



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

Transforming the world through education

2017 Jubilee

Celebrating 70 years
First Profession—7/15/1947

Sister Lauren Spence, SSND

Sister Lauren devoted the first 25 years of her teaching ministry to Catholic grade and high school students across the Twin Cities and the Winona Dioceses. The longest of these assignments included eight years at St. Michael High School, followed by seven years at Mankato's Academy of Our Lady of Good Counsel. She studied in Germany from 1978 through 1980, and began a period of service to the community at the Generalate in Rome that lasted through 1987. Sister Lauren returned to teaching full-time at Trinity High School in Dickinson, North Dakota. She devoted three years as director of the craft department at St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa, Mississippi, from 1993 through 1996. She moved to Mankato, serving in the same role at Our Lady of Good Counsel through 2001. She continues to reside there, serving as an artist on the Mother Bear Project and in prayer and presence. She earned a bachelor's in English with a minor in art from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee and a master's in art from the University of Notre Dame.



A memory I have to share...

Several times in my 70 years as an SSND, I have experienced abundant blessings flowing from my initial resistance to God's call. In 1978, I was asked to minister in Munich, but did not want to go, in part because of fearing the language barrier. Living in the same house, I made many visits to Mother Theresa's tomb. Through many conversations with her and sharing my struggles and tears, I discovered the graces I needed in the midst of the challenges. I continue to experience this deep connection and awareness of her presence in my everyday life. In 2003, I was asked to knit a teddy bear that would be given to an orphaned child in Africa through the Mother Bear Project. Reluctantly, I agreed to knit just a couple. As an employee was praying for the child who would receive the bear, I was moved by the sharing of insight: this bear might be the only thing the child would possess; it could bring comfort, love, and happiness to a suffering child; it might be a non-judging listener in the child's struggles. I suddenly knew that God could use me, through these bears, to bring children some care, love and hope. After a reluctant start and now having knitted over 2,200 bears, I feel so lucky to have a ministry that continues to touch children. I am grateful for the blessings realized throughout my life.

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