

2015 Jubilee



First Profession
1990

JUBILEE WISDOM

*Our lives are a
blessing from God.*

**- Mary Tokunaga
SSND**



School Sisters
of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

Mary Tokunaga, SSND

25 Years

Sister Mary was an elementary school teacher for three years after which she continued her education. Following additional studies, she 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 Hoshi Kindergarten in Okinawa, Japan. Before joining the order, she graduated Nakatsu Junior College. Sister Mary incorporated into Sacred Heart University in Tokyo, where she received her bachelor's degree.

A blessing of these years I want to share is ...

Three experiences come to my mind: relationships with children, missionary experiences in Nepal and opportunities of living SSND internationality. 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.

The words of wisdom I would like to share ...

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 blessing 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.

What was an especially meaningful time in your ministry?

In 2009, unexpectedly, I was called to serve on the Regional Council. The four years I served were a time of special grace. Leadership from the Generalate and each province taught me to trust and to love each member of the SSND faith community. I received loving support from the sisters of Japan and I have learned much from them. I am deeply grateful to the sisters for accepting and nurturing me, unqualified.

What drew you to the School Sisters of Notre Dame?

A mysterious providence led me to an SSND vocation retreat. There, I met Sister Lydia Kikuchi who helped me directly in my discernment. She and other sisters in the community attracted me with their lively, cheerful attitude and warm, homey atmosphere. Sister Catherine Kaifuku, guided me in a deeper prayer life and helped me to grow in my desire to live consecrated life.