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation, SND USA.*

Ann Clark states, “The process of Transforming Grace can be seen as interior work, the way individuals can internalize and process the information received from the outside world. Transformation occurs in the interpretation of this knowledge to the outside world, shaping how we respond to our understanding of new or polarizing viewpoints, and the ways we can find common ground and work together.” She adds, “Understanding how we approach interactions can impact how we relate to others, which can be very transformative.”

Transforming Grace asks people to consider:

- Am I a human doer or a human being?
- Am I listening to understand or listening to respond?
- Do I understand that being with is as important as doing for?

Clark, Drager and Higginbotham all agree: “See the big picture. Take time in deep silence. Listen intently to others and allow this to lead to right actions and speech. Finally, trust that something new is being born in you.” 



Sister André Marie Masney

At 92 years of age, Sister André Marie Masney resides at Rosary Care Center in Sylvania, OH, a 76-bed health care facility which serves religious and community members, offering short-term rehabilitation and long-term care. For Sister André, it is long-term care. While slowing down physically proves a challenge, the Sister of Notre Dame says she enjoys having time now to engage in one of her passions – creative writing.

## *When the Glass Wall Melted*

It was COVID  
Time was measured  
Space was separated by glass  
Two sibling sisters  
One on either side of the lobby, on chairs  
Their visit: no touch, no embrace  
Just impenetrable glass  
But the voice  
Transferred to vibration  
Transformed back to human sound  
Recognizing kinship  
Two siblings separated by a COVID window  
Shared love  
As they sat with phone in hand

– Sister André Marie Masney

# Living the SND USA Mission

Sister LaReine-Marie Mosely is excited to be living the SND USA mission at St. Mary’s University, a private liberal arts school in San Antonio and the oldest Catholic university in Texas.

“I live the mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame through my teaching and engagement with students, colleagues and staff at St. Mary’s University,” Sister LaReine-Marie states. “This semester I taught undergraduate and graduate Theology majors one of my favorite topics: womanist theology. This theology places the religious and moral perspectives of Black women at the center of its method. We have gotten into wonderful discussions talking about the intersection of race, class and gender for Black women.”

Sister continues, “Since St. Mary’s is a Hispanic-serving institution, I always enjoy the connections my Hispanic students make when reflecting upon their life experiences and those of other Hispanic women. It reminds me of how theology is a conversation, and the more we can find allies to converse with the stronger our theology will be. We benefit from having dialogue partners who experience similar challenges and societal oppressions.”



Sister LaReine-Marie believes it was the SND culture of encounter and caring that first drew her to religious life as a young woman. “This continues to sustain and animate me,” she says enthusiastically.

Sister LaReine-Marie received her undergraduate degree in Elementary Education in 1986 from Bowling Green State University in Ohio and has been teaching ever since, apart from five years while she earned a PhD in Theology from the University of Notre Dame.

“When I encounter students, my ultimate goal is to meet them where they are,” Sister LaReine-Marie describes. “I ask them how life is treating them and how things are going. This opens the door to interesting conversations and provides me with opportunities to be a listening presence.”

*Sister LaReine-Marie Mosely meets with students at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas.*



**“We benefit from having dialogue partners who experience similar challenges and societal oppressions.”**

– Sister LaReine-Marie Mosely

When asked what challenges she sees prevalent in young adults today, Sister remarks, “I find there is great variation when it comes to students’ exposure to Catholicism/ Christianity or other faith traditions. It makes me wonder whether faith is being passed on to future generations.”




*Sister LaReine-Marie Mosely*

One thought-provoking topic that frequently arises is LGBTQ issues. “Some students have strong opinions. It is both gratifying and edifying to see Pope Francis’ willingness to engage in dialogue on these topics. Just the other day, I forwarded an article to students

in one of my classes titled, ‘Pope responds with ‘open heart’ to Vatican document criticism from parents of LGBTQ children.’ For me, this is a sign of hope that there is a culture of encounter and caring happening on this level. Imagine if we could all bring an open heart to such challenging conversations!” states Sister LaReine-Marie.

Sister has also witnessed her students yearning for a stronger faith. “Some of my students are

members of our Catholic Student Association, founded in 2022 by interested students. They organize lectures and other activities to promote the Catholic faith.”

As the Sisters of Notre Dame celebrate 150 years in the United States, their ministry of education continues as they witness the younger generations ever striving to find God in their everyday lives. 



## SND Culture Resonates with SND Associate

Ingrid Kanics has been designing inclusive play environments since 2003, one year after becoming an SND Associate. She sees a connection between them.

“The design process I go through with communities is a blend of all my education and life experiences, but also it is deeply connected to God’s gift in how my mind works,” Kanics says. “I feel that my daily work is fully aligned with the mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame. I strive to bring a sense of God’s goodness to everyone I work with, to use my gift of design to help create community spaces where everyone in the community can thrive.”

Kanics attended Notre Dame Academy, now Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin School, in Chardon, OH. “My faith grew in leaps and bounds while I was there,” she recalls. “I was so appreciative of the sisters who always seemed to see the goodness in everything. I found that to be a great way to look at the world. As I got to know them better, they shared that this came from their charisma and core values—that our God was a good God who called us to be compassionate to all, especially the poor. This really spoke to me and influenced how I have looked at the world since.”

She went on to earn a BS in Mathematics from McMaster University in 1986, a master’s in occupational therapy from Duquesne University in 2001, and

a master’s in interior architecture from Chatham University in 2013. She established Kanics Inclusive Design Services, LLC in May 2010.

“I have used all of these degrees as the base for building my inclusive design business,” she states. “Before creating the business, I worked for several non-profit organizations, designing and running inclusive play environments, starting with The Center for Creative Play (CFCP) in Pittsburgh, PA. When CFCP closed in 2008, we had just finished building the Play Center at Hattie Larlham, a center for children with disabilities, in Mantua, OH. Hattie Larlham offered me a position to run their therapy department as well as their new play center space.”

She continues, “The position lasted until January 2010. At the time, my dad was very ill fighting cancer, so I opted to move home to help care for him during his recovery. He was the one who recommended

**“I strive to bring a sense of God’s goodness to everyone I work with, to use my gift of design to help create community spaces where everyone in the community can thrive.”**

– Ingrid Kanics



I try to create my own business around inclusive design, and so my company was born.”

Kanics’ first partner was a playground manufacturer in the U.S. called Landscape Structures, Inc. in Delano, MN. She is currently in her 14th year consulting with them.

“I also consult with different landscape architects and architect firms around the U.S. on everything from sensory gardens and open green spaces to museums and specialty schools for children with specific medical conditions, like autism,” Kanics says.

Kanics explains, “I work with community organizations like parks, recreation centers, museums of assorted types and children’s centers (day cares and schools) to create play environments where children of all abilities can learn, play and grow together.”


The SND Associate of 22 years is involved in design support for anywhere from 75 to 100 play environments each year around the world. One initiative she was honored to be a part of was the \$50 million Inclusive Play Initiative funded by the Jumpstart Foundation in Canada. “I’m Canadian-born so it was near and dear to my heart to be a part of this initiative,” Kanics explains. “This is a country-wide initiative bringing at least one inclusive playground to every province and territory across Canada.”

“I strive to embrace and live the SND core values each day,” Kanics shares. “I see what I do as a unique ministry, one that impacts people of all ages and abilities. Many

individuals with disabilities struggle to feel included and rarely can play with others. They are often marginalized. Many struggle to find work as adults.”

“There are so many blessings that come from being an SND Associate,” she says. “I have always enjoyed being with the sisters and Associates at gatherings. Recently, these gatherings have been remote since I moved to North Carolina to take my parents through their end-of-life journeys. I feel incredible support from my fellow SND Associates and the sisters even though I can rarely gather with them physically. If anything, I feel a stronger connection during this time. I’m so grateful to all of them. I feel a strong faith connection to them as we do faith sharing virtually.”

“The SND culture of encounter and caring resonates with me. So much of what I do involves meeting people where they are, in their community and in their daily life, and caring enough to listen to what they need. Then I design an environment where they can truly play with their families, regardless of age or ability.”

Kanics encourages individuals who feel a connectedness to God’s goodness in their life to explore the SND Associates. “You might find there is a whole community just waiting to welcome and support you on your faith journey.” 





# Sister Valerie Sweeney Demonstrates SND's Culture of Encounter and Caring



Sister Valerie Sweeney at Jennings in Garfield Heights, OH.

**“Caring about others, running the risk of feeling, and leaving an impact on people, brings happiness.”**

– Harold Kushner

*“I love what I do at Jennings. I really feel that I am part of a family or community when I go to work each day,”* exclaims Sister Valerie Sweeney, a member of the Pastoral Care Team at Jennings in Garfield Heights, OH.

Jennings, started by the Sisters of the Holy Spirit in 1942, offers choices from independent living residences to long-term care, and all residences are private. The health care organization also provides community-based services such as adult day services, child and infant care, short-term skilled nursing and rehabilitation, home care and hospice.

There are three members of the Pastoral Care Team at Jennings: Ted Steiner, Director of Mission and Ministry; Fr. Len Obloy, Priest Chaplain; and Sister Valerie. “We work together to provide spiritual support to our residents, their family members, and staff in whatever way is helpful,” Sister Valerie describes. Among her responsibilities are planning and assisting at daily liturgies, which includes leading the music, doing the readings and distributing Communion. Sister Valerie also takes Communion to residents who cannot attend chapel. “I lead a weekly Scripture Sharing session to help our residents reflect on the readings for the upcoming Sunday. I visit individual residents according to need,” she adds.





Sister Valerie with residents at Jennings.

Sister Valerie has ministered at Jennings for the past 11 years. “In my interactions with residents and staff, I hope each encounter provides both of us an experience of God’s goodness and love through the gifts that we share with each other,” considers Sister Valerie. “I don’t feel that I am the one ‘bringing’ God to the person I meet, but that it is a mutual exchange of blessings. I gain so much from our residents and staff, and I hope they feel the same about me.”



The Sisters of Notre Dame mission is to proclaim God’s goodness and compassionate love for people of all faiths and cultures. Likewise, Jennings is an organization rooted in Catholic values, celebrating and nurturing individuals as they age. “I feel the mission of Jennings blends beautifully with that of the Sisters of Notre Dame,” Sister Valerie describes.

Although Jennings is a Catholic organization, it serves people of all faiths and cultures. Sister Valerie believes this brings a richness to all their lives. “We can learn so much from each other,” insists Sister Valerie. “It reminds me of our congregation’s work in India. Most of the people we serve in India are not Christian, yet our sisters share God’s goodness and provident care with them, knowing they are beloved children of God. I try to do that in my ministry at Jennings. I am enriched by the gifts our residents and staff share with me.”

“I’ve always had a heart for the elderly,” fondly recalls Sister Valerie. “As a child, I loved to visit the elderly couple next door -- sit with them on their porch, play Chinese Checkers with them, and help cook and bake tasty treats they shared with me.”


She continues, “Later, my mom’s journey through Alzheimer’s brought me into the world of eldercare in a very real way. I learned to enter the reality of the person with dementia and offer them the dignity and compassion they deserve that they may not receive in society. They are still the person they have always been – just with different abilities. They have so much to share if we take the time to be with them. We all face challenges as we age, whether they are physical or mental, and we don’t get to choose. Older people can

teach us so much about taking life’s journey with openness and strength.”

Sister Valerie says she has learned the most powerful way to support those facing death is simply through her presence – whether that be in words or touch, song or silence, tears or laughter.

“Each day, I am inspired by the people to whom and with

whom I minister,” Sister Valerie concludes. “We are all human, and there are many challenges in this work. Yet we also have fun and celebrate life in so many ways.

Many people think it must be depressing to work in a nursing home and that the elderly are so frail and vulnerable. I find them to be some of the strongest, most resilient people I know. They teach me to live simply; to find joy in little things; to stay connected with others; the importance of faith; and the gift of a good sense of humor.” 

**“I gain so much from our residents and staff, and I hope they feel the same about me.”**

- Sister Valerie Sweeney, a member of the Pastoral Care Team at Jennings in Garfield Heights, OH

The organization was founded by the Sisters of the Holy Spirit through a bequest from Monsignor Gilbert P. Jennings. Jennings is a Catholic organization serving people of all faiths through a continuum of care in four locations in Ohio: Brecksville, Chardon, Garfield Heights and Shaker Heights. About | Jennings ([jenningsohio.org](http://jenningsohio.org))



*Ethan Long,  
the peripheral  
blood stem  
cell donor,  
and his family*



# The Culture of Encounter and Caring Comes Full Circle

**S**ister Joan Schlotfeldt witnesses the SND culture of encounter and caring with everyone she meets. Imagine her humble surprise and appreciation as this role was reversed when she became the recipient of a stem cell donation through the City of Hope in Duarte, CA -- one of the nation's largest and most reputable cancer research and treatment organizations.

"I was diagnosed with a proliferative blood disorder in January 2009," Sister Joan explains. "My first hematologist sent me to a reliable website for information. Back then, the website gave a prognosis of 5.4 years. At the time, many health care specialists considered stem cell treatment too risky for patients over age 65. I am fortunate that my providers did not adhere to that view. From 2009 to 2014, my symptoms of excessive platelets were controlled by a prescription medication and blood transfusions."



Sister Joan admits her health care journey became even more challenging. Fortunately, the Sisters of Notre Dame provided the sisters a Kaiser Permanente Medicare Advantage Plan which included access to the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) and Be the Match. NMDP and Be the Match locate possible donors for their patients. “My close blood relatives were not matches for me,” Sister Joan states. “However, my Kaiser bone marrow transplant specialist discovered three volunteer donors of blood stem cells with 10 blood markers the same as mine!”

To be a recipient, Sister Joan first needed to pass 10 medical tests to ensure she could withstand the rigors of the procedure. “My actual treatment during the summer of 2014 included a five-and-a-half-week stay in a private room with a controlled environment at the City of Hope. After a conditioning regimen, I received the actual transplant of a bag of blood stem cells on July 16, 2014,” she says with a smile.

**“I sometimes felt that God was holding me in the palm of His hand.”**

- Sister Joan Schlotfeldt

“My faith helped me through those challenging times of feeling weak and unwell. I sometimes felt that God was holding me in the palm of His hand.”

After her release from the hospital, Sister Joan needed to wear an N-95 mask—more than five years before the pandemic—and return to the City of Hope for follow-up appointments twice a week for two months. During these visits she sometimes needed blood transfusions until the transplanted stem cells multiplied sufficiently. “My faith got me through this period of my life one step, one day at a time,” Sister Joan exclaims.

Sister Joan is forever grateful to the person who donated his stem cells. “After a year, I completed an application asking permission to contact my donor by email. The donor also needed to agree,” she explains. “I was so touched and encouraged to be on the receiving end this time.”

Firoozeh Sahebi MD, Bone Marrow Transplant specialist, Sister Joan Schlotfeldt, and Sister Luellen Boeglin



Ethan Long was the peripheral blood stem cell donor for Sister Joan. “I signed up to become a bone marrow/stem cell donor in early August 2012 when I attended my first Yankee game with my father-in-law and brother-in-law. DKMS (*Deutsche Knochenmarkspenderdatei*) had a table set up inside Yankee Stadium where they encouraged people to do a cheek swab and register to be added to the bone marrow donor database. My father-in-law was over the age limit, but my brother-in-law and I signed up and did cheek swabs.”

DKMS stands for *Deutsche Knochenmarkspenderdatei*, German Bone Marrow Donor Center. As the center grew internationally and extended its mission to include the United States, Poland, the United Kingdom, Chile, India and South Africa, in 2016 the acronym DKMS was formalized.

Long was initially matched with two other patients, but the patients’ doctors decided not to proceed with Long, instead using the marrow of other stronger candidate donors.



Sister Joan Schlotfeldt

“The third time was the charm,” Long remembers. “I was matched around March 2014, gave blood in early April, and received confirmation that I was selected as the patient’s (Sister Joan) matching donor on June 5. I went in for a physical on June 17 and started receiving daily filgrastim injections on July 11. The injections put my bone marrow into overdrive to overproduce stem cells, so they spill out into my bloodstream. I donated the stem cells on July 15. In October 2014 I received an update that my transplanted cells had begun reproducing new blood cells inside the patient’s body and that the patient was recovering well and had been discharged from the hospital.”

The compassionate gentleman remains in the national registry. “If matched, I would donate again without any hesitation,” he states.

“I was elated to hear from Sister Joan,” Long says. “I was overwhelmed with emotions. Prior to her email, I only knew her name; I didn’t know who she was, what she did, or anything else about her life. Hearing from her made it feel more real. Instead of her being just ‘a patient,’ she was a real person with her own life story. It was incredibly touching to receive an email from the woman who received my blood and was now on the road to recovery.”

Long adds, “I absolutely felt God’s hand in this. My brother-in-law has not been matched since joining the registry almost 12 years ago. I have a coworker who has been on the registry for over 20 years. I felt God had chosen me to help, and I couldn’t imagine not answering His call.”

While Sister Joan has not personally met Ethan, who lives in New York state, they have kept in touch through the years via email. “I rejoice with his family events like marriage, children, pets, vacations and job advancements.”


Long concurs, “Sister Joan and I email each other several times a year, sharing parts of our lives with one another. A thank you card and photo Sister Joan sent me hangs in my cubicle at work. I look at them daily. She sent a card when my wife and I were married. She sent a nativity set we display every year and a book for our daughter that we enjoy reading to her. Sister Joan is a very special person in my life. Although we have never met in person, she is part of our family. The only way I can describe how I feel about her is love. My family and I are blessed to know Sister Joan, and we all love hearing from her.”

Long states, “I would encourage anyone who is healthy enough to be a donor to do so. It is a blessing to have the opportunity to help someone and give them a chance to live a longer, healthier life. The donation process is straightforward and, in my experience working with DKMS, they provide all travel arrangements and accommodations necessary to make it as easy as possible for the donor. In my opinion, there is no greater feeling than knowing you helped another person. It is profound to know I have helped give Sister Joan years to live. Getting to know her was the blessing I received.”

Sister Joan concludes, “I find one way to mirror a culture of encounter and caring is by keeping in touch with family, friends, colleagues and former students. Birthdays and anniversaries noted in my calendar remind me to select and send greeting

***“I felt God had chosen me to help, and I couldn’t imagine not answering His call.”*** - Ethan Long



cards. Email and phone calls also help me to stay connected. I still say a little prayer daily for the City of Hope staff and for the patients who have occupied room 6227.” 



## Tip: Blue, Not Black

When you sign your estate planning documents, use blue ink. Then make copies in black-and-white only. That way, it is easy for you and your loved ones to tell the original from a copy.

# Where Is Your Will?

Do you know where your will is? More importantly, do your loved ones know? Having a will or trust in place is the most loving gift you can give to your heirs. They will seek out your official instructions at a time of great sadness and stress. Here's how you can make a difficult time easier for them:

1. Make sure you have an up-to-date will or trust that reflects your values and your relationships with family, friends and causes close to your heart.
2. Keep the original signed document, along with a copy, in a secure and easily accessible location like a fireproof safe (not a safe-deposit box—banks have strict rules on who gets access). Your estate planning attorney may also offer to store it at their office as they have the means to safeguard your confidential information.
3. Tell your executor or personal representative the location of your will or trust. Share the location of your safe and its combination or key or give them the contact information for your attorney.

About two-thirds of Americans don't leave a will or trust. That means frustrating legal hurdles, unanswered questions and hurt feelings for millions who are also mourning a profound loss.

## We're Happy to Help

If you have questions about the best ways to ensure your loved ones know your plans, and if those plans include leaving a legacy gift benefiting the Sisters of Notre Dame, contact your local Mission Advancement representative below to learn more.

### COVINGTON, KY:

MARGIE SCHNELLE | [mschnelle@sndusa.org](mailto:mschnelle@sndusa.org)

### TOLEDO, OH:

KERRI ROSE-ROCHELLE | [krochelle@sndusa.org](mailto:krochelle@sndusa.org)

### THOUSAND OAKS, CA:

SISTER LISA MEGAFFIN | [lmegaffin@sndusa.org](mailto:lmegaffin@sndusa.org)

### CHARDON, OH:

CARRIE HIGGINBOTHAM | [chigginbotham@sndusa.org](mailto:chigginbotham@sndusa.org)

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# Young Adults Participate in Gethsemani Pilgrimage

By Sister Ruth Lubbers

When it came time to plan the SND Young Adult Retreat for Spring 2024, I reached out to people who had served on last year's team. Four individuals came forward: Sarah Davis, Julie Rehkamp, and Bridget and Trevor Sacilowski. When one team member asked about the possibility of making a pilgrimage to Gethsemani, we agreed that would be a wonderful option and began to plan accordingly.


Gethsemani is a Catholic monastery located in Nelson County, KY, near Bardstown. Founded in 1848 by monks from Melleray Abbey in France, it is part of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, commonly known as the Trappists. The Abbey was also the monastic home of Thomas Merton from 1941 to 1968.

Ahead of the retreat, our group of 12 young adults gathered at St. Joseph Heights to prepare for this pilgrimage, discuss our purpose in going, and consider what each hoped to receive through this experience. Each received a booklet with prayers and readings to use throughout the day.

As time for the pilgrimage drew closer, I emailed the Abbey to ask about meeting with one of the monks. I was told that since the date we were going, June 29, was the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, the monks would be following their usual Sunday schedule. Time would be available in the afternoon for a Meet & Greet.

At the Abbey we attended the 10:30 a.m. Mass with the monks, sitting close behind them. What a joy! We viewed their video, "One Day," and learned about their life before meeting Brother Luke Armour later

in the afternoon. Brother Luke brought us into the main body of the church and shared information about the history of the community and the Abbey as well as about the purpose of their life. Our group visited the cemetery where the 'graduates' are buried. Brother Luke spoke of their burial practice and the reverence they have for each monk. No monk's grave is any different from any of the others. He showed us Thomas Merton's grave and shared some stories about him. To conclude our time together, Brother Luke invited us into his office where he set up his tripod and camera and took a photo of our group, including an older couple who were invited to join in the photo.

For the next few hours, our young adults could choose how they wanted to spend their time. Activities available included hiking to the Gethsemani statues, visiting the Welcome Center and Gift Shop, celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation and spending time in prayer in church. We met back at our outdoor lunch site later in the afternoon to process our experiences and share some takeaways from the day, where people had encountered God, and any other grace received. Many spoke of the time with Brother Luke and how inspired they were with all that he had shared, more so with the person he is and his love of God and God's people. One young man, who is not Catholic, was impressed by the fact that for more than 175 years, day in and day out, the monks have been praising God and praying for the needs of the world and the Church. It truly was a graced time! 



Gethsemani group outside church







# Young Adults Encourage Their Peers

**J**ulie Rehkamp states, “Growing in relationships is such an integral aspect of life. Whether this is deepening your self-awareness, strengthening your connection with God, or navigating social interactions with others. There is hardly a

better way to improve yourself and your wellbeing besides being involved and active in a meaningful faith life. To pursue your faith is to define a purpose and direction to your daily living. I encourage all young adults to seek ways to learn, understand, and deepen their faith in our loving God.”



Julie Rehkamp at the lake

Monica Luong shares, “I’m so pleased I went on this pilgrimage. The timing was sort of perfect because the pilgrimage fell on the weekend after I arrived in Kentucky from California for a five-week internship with Dynamic Catholic. Sister Ruth was the first person I met, and her warm invitation made me feel incredibly welcome. The young adult group that went were so comfortable to be around because of their friendliness and inclusiveness.

The pilgrimage itself was wonderful. I received a sense of ‘wonder’ of life. This was written in the Abbey’s gallery, and it


essentially means taking nothing for granted, both big and small. According to the excerpt hanging on the wall of the gallery on Wonder, it is the first step towards awareness of

the divine. This experience blessed me with a more gracious heart, a mindful, appreciative mindset, and it ultimately brought me closer to ‘awareness of the divine’ in my life.”

**“This experience blessed me with a more gracious heart, a mindful, appreciative mindset, and it ultimately brought me closer to ‘awareness of the divine’ in my life.”**

– Monica Luong



Monica recommends young adults spend time with a young adult group. “Once you do, you’ll want to keep going back. The SNDs are awesome, and their young adult activities are definitely worth trying out, even if it’s just to hang out with the sisters. Spending time with the sisters will reveal God’s love in ways you may not have experienced before. You’ll witness their deep devotion to Him and see His love shining through their lives.” 

Sister Erin Nagy and Monica Luong





# St. Claire HealthCare and University of Kentucky Enter Partnership

St. Claire HealthCare in Morehead, Kentucky, recently entered an expanded partnership with the University of Kentucky (UK), a collaboration that will ensure that St. Claire continues its 60-year tradition of serving the health care needs of people residing in Eastern Kentucky.

According to Sister Judine Lambert, Vice President, Mission Integration, “While St. Claire HealthCare will no longer be a Catholic hospital sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame, this groundbreaking collaboration will provide expanded opportunities to carry the SND mission forward into the next 60 years – a lasting tribute to the legacy of the Sisters of Notre Dame, whose sponsorship helped build and maintain St. Claire HealthCare.”

“The economic status of Eastern Kentucky ranks in the lowest 10 percent of the nation,” Sister Judine says. “The SND mission here ensures medical care is available to the people of our region who cannot afford to travel distances to seek health care. The new partnership will bring greatly expanded services and more medical specialties to our area, which means our patients will be able to get the care they need close to home. The same can be said of the expanded education programming that will be located here that is also central to the SND charism and mission.”

As part of the agreement, St. Claire will establish a \$30 million community foundation dedicated to funding projects that continue the SND mission in the local area. The new SND Eastern Kentucky Foundation will be a sponsored ministry under the Sisters of Notre Dame’s National Ministry Corporation.

“The current St. Claire Foundation will award more than \$100,000 in scholarships this year,” Sister Judine notes. “We anticipate funding for scholarships to continue and expand. The new SND Eastern Kentucky Foundation will also support social service organizations in our service area. For example, three area food banks and clothing distribution centers were awarded \$350,000. And, in the past, all support from the St. Claire HealthCare (SCH) Foundation had to be designated for efforts that had a direct tie to SCH, its employees and patients. While that will continue, the new foundation’s mission will expand to potentially serve needs throughout Eastern Kentucky.”

“This partnership provides perpetuity to the SND mission that has served the people of Eastern Kentucky for 60 years,” states Laura Koehl, Executive Director, SND USA National Sponsorship and Network Office. “This is an exciting and groundbreaking partnership that promises to carry the St. Claire mission forward

in a growth-oriented way. It will provide for an expansion of the services to the region that the St. Claire community has been so committed to for the last 60 years.”

Koehl says an SND Eastern Kentucky Foundation will be established with board members appointed by the SND National Ministry

Corporation. “We will work with these board members as they continue to further the SND mission. As a dedicated partner, the University of Kentucky greatly respects the heritage of the sisters,” she states. “The SND mission will continue with the Foundation’s work as they develop programs, services, education, and potential partnerships with other community entities. The foundation will continue St. Claire’s legacy of bringing God’s goodness and provident care to the people of Eastern Kentucky.”

Donald Lloyd, President/CEO of St. Claire HealthCare, concurs that this partnership will continue the mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame. “In our diligent evaluation of the University of Kentucky as a potential strategic partner, our Board of Directors, a delegation from

**“The Sisters of Notre Dame are revered by the people of this region because the sisters have always served as a beacon of caring, compassion, and hope for a people often forgotten in society.”**

— Donald Lloyd, President/CEO of St. Claire HealthCare



campus and adding graduate programs in Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Therapy as well. We also plan to create programs for graduate-level Social Workers and Licensed Clinical Social Workers. And finally, we have plans to expand the UK College of Public Health here with Master of Public Health and Master of Health Administration programs at our new education hub.”


“I have had the honor and privilege to serve with the Sisters of Notre Dame for five

the Sisters of Notre Dame, and members of our management team critically examined the values and mission of UK. What we found was a history of shared values and a 60-year track record of demonstrated commitment to the people of Eastern Kentucky. We looked for examples of how UK demonstrated—not just rhetorically but by actions—programs and services implemented by UK which serve the marginalized and disenfranchised populations St. Claire traditionally served. In every circumstance, we found evidence that further demonstrated a commitment today, and in the future, to meeting the clinical and educational needs of our region.”

“The creation of UK St. Claire will result in a minimum of \$300 million of capital investment in clinical and educational infrastructure in the entire region during the next six years. We plan to add numerous new specialty clinical programs and personnel to address the needs of our patients, and to use those resources to better address the many social determinants of health that impact the communities the Sisters of Notre Dame have served for more than six decades,” Lloyd explains.

He continues, “We also plan to expand five of the health-related colleges at the University of Kentucky to Morehead as we create a new medical education hub here at St. Claire. In addition to expanding the current College of Medicine Rural Physician Leadership Program and the College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Program already at St. Claire, we will be adding a new Residency in General Surgery, potentially Psychiatry, expanding the College of Dentistry to our

years,” Lloyd reflects. “Every day that I serve in this ministry I gain a new level of admiration and awe for the service our SNDs have given to the people of Eastern Kentucky. The Sisters of Notre Dame are revered by the people of this region because the sisters have always served as a beacon of caring, compassion, and hope for a people often forgotten in society. Today, those of us blessed to serve in this ministry, and our new partners at the University of Kentucky, have a profound sense of gratitude for the clinical and educational foundation the Sisters of Notre Dame have built for us. St. Claire and UK, now serving as UK St. Claire, have a deep sense of obligation and responsibility to carry forth the sisters’ legacy in perpetuity. I have every confidence that those who will follow us in the next 60 years will always use the spirit of the Sisters of Notre Dame as their compass to service, love and compassion, for all of Eastern Kentucky.”

Sister Judine’s role as Vice President of Mission will continue but with a new emphasis. “While I will continue to oversee the Pastoral Care Department and perform duties with the Foundation, I have also begun to work in the area of Patient Experience and plan to expand my time in that area,” she concludes. 




# IN THE NEWS

## Congratulations Sister Carolyn!




Sister Carolyn Marie Schaffer was presented the 2024 Agnes Stoll Riley Culture of Excellence in Teaching Award at St. Paul's Catholic Parish, Norwalk, Ohio. The award is named in honor of Agnes Stoll

Riley, St. Paul's first valedictorian, who worked with the Sisters of Notre Dame to help the school receive accreditation by the State of Ohio as a four-year high school in 1923. Norwalk Catholic School established the award to recognize those who go above and beyond while teaching students, emulating the school's vision of family of faith, a culture of excellence and a calling to serve; and supporting the mission to develop disciples of Christ, promote academic excellence and foster a respectful community. A fitting honor for Sr. Carolyn as she retired from a 43-year teaching career at the end of the 2023-24 school year. 

## Partners in Mission

On Sunday, April 21, 2024, SND Chardon held a Mass and luncheon for our Partners in Mission to appreciate their support of our ministries.

This annual event recognizes the many partners who have shared their time, talent, or treasure with us and our ministries. This year, we highlighted John and Stella Hetzer, a couple whose generosity through their personal and professional resources has provided support for SND ministries over decades; the tremendous steadfast gifts of many global mission donors whose regular donations built and maintain our international outreach programs in India and now in Africa; and the generous gift of time from Paula J. Aveni, a volunteer inspired to help coordinate and staff the yearly BBQ event. 



## 150th Celebration




*Sisters read a Mayoral Proclamation from Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz commemorating the 150th anniversary of SND in the United States.*



*Toledo sisters celebrated the 150 years in the United States with historic trivia.*



Sisters in Toledo marked the 150th Anniversary of arriving in the United States with a celebration on the Fourth of July! The day began at the Sisters of Notre Dame Center in Whitehouse with a beautiful Mass of Thanksgiving with Monsignor Chris Vasko presiding. Mass was followed by a picnic lunch, activities and ice cream. Sisters enjoyed reminiscing with old photos and SND history trivia. Later in the day, the celebration continued at Rosary Care Center to include sisters residing there. Throughout the day, sisters

honored the rich history and contributions of the Sisters of Notre Dame with the readings of a Papal Decree and proclamations from the Governor of Ohio and the Mayor of Toledo. Friends and family are invited to attend a public celebration on Sunday, November 10 at 1:30 p.m. at Gesu Catholic Church. 

## California Centennial

One hundred years ago, 11 very courageous Sisters of Notre Dame arrived in Los Angeles from Cleveland, OH. Their mission was simple, “go to California and build a house of love.” And it was their trust in God’s goodness and provident care, that brings us to this moment in our history.



Saturday, August 31 found more than 400 Sisters of Notre Dame, Associates, benefactors and friends thanking God for the many graces of 100 years of SND presence and ministry in California.


In his homily, Archbishop Gomez commented how “God works in mysterious ways, He works through ordinary people in the eyes of the world....God has chosen each one of us and called us to do great

things for Him and to bring His love in the world....And that is the beautiful example that all of you sisters have given to us your ministry in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles for 100 years—amazing! Thank you for the beautiful witness of your lives.”



Former and current staff, alumnae and students from Pius Matthias Academy



A unique gift for the sisters was 100 personal letters from students, staff, parents and alums of Notre Dame Academy Schools of Los Angeles. For more information on our 100-year celebration of mission and ministry in California, visit <https://sndusa.org/ca100/>. 



**God’s plan is being fulfilled by a group of wonderful women who are moving to the beat of God’s own heart...**

*- Sue Vigo, long-time friend and donor*

## Preparing for the November Election

As we all prepare to do our civic duty to vote in the election on November 5, the sisters offer some information.



- Educate yourself on candidates at all levels, local state and federal.
- Educate yourself on issues.
- Double check your voter registration, polling location and voting hours.
- Encourage others to vote as well. We all have a right and a responsibility to vote.
- Pray for the election, those seeking election, those voting and those working the polls.

For more information, and to view short videos of why the sisters vote, scan this QR code for resources from the Sisters of Notre Dame Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation National Office.



# IN THE NEWS

## African Sisters Visit USA

The Sisters of Notre Dame welcomed Sister Christine Syombua, SND delegation superior, and Sister Therese Marie Nabakka, SND, delegation treasurer, from the East African Delegation during the months of July and August. The sisters spent time visiting each region; Chardon, OH, Toledo, OH, Thousand Oaks, CA, and Covington, KY, giving presentations in each area. To view a recording of this year's annual update, as well as previous presentations on their ministry work in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, visit <https://sndusa.org/africavisit2024/>.



## SNDs Celebrate 150 Years of Ministry in the United States in Cleveland

More than 175 people attended the Mass and reception at historic St. Peter Church in Cleveland on September 8. This was the first parish where SNDs began their ministry upon arriving from Coesfeld, Germany.





## Covington Festival

Many thanks to everyone who attended, donated and sponsored our 102nd annual Festival event on July 4th. Guests enjoyed a beautiful afternoon on the SND Covington campus, complete with delicious food, games, crafts, and the opportunity to visit with sisters, staff, alumni, neighbors and many more. For more than 100 years, this unique tradition in northeast Kentucky has provided resources that enable sisters to continue their vital ministry work. Thank you for sharing God's goodness with us! 



## SND BBQ & Boutique a Huge Success

The Sisters of Notre Dame's 2024 Annual BBQ & Boutique on Sunday, September 29 was a tremendous success with plenty of familiar and new faces in attendance. The "Nugget" mascot was also on hand so guests could take a photo with the chicken to wrap up a fun day of dinner, shopping and socializing. We hope to see you here next year!





# A LASTING TRIBUTE

## SISTER MARY ROSS BURGARD



### Toledo Region

November 11, 1930 – March 3, 2024

Born Norma Jean, she was the second oldest of seven girls and four boys born to Ross and Hattie (Stock) Burgard. Norma attended St. Joseph School in Erie, Michigan, and Central Catholic in Toledo. She entered the Sisters of Notre Dame in 1948 and began teaching one year later at Gesu School, Toledo, OH.

For the next 44 years Sister Ross taught grades one through four at Gesu, St. Michael, Ladyfield, St. Ann, St. Martin de Porres (Toledo), St. Joseph (Maumee), St. Michael Ridge (Defiance), Sacred Heart (Bethlehem), St. Mary (Leipsic), St. Joseph (Monroeville), St. Augustine (Napoleon), St. John (Delphos), and St. Paul (Norwalk), all in OH.

Throughout her 72 years of religious life, Sister witnessed to God's goodness and provident care. This was especially evident when she taught small groups at Mary Immaculate School Toledo, OH from 1994-2009. Five years of volunteer library work at St. Joseph School in Erie, MI, followed her teaching career. In December 2015 she moved to the Sisters of Notre Dame Center in Whitehouse where she engaged in community service for eight years.

Having moved to Rosary Care Center in Sylvania on December 28, Sister Mary Ross had only one thing left to do during her life of dedication to God: to give thanks and praise. With this gift she entered into "God's joyful surprise" returning her life of 93 years back to God on March 3, 2024.

## SISTER MARY ANN TUSAI



### Chardon Region

(Formerly Sister Mary John Martin)

August 25, 1937 – March 25, 2024

Born to John and Helen (Doljac) Tusai, Mary Ann was the only girl and the oldest of five children. She attended St. Thomas Aquinas Parish School in Cleveland. Following graduation at St. Peter High School in 1955, Mary Ann was employed

by Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company and then at Hollander Abstract Company.

When Mary Ann was 14, she seriously considered religious life and learned more about the history and spirit of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Mary Ann became a postulant on February 2, 1957. At investment she received the name Sister Mary John Martin.

She earned a BS in Education from St. John College, Cleveland, in 1963 and a Master of Arts from John Carroll University, University Heights. As a dedicated teacher for 33 years, Sister Mary Ann ministered in 13 different schools, educating students in grades 5 through 8. Whether in Ohio—in Avon, Cleveland, Lyndhurst, North Ridgeville, University Heights, and Warren—or in Dunedin, FL, she shared with her students a deep appreciation for the beauty of planet Earth, which she called "our house away from home."

In 1993, having retired from classroom teaching, Sister Mary Ann became the bookkeeper for Julie Billiard School, Lyndhurst, and then for Notre Dame Elementary School, Chardon. For the past 20 years at the SND Center in Chardon, she assisted in the facilities office, drove sisters to their appointments, and served the community in various ways. For 10 years she was a catechist at the Parish School of Religion at St. Mary, Chardon.

Sister Mary Ann never lost her sense of wonder. With sisters who shared her enthusiasm for the outdoors, she delighted in hiking, camping, and exploring State Parks in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

## SISTER MARY AMY HAUCK



### Thousand Oaks Region

October 14, 1950 – April 23, 2024

Mary Amy Hauck, the daughter of Dr. Richard and Helen Hauck, was born in Lynwood, CA in 1950. As a student at St. Helen's Elementary School and St. Matthias High School, she came to know the Sisters of Notre Dame and felt called to religious life. She explained this call:

"I saw that the sisters' lives were focused on God and out of this single focus, a spirit of joyful simplicity, a love for other people and a zeal for the kingdom of God radiated forth."

Over the years, Sister Mary Amy served in various ministries, beginning as an elementary school teacher and administrator and continuing in province leadership. As Provincial Superior, Sister Mary Amy significantly impacted many lives by initiating the Associate program which now has more than 100 members who live the SND spirit and mission in their families, parishes, workplaces and other

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

relationships. She was also instrumental in founding the mission in Uganda in collaboration with the Covington, KY province. Her dedication helped to lay the firm foundation for St. Julie Primary Boarding School and Notre Dame Academy in Buseesa, Uganda, as well as other Ugandan ministries.

In her last years, Sister Mary Amy suffered from acute rheumatoid arthritis as well as cancer. She bore her sufferings bravely and trusted in God's provident care.

### SISTER MARY GERALYN STENGER



#### Chardon Region

December 7, 1937 – May 5, 2024

Born in University Heights, OH, Patricia Ann was the oldest child of Harry and Geraldine (Morrison) Stenger. She and her three brothers attended Gesu Parish School. She credits her 4th grade teacher Sister Mary St. Andrew and Sister Mary Teresita, who taught her in 6th and

7th grade, with helping her to discern and accept God's call. At Beaumont School for Girls, her high school interests included Glee Club, Library Club, Mission Club, and the Sodality. In 1954, the family grieved the death of Mrs. Stenger. Patricia, age 17, managed her studies and took on new responsibilities of caring for her young brothers. In 1956, Mr. Stenger married Mary Walsh. Patricia entered the Sisters of Notre Dame as a postulant on September 8 of that year. At investment, she chose the name Sister Mary GERALYN, inspired by St. Gerard Majella's great love of Jesus in the Eucharist.

With a bachelor's degree from St. John College, Cleveland, and a Master of Arts degree from John Carroll University, Sister Mary GERALYN taught intermediate and junior high students for 26 years. In Cleveland, she ministered at St. Benedict, St. Boniface, St. Joseph Franciscan, St. Michael, and Our Lady of Lourdes; she also taught at St. Aloysius, East Liverpool; Immaculate Heart of Mary, Austintown, and Notre Dame Elementary School in Chardon. Assignments outside of Ohio included St. Agnes School in Arlington, VA, and St. Mary Magdalen School in Maitland, FL. She served in several parishes as Lector, Eucharistic Minister, and teacher/coordinator of the Parish School of Religion.

After retiring from teaching in 1986, Sister Mary GERALYN ministered in the Community Office and Finance Office for 24 years. For 10 years she drove sisters to their appointments. Her talent for crochet yielded a supply of blankets and baby booties for the Boutique and Gallery.

### SISTER MARY JULIE ROSE KECK



#### Chardon Region

September 13, 1932 - May 16, 2024

As the second oldest of five girls and one boy born to Joseph and Josephine (Hamm) Keck, Roseann was never at a loss for playmates. After elementary school at St. Joseph in Collinwood, Roseann attended St. Francis High School in Cleveland. Here, she met the Sisters of Notre

Dame and formed life-long friendships. At graduation in 1950, Roseann received the Mother Evarista Scholarship to Notre Dame College in Euclid, OH. She began college and then entered as a postulant on September 8, 1950. At investment she received the name Sister Mary Julie Rose.

Sister Mary Julie Rose earned a bachelor's degree from St. John College in Cleveland and a master's degree in administration and curriculum from St. Xavier College in Chicago. Her 37 years of ministry in elementary education as principal and junior high teacher took her to schools in Ohio, Virginia and Washington, DC.

In 1990 Sister Mary Julie Rose transitioned to a new area of ministry, serving as a secretary in the Cleveland Diocesan Education Office and then in the Chardon Provincial Secretarial Office for 25 years. She served the SND community in countless hidden ways.

Sister Mary Julie Rose had great respect and love for her family and her sisters in the community. As her health declined, Sister remained grateful for life and for all the people who were part of her journey.

### SISTER MARY THERESE BROWN



#### Chardon Region

(Formerly Sister Mary St. Pius)

December 3, 1937 – May 21, 2024

In her autobiography, Sister Mary Therese Brown calls herself "a child of prayer" because her parents, Lawrence and Margaret Grubiss Brown, had prayed for more than five years that God would bless them with children. She attended high

school at Notre Dame Academy as an aspirant and became a postulant on February 2, 1955. As a novice, she received the name Sister Mary St. Pius, professing perpetual vows in 1962.



# A LASTING TRIBUTE

Sister Mary Therese earned a BA degree from Notre Dame College, South Euclid, OH, in 1960 and was certified to teach high school Latin and Art. In 1969 she earned an MA degree from Bowling Green State University, specializing in prints and sculpture as well as art history. For 35 years she taught at Notre Dame Academy (Cleveland & Chardon), St. Stephen, St. Peter, Regina, Our Lady of Lourdes, and Cleveland Central Catholic High School, all in Ohio. Her ministry also took her to Notre Dame Academy in Middleburg, VA, and Cardinal Mooney High School in Sarasota, FL.

In 1995, Sister Mary Therese began a 15-year ministry as a Pastoral Minister and Director of Religious Education. She served at SS Cyril & Methodius Parish, Lakewood, OH; St. Therese Parish in Wilson, NC; and as Director of Adult Faith Formation at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Apex, NC. She especially loved accompanying adults in their faith journeys into the Catholic community. Back in Chardon, she worked with SND Global Missions.

Sister Mary Therese was thrilled to be part of a committee that researched and designed the renovation of Regina Mundi Chapel in Chardon in 1998. She collaborated with several sister-artists to create the eternal life devotional space, with its quilted depiction of eternal life and glory.

## SISTER SUSAN MARIE SCHERGER



**Toledo Region**  
*(Formerly Sister Mary Louise)*  
July 25, 1945 – May 30, 2024

Born the first child of Louis and Rosemary (Metzner) Scherger, Susan attended St. John Elementary School in Delphos before becoming an aspirant with the Sisters of Notre Dame and attending Notre Dame Academy in Toledo for high school,

where she excelled, receiving the highest award in religion. In 1963 she joined the sisters taking the name Sister Mary Louise (later changed to her baptismal name).

Throughout her life Sister Susan was an avid reader and swimmer, spending her leisure time diving into pools and good books. Her love of reading incited Sister to pursue degrees in English from Mary Manse College, Toledo, OH, and Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. Sister taught elementary students for nine years in Sandusky, Fostoria, Norwalk, Bellevue, and Toledo, OH before becoming a

high school teacher of English and religion at Notre Dame Academy; St. Mary, Sandusky; St. Joseph, Fremont; St. Wendelin, Fostoria; and St. Francis, Wheaton. Sister then attended Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, to obtain a master's degree in library science, enabling her to become an instructor for Owens Technical College and Stautzenberger College in Toledo. Then began a 20-year career at Lima Public Library as a reference librarian, followed by some years in community service.

In 2019 health concerns led to her move to Ursuline Center and Rosary Care Center in 2021.

## SISTER ROSE MARIA MOSER



**Toledo Region**  
*(Formerly Sister Mary Ferdinand)*  
July 13, 1923 – June 11, 2024

Laurena Rose Moser was the youngest of eight children born to Peter and Catherine (Steffel) Moser. Laurena followed in the footsteps of her older sister, Agnes (Sister Mary Carmel), who entered the Sisters of Notre Dame six years earlier. In 1938

Laurena became an aspirant in her sophomore year. In 1941 when Laurena became a Sisters of Notre Dame, she took the name Sister Mary Ferdinand, later changing her name to Sister Rose Maria.

Sister was an educator for 30 years, teaching elementary students for 14 years and high school students for 16 years. Her area of expertise was in math, but she also taught religion and German.

In 1973 she eagerly joined the Motherhouse community of the Sisters of Notre Dame in Rome, Italy, where she spent many hours in prayer as an Adoration Sister and performed secretarial work until 2003. Upon returning to the United States in 2003, she ministered in the library and found joy in taking care of flowers and plants, putting puzzles together, and upgrading her computer skills.

Wherever Sister Rose Maria was, whatever she was doing, she radiated her love of being a Sister of Notre Dame. On June 11, 2024, in the presence of her niece, Sister Mary Rose Moser, who is also a Sister of Notre Dame, she slowly breathed her last breath and entered eternal peace.

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

## SISTER MARY ANNE PHILOMENA GRADY



### Chardon Region

*(Formerly Sister Mary Eamon)*  
January 27, 1944 – July 11, 2024

Anne Philomena Grady was the youngest of six children of Michael and Ann Molloy Grady. Of the four boys, the two oldest died in infancy. Anne Philomena's sister, Mary Therese, became a Sister of Notre Dame. As a student at Christ

the King Parish School in Cleveland, and then at Regina High School in South Euclid, Anne Philomena was also considering religious life. For a time, she was drawn to the Maryknoll Sisters, who were founded to serve in missions outside the United States. Discernment and fervent prayer to do whatever God willed led her to Notre Dame. Anne Philomena became a postulant on July 2, 1961; at investment she received the name Sister Mary Eamon.

A BS from St. John College, Cleveland in 1968, and a master's degree in 1980 from Bowling Green State University, both in Ohio, prepared Sister Mary Anne Philomena for 42 years of ministry as a teacher of primary students. Most of these assignments were in second grade. Preparing the children for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion was a great gift of faith and joy she shared with hundreds of children.

Sister Mary Anne Philomena ministered in nine schools: St. Paschal Baylon, Highland Heights; St. Joseph, Youngstown; St. James, Warren; St. Joseph, Randolph; St. Mary, Massillon; St. Aloysius, East Liverpool; and Metro Catholic School, Cleveland, all in Ohio. She also served at St. Anne School, Arlington, VA, and at Our Lady of Victory School in Washington, DC. From 2009 to 2011, she was a tutor at Metro Catholic School, and from 2011-2020 at Notre Dame Elementary School, Chardon.

For the past 12 years, Sister Mary Anne Philomena was engaged in the ministry of prayer, praise, and presence at the SND Center, Chardon. She served her sisters in the community in many ways. Earlier this summer, Sister Mary Anne Philomena celebrated her 60th anniversary of religious life—her Diamond Jubilee—with family, friends, co-workers, and religious sisters. May her life on earth and new life in heaven shine brightly in God's love.

## SISTER MARY JOENITA SCHLUETER



### Covington Region


March 27, 1944 – July 30, 2024

Janice Thelma Schlueter was born into the loving family of Thelma and Elmer Schlueter on March 27, 1944. She was their only child. Janice attended St. Martin School in Cheviot, Ohio, where she came to know the Sisters of Notre Dame. By the eighth grade

Janice was convinced that she wanted to follow them and become a sister. After graduating from Mother of Mercy High School, she entered the Sisters of Notre Dame, and made her first profession of vows in 1965. Sister Joenita was then assigned to assist at St. Joseph Heights infirmary, Lourdes Hall, while pursuing a nursing education in practical nursing at Northern Kentucky Vocational School of Practical Nursing.

Upon receiving her degree, Sister continued her ministry as staff nurse at Lourdes Hall and then worked three years at St. Charles Nursing Home. She then went to Morehead State University to earn her RN associate degree and worked at St. Claire Hospital on the surgical floor and in the emergency room. In 1977 Sister Joenita returned to St. Charles Nursing Home as Director of Nursing for nine years, after which she attended Northern Kentucky University for her bachelor's degree in nursing. She continued at St. Charles Nursing Home, working as the evening shift supervisor. In 1994 she returned to Lourdes Hall as head nurse.

Sister Joenita returned to St. Claire in 2002. She continued to serve there as a Registered Nurse, a bedside nurse, a Clinical Research Analyst in Oncology, and then as a Patient Satisfaction Liaison. Sister Joenita retired from St. Claire in 2015 and returned home to St. Joseph Heights.

Shortly after her return, she moved to Lourdes Hall where she continued to share her kindness, sense of humor, and creativity, as well as her care for her sisters and others. 





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](http://www.sndusa.org)

**Chardon Office Prayer Line**

440-279-1163 or [prayersCH@sndusa.org](mailto:prayersCH@sndusa.org)

**Toledo Office Prayer Line**

[prayersTO@sndusa.org](mailto:prayersTO@sndusa.org)

**Covington Office Prayer Line**

859-291-2040 or [prayersKY@sndusa.org](mailto:prayersKY@sndusa.org)

**Thousand Oaks Office Prayer Line**

[prayersCA@sndusa.org](mailto:prayersCA@sndusa.org)

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# SHINE

WOMEN'S SUMMIT

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THURSDAY 07  
NOV 24  
PARKWAY PLACE  
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DOORS OPEN  
4:00 PM  
PROGRAM  
5:30 PM

*Join the Sisters of Notre Dame and women of all ages, faiths and backgrounds to support, honor, inspire, nurture and empower each other!*

*Event Agenda*

- 4:00 Doors Open for Welcome Reception and Nonprofit Expo.
- 5:30 Welcome (Dinner is Served)
- 5:45 Panel Discussion
- 6:30 Keynote Conversation
- 7:15 Women Who SHINE Ceremony
- 7:30 Dessert Reception and Book Signing with Dr. Sullivan



Keynote Guest:  
*Dr. Kathy Sullivan*  
First American Woman  
to Walk in Space



\$50 ticket includes dinner

For more information on SHINE or to purchase tickets scan here.

Questions? Call 419.213.0837

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