

Trust & Dare

2010



School Sisters of Notre Dame

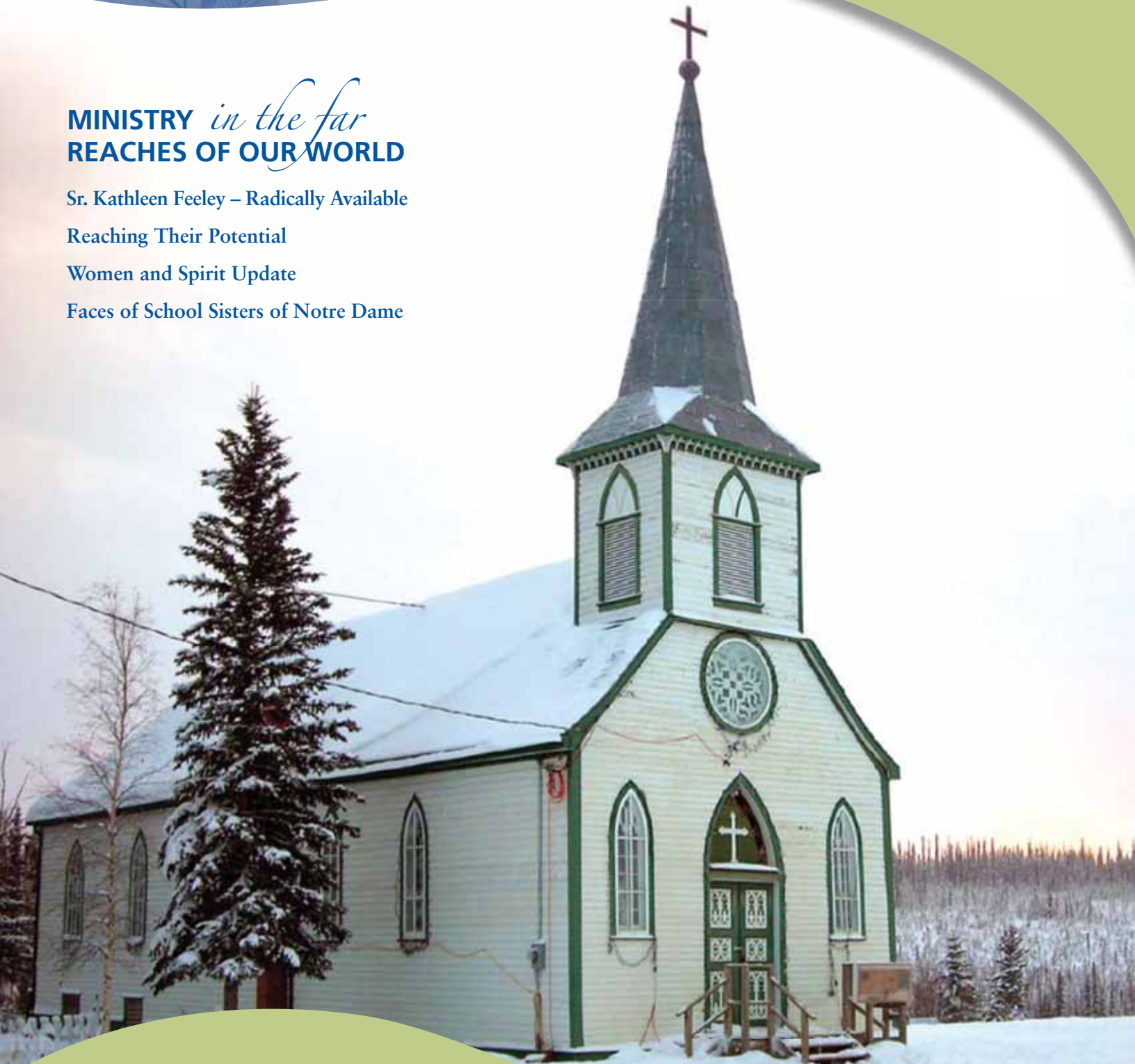
MINISTRY *in the far* REACHES OF OUR WORLD

Sr. Kathleen Feeley – Radically Available

Reaching Their Potential

Women and Spirit Update

Faces of School Sisters of Notre Dame



Transforming the world through education

Our Lady of Good Hope Church,
about 30 miles south of the Arctic Circle



DEAR FRIENDS OF SSND,

It is with great pride that I share with you *Trust & Dare*, the first annual publication of the School Sisters of Notre Dame of the North American Major Area (NAMA). The title of this magazine is taken from Trust and Dare,

a book of quotations from our foundress, Blessed Mary Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, published in 1985. Sr. Mary Margaret Johanning, general superior from 1977-1987, writes in the foreword:

To dare to risk something – small or great – because of deep trust in God and in others is a gift possessed by holy people. In the lives of such people, a decisive moment occurs in which the way of God is clear; from that moment, they dare anything and everything to do what they understand to be God’s will. They do this because of their absolute trust in their God who calls and works in and through them, even through their weakness and sinfulness.

Mary Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, was such a woman. From the moment that she was convinced that it was God’s will for her to direct her entire being to the proclamation of the kingdom, particularly to the poor, and specifically through education, she trusted totally and dared all for this cause.

In this magazine, you will read about School Sisters of Notre Dame, associates and many friends of SSND who share Blessed Theresa’s conviction and spirit. They dare to serve those in greatest need, trusting that God will work through them to make a difference in the lives of others and reveal God’s love.

As you read this issue, know that we are grateful to you, for your trusting and daring that complements and supports ours. “If we trust God and dare all for the kingdom, the world can and will be transformed.” (Sr. Mary Margaret Johanning, Trust and Dare)

Sincerely,

Sister Mary Heather MacKinmon, SSND

Sister Mary Heather MacKinmon, SSND
Chair of the SSND NAMA Leadership Conference

Our Mission

is to proclaim the Good News as School Sisters of Notre Dame, directing our entire lives toward that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent. As He was sent to show the Father’s love to the world, we are sent to make Christ visible by our very being, by sharing our love, faith, and hope.

You Are Sent,

Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame

Trust & Dare

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Professing with Song

Sr. Debra Marie Sciano, provincial leader of the Milwaukee Province, and Sr. Katie Frank, of Lake Park, Florida, sing the recessional song following the liturgy celebrating Sr. Katie's perpetual vows as a School Sister of Notre Dame at Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Bringing the Gifts

Sisters Mary Mayi-Ojo Abuh and Mary B. Odundo bring the bread and wine to the altar at Mass during the Eucharist Symposium in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



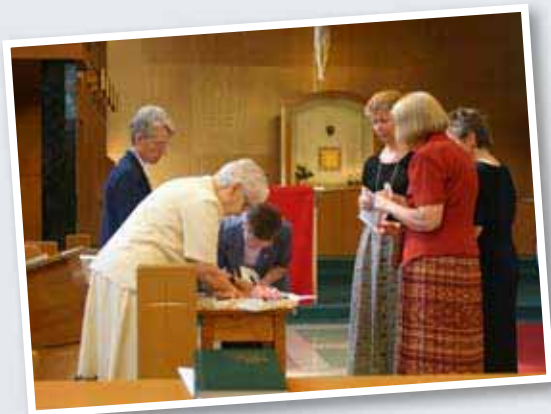
Exploring Their Roots

Sr. Annette Fernholz, of Madison, Minnesota, with two children at Earthrise Farm. The Earthrise Farm Foundation provides educational programs and spiritual opportunities pertaining to cosmogenesis, Earth literacy, organic farming, food and nutrition.



Songs of Joy

Sisters Lucy Nigh, Charlaime Fill, Catherine Bertrand, Joan Jacinta Okoth and Christine Garcia lead the sisters in song during a gathering this past summer that brought together sisters from the United States, Canada, Africa, Guam, and Japan.



Covenant Bonds

In Canada, Sisters Dorothy Goetz, Rita White and Irene Freeman (left) formally receive Liz Whyte, Cathy Heffernan and Nerina Murray (right) as SSND associates.



Renewing Vows

St. Francis Borgia in Washington, Missouri, recently celebrated its 175th anniversary. During Mass, the School Sisters of Notre Dame were invited to renew their vows. (Photo by Washington Missourian)

For more faces of SSND, please turn to page 10.

SR. KATHLEEN FEELEY – *Radically* AVAILABLE

In late August 2009, at 80 years of age, after celebrating her 60th jubilee, Sr. Kathleen Feeley returned to Ghana to begin her seventh year of service there. How did this former college president and recipient of two Fulbright fellowships end up teaching English in West Africa? The answer is threaded throughout Sr. Kathleen's life - a life of great adventure and of radical availability that has led her from Baltimore to India, Australia, China, Southern Sudan, Ghana and back to Baltimore again.

Sr. Kathleen is and always has been fascinated with the educational process and passionately committed to lifelong learning. When she speaks of education, there is a joy that floods her person. She is deeply curious about almost everything. And she loves teaching.

“I believe in working while it is still day,” Sr. Kathleen said. “The night comes. I’m doing what I love. And I’ve loved teaching ever since I was taught by the SSNDs.”

A Baltimore native and a graduate of Notre Dame Preparatory School, Sr. Kathleen entered SSND in 1946 and shortly after first vows, began her long and distinguished career as an educator.

In 1971, Sr. Kathleen was named president of the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, a position she held for 21 years. Under her leadership, the college grew and adapted to changing times even as it consciously retained its traditional identity as a women's institution of learning.

After leaving the presidency in 1992, Sr. Kathleen's life took a distinctly international turn that began when she set sail aboard a trans-Atlantic cargo ship bound for Europe. After docking at Antwerp, the freighter headed to the Mediterranean and several ports of call. Two months later, Sr. Kathleen disembarked in Baltimore. True to form, even as a passenger, she had spent time tutoring a fellow traveler anxious to learn English.

Following her sailing adventure, Sr. Kathleen flew to India to teach at the University of Madras as a Fulbright Scholar. From India, she went to Australia and served for a year as professor of English at three campuses of the nation's Catholic University system.

In 1994, Sr. Kathleen returned to Maryland to serve as executive director of Caroline Center, a newly established sponsored ministry in Baltimore. The center has as its mission “to assist unemployed and underemployed women to acquire the job skills and education necessary for finding meaningful employment.” By the time Sr. Kathleen left in 1997, she had put the center on sturdy footing and had raised \$1.6 million.

In 1998, Sr. Kathleen once again went abroad as a Fulbright Scholar and professor of English at Fudan University in Shanghai. After a year, she returned to Baltimore, to join the English Department at the College of Notre Dame.



Sr. Kathleen Feeley greets a child in the town of Teacherkrom, Ghana.

Then in the fall of 2000, a friend of Sr. Kathleen's, a sister serving in Africa, died quite suddenly. Sr. Kathleen found herself asking whether she should take her friend's place in Africa. The thought did not go away, and she emailed her curriculum vitae to several universities in Africa. Having received little response, Sr. Kathleen was almost ready to give up when she heard from Jesuit Father Michael Schultheis, the first president of the Catholic University of Ghana. His message to Sr. Kathleen was clear and direct: "Yes, come! Come right now! We need you!"

Sr. Kathleen went to Ghana in October 2003 to teach English. At that time, the university, an endeavor of the Ghanaian Catholic bishops, was less than a year old and had an enrollment of 39 students. By 2008, the school was booming and well-established, and Sr. Kathleen decided that it was time to retire.

Her retirement did not last long. In the summer of 2008, Sr. Kathleen spent 10 weeks working with the Solidarity with Southern Sudan project. It was a rigorous experience in merciless heat. Sr. Kathleen taught English to Sudanese teachers. She also worked for Bakhita Radio, a Catholic station operated by the Archdiocese of Juba.

When Sr. Kathleen returned to Ghana in 2009, she taught English to the young African religious in several communities of men and women. And, at the request of the leadership of the SSND District of Africa, she created a program for SSND leaders in education and the laity who work with them. "Partners in Mission:

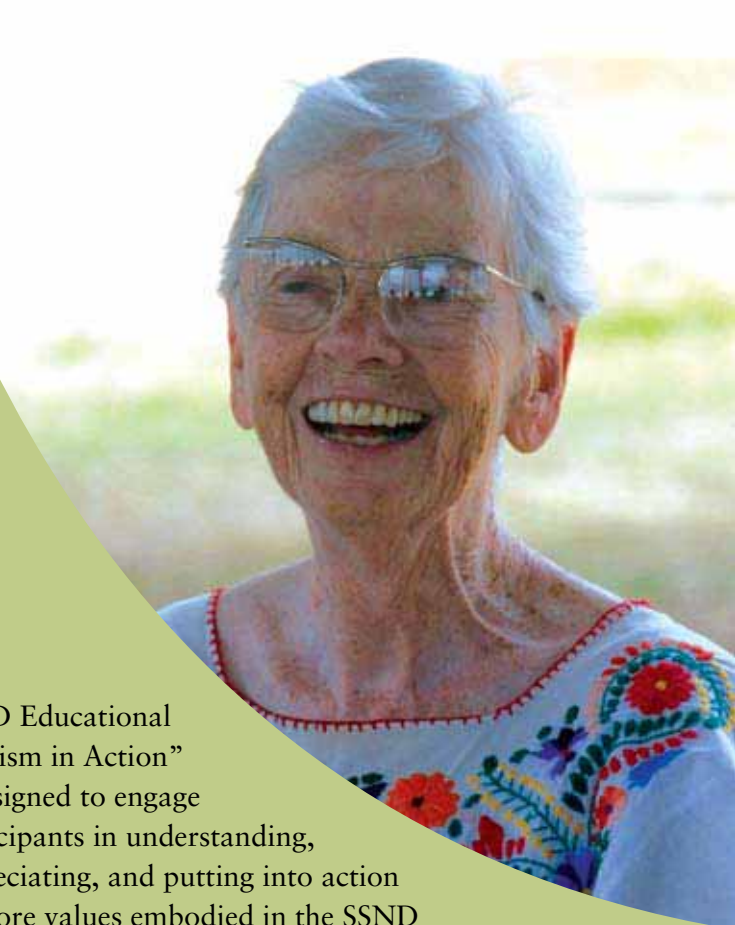
SSND Educational Charism in Action" is designed to engage participants in understanding, appreciating, and putting into action the core values embodied in the SSND history and heritage.

This past summer, Sr. Kathleen moved again, returning to the United States to serve as interim president of the Institute of Notre Dame, an SSND-sponsored school in Baltimore.

At an SSND gathering in 2009, Sr. Mary Maher, SSND general superior, challenged the participants to commit to "radical availability." Sr. Kathleen Feeley was not at that meeting. But it is apparent she had already gotten the message. It seems that for quite awhile now, Sr. Kathleen has been living her life joyfully, radically available and ready to go.

“Let’s take a chance on God, who never lets us down, and know the freedom of radical availability. We live on the edge because we are willing to take a chance. My dear sisters of the international congregation, let’s take a chance.”

*Sr. Mary Maher, SSND general superior
June 26, 2009*



MINISTRY IN THE FAR

School Sisters of Notre Dame minister in 35 countries around the world. Whether they are in large cities, small towns or remote villages, the sisters are present and visible to the people they serve. Here, we introduce you to our sisters who are living and working in the far reaches of our world – the mountains of Nepal and the wilderness of the Arctic Circle.

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL IN THE MOUNTAINS OF NEPAL

High in the Mahabharat mountain range in the Asian country of Nepal, School Sisters of Notre Dame are making a difference for the youngest Nepalese and their families.

Their presence in Nepal is a mission of the SSND Region of Japan. Sisters first arrived in Nepal in 1983, started to learn the language and worked at St. Mary's School in Kathmandu. At the invitation of Bandipur village and the Nepal Church, the sisters opened Notre Dame School in Bandipur in 1985.

Sisters André Maureen Soeté and Barbara Soeté, who are biological sisters from St. Louis, Missouri, are teachers at Notre Dame School in Bandipur, along with Sisters M. Evangela Imamura and Miriam Therese Kanaya from Japan.

Because the country was under the control of the Hindu Kingdom of Nepal, which prohibited Christian

religious instruction, the mission focused on educating the village children without attempting to evangelize.

The sisters found that many of the children at Notre Dame School were malnourished and inadequately prepared for study. In response, Sr. Miriam Therese started the Child Care Center, Seto Gurans, to better ready children for school through early childhood education.

“Given nourishing refreshment, teachers’ good guidance, and a safe and hygienic environment, children started to grow nicely and became healthier and brighter in appearance,” Sr. Miriam Therese said.

The Child Care Center was started for the lower caste, but people from other castes soon became aware of the importance of early childhood education and joined the center. Now, about 100 children come together at the center every day.

The sisters also are training local adults as teachers. They count the teachers’ growth as the most significant development in the center. With these newly trained teachers, the sisters were able to open four more Child Care Centers in Kathmandu and one in Damak in east Nepal.

The children who attend the centers learn through singing, dancing, chanting, memorizing words and playing games with other children. The sisters working



Nepalese children perform in class.



Children from The Child Care Center, Seto Gurans, in Bandipur, Nepal, perform for their parents.



Sr. Miriam Therese Kanaya interacts with some of her students at the Child Care Center, Seto Gurans.

REACHES *of our* WORLD

in Bandipur see the impact they are making. The growth in the students is visible, and it is proven when these young Nepalese join formal schools.

REMOTE IN THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

Approximately 30 miles south of the Arctic Circle is Fort Good Hope, the SSND mission closest to the North Pole. Sisters Joan Liss and Pauline Girodat live in this remote fly-in aboriginal community of about 600, ministering to their spiritual needs. A priest visits occasionally to administer the sacraments.

Their ministry includes sacramental preparation, lay-led liturgies and “being available.” Presence is a significant component of their ministry. Their home is a safe place for people to come to share their grief and joys, to relax, visit over a cup of tea or play a game.

Another aspect of their ministry is the Monday morning “church” program on the local radio station. The hour includes reflections on the readings for Sunday Mass, hymns, inspirational stories and discussion on issues of local interest. During their time at the station, which is a small room in the Community Band Office Building, Sisters Joan and Pauline work alone, operating the equipment themselves.

Being in such a remote area has its challenges. When they first moved to Fort Good Hope, they had to leave their vehicle, nonperishable food supplies and personal belongings in Hay River, where the items were then put on a barge and delivered to Fort Good Hope on the shore of the MacKenzie River. The sisters had arrived earlier by plane.

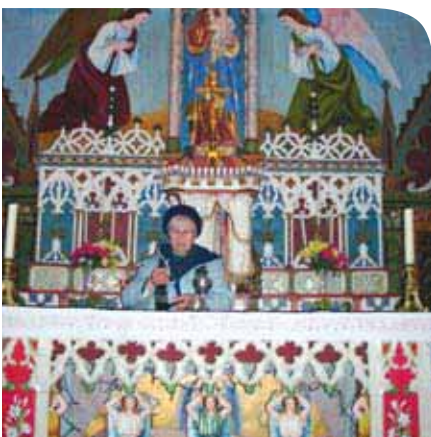
Winter lasts seven months, and for three of those months, there are only about 90 minutes of daylight daily. In the summer, there are three months of 24-hour daylight.

Travelling in winter actually can be easier than in the summer due to the “winter road,” which is a rough road cut through the trees once the ground is frozen and snow covered.

“Once you are on the winter road,” Sr. Pauline said, “there is nothing but you and nature, and so we carry winter sleeping bags, food, extra gas, logs, matches, candles, flashlights and extra warm clothing – just in case. Cell phones are useless in this area.”

Life here has its challenges but Sisters Pauline and Joan are adamant that they wouldn’t trade it for city life.

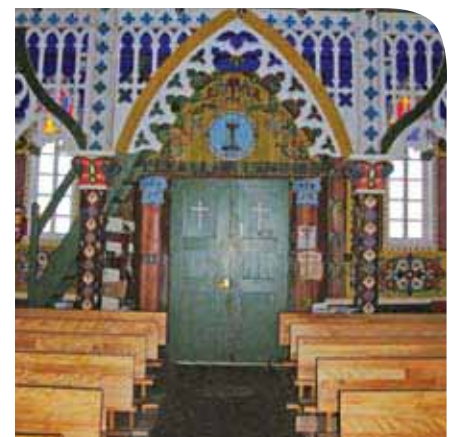
“We were called, and we were sent,” Sr. Joan said. “And we love it.”



Sr. Pauline Girodat prepares to take the Eucharist to shut-ins. The altar, like the rest of the church interior, is decorated in the Gothic style.



Sr. Joan Liss (left) and Sr. Pauline Girodat (in back), accompanied by a local girl, head out from Our Lady of Good Hope Church. The church was built between 1865 and 1876 by Oblate missionaries.



The inside front entrance of the church. Oblate missionaries painted the designs and scenes on the walls.

Reaching Their Potential

Thanks to School Sisters of Notre Dame

The School Sisters of Notre Dame have educated, inspired, mentored and motivated people of all ages, races and backgrounds. The following people who have been inspired by the School Sisters of Notre Dame share their stories on how they have achieved their potential, thanks to their former SSND teachers.



*Educated by SSNDs
in Liberia*

SOPHIE NYANUE

One of seven children, barely subsisting on their rural farm in Liberia, Sophie Nyanue could easily have found herself in the same dire circumstances as an adult. But because of her mother's commitment to education and the

assistance of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, her life has taken a much different path.

“I studied and studied and got good grades, and the sisters noticed me,”

Sophie said. “So when the sisters asked if I wanted to live in the convent, I said ‘yes, yes, yes!’ But when I told my mom, she said she didn’t have the money to pay. The nuns said that it would be all right if my mother could just give a 100-pound bag of rice every year to help with the food.”

Sophie moved into the convent in eighth grade and lived with the sisters for five years until she graduated from high school in 1977.

“The sisters instilled in us a lot of values,” Sophie said. “They instilled in us the value of hard work. They taught us to be honest no matter what the situation. They taught us to respect ourselves and respect other people. They taught us to love God from our hearts

and to love our fellow man. They taught us to give back. No matter how poor you are, you can always give back.”

During the civil war in Liberia, Sophie, her husband and children were forced to flee the country, a harrowing journey that eventually ended in Chicago in 1991. Like the families, the School Sisters of Notre Dame also were forced to leave Liberia. But last year, the School Sisters of Notre Dame returned to Liberia to help build a school for the street children in Monrovia.

Hear Sophie tell her story in the video posted at www.facebook.com/ssnd.northamerica.



*A 1982 graduate of
Notre Dame High School,
Talofofo, Guam*

MARY ANN YOUNG OKADA, ED.D.

Mary Ann Young Okada's memories of Notre Dame High School (NDHS) in Talofofo, Guam, include beginning each day with prayer, sharing ideas and experiences with other students, and an environment focused on teaching and learning.

She took the helm as the first female president of Guam Community College (GCC) in 2007. Previously, she held GCC positions as vice president of financial affairs, controller and general accounting supervisor. She successfully advocated for the development and growth of career and technical education and training for Guam and the neighboring islands of Micronesia.

Mary Ann was an outstanding student – very focused and disciplined. She graduated from NDHS as salutatorian in 1982.

“We immersed ourselves in studies, while participating in many activities that developed the whole person.” Mary Ann said. “Prayer is very powerful for so many

“For us, education means enabling persons to reach the fullness of their potential as individuals created in God’s image and assisting them to direct their gifts toward building the earth... We educate with the conviction that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons.”

You Are Sent, Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame

reasons. It calms our minds and allows us to reflect on all we do. It provides guidance when we are in need.”

One of Mary Ann’s NDHS teachers fostered her interest in finance. Her work in school finance eventually led to her current leadership position.

“I learned that things always happen for a reason and if you have the best of intentions, then God will guide you down your path,” Mary Ann said.

Sr. Jean Ann Crisostomo, current NDHS president, commented on Mary Ann’s love for her alma mater. “Mary stayed in touch and offered assistance over the years. Recently, she invited NDHS to a grant writing workshop at GCC. Mary’s faith and love of Catholic education is reflected in sending her children to Catholic Schools.”



A lawyer in Western Canada who works with the disadvantaged in society

DAVID EBY

David Eby, an active advocate for the homeless and marginalized in society, would make any Catholic school proud to call him a former student. That proud school is St. Mary’s High School in Kitchener, Ontario, founded by the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1930.

David, currently living in Vancouver, British Columbia, was called to the British Columbia bar in 2005. Today, he is executive director of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association; adjunct professor of law at the University of British Columbia; president of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network; research associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; a regular commentator on CBC, CTV and Global local and national news; and author of *The Arrest Handbook: A Guide to Your Rights*.

He also works with Pivot Legal Society, a non-profit legal advocacy organization in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. Pivot’s mandate is “to take a strategic approach to social change, using the law to address the root causes that undermine the quality of life of those most on the margins.”

“I know that a large part of why I do the work I do is motivated by the Catholic teachings I received in grade school and high school,” David said.

“That compassion for others was an active part of the curriculum and is something for which I am very grateful – compassion is a value that must be taught and modeled, and it is not often intuitive for people growing up right now. The sisters who taught me both inside and outside of class were living examples of that compassion.”

FACES

of School Sisters of Notre Dame in Prayer, Ministry and Community



Touring St. Peter's Square

Sr. Beatriz Martinez-Garcia, of Rio Grande City, Texas, participated in the international program held in Rome. The gift of the experience, Sr. Beatriz said, gave her greater understanding of the SSND mission and spirituality.



Potters' Hands

Sr. Patricia Rass teaches pottery as part of her art curriculum at Notre Dame Middle School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Tea Time

Students from Notre Dame High School in Kyoto, Japan, spent a week at Notre Dame High School in St. Louis, Missouri, where they shared a tea ceremony at the motherhouse.



Advocating for Women and Girls

Sr. Roxanne Schares, coordinator of the SSND Shalom Network for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, and Mount Mary College student Ivy Padula speak with the regional gender justice coordinator for Oxfam, Great Britain-South Africa, during the Commission on the Status of Women meeting at the United Nations.



Celebrating Their Final Profession

Sr. Mary Kerber, Africa district leader (left), and Archbishop Zacheus Okoth join newly professed Sisters Gladys Manani, Mary B. Odundo and Jacinta Ondeng in cutting the cake at the celebration following their profession ceremony in Kisumu, Kenya. The day was full of festivities punctuated with trumpet sounds, ululations and songs.



New Year's Day Peace March to the Vatican

Each year the San' Egidio Community in Rome sponsors a January 1 Peace March to the piazza of St. Peter's and joins the crowd there to hear the pope's Angelus message. Sisters living at the SSND Generalate in Rome posed among the signs of many nations, carried by participants. Left to right: Sisters Ann Schoch, Roxanne Schares, Judy Bourg, Lucy Nigh, Cathy Arata, Rosemary Howarth, Juliette Daigle, and Joanna Suh.

NATIONAL EXHIBIT INCLUDES SSND

Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America, a national traveling exhibit developed by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), tells the largely untold story of the role Catholic sisters have played in shaping the United States.

Keeping in mind that approximately 650 groups of women religious have served in this country, it is all the more remarkable that the exhibit includes five prominent references to the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

One featured item is a picture of the first graduates of the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, displayed on a panel introducing an area on higher education and women's leadership. Another panel is dedicated to SSND participation in the groundbreaking Nun Study on Alzheimer's disease.

SSND artifacts on display also include the 1944 naturalization paper of Maria Josefa Fick – Sr. Mary Leonis, a School Sister of Notre Dame from St. Louis, Missouri – and a stereoptic (3-D) viewer and cards, used in the 1890s.

In addition, one of the exhibit's videos features Sr. Catherine Bertrand, along with sisters from other congregations talking about their lives today.

Upcoming venues include the Statue of Liberty National Monument/Ellis Island Immigration Museum at Liberty Island, New York; the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa; Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles, California; and the Center for History in association with the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana.

For more information about the exhibit, please visit www.womenandspirit.org.



Sisters Jane Burke, Carole Shinnick, Jean McLoughlin, and Catherine Bertrand attended the opening in Cincinnati. Sisters Carole, past executive director of the LCWR, and Jane, current LCWR executive director, were instrumental in planning the exhibit.

Join Us in Mission

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger founded the School Sisters of Notre Dame with a commitment to the education of girls and young women. With absolute trust in God, she faced poverty, political upheaval and many other challenges, always carrying her mission forward.

Like Blessed Theresa, we are committed to doing whatever is necessary to foster our mission more effectively and to better share our resources within our international congregation. Accordingly, we are re-founding our provinces within the North American Major Area. On June 12, 2011, the provinces of Dallas, Mankato, Milwaukee and St. Louis will become one province, and on August 28, 2011, the District of Africa will become a province. In addition, the Canadian Province will integrate with the Atlantic-Midwest Province.

Our sisters continue to minister around the world with the same passion for education. We believe in the

transformation of persons, helping them to reach their full potential and so transforming the world.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame continue to look to the generosity of many to partner with us. When you make a financial contribution and volunteer your time and talent, you join the sisters who teach in inner city schools, offer help and hope to those recently released from prison, coordinate and staff a food pantry for those in need, or minister to the sick and lonely in area hospitals.

To receive additional information about joining the School Sisters of Notre Dame in their ministries as a sister, associate, volunteer, or by making a contribution, please contact us at one of the locations listed on page two. Thank you for all you do and are for the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Together, with God's help, we transform the world through education.

SISTERS SERVED IN *35 Countries* IN 2010

