



SSND

Milwaukee
Province

Winter 2007

Today

Spiritual Journeys

People have long recognized how the School Sisters of Notre Dame have helped to transform lives through education. But how is their work as educators connected to the spiritual journey? Just think for a few moments, beyond the limits of the “school room model” in education and look at the many years of learning that people must do in order to navigate their life journeys.

There is a real hunger in our world. People are searching for God, for inner peace. The faster our culture moves with its technology and materialism, the more people want to find peace in their busy lives. This desire for spiritual renewal may be witnessed in the growth of Retreats International with its listing of over 600 retreat centers in the United States and Canada.

What is spiritual direction?

The Spiritual Directors International organization defines spiritual direction as the process of accompanying people on a spiritual journey. Spiritual direction exists in a context that emphasizes growing closer to God (or the holy or a higher power).



S. Joan Penzenstadler converses with S. Mary Swanson. They recently completed a two-year spiritual guidance training program.

Thomas Merton, Trappist monk and noted spiritual writer said, “Spiritual direction is, in reality, nothing more than a way of leading us to see and obey the real Director – the Holy Spirit hidden in the depths of our soul.”

The often-used title for a person who works in this ministry is spiritual director. However, the terms companion, mentor, facilitator, guide, and partner are much preferred. The person seeking spiritual guidance meets with a companion on a regular basis (about once a month) to become more attuned with God’s action in his/her life and to respond more fully to God in all of life.

S. Sharon Roedl has served as a spiritual companion since 1983. In addition to working with individuals, she has facilitated groups and served on teams for retreats and days of reflection. Having observed how people are searching for God and for inner peace, she noted that the struggles faced in life bring about choices. The process is about recognizing God’s presence in our lives and trusting the transformation.

One of the teams she worked with during the 1980s was made up of three sisters and five laywomen. They developed a process to help women reflect

page 2 ►

Spiritual Journeys

▶ continued from page 1



What Spiritual Direction Is Not

- SD is not counseling.
- SD is not therapy.
- SD is not financial advice.

Like psychotherapy, it is often offered as a one-to-one or group experience in private sessions with spiritual mentors who have most likely completed extensive formation for the ministry of spiritual direction. It is up to you to choose a spiritual director who has the training, formation, and experience that suits your needs.

Spiritual direction includes your deity or higher power as a third partner in the process. While it may be appropriate at times to discuss personal and relational struggles in the context of spiritual direction, a spiritual director is not a psychotherapist, nor does the spiritual director provide such services.

Similarly, you may discuss financial issues in spiritual direction, but a spiritual director does not offer financial advice and any decisions and actions you may take in that regard are done without advice or recommendation, and are purely your responsibility.

You may review additional information and resources at the Spiritual Directors International website: www.sdiworld.org

on their spirituality based upon the story of Martha and Mary. She also served as a facilitator for the SSND sabbatical program offered at St. Mary of the Pines Retreat Center in Chatawa, Mississippi.

When she was part of the SSND renewal team, S. Sharon came to appreciate the renewal model used. The steps in that model were experience, reflection, choice, and action. She said it has been an honor assisting people in their spiritual awareness. For her, the ministry of spiritual mentoring/partnering has been a call from God that evolved.

With the personal and societal crises that so many people face today, the need for prayer and contemplation becomes more apparent. A key component for SSNDs is their “contemplation in action.” Blessed Mary Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger (who founded the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1833) embraced this concept with many hours of nightly prayer, along with her daytime work.

When she attended the Institute for Spiritual Leadership (part of the Jesuit School of Theology in Chicago at that time), S. Marie Regine (Gina) Redig was the first SSND of the Milwaukee province who was sent for studies to prepare for spiritual/retreat direction. It was 1975 and the province was opening a retreat center at Notre Dame of the Lake in Mequon.

S. Gina reflected that a spiritual companion is a lot like a teacher. — “Good teachers lead the student to explore, to come to the truth through prayer, discovery, being open to God and where that may take them.” She said that meeting with a spiritual facilitator, helps the spiritual seeker to be accountable. The seeker can concretely explore, “This is where I’m at. This is what’s going on. These are my joys and my problems.”

The spiritual companion ministry can certainly be seen as an expansion of an SSND’s role as educator. S. Joan Penzenstadler, who recently completed a two-year Spiritual Guidance Training

Sisters Joan Penzenstadler and Mary Swanson were participants in the two-year Spiritual Guidance Training Program offered by the Racine Dominican Retreat Program – Siena Center in Racine, Wisconsin.



Spiritual direction is, in reality, nothing more than a way of leading us to see and obey the real Director — the Holy Spirit hidden in the depths of our soul.

– Thomas Merton, Trappist monk, USA



▼ *The other side of the Scripture circle is pictured below (L to R) Sisters Susan Michelle Dubec, Alice Lechnir, and Liz Hoell*

▲ *Weekly, S. Liz Hoell gathers with a group of sisters in the NDEG community to share on the Sunday Scripture. She is pictured above with (L to R) Sisters Elinor Malsack, Anastasia Glanbin, and Regine Collins.*



Program at the Racine Dominican Retreat Center, commented on the meaning of transformative education. She said that she came to this ministry after asking, “What are my gifts at this season of my life?” Subsequent questions included: “How do we help to free the human heart? How do we break open the world of the Spirit?”

Besides her ministry as a spiritual guide, S. Joan also serves with Reiki, a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that promotes healing. It is administered by “laying on hands” and is based on the idea that an unseen “life force energy” flows through us and is what causes us to be alive. The word Reiki is made of two Japanese words – Rei means “God’s Wisdom or the Higher Power” and Ki means “life force energy.” Reiki treats the whole person: body, emotions, mind, and spirit. It provides many beneficial effects that include relaxation, feelings of peace, security, and well-being.

It is important to note that spiritual guidance does not replace therapy or counseling. There are distinctions between spiritual guidance and thera-

peutic relationships. Therapy and counseling deal primarily with problem areas of one’s life and attempt to bring healthy resolution to issues. Spiritual direction is concerned with finding and responding to God in daily life. People may pursue both avenues at the same time. See the sidebar: “What Spiritual Direction Is Not.”

After spending the first 20 years of her religious life as a music educator and minister, S. Elizabeth Marie Hoell was sent in the early 1970s to prepare to work in formational ministry. Together with 35 sisters from 26 different communities, she studied in the program, “Scripture and Theological Foundations of Religious Life for Apostolic Religious Communities” in Rome.

S. Liz noted that the statement “We are all in a lifelong process of being and becoming” (*You Are Sent*, SSND Constitution and General Directory) highlights the need that individuals of all ages have for spiritual development. She has ministered with a variety of people over the years: postulants for SSND, seminarians for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, parishioners of the Saginaw Diocese in

Michigan, and people attending retreats at centers in Wisconsin and Michigan. S. Liz was involved with “retreats for families in recovery from alcoholism,” a first of its kind offering and she served on the spiritual formation team at Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners.

In her current work as pastoral minister at Notre Dame of Elm Grove she offers the 30-week “Retreat in Everyday Life.” It is a tremendous tool for participants’ ongoing reflection. S. Liz noted that it is one of her great privileges at NDEG to be present and pray with sisters who are dying. In *You Are Sent*, death is recognized as our final yes to God and our final transformation into fullness of life with God.

If you are interested in exploring opportunities for spiritual growth with the help of a spiritual companion, it might be helpful to consider the following questions and information.



Finding a spiritual director is a very personal and spiritual quest. Spiritual Directors International suggests that you contact at least two spiritual directors to interview. Here are some ways to find spiritual directors to interview:

Call area theology schools, institutes, and retreat centers and ask if they have a list of spiritual directors.

Ask an ordained minister, rabbi, or vowed religious for names of spiritual directors they recommend.



S. Sharon Roedl



S. Marie Regine Redig

How do I interview a prospective spiritual companion?

Spiritual Directors International suggests the following questions:

- What enrichment, spiritual formation, and theological education do you have in spiritual direction?
- What is your personal experience tending your own prayer, meditation, and contemplative life?
- What is your experience as a spiritual director? How many years? In what environments? What are you most interested in spiritually?
- How do you continue your education and supervision for your spiritual direction ministry?
- What ethical guidelines do you abide by, such as those published by Spiritual Directors International?
- What type of engagement agreement will we establish to clarify roles and responsibilities in our spiritual direction relationship, such as samples provided to members of Spiritual Directors International?

Editor's Note: The Spiritual Journeys article grew out of conversations with four of the nine SSNDs (Sisters Sharon Roedl, Joan Penzenstadler, Elizabeth Marie Hoell, and Marie Regine Redig) of the Milwaukee province who serve as "spiritual directors." SSNDs also serve in following related areas:

- Pastoral care ministers..... 15
- Hospital chaplains 5
- Mental health counselors..... 3
- Therapists 2
- Social workers 2

Retreat Centers in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana Telephone Numbers / Email Addresses (if available)

WISCONSIN

Epiphany House
Milwaukee, 414-352-0108
smassoc@aol.com

Franciscan Spirituality Center
La Crosse, 608-791-5295
fscen@fsa.org

Holy Name Retreat House
Green Bay, 920-437-7531 Ext. 8296
hnrh@gbdioc.org

Jesuit Retreat House
Oshkosh, 920-231-9060
office@jesuitretreathouse.org

Marywood Spirituality Center
Arbor Vitae, 715-385-3750
marywood@newnorth.net

Monte Alverno Retreat Center
Appleton, 920-733-8526
montealverno@juno.com

Mount Tabor Center
Menasha, 920-722-8918
mttabor1@sbcglobal.net

Norbertine Center For Spirituality
De Pere, 920-337-4315
norbertinecenter@yahoo.com

St Anthony Retreat Center
Marathon, 715-443-2236
info@sarcenter.com

Saint Bede Retreat & Conference Center, Eau Claire, 715-834-8642
center@saintbede.org

Holy Wisdom Monastery
Madison, 608-831-9304
lwsmith@sbcenter.org

St Clare Center For Spirituality
Custer, 715-592-4099
stclare@coredcs.com

St Joseph Retreat
Baileys Harbor, 920-839-2391
stjosephretreat@juno.com

Schoenstatt Retreat Center
Waukesha, 262-547-7733

Siena Center - Retreats
Racine, 262-639-4100
retreats@racinedominicans.org

Sinsinawa Mound Center
Sinsinawa, 608-748-4411 ext 869
jdemuth@sinsinawa.org
sheim@sinsinawa.org

The Bridge-Between Retreat Center
Denmark, 920-864-7230
bridge-bet@bridge-between.org

TYME OUT Youth Center
Nashotah, 262-966-1800
youth@tymeout.org

MICHIGAN

Augustine Center
Conway, 231-347-3657
barbara.lhubeny@gmail.com

Capuchin Retreat
Washington, 248-651-4826
info@capretreat.org

Center For Ministry
Saginaw, 989-797-6608
roberta@dioceseofsaginaw.org

Colombiere Retreat Center
Clarkston, 248-620-2534
colombiere@colombiere.com

Dominican Center
Grand Rapids, 616-454-1241
nbrousseau@dominicancenter.com

Manresa Jesuit Retreat House
Bloomfield Hills, 248-644-4933
office@manresa-sj.org

St Francis Retreat Center
Dewitt, 517-669-8321
information@stfrancis.ws

St Mary's Retreat House
Oxford, 248-628-3894

St Paul of the Cross Retreat Center
Detroit, 313-535-9563
stpauls@passionist.org

The Hermitage
Three Rivers, 269-244-8696
thehermitage@juno.com

The Retreat Center at St. John's
Plymouth, 734-414-1111
info@TheRetreatCenter.org

Transfiguration Retreat House
Ortonville, 248-627-4355
mttabor@aol.com

Transformations Spirituality Center
Nazareth, 269-381-6290

Visitation Spirituality Center
Monroe, 734-242-5520
visitation@ihmsisters.org

Weber Center
Adrian, 517-266-4000
webercenter@adriandominicans.org

INDIANA

Angela House Retreat & Prayer Center
Michigan City, 219-873-1324
angela@adsnet.com

Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, St Meinrad, 812-357-6585
mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu

Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, Beech Grove, 317-788-7581
benedictinn@yahoo.com

Bethany Retreat House
East Chicago, 219-398-5047
bethanyrh@sbcglobal.net

Elizabeth House of Prayer
Fort Wayne, 260-424-4989

Fatima Retreat House
Indianapolis, 317-545-7681
fatima@archindy.org

John XXIII Center
Hartford City, 765-348-4008
john23rd@netusa1.net

Kordes Center
Ferdinand, 812-367-2777
kordes@thedome.org

Lindenwood Conference & Retreat Center, Donaldson, 574-935-1780
lw@lindenwood.org

Little Noddfa - Sisters of St. Joseph
Tipton, 765-675-3950
wwetli@tiptontel.com

Mount Saint Francis Retreat Center
Mt St Francis, 812-923-8817
retreats@mountsaintfrancis.org

Oldenburg Franciscan Center
Oldenburg, 812-933-6437
center@oldenburgosf.com

Providence Center
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 812-535-4531
spiritpro@spsmw.org

The source for this list is the Retreats International website. Find the total listing of retreat centers throughout the United States and Canada at www.retreatsintl.org



Alive in the Lord

- Sister Rosanne Zygmun + October 5, 2006
- Sister Mary Godfrey Kaplanowski + October 25, 2006
- Sister Mary Xavier Peplinski + November 2, 2006
- Sister Jane Marie Gard + November 20, 2006
- Sister Catherine (Mary Mona) Wilkinson + February 2, 2007

School Sisters of Notre Dame Participate in 50 Plus Fest

Sister Kyran Curtin and Carol Anschutz, planned giving officer for the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) Milwaukee province took part in the 50 Plus Fest held at Mayfair Mall April 20. SSND is one of many partners of Leave A Legacy® – Wisconsin (LAL-WI), a nationally recognized award winning program, developed to raise awareness of planned giving in our communities. LAL-WI helps non-profit partners, like SSND, serve their donors’ needs for planned giving information.



Carol Anschutz, S. Mary Kyran Curtin, and Betty Heiden participate in the 50 Plus Fest

One of the many people we met at the mall was Betty Heiden, a former grade school student at St. Mary’s in Elm Grove where the SSNDs began teaching in 1859. As a first grader, she remembers attending old St. Mary’s church in Elm Grove. “Back then it was a country church;” Betty said, “it was my first exposure to getting quiet with God and listening to that inner voice.” She has carried this meditation all through her life. It keeps her from getting frazzled in the busyness of everyday life. Betty hopes that many folks will remember how the sisters formed their students’ character and integrity; and she remembers how they “gave so much and got back so little.” They were happy serving the Lord day after day.... “Besides teaching you to be a better person, they also did the grunt work,” remembering it was the sisters who cleaned the schools, washing blackboards, desks, windows, floors, etc.

Today, Betty is aware of the problems with youth gangs on the rise and spreading to the “better” neighborhoods. She has advocated starting neighborhood-reading programs for children before they join gangs and get into

trouble, hoping to encourage them in positive ways. She has presented this and other ideas to folks who attend the Police Academy lay citizens’ classes, which meet regularly.

Perhaps you don’t have the time to volunteer for community programs like the one Betty described. However, please consider helping SSND to educate women and youth and transform the world, one person at a time, by becoming a financial partner with us. If you previously donated, possibly you are now in a position to help through a bequest in your will or other estate plan.

To learn more about leaving a legacy, visit the LAL-WI website at www.lal-wi.org. You will find several stories about folks who left charitable bequests. From there, you can connect to our website by clicking on our name, or you can go directly to our website at www.ssnd-milw.org and click on Donation Partnerships. You can call the SSND Planned Giving office at 262-787-1038 or email: ssndpg@ssnd-milw.org. There are many ways you can make a difference in the lives of others. Thank you.

New Giving Possibility — Good for you! Good for SSND!

The School Sisters of Notre Dame are excited to tell you about a new law and giving opportunity. The Pension Protection Act of 2006, signed into law on August 17, 2006, encourages financial support of qualified charitable organizations in the US through a temporary change in the rules governing an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). It only applies to tax years 2006 and 2007.

An IRA owner age 70½ or older may now make a gift of up to \$100,000 from their IRA without having to report the amount as income. The IRA charitable rollover will qualify as your required minimum distribution for 2007. This is a great way to increase the size of your gift without any tax implications. Your heirs would pay income tax on IRA funds they receive as beneficiaries.

Giving from your IRA is a simple way to make a gift and it’s a win-win situation. It benefits you and it benefits the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

We invite you to call for more information or check with your financial or tax advisor about the IRA Charitable Rollover. But hurry as this new IRA gift opportunity ends December 31, 2007.



Contact:
 School Sisters of Notre Dame, Planned Giving Office
 Carol Anschutz • 262-787-1038 • ssndpg@ssnd-milw.org

Dear Friends,

This issue of *SSND Today* brings me just shy of my first year as director of mission advancement for the Milwaukee province. It has been an amazing experience. I have learned much, and quite a bit about you, our wonderful benefactors. I've experienced not only your remarkable generosity but also your deep kindness. Those of you whom I have been fortunate enough to meet or talk with have unfailingly offered prayers for my success. Bless you! Rarely does a day go by when I don't receive encouragement. Most often, it happens with notes that accompany your gifts. These little postscripts have brightened my days. I wish I could personally thank each and every one of you for the faithful support you give to the School Sisters of Notre Dame. You have definitely made this a joyful year for them!

It has been a successful year, both in the amount of donations and in the number of new benefactors and friends. The work of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is seen as vital in our world today. For 174 years we have been helping people, through education, to find happiness and fulfillment in their lives — *success*, if you will. Here is a definition of success that I came across recently:

Successful is the person who has lived well, laughed often and loved much, who has gained the respect of children, who leaves the world better than he/she found it, who has never lacked appreciation for the earth's beauty, who never fails to look for the best in others or give the best of themselves.



This definition not only fits our sisters, but it is as good a description of you, our benefactors, as I'm likely to find. Thank you most graciously for all you do and all you are for the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Gratefully,

Irene E. Pérez
Director of Mission Advancement

SSND Today: Published By - School Sisters of Notre Dame - Milwaukee Province

Mission Advancement Department:

Irene Pérez, Director of Mission Advancement
Mary Conarchy, Communications Director
Carol Anschutz, Planned Giving Officer
La Donna Borth, Database Specialist
Wanda Kohloff, Administrative Assistant

Writing, Editing & Layout:

Mary Conarchy
Printing:
Exacta Graphics, Inc.
Questions & Comments:
mconarchy@ssnd-milw.org

Phone:

(262) 787-1032

Fax:

(262) 207-0050

Website:

www.ssnd-milw.org

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
School Sisters
of Notre Dame

Address Service Requested

School Sisters of Notre Dame
Milwaukee Province
Mission Advancement Dept.
13105 Watertown Plank Rd.
Elm Grove, WI 53122-2291

