



VISION and Challenge

Sisters of Notre Dame ♦ California Province

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Winter 2011

Sr. Mary Kristin is Elected Superior General

Sr. Kristin wrote this reflection before leaving for Rome in mid-February:

In the fall when I wrote my last provincial's letter for Vision and Challenge I ended my letter by saying, "After the General Chapter and a little rest I will be launching into a new ministry still in the mind of God! I am sure our paths will continue to cross as we walk our God-given journey."

At that time little did I know that God's plans for me would be so life altering. At our General Chapter I was elected Superior General of the Congregation for the next six years. This means I will soon be moving to Rome and will be engaged with the help of five Assistants General in the governance of our world-wide community. The assistants are very talented and qualified women from different geographical and cultural parts of the world.

My new ministry will take me to the 14 countries where Sisters of Notre Dame are serving the people of God in education, health care, social ministries, pastoral work and missionary endeavors. It will be such a privilege to see first hand the marvelous things our sisters are doing on five continents.



Three Superiors General, in Rome (l-r): Sr. Mary Joell, Sr. Mary Kristin and Sr. Mary Sujita.

Our General Chapter articulated a new vision statement to direct our apostolic efforts. It reads:

As Sisters of Notre Dame we proclaim
God's goodness and provident care, united in:
one heart
one hope
one mission
... committed to global transformation.

As a congregation we will focus our efforts in areas that will assist us in moving forward and advancing the reign of God more effectively. These will include looking at our missions in developing parts of the world and assisting them by establishing the position of Mission Coordinator. This coordinator will give quality attention to their needs especially regarding personnel and finances. The position of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Coordinator will also be established. This coordinator will keep the congregation aware of social and environmental issues and coordinate our efforts in addressing these on an international level. Efforts will be made to network and collaborate more efficiently within the congregation so that we can be of more assistance to one another on many levels.

I know that *Vision and Challenge* will *continued on p. 2*

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SND Eco Note

Sisters of Notre Dame promote intentional sustainability of our planet. Earth Day is April 22, which this year happens to be on Good Friday. For over forty years, Earth Day has offered us an opportunity to consider our impact on the environment and make sustainable choices. Visit www.earthday.org to learn more.



Associates Share the Notre Dame Spirit with People in Need



Many SND Associates volunteer their time in parishes, jails, and other settings. In Ventura County, several associates serve the poor, following the example of the congregation's foundress, Sr. Maria Aloysia.

This winter the No Room at the Inn nativity exhibit raised \$30,000 for sixteen organizations that serve people who are homeless in Ventura County. SND Associate Nora Howells co-founded the organization which organizes a yearly benefit and exhibition at various area churches. SND Associates Mary Harris, Dick Harris and Yolanda Nunez serve on the board, and many more associates have donated time and treasure to the organization. For more details about how to organize a benefit nativity exhibit in your area, or to volunteer, contact Nora at 805-557-0323 or visit www.nrati.org.

SND Associates Pat Yost and Barbara Vernon coordinate a program called Many Meals of Camarillo. This nonprofit, non-denominational organization provides hot meals for people who are hungry at various area churches. Volunteers sign up to either provide a hot meal for 10 from home or to work the weekly event as buffet servers and guest helpers. SND Associates Joan Roberts, Jeanette Longwill, and Mary and Richard Cathcart have helped serve the meals. "It was a very humbling experience," said Mary.

Six area churches provide the meals, and many other people offer their time and talents. La Reina High School juniors Annie McKenzie and Livia Vigna recently developed the "Bunches of Lunches" program. They pack 40-50 sack lunches on the last Monday of every month for children who are guests at the dinner. "We are so blessed to have them supporting Many Meals of Camarillo," said Pat. The program offers clothing give aways once a quarter, has a bimonthly mobile health clinic visit, monthly birthday celebrations and drawing lessons twice a month for children who attend the meals. To help, contact manymealsvolunteers@verizon.net.

Stay tuned for more ministry news from SND Associates in other areas. If you are interested in learning more about the Associates program, contact Sr. Lisa Megaffin at 805-402-8623 or megaffin@earthlink.net.

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keep you updated on international congregational events. Please keep all of our Notre Dame works around the world in your prayers. If you are ever in Rome please stop by our Generalate for a visit! We can be found at Via della Camilluccia 687, 00135 Rome, Italy.

Women of Hope and Transformation: The New Province Leadership Team

Sr. Mary Anncarla Costello was named provincial superior last May. Last summer, she assembled a leadership team to assist her. Sr. Mary Rebekah Kennedy serves as assistant provincial and the provincial councilors are Sr. Mary Lisa Megaffin and Sr. Mary Regina Robbins. In mid-December, the new leadership team formally assumed their responsibilities.

As women of hope and transformation, the provincial council brings a wide range of talent and experience to the table. Like the congregation, and the world, they find strength in diversity and hope for the future by understanding the past. We invite you to 'meet' each of them:

“It is a privilege to serve my sisters in our province through this ministry,” Sr. Mary Anncarla said after she assumed her duties as provincial superior. “God has gifted our province with outstanding women who love God, strive to live the Gospel and generously serve our sisters and brothers.”

Besides her service to her sisters within the province as province leader, Sr. Mary Anncarla has worked closely with women religious of many orders in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Cardinal Roger Mahony, Archbishop of Los Angeles, appointed her Vicar for Women Religious in 2004 and since then she has served the nearly 2000 women religious living in the archdiocese. She has been well prepared for provincial leadership by her masters' degrees in theology, spirituality, and pastoral ministry



The new leadership team was educated in SND schools, as noted (clockwise from top) Sr. Anncarla, La Reina H. S. alumna; Sr. Regina, NDA alumna; Sr. Rebekah (sitting), and Sr. Lisa Megaffin, both St. Matthias H. S. alumnae.

from the Angelicum and St. John's Seminary and her experiences as a secondary teacher, province vocation and formation director and in community administration both in California and in Rome, Italy. When she isn't working, Sr. Mary Anncarla likes reading, making crafts, and writing.

Sr. Rebekah serves as assistant provincial and oversees the mission effectiveness of the many ministries Sisters of Notre Dame undertake. She holds a master's in pastoral ministry from St. John's Seminary as well as teaching and administrative credentials from Mount St. Mary's. Currently she teaches ecclesiology and world religions at La Reina High School where she appreciates seeing the potential of 16 and 17 year old girls as women of compassion and change.

In her spare time Sr. Rebekah enjoys reading, walking at the beach, seeing a good movie with friends, and chatting over a good cup of coffee. “I am excited to be on the leadership team for the California province,” she said. “I have great trust in the Holy Spirit, whose flame can ignite great fires of life in today's troubled world.”

The province benefits greatly from Sr. Regina's depth of experience in spiritual formation, which she applies to guiding the spiritual growth of professed sisters as well as new members. Her

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Called to Hope



When Srs. Mary Rebekah, Regina, Lisa and I formally began our service of leadership, we shared with our sisters the vision and the challenge of living as Sisters of Notre Dame today. Reflecting the shared wisdom of all our sisters, we articulated their hopes, dreams and aspirations.

Sr. Jean Morningstar, SNJM, a talented graphic designer, gave visual expression to this vision statement. In our graphic, the WORLD has no boundaries... just as the mission of Christ has no boundaries. The image of the BUTTERFLY reminds us of our need for a certain solitude of heart and an expectant silence as we listen for God's Word. This is our "spiritual cocoon" sustaining us just as the physical cocoon nourishes and strengthens the developing butterfly.

Being women of hope means bending low and washing feet in generous service and compassionate care, committing ourselves to transform the world... one act of loving service at a time. Just as science verifies the "butterfly effect" telling us that the single flutter of a butterfly's wing has an incalculable impact on our world, so when we live prophetically as women of hope, every one of our actions has a universal impact which can transform the world!

We invite you to join us in living as people of hope... transforming the world. It starts with each of us—nourished by Word and Eucharist, living prophetically and serving our sisters and brothers as we are able. You are welcome to join us for prayer or Eucharistic liturgy at Notre Dame Center or any of our convent homes. Of course our prayer is our greatest and best gift to you. Please share with us your intentions! Visit www.sndca.org or call 805-496-3243.

Lovingly in Our Lady, Woman of Hope,

Sr. Mary AnnCarla

Sr. Mary Rebekah

Sr. Mary Regina

Sr. Mary Lisa

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ministries include retreats for women religious and laity, spiritual direction, and serving as Assistant Formation Director of Juan Diego House for College Seminary Formation. Previously she spent 14 years directing pastoral formation and field education at St. John's Seminary and served the province as novice directress.

In addition, Sr. Regina has traveled extensively and holds masters' degrees in English from Loyola Marymount University and theology from Gregorian University in Rome. She has done post-graduate studies at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkley, Aquinas Institute of Preaching in St. Louis and the American College in Louvain. She likes to write, read, dance and swim in her free time.

Sr. Lisa brings her expertise in communications, development and finance to the leadership team. She has served primarily as a secondary educator within the California province and is currently the Director of Advancement for La Reina High School. She is also the director of the SND Associates.

Within the civic community, Sr. Lisa has been a board member for Many Mansions (a non-profit organization that provides affordable housing with life-enriching services in Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley) since 1995. Between 1999 and 2005, Sr. Lisa was a commissioner for the Area Housing Authority for the County of Ventura. She holds masters' degrees in mathematics from Loyola Marymount University and private school administration from the University of San Francisco. She enjoys photography, reading and spending time with family and friends.

These sisters will lead the province as it embraces the ever-changing needs of today's world and shares the healing touch of God's love with everyone, especially those who live in poverty. We hope you will join them on the journey.

Embracing the Freedom in Religious Life

by Sr. Valerie Marie Roxburgh



You can reach Sr. Val at 805-452-9699 or sistervalsnd@gmail.com.

In society today, vows of poverty, chastity, and especially obedience, can sound very negative to people. Obedience is often interpreted as a crushing of our own desires, when in truth it means “to listen.” Our vows are truly life giving and free us for mission in the church and the service of others. People often say to me that we need more religious and priests, but very few families, parishes and schools are actively and effectively encouraging these vocations.

Do you think Mary had all the information before her fiat, her ‘yes’ to become the Christ bearer? Do you think the apostles were given an overview of what their lives would entail as followers of Jesus before they responded to Jesus’ call to follow him? Mary and the apostles responded boldly to God’s grace in their lives. Did they have fears and concerns? Of course, but through their faith and trust in God they were FREE to respond to God’s call to radical discipleship.

If you have a loved one or friend who is discerning a call to religious life or the priesthood they need your loving, prayerful support and to discern their call without the fear of your disapproval. The call to religious life is radical! Religious life requires letting go of one’s need for security, a clearly defined career path, and illusory guarantees. When your loved one makes this leap, are you ready to leap with them?

You may wonder how you can support a loved one’s call to religious life when it may mean that your relationship with them will change drastically. Family members and friends of women who are discerning religious life often tell me that one of their main concerns is losing contact with their loved one or friend. Their concern is understandable but our

relationships with our family members and close friends do not end when we enter the convent. In many ways our relationships flourish and take on a deeper dimension. What does change somewhat is availability, just as when a person gets married and especially when they have children, their availability changes.

When a woman enters a community she spends three to four years in spiritual formation before making temporary vows and an additional five years before making final vows. This process provides a long time to discern. A vocation to religious life, like a vocation to single life or marriage, needs to be prayerfully and carefully considered. Religious life is a response to God’s call. God always wants the best for us and desires that we live happy, fulfilled lives.

Try to remember that as family members and friends who love a person discerning religious life, your primary concern is their happiness. I have never been happier, more at peace, or fulfilled, than I am now as a Sister of Notre Dame. My family and friends see this in me and embrace my choice of this counter-cultural lifestyle.

I have found in my own life that I have been able to see my sister more often since I entered the community because I lived in closer proximity to her. She once commented that she has not lost a sister; she has just gained many more sisters. Our families and friends become part of our Sisters of Notre Dame community, not excluded.

Religious life is an incredible vocation and discerners need the loving prayerful support of their families and friends. We can be free to listen to God when we foster a culture of vocation in our church today. This openness begins in our homes, parishes, and schools. I’m available to help you on this journey, whether you are in discernment, supporting a friend or family member, or hoping to nurture vocations in your community.

Young Adult Ministry Update

Srs. Mary Kathleen Burns and Valerie Marie Roxburgh are both providing retreats, evenings of reflective prayer, service opportunities, and discussion groups with young adults throughout Southern California. They have also hosted several young adult events at Notre Dame Center. The next event will be an evening of **Taize Prayer on April 9, 2011.**

Message from the Development Office

Warmest greetings to you and your family in 2011.

Eleven is also a number etched in the history of Rosa Mystica Province. “The Eleven,” as they called themselves, boarded the train from Ohio to Los Angeles on August 26, 1924, making them the first Sisters of Notre Dame in California.

In an excerpt from *Spreading The Fire: The Story of the Sisters of Notre Dame in California, 1924 – 2010* by Sister Mary Joanne Wittenburg, SND,:

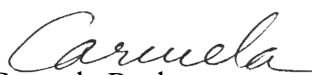
“The time traveling was spent praying, relaxing and watching the landscape change from the level plains of Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska, to the sandy deserts of Utah and Nevada, and finally to the orange groves and palm trees of Southern California. On Saturday, August 30, the Feast of St. Rose of Lima, the train pulled into the Union Pacific Station. ... This little group of pioneers separated immediately. Sister Mary Balbina, Sister Mary Alice, Sister Mary Sirana, Sister Mary Clarissa, and Sister Mary Blanche took a taxi to Watts; while Father Pierse and Mr. Emmerick drove the remaining six sisters down bumpy, unpaved Slauson Avenue to Huntington Park.”

The other six were: Sister Mary Bernard, Sister Mary Hildegard, Sister Mary Isabel, Sister Mary Walburge, Sister Mary Ellen, and Sister Mary Amandis.

Los Angeles Bishop (and first Archbishop) John Cantwell was instrumental in establishing Notre Dame foundations at St. Matthias Parish in Huntington Park and St. Lawrence of Brindisi Parish in Watts. From there, sisters went on to teach and/or administer in at least 25 more Catholic elementary and secondary schools in California making an impact through spiritual development, character formation, leadership training and academic excellence.

Today, the Sisters of Notre Dame continue to “spread the fire” by reaching out to many who are poor—economically, intellectually and emotionally. As we celebrate 50 years as a province, your support and compassion will impact improvement projects in our Uganda missions, awareness of the scope of human trafficking, and sustainability of our new ministry activities in California. We have attached an envelope with this newsletter or you can donate online. We are most grateful for whatever amount you are able to contribute. In addition to this newsletter, you can learn more about our work by visiting our websites: www.sndca.org, www.snduganda.org and www.sndrome.org.

Sincerely,


Carmela Burke
Director of Development

Join the Uganda Sponsorship Program

In 2008, graduates of St. Julie Mission Primary School returned to the mission to form an alumni association. Since then, they have gathered three times. We will write more in a future issue, but wanted to share how these former students have inspired our missionary sister:

When I reflect on the gatherings of the old students, I am left with a great deal of hope for the future of Uganda. These youth have strong ideals and dreams for their country and the Church. They want to make a positive contribution to society and have learned to think creatively and constructively to bring about their goals.

I think our donors, too, should know that their monetary and prayerful contributions to St. Julie Mission are paying off enormous dividends. These men and women will bring light to the many troubled areas of Uganda and of Africa in general. Please continue to help as you are able so that many more lights can shine here!

--Sr. Mary Colette Theobald

You can sponsor a student at St. Julie Primary School or support the mission's efforts to become self-sustaining. For additional information, contact:

Office of Development
Sisters of Notre Dame
1776 Hendrix Avenue
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
Email us at carmela@sndca.org or
phone 805-917-3714



Notre Dame Education Center in Mpala Gets Wheels

Thanks to the generosity of donors, the six Sisters of Notre Dame and five young Ugandan candidates no longer have to rely on expensive taxis for transportation to church, university, the market, or the airport. Sr. Mary Colette Theobald, formation director, can meet with the families of candidates in their homes throughout the area. Visits to St. Julie Mission in Buseesa are also much easier now. The vehicle was bought used and refitted to hold 14 passengers. "A big thank you to our donors," said Sr. Colette.



Helping Habitat for Humanity

The Sisters of Notre Dame who live at Notre Dame Center and students at La Reina High School volunteered on a house recently built in Thousand Oaks by Habitat for Humanity. Sr. Mary Rebekah Kennedy coordinates La Reina's senior service learning project and encourages students to participate in the Habitat experience. "All volunteer work is not glamorous," said Sr. Rebekah, "and so the girls have dry-walled, dug trenches and filled trenches, used nail guns to put planks up as well as doing an inventory of the Restore materials."

Sisters living at Notre Dame Center made sack lunches for volunteers once a month. "It was a real community effort to make 40 lunches each month and we enjoyed doing it," said Sr. Shirley Marie



La Reina senior Nikki Anaya was one of many volunteers at the construction site.

McGovern. The lunch deliveries made it possible for people to work longer at the building site. Twice she and Sr. LaReina Kelly arrived with the lunches to

Srs. Rebekah, Shirley Marie and Betty Mae attended the housewarming ceremony.

find no one was there. Sr. LaReina knew that Catholic Charities often fed day laborers so they took the food there. It was gratefully received and distributed. To read more visit www.sndca.org/news/habitat.

California Grapevine

Notre Dame Creations Exhibits at Religious Ed. Congress

Sister Rose Marie Tulacz will once again present her beautiful photography artwork and cards for sale at the Religious Education Congress in Anaheim March 18-20. To register, visit www.RECongress.org.

Human Trafficking Awareness Campaign Continues

Sisters Valerie Marie Roxburgh and Mary Kristina Fuller participated in the annual Freedom Walk to raise awareness about human trafficking. This year the walk took place in downtown Los Angeles on January 11, National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. The 27 block walk culminated in a fair held at Pico House. The event included Korean drummers, a mime, and a poet as well as an informational presentation about modern day slavery. Many participants signed a Freedom Wall and proudly wore blue ribbon stickers for the rest of the day. For pictures, visit www.sndca.org/freedom.

More on back page

Moving soon? Send us your new address!

California Grapevine

Sisters Speak at University Series

The University Series, an adult faith enrichment program, returns to Ventura County during Lent. Sisters Mary Antonine Manning, Kathleen Burns and Rose Marie Tulacz are presenters. For specific dates and times as well as registration information, visit www.sndca.org or www.theuniversityseries.org.

Check Your E-Mail for Lenten Reflections

Various Sisters of Notre Dame are collaborating to send weekly Lenten reflections to our friends, colleagues, and donors. Not on our e-mail list? Sign up at our website!

You can also read the reflections at our blog, In the Hands of the Potter, www.inthehandsofthepotter.wordpress.com.

More Grapevine on page 7

Women of Vision

Sr. Mary Anita Hornack is 96 ½ in calendar age, but 46 in spirit. She continues to pray daily for her former students and also maintains a wide correspondence despite her decreasing sight. Her days are a comfortable routine of prayer, Mass, meals and spiritual reading. Sr. Mary Antonine Manning reads to her every morning and they've covered 16 books together, including works by Kathleen Glavich, SND, Melannie Svoboda, SND, and James Martin, SJ.



"We're going to be women Jesuits when we've finished!" Sr. Anita said. "She's an angel."

Sr. Anita enjoys letters and visits but often struggles with phone calls due to her poor hearing. She charms students from La Reina High School and other visitors with her many stories about growing up and teaching during very different times. "I couldn't ask for a better life," she said. "We're working to be saints, but we're not saints yet."

Sr. Mary Joanne Wittenburg continues to share her love of history through writing. She recently completed a history of the province entitled "Spreading the Fire: The Story of the Sisters of Notre Dame in California, 1924-2010." Sr. Mary Joanne has also written the book "An Investment in Children," an account of the growth of the Catholic Education Foundation. Cardinal Roger M. Mahony's commitment to make a Catholic education accessible to every child in the archdiocese became a foundation that has provided more than 110,000 tuition awards especially to families living in the poorer neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

