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Sisters of Notre Dame  
of the United States

California Region

*Mission Advancement Egram*

May 28, 2026

**One Heart. One Hope. One Mission.**

## MESSAGE FROM MISSION ADVANCEMENT

*...feeling the empowerment of the Spirit.....*

Dear Friends,

This time of year, graduation speeches abound which are meant to empower graduates with the vision and determination to go into the world, fulfill their personal goals and live their dreams. This egram comes while we are still feeling the gifts of the Holy Spirit from last Sunday's celebration of Pentecost. The Spirit's empowerment is far greater than any type of secular empowerment, for the Spirit's graces provide strength, resilience and courage to live Jesus' example of trust, generosity and forgiveness.



With hearts full of gratitude, we are excited to share our latest "empowerment tool." A \$50,000 grant from SOAR (Support Our Aging Religious) provided a generator here at Notre Dame Center. During power failures (of which there are a growing number), our health care wing, an assisted living wing, our kitchen, dining room, community room and two elevators will all have electricity! The generator will directly benefit sisters needing oxygen and access to both floors of the building, maintain refrigeration, and be a "power oasis" for the entire community who live and work in the other areas. And special thanks to our many donors to our Life & Ministry Fund, underwriting other expenses such as installation and a new concrete, seismic-safe concrete slab for the generator. **Now that's some empowerment!**



Our mission is all about empowering lives. For example, we particularly value South Central LAMP whose mission includes empowering "women to advocate for themselves, their children and their families." We recently heard the story of a mother who enrolled her two autistic preschoolers in LAMP's early literacy program. Meanwhile, she learned to advocate for their needs. As a result of LAMP's programs and dedicated staff, her children are now middle-schoolers on the honor roll! **Now that's empowerment!** ([Follow this link](#) to learn how you can touch lives through LAMP!)

As spiritual and financial partners with the Sisters of Notre Dame, you are empowering many lives, like those featured in this egram. Be assured of our heartfelt gratitude and prayers for you and your loved ones and **may you feel the empowerment of the Spirit!**

Blessings always,

Blessings always,  
Sr. Lisa Megaffin, S.N.D.  
Director of Mission Advancement Services

## FROM THE CALIFORNIA GRAPEVINE

*...all around town...and the world!*

## Meeting new friends at the CALL Cinco de Mayo Fundraiser

Sister Shawn Doyle and Sister Judeen Julier attended the CALL (Catholic Association for Latino Leadership) Cinco de Mayo Fundraiser for Catholic Education. CALL is an organization founded by Archbishop Jose Gomez to help young Latino(a)s blend their faith and careers, supported by professional and spiritual mentors.



While interacting with the guests, the sisters met former SND colleagues, the grandmother of a current Notre Dame Academy senior, a young adult participant in a silent retreat at Notre Dame Center, and seminarians from St. John's in Camarillo, among others. This event was a great opportunity to network and share social energy for community and ministry. [Follow this link to learn more](#) about CALL.

## Making a difference at the Notre Dame Academy Gala

The community of Notre Dame Academy gathered earlier this month for the 7th Annual Making a Difference Gala. The festivities were powerful in providing financial support for the students since all of the proceeds will provide tuition assistance to nearly 45% of the students receiving aid.



Sister Anna Maria Vasquez is shown here with Francis Costanzo, her fifth grade student at St. Helen's School in South Gate.



Sister Gina Marie Blunck presented the Spirit of NDA Award to Bruno and Ellen Tonin. Bruno was NDA's Director of Facilities.



Sister Leanne Hubbard shares memories with Rev. Marinello Seguin, her former student and now pastor of Our Lady of Grace Church in Encino, and Betsy Ward, Director of Mission and Ministry at NDA.



Sister Antoinette Moon, an NDA graduate chats with Sister Donna Appert, a current NDA faculty member.

## Latest clips from Uganda

Here is a video of children at St. Julie's Mission thanking donors for new shoes--a real treat for them. In the background, be sure to note the model airplane which is part of their playground equipment!

To view a showcase of videos from the students in Buseesa, Uganda, [follow this link](#). Features include a patriotic dance, Easter Alleluias and a rehearsal for a national music and dance competition. Special thanks to the thousands of donors who have enabled this SND mission make the good God known and loved over the years!



Unmute



*Mission Moment*

**Honoring Marty & Eileen Garcia ~ Sharing hope!**



Marty and Eileen Garcia take their covenant to live as SND Associates very seriously, especially their commitment to be a hope-filled presence in the world. Eileen has been a volunteer through Helping Hands at St. Julie Billiard Parish in Newbury Park. Marty is a retired executive from CBS and Many Mansions board member.

Marty's mother, Vicky, was a child of immigrant parents from Spain. She loved school and education but attained only a 4th grade education. Although she could never realize her dream of becoming a teacher, she fulfilled

part of her goal by working as a teacher's aide. Her love of children and her bilingual skills enabled her to work well into her mid-80's. After Vicky passed away, they learned of the enormous impact she had on her students, primarily because she cared deeply for each child. She had the innate ability to build positive self-esteem regardless of a child's disability or family situation.

In 2013, Marty and Eileen established Vicky's Scholarship Fund to share her legacy and to benefit residents of Many Mansions. Since its inception, more than \$377,000 Vicky's Scholarships have been awarded to 171 individuals, providing personal encouragement and a pathway out of poverty. [Follow this link](#) to read the stories of the 2025 Vicky's Scholarship recipients and prepare to be inspired...and to experience hope!

*Mission Moment is a regular column in our monthly egram. We will feature SNDs, Associates, and ministry partners who exemplify the SND spirit and mission. To make suggestions and provide testimonials, please email [infoca@sndusa.org](mailto:infoca@sndusa.org).*

**CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS**

*...living with one heart, one hope, one mission*

**Friday, June 12 - 5:00 p.m. (Pacific time)**  
Online

**Young Adult Faith Sharing**

Join young adults from across the country to reflect and share on the Sunday Gospel on the second Friday of each month. All young adults are welcome. And feel free to share this invitation with any young adult in your life seeking meaningful connections rooted in prayer. To register, contact Sr. Val Roxburgh via [email](#) or text to 805-452-9699.





**Saturday and Sunday, June 20 - 21**

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish  
El Monte, California

**Saturday and Sunday, July 11-12**

St. Michael Parish  
Livermore, California

**Mission Co-operative Update and Appeal**

The Sisters of Notre Dame are grateful to share our passion for our global missions in various Catholic churches across the United States this summer. We look forward to sharing the impact of your spiritual support and financial generosity. Thank you for joining us in making the good God known and loved! Additional locations and dates will be published in the coming months. For further information, please contact Sister Lisa Megaffin via email.



**Saturday, June 27 - 1:00 p.m.**

St. Julie Billiard Parish  
Newbury Park

**Flag Pole Dedication & USA 250th Birthday Extravaganza**

To honor the 250th birthday of the USA, St. Julie's is hosting a special celebration from noon until 4:00 p.m. At 1:00 p.m., there will be the blessing of a flagpole and adjoining commemorative wall. The SNDs are proud to support this timeless symbol of our shared faith and patriotism.

**Saturday, July 11 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Mary & Joseph Retreat Center  
Rancho Palos Verdes

**Women's Discernment Retreat**

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles is hosting this retreat for single women ages 18-39. This retreat will offer a relaxed, prayerful space to listen for God's voice in a loud world. Participants will meet consecrated women, spend time in Eucharistic adoration, attend Mass and reflect on their personal vocational paths. Registration is free, but the RSVP deadline is July 1. For further information, email Sister Leanne Hubbard or to register, follow the QR code on this flyer.



**Saturday, July 25 - 12:00 noon**  
St. Maximilian Kolbe Church  
Westlake Village

**2026 SND Jubilee Mass and Reception**

We will be honoring eight Sisters of Notre Dame for their years of dedication to God and the Church. We congratulate.

**JUBILEE OF JOY ~ 75 YEARS**  
Sister Mary Antonine Manning \*

**IRON JUBILEE ~ 65 YEARS**  
Sister Mary Joanne Wittenburg \*

**DIAMOND JUBILEE ~ 60 YEARS**

Sister Gina Marie Blunck  
Sister Mary Richardlyn Jones  
Sister Shirley Marie McGovern  
Sister Mary Joyanne Sullivan

**RUBY JUBILEE ~ 40 YEARS**

Sister Donna Marie Appert  
Sister Mary Colette Theobald

The ceremony will be livestreamed [through this link](#). For further information, email [infoca@sndusa.org](mailto:infoca@sndusa.org). Please note that an asterisk indicates that this Jubilarian will be celebrating privately.

[SNDUSA Website](#)

[SND USA Magazine, Spring, 2026](#)

[2025 Impact Report](#)

[Gift of Prayer & Memorial Prayer Cards](#)

[Archives of the California Mission Advancement Egrams](#)

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The Sisters of Notre Dame | 1776 Hendrix Ave. | Thousand Oaks, CA 91360 US

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