

SSNDCP Website Slider - Open Thank You Letter

*“Love is the bond that unites us with one another and with God.”
Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger
Letter #949, December 8, 1850*

Dear Friends,

As many of you know, the School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province lost nine sisters to COVID-related complications at Notre Dame of Elm Grove, Wisconsin, in December. While we started the month preparing to celebrate Christmas with no known COVID-19 on the campus, we ended the month grieving the loss of so many beautiful wisdom figures while instituting even stricter restrictions.

All of the sisters who passed away were educators, leaders, role models and powerhouses of prayer. Their faithful commitment as vowed women religious - sources of love, unity and healing to our world community - is an example for us all.

Nothing fully prepares you for any death, let alone so many unexpected deaths at one time. The sisters and staff had worked so hard to stay safe and healthy. But we, as so many other families across the world, were reminded how fragile life is and how quickly this virus can take hold.

As sisters and staff began to grieve those who had died, they were unable to observe usual grieving rituals. When the sisters' deaths became public, our focus shifted from internal, personal grieving to public, community grieving. Initially, we resisted this shift, but then we realized this was an opportunity to celebrate the lives of our sisters and help all those who knew and loved them grieve and begin to move forward.

The media coverage was unexpected and overwhelming at times. The response from the community was humbling and amazing. People from all over the world contacted us to offer prayers, support and love. We were astounded by the numerous expressions of compassion, sympathy and thoughtfulness. We never expected anything like it.

Thank you does not seem enough at a time like this, but please know how much we appreciate every prayer, note, call, email, card and gift. THANK YOU!

Today, we are pleased to share that there is no known COVID-19 at Notre Dame of Elm Grove. In addition, sisters and staff received their first vaccine Friday, January 22, 2021. While we celebrate this first step toward a new normal for our sisters, we recognize that so many continue to suffer from COVID-19. We encourage everyone to support those who have lost loved ones, those who are suffering economic hardship, and those who struggle through this time of separation from loved ones and normal activities. We will continue to pray for the health and safety of all and that everyone soon has access to the vaccine.

With peace, hope and love,

Sister Debra Marie Sciano
Provincial Leader