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.

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

You’re Invited

Please join us for our upcoming events!

150th Anniversary Concert
September 20, 2015
Our Lady of Good Counsel in Mankato, Minn.

40th Annual Craft Fair and Garage Sale
October 10, 2015
Our Lady of Good Counsel in Mankato, Minn.

With joy in our hearts: Our new provincial council
pages 3-6

A decade later… New Orleans: Ripple of challenges and blessings continue in Katrina’s wake
pages 8-9

Celebrating 150 years in Mankato, Minn.
pages 10-11
Our world is full of division. Sadly, we see it every day in our homes, at work and throughout the world. Yet we, as Christians, are called to unity. And the SSND mission calls us to direct “our entire lives toward that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent.”

One Body.
As you read this issue of the donor newsletter, you will see Unity, Oneness and One Body being lived out every day in support of the SSND mission.
- Read about the new provincial council, which will serve in unity and oneness through June 2019.
- Prepare to celebrate the 150th anniversary of SSND in Mankato, Minn. Thousands of SSNDs have served in the Catholic schools of the area over the last century and a half, promoting unity and transformative education that continues today.
- Remember the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. SSNDs showed the true meaning of one body by their actions in the aftermath of the storm.
- Discover more about our volunteers who exemplify unity, oneness and one body in all they do to support the mission.
- Celebrate our Jubilarians who have lived a life of commitment toward oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent.

Your prayers and support are the backbone of our one body. Without you, we would not be able to continue to transform the world as God has called us to do. Thank you for your loving support.

Christine Garcia of Douglas, Ariz.; Susan Jordan of St. Louis; Marjorie Klein of St. Louis; Anna Marie Reha of Gaylord, Minn.; and Laura Jean Spaeth of Jefferson City, Mo. All seven sisters will serve on the provincial council until June 2019.

“The mission of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is to proclaim the good news, directing our entire lives toward that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent,” said Sister Mary Anne. “The provincial council’s work flows from the shared life and mission of the sisters of the province, and it is an honor to serve in this way.”

Macarena Eibar, RN, of Scranton, Penn. From 1973 to 1978, she served in elementary school administration in Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas. During that time, she transferred to the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Dallas.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province installed its provincial council June 13, 2015, at St. Mary of the Pines, Chatawa, Miss. Sisters from across the province attended the installation and Mass, which was celebrated by Father James Dougherty of the Diocese of Belleville, Ill.

The provincial council provides leadership for the province. Sister Mary Anne Owens of St. Louis was installed as provincial leader. Six sisters were installed as provincial councilors: Sisters Kathleen Bauer of Bloomington, Minn.; Christine Garcia of Douglas, Ariz.; Susan Jordan of St. Louis; Marjorie Klein of St. Louis; Anna Marie Reha of Gaylord, Minn.; and Laura Jean Spaeth of Jefferson City, Mo.

All seven sisters will serve on the provincial council until June 2019.

“She is a great woman who responded to different times as leaders in the congregation — times that were no less challenging,” Sister Mary Anne Owens was born in New York City. She originally professed her religious vows with the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Scranton, Penn. From 1973 to 1978, she served in elementary school administration in Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas. During that time, she transferred to the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Dallas.

FROM THE PROVINCIAL LEADER
Sister Mary Anne Owens, SSND

ON THE COVER
The new provincial council of the School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province: (front, from left) Sisters Christine Garcia, Laura Jean Spaeth, Marjorie Klein and Susan Jordan; (back, from left) Sisters Mary Anne Owens, Kathleen Bauer and Anna Marie Reha. PHOTO BY SISTER MARY KAY GOCH

FEATURE STORY
We present our new provincial council

SISTER MARY ANNE OWE N S
“Mother Caroline Friess and Mother Georgianne Segner were both great women who responded to different times as leaders in the congregation — times that were no less challenging.”

Sister Mary Anne Owens was born in New York City. She originally professed her religious vows with the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Scranton, Penn. From 1973 to 1978, she served in elementary school administration in Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas. During that time, she transferred to the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Dallas.
Beginning in 1978, she served as diocesan program director in Lafayette, La. Returning to Dallas in 1985, Sister Mary Anne held a leadership role as provincial councilor for eight years in the former Dallas Province. She then served several social service agencies in Dallas and Rockville Center, N.Y. That era culminated with her position as executive director of Catholic Charities of Dallas from 1998 until June of 2011, when she was elected provincial leader of SSND’s newly formed Central Pacific Province, a post she currently holds.

For 25 years, she was a physical therapist in various settings in Minnesota, including Mankato Public School District, Our Lady of Good Counsel in Mankato, University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Ebenezer Caroline Center in Minneapolis, Golden Valley Health Center in Golden Valley, and Rehab Dynamics in Fridley and New Ulm. From 1999 to 2012, she was hired by Allina Health and managed various departments at New Ulm Medical Center in New Ulm. Most recently, she served as information services site manager for Abbott Hospital in Minneapolis.

Sister Kathleen Bauer was born in Scranton, Pa. in 1967 and a master’s in geography from Marywood College in Scranton in 1974.

SISTER KATHLEEN BAUER

“My hope as we look ahead is we will continue to be about the mission we hold in common, that women will continue to engage with us as vowed members, and that our associates will be stronger than ever in promoting our charism and mission.”

Sister Kathleen Bauer was born in Chicago and a master’s in educational administration from Loyola University of Chicago in 1989.

SISTER CHRISTINE GARCIA

“Thirty-seven years of living as a SSND, personally experiencing the fidelity of God, celebrating life, and discerning and serving God’s call in community and ministry are strengths that help me to trust and dare to say yes to this new call.”

Sister Christine Garcia was born in San Antonio, Texas. She professed first vows as a School Sister of Notre Dame in 1978 in Dallas, Texas. She served as a teacher for 14 years in Dallas, San Antonio and Rio Grande. She was principal at Immaculate Conception in Rio Grande from 1991 to 1997. She was in discernment and preparation for SSND ministry in Pakistan at the same time serving as transportation coordinator with the sisters in Chitawwa, Miss., 1998 to 2000.

After returning from Pakistan in 2001, she served as vocation ministry director for the former Dallas Province, 2002 to 2007. She served as administrative assistant in the Office of Religious Education for Children in the Diocese of Laredo, 2007 to 2008. Responding to the diminishment needs of her parents, her ministry was focused on care for her parents in San Antonio while she served on provincial committees. Since 2010, she served the migrant community as volunteer with the SSND border ministry in Douglas, Ariz.

Sister Christine earned a bachelor’s in elementary education from St. Louis University in 1989 and a master of education with a concentration in open studies in 1980 and a bachelor’s in physical therapy in 1982 from Mayo Clinic and Mankato. From 1981 to 2007, she was the coordinator for the Midwest Coalition for Responsible Investment, a faith-based regional organization that collaborates with like groups and the national Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility to use the power of investments to influence corporate policies related to justice issues (such as human rights and supply chains, disarmament and nuclear power, genetically modified seeds, climate change, etc.). She simultaneously served the School Sisters of Notre Dame as a social responsibility resource person. She was a provincial councilor for the former supervision from Boston College in Massachusetts in 1991. SISTER SUSAN JORDAN

“My hope as we look ahead is our congregation will be more open and the mission of the congregation will be one of hospitality.”

Sister Susan Jordan was born in San Antonio, Texas. She professed first vows as a School Sister of Notre Dame in St. Louis, Mo. She served as a teacher for 15 years in St. Louis at Rosary, Labouré and Kennedy high schools. From 1981 to 2007, she was the coordinator for the Midwest Coalition for Responsible Investment, a faith-based regional organization that collaborates with like groups and the national Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility to use the power of investments to influence corporate policies related to justice issues (such as human rights and supply chains, disarmament and nuclear power, genetically modified seeds, climate change, etc.). She simultaneously served the School Sisters of Notre Dame as a social responsibility resource person. She was a provincial councilor for the former supervision from Boston College in Massachusetts in 1991.

JOY IN OUR HEARTS
Since 2005, she has been the director of Hispanic ministry for the Diocese of New Ulm in Minnesota.

Sister Anna Marie earned a bachelor’s in elementary education of New Ulm in Minnesota. In 1984 and a master’s in theology in San Antonio, Texas, and a Ph.D. from Mankato State University in 1997, and was elected for two five-year terms to the General Council, 1998 to 2008, in Rome, Italy. She was a campus minister with the Newman Center in Rolla, Mo., 2009 to 2012. Most recently, she has served as spiritual director, leader of various retreats and facilitator within the Diocese of Jefferson City in Missouri.

Sister Laura Jean Spaeth was born in West Bend, Wis. She professed first vows as a School Sister of Notre Dame in 1963 in Mequon, Wis. She served as a teacher at St. John Baptist in Cook’s Valley (Bloomer), Wis., 1965 to 1966; and St. Leo in Milwaukee, Wis., 1966 to 1969. She was principal and teacher at St. Francis Xavier in Superior, Wis., 1969 to 1976. She worked in the justice and peace office for the former Milwaukee Province, 1976 to 1979. She was the parish RENEW program coordinator at St. Anne in Milwaukee, 1980 to 1982; a resource staff person to further our mission for justice and peace for the SSND Generalate in Rome, Italy, 1982 to 1985; and founding director and administrator of Wellspring Renewal Program for men and women religious in Glen Falls, N.Y., 1986 to 1991. For the former Milwaukee Province, she served as provincial leader, 1991 to 1997, and was elected for two five-year terms to the General Council, 1998 to 2008, in Rome, Italy. She was a campus minister with the Newman Center in Rolla, Mo., 2009 to 2012. Most recently, she has served as spiritual director, leader of various retreats and facilitator within the Diocese of Jefferson City in Missouri.

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Sister Anna Marie earned a bachelor’s in elementary education from Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, in 2005.

Sisters Regina Kabayama and Josephine Niemann, who minister in Liturgical Fabric Arts at Sancta Maria in Ripa, won awards at the Quilt Expo at Quersey Park, sponsored by the Thimble and Thread Quilt Guild of Greater St. Louis.

Sister Marianne Kempa, who serves as a member on the Archdiocesan Synod Implementation Commission in Milwaukee, was one of two religious women appointed by Archbishop Jean E. Listecki to the commission.

Sister Theresa Markus, director of religious education at St. Peter Cathedral in Belleville, Ill., was awarded the Bronze Pelican Award by the Belleville Diocese Catholic Committee on Scouting.

Sister Mary Warner, Ph.D., director of English Credential Program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at San Jose State University in California, received the 2015 Distinguished Service Award from the university’s College of Humanities.
School Sisters of Notre Dame

A decade later...
New Orleans: Ripple of challenges and blessings continue in Katrina’s wake
By Mary Lou Frank

The governor of Louisiana declared a state of emergency. Evacuation orders became widespread. The weather reports sounded ominous. And yet, deBlanc and Dot Maniscalco recalled building a usual farewell to their fellow faculty members, punctuating their sentiment with a wink and a smile: “We’ll see you Monday.”

As in: “We’ve been through this many times before. Nothing too bad has ever materialized. We’re not worried.”

For safety, 17 sisters who served in the Archdiocese of New Orleans trekked 100 miles north to Chatawau, Miss., to the SSND St. Mary of the Pines retirement and retreat center.

“The doors also were opened to as many evacuees as they could take. It seemed as if half the world went to Chatawau!” noted Sister Marie Jo Lazzeri, assistant principal at St. Dominic School in New Orleans.

But no one would make it back on Monday as planned. The record-breaking hurricane Katrina crashed ashore that day. Its 27-foot storm surge washed inland up to six miles, claiming the lives of more than 1,800 residents and causing more than $100 billion in damages.

There was shock and horror of untold magnitude as the news unfolded.

“We didn’t know anyone’s fate,” Sister Mary Lester recalled. “We didn’t have phone numbers or know how to get in touch with school families. That was hard. It wasn’t until almost a year later that we had a Mass and there were many tearful reunions because we didn’t know who had survived. We learned our librarian had drowned and one of the mothers in our school. She’d told her sons she was going upstairs to retrieve a few things, and the storm surge came up before she could get out. All those boys could do was look on from outside.”

Sister Mary Lester remembered seeing the initial news reports and realizing immediately that “Chalmette was history.”

Immediate aftermath, New Orleans residents came together as one. Trickling back into their homes weeks and months later to behold massive devastation, barely-acquainted neighbors became immediate friends. Race had no place. Everyone helped someone in any way they could.

“That was the silver lining,” said Sister Jean Marie Blake from St. Dominic School in New Orleans. “For us, an even more consoling blessing was the fact that we belonged to a religious community and that community really came to our assistance. They helped us secure what we needed: housing, cooking utensils, whatever it was.”

“One central challenge for us has been how to overcome the true emptiness and total loss we all experienced. It called us to look deep within; to really put our trust in God.”

Sister Marie Jo summarized the sentiment: “There was no greater gift than the gift of the SSNDs during those days.”

The schools where these four sisters served (Archbishop Hannan High School, St. Dominic and Our Lady of Prompt Succor) eventually reopened or relocated. St. Dominic School’s enrollment is back near pre-Katrina levels.

Many of the younger generation are just now beginning to come back. Our area is really growing, and that’s great to see,” said Sister Marie Jo.

And while the area’s infrastructure is largely renovated and in many instances improved from pre-storm conditions, Sister Marie Jo laments that the poor continue to suffer the greatest fallout.

“Many of their homes have never been redone. The streets around their neighborhoods are still god-awful, terrible. I hate to say it, but often they’ve been shortchanged. We’re educated — we know how to go about handling getting things done. But many poor people who lost everything had no one and nothing to fall back on. It’s very sad to see. We do what we can to help,” Sister Marie Jo added.

Today, nine School Sisters of Notre Dame serve in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

The grace of time and the support of their New Orleans and SSND communities have helped the sisters heal. Today, they’ve reached a place where looking back on the devastation and challenges has given them a clearer vision of the richness of the experience and suffering, thanks to the many hidden blessings that poured forth amidst the waters of Katrina.
Celebrate 150 Years in Mankato, Minnesota

By Sister Mary Ann Kuttner

I t was Sunday evening, Sept. 3, 1865. The streets of Mankato were trimmed with branches and flags. At last the joyful cry arose, “They’re coming!” Then the patient crowd, who had been waiting since morning, saw for the first time the three sisters and a candidate whom Mother Caroline Friess, the SSND North American foundress, had promised would come and teach their children in the parish school.

Sister Ambrosia, 27, had professed her vows in Milwaukee in 1860 and taught in schools and orphanages in the East before coming to a town that had recently been surrounded by wilderness. Sister Johanna, 21, a music and English teacher, was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and Sister Rebecca, 30, who would be in charge of the household and garden, was born in Prussia. Both sisters professed their vows in Milwaukee on Aug. 28, 1865, two days before setting out on the long journey to Mankato. Candidate Mary Helling, 16, was from Fort Madison, Iowa. She wrote later, “Our little community had to put up with many hardships. The pastor had charge of 25 stations; hence the sisters had Holy Mass and Communion about twice a month.”

According to the chronicle kept by the sisters, “It was between seven and eight o’clock on the evening of August 30, 1865, when the mission sisters, accompanied by best wishes and blessing, left their beloved motherhouse. Their journey lasted from Wednesday evening until the following Sunday.”

From Milwaukee, the sisters went by train to La Crosse, Wis., and from there, by steamboat to St. Paul, where Father Valentine Sommerveisin, the pastor in Mankato, was waiting for them. Together they called on Bishop Thomas L. Grace, who gave them his encouragement, promise of prayer and blessing.

The chronicle continued: “Then the hardships of the journey really began, for the sisters were obliged to take the stage coach. The roads were so bad that neither the horses nor the driver nor the passengers could see each other.” For the well-being of both travelers and horses, frequent stops were necessary.

When the sisters arrived in Mankato, they proceeded to the stone building that would be their home.

The request for sisters

This journey to Mankato actually began in 1864 when the first request for teachers was made, as had happened with many of the schools started by Mother Caroline and staffed with School Sisters of Notre Dame. In March 1864, Leo Lamm, a member of the newly formed school board in Mankato, had traveled to Milwaukee to ask Mother Caroline for sisters to teach in their school, but no sisters were available. A year later, Father Sommerveisin made the same journey, and Mother Caroline promised to send sisters before the start of the school year. The parishioners had been concerned about the education and religious formation of their children and, with great sacrifice, had built a new church with rooms for a school and convent on the ground floor. On the first day of classes, repeated much too often during the three days. The weather was favorable, but because of a lack of rain, the roads were so dusty that neither the horses nor the driver nor the passengers could see each other.”

250 children and young people came. For two months, the sisters taught religion and many students were prepared for their first holy communion.

In November, 87 children registered for classes taught in German and English. At the end of the first year, The Mankato Weekly Record reported on Aug. 4, 1866, that the great success of this school was due to “the interest manifested by the teachers in the welfare of the scholars placed under them.”

SS. Peter and Paul Parish opened its doors on Sept. 10, 1912. When SS. Peter and Paul Parish celebrated a “Century of Service” by the School Sisters of Notre Dame in early 1966, more than 1,100 students were attending the parish schools. An additional 1,550 students attended four other Catholic schools in Mankato and North Mankato. Today, Loyola Catholic School continues to provide a Catholic education for children and young people of the Mankato area.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame are grateful to God for having been called to Mankato and are grateful to all who continue the ministry of education and religious formation that began there 150 years ago.

This was the combination church, school and convent in Mankato, Minn., in 1865. The parish was named SS. Peter and Paul only when a new church was dedicated in the 1870s.

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By 1910, 25 new missions in Minnesota and northern Iowa had been opened, and plans were made for a new motherhouse in Mankato. Mother Isidore’s “boys” supported their beloved teacher in word and deed, and the Provincial House and Academy of Our Lady of Good Counsel opened its doors on Sept. 10, 1912.

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AROUND THE PROVINCE
Event Updates
By Leah Pockrandt

Throughout the year we are fortunate to share fellowship and connect with our longtime friends ... and make new friends ... throughout the province at various events. We have had the pleasure of hosting several events this spring and summer.

In March, 700 people attended the Women’s Leadership Luncheons hosted in Elm Grove, Wis., St. Louis, Mo., Dallas, Texas and St. Paul, Minn. Guests were treated to inspirational messages, wonderful food and engaging fellowship. This year’s speakers were:

- Susan Dreyfus, president and CEO of the national organization, Alliance for Strong Families and Communities in Elm Grove;
- Patricia Martens Balke, Ph.D., psychotherapist, volunteer and alumna of Notre Dame High School St. Louis, class of 1961, in St. Louis;
- Ann Reed, singer and songwriter, in St. Paul.

These luncheons are offered to further the understanding of leadership, bringing women leaders and colleagues together to reflect on the integration of the spiritual and professional dimensions of life.

More than 500 people delighted in the Wine & Chocolate Soirées held in April and May. Great conversation and laughter filled the rooms along with outstanding musical performances. Attendees enjoyed fine fare, decadent desserts, flavorful wine and robust beers. At Notre Dame of Elm Grove, guests were treated to three musical groups: the Chris Koszuta Duo on piano and saxophone, plus a capella groups the Melodies and Gold ‘n Blues from Marquette University. The Erin Bode Group performed for guests in Maria Center at Sancta Maria in Ripa while at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Mankato, Minn., guests were entertained by Ben Marti, classical and jazz pianist.

In June we were joined by a record 110 golfers and 44 card players for the 11th Annual Golf Tournament and Card Party at Dayton, Minn. In addition to a dinner, attendees heard engaging success stories from those benefiting from ministries, Theresa Living Center and Caroline Family Services.

We are so grateful to each of you who supported these events by your attendance, through sponsorships or by gifts of products and services. Events like these are not possible without the generosity of our many donors and sponsors. Through your support we are able to continue the ministries of our sisters and provide for their care in retirement.

Thank you for your partnership with the School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province.

“Pray for us, and we appreciate the prayers when we have weddings [and] babies born,” says Gloria, who at 91 keeps herself busy not only with volunteering up to 10 hours a month, but has been a Mary Kay consultant for more than 40 years. “I’m not even Catholic, but it’s so nice that they treat me like one of theirs.”

Gloria says she enjoys the atmosphere and wonderful social interactions within “a stones’ throw” of her home. She also likes that she’s not committed to so many hours on a set schedule. Instead, she gets a call that work will be done on certain days during certain times, and she can choose her schedule. She gets credit for those hours to use toward her Daughters of the American Revolution membership as well.

“Our volunteers are a blessing to us.”

Debbie, the senior development coordinator, notes that these volunteers and the sisters who help have formed a strong emotional bond through the years. “They are very committed and dependable,” she says. “They have been there for each other through family members’ births, weddings, illnesses and deaths. They have also grieved several members’ passings over the last two years. They came looking to volunteer and found a community.”

Primarily, this group of volunteers helps by stuffing envelopes, attaching labels and stamping many of the mailings that go out from Resource Development. They are far from the only volunteers on whom SSND rely to help with their ministries.

For more information about these events, visit our website ssndcentralpacific.org or follow us on Facebook facebook.com/sspndcentralpacific.
We thank God for the 104 sisters from the Central Pacific Province celebrating Jubilees as women of hope. With great joy, we recognize these sisters for 25, 50, 60, 75 and 80 years of service to God, the Church and the world.

Throughout the summer, jubilees are celebrated with the SSND community, family members and friends at our campuses and various parishes.

Celebrating 80 Years

Sister Mary Elsa Metternich served during her early years as a Catholic grade school teacher in Blue Island, Ill.; Milwaukee, Wis.; and the Michigan towns of Grand Rapids and Harbor Springs. She followed her call to Guam in 1956, beginning a decade of teaching and administration in the communities of Tona and Agat. She returned to the classroom from 1966 to 71 in the Wisconsin cities of Portage du Chien and Sheboygan. Returning to missionary service once more, she taught in Barrigada, Guam, and in the western Pacific Caroline-Marshall Islands, until 1988. Returning to Milwaukee, she undertook various roles internationally. I was called to serve at Notre Dame Elementary School. It was a great joy to find God within the children and to nurture their hearts. After my final vows, I was sent to Nepal as a missionary. Now I realize that God has used my poverty in serving children. I participated in SSND international programs internationally. I was called to serve at Notre Dame Kindergarten in Okinawa, Japan.

Three experiences come to my mind as blessings of these years: relationships with children, missionary experiences in Nepal and opportunities of living SSND internationally. I was called to serve at Notre Dame Elementary School. It was a great joy to find God within the children and to nurture their hearts. After my final vows, I was sent to Nepal as a missionary. Now I realize that God has used my poverty in serving children. I participated in SSND international programs held in Rome: the Bonding Program in 1995 and the International Program in 2007. Those experiences changed my way of living, my values and my thinking patterns.

At my final vows, I experienced the full acceptance by the SSND Community. My heart was filled with God’s peace. I have learned the beauty of living in a faith community, the preciousness of loving and accepting others. Our lives are blessings from God. Only because God has forgiven me and wanted me to live, I am here. In the same way, each death of various kinds is also from God’s providence in deep love.

Celebrating 25 Years

Sister Mary Tokunaga was an elementary school teacher for three years after which she continued her education. She then returned to the elementary classroom and also served as a member of the last regional council in Japan. At the present time, Sister Mary is principal of the Ume no Hosbi Kindergarten in Okinawa, Japan.

Each Jubilarian is encouraged to reflect on the experiences in her life, the blessings she has received and the wisdom she has gleaned. Following are reflections from two Jubilarians who share the blessings of their life and ministry.

Meet more 2015 Jubilarians and read their stories at ssncentralpacific.org/Jubilee.