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School Sisters of Notre Dame Form New Province

MILWAUKEE, Wis.—The School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND), a Catholic congregation of women religious, are reconfiguring and forming a new province in North America. The sisters of the current provinces in Milwaukee, Wis.; Mankato, Minn.; Dallas, Texas; and St. Louis, Mo., are uniting next year as a new province. The inauguration day is Sunday, June 12, 2011, on the day Christians celebrate the feast of Pentecost.

“School Sisters of Notre Dame of the Central Pacific Province” is the name of the new unit. “Central Pacific Province” is a reference to the central United States geographic location of the current campuses, the SSND ministries in the western and Pacific coast areas, and the sisters in Japan and Guam.

This province will have four campuses: the campus of Notre Dame of Elm Grove in Elm Grove, Wis.; the campus of Our Lady of Good Counsel (also known as the Provincial House) in Mankato; the campus of Dallas, which includes St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa, Miss., and offices in San Antonio, Texas; and the campus of Sancta Maria in Ripa (also known as the Motherhouse) in St. Louis, Mo.

More than 1,200 sisters will be united in this new province of SSND. Each city will continue to have an SSND presence, including regional offices, schools, healthcare facilities and ministry sites. While each campus brings similar gifts to the new unit, the main address for the new province will be at the campus of Sancta Maria in Ripa in St. Louis.

This new SSND province is just one of many throughout the world; School Sisters presently serve in 35 countries. The other provinces in North America are the Atlantic-Midwest Province and the Canadian Province.

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“The changing of provincial structures is not new to our congregation. Internationally, SSNDs have been actively involved in reconfiguration efforts over recent years in order to further collaborative efforts and use our resources wisely, so that we can embrace the challenges we face and better respond to God’s call,” said Sister Debra Marie Sciano, the leader of the SSND Milwaukee Province.

“By choosing to consolidate aspects of our organization, the School Sisters of Notre Dame can more easily focus on our mission, which calls us to integrate prayer, community and ministry in our daily lives. We continue to serve the needs of the poor, especially women and children, with an emphasis on transformative education. As we combine our respective resources in the Central Pacific Province,” Sister Debra Marie added, “we will continue our presence through numerous thriving ministries. At the heart of our response, we strive to proclaim the Good News and direct our lives toward the oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent.”

The sisters coming together in this new province have been talking about collaboration and reconfiguring since November 2005. After more than four years of planning, the new province is taking shape. Donors and supporters of SSND ministries will continue to be crucial to the success of the SSND mission.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame have a history of adapting to changing times to better respond to those in need. The congregation was founded in Bavaria in 1833, with its original mission to educate and minister among poor women and children.

School Sisters have been in the United States since 1847, in response to a request for teachers to educate the children of German immigrants. They quickly became respected and requested as teachers for parochial and public schools, from preschools to universities. The sisters have been serving in the Milwaukee area since 1850.

The sisters share their commitment – to transform the world through education – in various settings, including classrooms for all levels of education, parishes, healthcare facilities, prisons and social service organizations.

For more information, please call 262-787-1032 or email info@ssnd-milw.org.