



A
Communication
from
Yvonne DeBruin
Director of Ministry
Services

Dear Sisters, Associates and
Colleagues,

June was a busy month for the Ministry Services department, which is reflected in a longer than usual newsletter. But my joy and gratitude are overflowing with all that has been happening in Ministry Services, so I am eager to share. We started out with offering the *Claiming the Fire Within* retreat at Malvern retreat house. We were delighted that 22 participants from 13 different province departments, and sponsored and co-sponsored ministries attended. Susan Lescher, board chair of SisterHouse in Chicago, IL was recognized for concluding the Ministry Formation Program. Presenters Mary Ann Kuttner, SSND, Nancy Gilchrist, SSND, Amy Rumano, and Kathleen Bonnette from the Mission and Ministry team presented on Blessed Theresa, Mother Caroline, the evolving charism of SSND,

With Joy and Gratitude

“Faith that Does Justice,” and the SSND directional statement. A retreat staff of five, including Associates Donna Bilek and Carol Sheldon, Sisters Rita Bueche and Judy Schaum, and Yvonne DeBruin, provided for meaningful prayer experiences and facilitated the flow of the retreat. The evaluations were overwhelmingly positive, stating the experience

grounded participants deeper into the SSND history, charism and culture, and gave time for reflection and the benefit of networking with one another. We also received constructive feedback. This is helpful in planning future retreats, as we continuously seek to meet the evolving needs of our retreatants. Thank you, Sister Judy. You were instrumental in making it all happen.



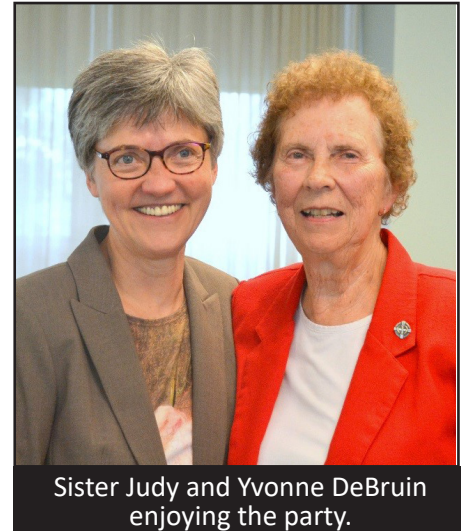
Mandalas created as part of a prayer experience during the retreat.

Sister Judy's Celebration of Many Years of Service

Nestled in between the dates for retreat and the Heritage Pilgrimage was a gathering to celebrate Sister Judy's many years of service to the ministry of sponsorship and to extend our gratitude to her. Since 2008, with the inception of this newsletter, Sister Judy has been serving the SSND mission and the sponsored and co-sponsored ministries in various capacities through the office of Mission Effectiveness, which evolved

under her leadership into today's Department of Ministry Services. Attending the celebration were members of the provincial council and her community, a member of her family, staff, and Sister friends. We all had a jolly time together. Thank you, Sister Judy, we will miss you and wish you much joy as you engage in new and fun-filled activities and explore new horizons.

We hope you will visit us all often!



Sister Judy and Yvonne DeBruin enjoying the party.

Heritage Pilgrimage to Germany, Austria, and Italy

June 18-29, 2019

For the second time since the inception of the Ministry Formation Program, 12 leaders of our sponsored ministries and directors of province departments had the privilege to travel in the footsteps of Blessed Mother Theresa. Provincial Leader Sister Charmaine Krohe also participated in the pilgrimage, as well as three participant's spouses and a participant's daughter. The group was accompanied by Sister Maria Iannuccillo, liaison to sponsorship, and Ministry Services staff members Sister Judy Schaum and

Yvonne DeBruin.

Highlights of the Pilgrimage included Vespers at the tomb of Mother Theresa at the Motherhouse in Munich and a visit to her birthplace in Stadtamhof on her birthday and baptismal day on June 20. The pilgrims also saw the tomb of Bishop Wittman in Regensburg; the site of the foundation of the congregation in Neunburg vorm Wald; and the School Center in Vienna. They enjoyed an audience with Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square in Rome and a visit to

the SSND Generalate. Interwoven through all visits, was meeting the sisters of these countries and experiencing their hearty welcome and witnessing their passionate living of the SSND charism, mission and ministry in their respective cultural and social contexts. Being impacted by the opportunity to experience this as a group, the participating leaders experienced themselves as serving in diverse ministries but being united in mission. In the following pages, the participants share key insights and transformative experiences.

Caelie Haines

Communications Director, Atlantic-Midwest Province

The most impactful persons we met along the way, were the Sisters from the other provinces. Seeing the joy on their faces in meeting their American Sisters

for the first time (or seeing them for the first time in a long time), I was struck by how connected the congregation is, even though its Sisters are spread around the

world. They immediately struck up warm conversations, and even those who did not know much English were able to ask and answer a few questions about

Heritage Pilgrimage (continued)

their ministries. The Sisters also welcomed us lay staff with literal open arms (there were many hugs given and received by those who were comfortable doing so), strong coffee, and home-baked local treats. They generously shared their time, proudly showing off the schools where they teach and the historic places in which they live. I would like to say thank you a million times over to the Council for giving us the gift of this Pilgrimage. And thank you to each and every one of the Sisters we

met for your time, your kindness, and your gift of sharing with us a bit

of the community that you share with each other.



Sisters in their chapel in Neunburg vorm Wald.

Margarita Silva

ESL Program Coordinator, Corazón a Corazón, Chicago, IL



Chapel in the Generalate.

I always knew that being part of an SSND sponsored ministry was where I was meant to be. While sitting in the chapel of The Generalate I thought I truly am where I am most needed. Being at Corazón and the work I do for all the women, men and children means something. I am changing their lives by a simple act. Through education I am

transforming not only them, but myself. I have decided to take the next step in my involvement with the SSND's. I am taking steps and going on the journey to becoming an SSND Associate. This Pilgrimage changed me and I want to share my gifts with those I am helping. No act is too small. Every act we do makes a difference.

Myra Pimentel

Volunteer and Intern Coordinator, Corazón a Corazón, Chicago, IL

Since returning from our Pilgrimage, I have had time to reflect and have shared with others this experience of a lifetime.

Learning about the rich history of the School Sisters of Notre Dame and of the obstacles they had to overcome together was inspirational. Standing in Mother Theresa's bedroom where she prayed and rested was also special. For a moment, I envisioned her in her room where it

seemed as though time had stood still and it made the experience all the more real.

Laughing and hearing each of my fellow pilgrims' reflections during the trip was something I will not forget. Mother Theresa's spirit is alive in us all, and I feel excited and energized to continue to work to unite through our little Corazón community.



Mother Theresa's Bedroom

Joan Finn Connelly

Director of Mission and Ministry, Academy of the Holy Angels, Demarest, NJ



Mother Theresa statue in the house chapel in Stadtamhof.

The charism of SSND has blessed my life in innumerable ways. During my time on the SSND Heritage Pilgrimage my understanding and experience of the Reign of God grew and was illuminated by the life and words of Blessed Theresa, together with the witness of the prophetic community of pilgrims with whom I had the privilege of sharing this journey. What I have found in the charism of SSND was a confirmation of what I've always known to be true: We are created to love . . . we are all

connected, bound to one another through a Spirit of Unity. We are called to walk together caring for one another in a Spirit of Peace. Sharing this common vision of the Reign of God with all the beautiful people on this Pilgrimage and those in the SSND communities we visited in Europe provided a powerful, transformative and enriching experience. I am profoundly grateful to God, Blessed Theresa and the Atlantic-Midwest Province for this experience.

Suzy Blackburn

Director of Associates, Atlantic-Midwest Province

The words from the Prologue to *You Are Sent* echoed in my mind and heart during the Pilgrimage: "Our charism continues to develop in the living community, which, enriched by the past, enables the congregation to unfold in the present and to be challenged by the future."

I could not help but be reminded of the shoulders on which we stand as we toured Stadtamhof, Neunburg vorm Wald, Munich, and Vienna, but I was most deeply touched by the charism alive in the warm welcome we received from the Sisters. It was a pleasure to interact with

my counterpart, Sister Christine Heider, Director of Associates in Bavaria, as we laughed together over photo albums. Present and past became one in the lively presentations of Sisters Doménica, Maria Teresia, and Beatrix. I caught a glimpse of how SSND will impact the future as I heard of the wonderful things being done to promote oneness in the SSND school in Vienna, and witnessed the ideals and conviction of the novices at the Generalate in Rome. I felt I had experienced both time and timelessness in this journey.



Suzy Blackburn and Sister Christine Heider

"I felt I had experienced both time and timelessness in this journey."

Marylou Yam

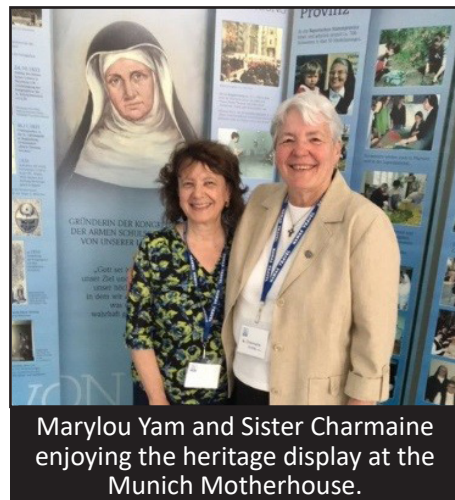
President, NDMU, Baltimore Maryland

The SSND Heritage Pilgrimage gave me the incredible chance to walk in the steps of our foundresses in Europe. As a pilgrim I was able to become immersed in the history of the SSNDs and to gain a global perspective on the impact of their work, particularly in education and social justice.

Listening to fellow pilgrims and praying with them (in such beautiful sacred spaces) inspired my personal reflection. The sheer joy of being

together (including the meals & laughter) as well as the sharing of our ministries with one another gave me a strong sense of common purpose and support.

I came away with an overwhelming sense of belonging and a feeling of community. I thought – what an honor to be part of this great legacy. I can't wait to share the charisma and happiness with others. My heartfelt gratitude to the SSNDs for this experience.



Marylou Yam and Sister Charmaine enjoying the heritage display at the Munich Motherhouse.

I came away with an overwhelming sense of belonging and a feeling of community.

Christine Szala

Head of School, IND, Baltimore, MD

Having the opportunity to travel to our foundress Blessed Mother Theresa's homeland truly was a life-changing experience. During our trip, I witnessed first-hand how Mother Theresa's apostolic mission to educate young women laid the Christian foundation for their families, their future, and their societies. Throughout the trip, there were many moments when I was able to witness dedicated School Sisters and lay people who have committed their lives to educating young women. What struck me most was it did not matter what country we were in or what language was being spoken, these individuals were living and carrying out the mission of SSND. Seeing this overwhelming devotion to a mission outside the walls of the Institute of

Notre Dame has reinforced my commitment and belief in God's work. I am truly honored to be able to put this work into place every day and see how the lives of the students who attend IND are positively impacted through

their educational experience. Due to Mother's Theresa's forward thinking and commitment to her faith, IND has been educating and empowering young women in and around Baltimore City for more than 170 years.



Maria Schelkshorn-Magas, school leader, and Sister Karin Kuttner sharing with participants how they implement the SSND mission at the School Center Friesgasse in Vienna.

Lucy Freeman

Executive Director, Caroline House, Bridgeport, CT

My pilgrimage experience solidified my love and appreciation for Mother Theresa and her mission. Her courage gave me the courage to not pull out of a recent mission trip of my own. We cannot let fear or fear of failure get in the way of God's purpose for our lives. I realized that talking about the works of SSND is not enough. You need to experience it in all its glory. I learned so much by being in the presence of preserved history and learning of the works of today happening in so many places, continuing to touch lives. I

have such a sense of pride to be in fellowship with the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

“We cannot let fear or fear of failure get in the way of God's purpose for our lives.”



Sister Maria and Lucy Freeman sharing a moment in front of a Mother Theresa image at St. Andreas Church in Stadtamhof.

Lisa Wetzel

Assistant Head of School for Academics, Institute of Notre Dame, Baltimore, MD

As I reflected upon our recent pilgrimage, the themes of legacy and love kept circling through my mind. I thought about the tiny but powerful seeds of transformational hope and change that Blessed Theresa scattered throughout Europe and North America. I pondered the challenges and hardships she faced traveling on a ship across the Atlantic to an unknown land. Her deep faith in God, profound strength of character, and unwavering determination to be a beacon of hope for poor girls in small towns and villages came alive for me throughout our travels on this trip.

Indeed, Blessed Theresa served God with “...constant joy and total trust...”

Witnessing the roots of Blessed Theresa's legacy instilled in me a renewed vigor to continue her work and the work of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. The need to educate, heal, and transform young girls to go out into our troubled city and advance change looms large over Baltimore now, just as it did in 1847. Blessed Theresa and Mother Caroline did not run from this challenge. Nor can we. I am inspired by their courage.

in Rome and having an audience with Pope Francis.

This pilgrimage was a once in a lifetime experience that has helped me better understand the SSND heritage. With this new insight, I hope to continue Blessed Theresa's legacy of love and service.



Audience with Pope Francis

I was humbled to kneel and pray on Blessed Theresa's prie-dieu. I felt a sense of awe and peace as we sang Vespers at Blessed Theresa's tomb in Munich. I prayed for Blessed Theresa's strength and vision, and I wondered how she would address the challenges that face us today. One of the highlights of the trip for me was spending my birthday



Blessed Theresa's Prie-Dieu

Laura Lang

Director of Development, Atlantic-Midwest Province

One of my favorite books to read to my children when they were young, was “Oh the Places You’ll Go” by the incredible Dr. Seuss. Little did I know those many years ago how true his words were. “You’re off to great places, you’re off and away!” To experience the Heritage Pilgrimage and live out these words with my daughter was truly a once

in a lifetime experience. I’m not sure how many people truly understand and get to know the reason behind what they do each and every day. We got this chance; we saw where it all began and why what we do still matters to this day. The mission, the charism, the beauty of Regensburg, Vienna, and Rome, will live in my heart forever.



Laura and Olivia Lang

“I’m not sure how many people truly understand and get to know the reason behind what they do each and every day. We got this chance...”

Jean Miller

Principal, Academy of the Holy Angels, Demarest, NJ

The Heritage Pilgrimage was a gift of a lifetime, one which afforded me the opportunity for personal, professional and spiritual growth. While I’ve always known the mission of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, during our Pilgrimage I came to better understand the mission, but also deepened my faith, my purpose, and my resolve.

We are all connected in the mission to advocate and educate, but to witness firsthand the work of our Sisters, to walk in their footsteps and come to know them, gave deeper meaning to my purpose as Principal of Academy of Holy Angels and gave me renewed energy to “trust and dare,” even more so when the world seems to be challenging us, and me, in new and surprising ways.

From our visits to other schools, I

learned the difference between unity and uniformity--while we are different in so many ways, and serve different populations, we are the same in our belief that indeed, the world can be changed through the transformation of persons.

The Pilgrimage was a community-building experience that helped us

to deepen connections and forge unforgettable bonds with the other travelers. As one group, we traveled across ocean and country borders but then returned to separate jobs in different places. Now, although apart, we move forward communally with our fellow pilgrims and Sisters in our hearts.



Lisa Baugh

Executive Director, SisterHouse, Chicago, IL

Nobody could have prepared us for the experience that was far beyond our imagination; Rome, Italy, Munich.....All we could think was WOW! We can say that, as a result of this pilgrimage, we are not the same people that left Chicago. We believe that the Pilgrimage was preparing us for the next phase of our lives, spiritually, personally, and professionally.

The smallest interactions became significant lessons for us. For instance, meeting the School Sisters at their Generalate in Italy was insightful and phenomenal. Learning more about the Atlantic-Midwest SSND was even more profound for us. Having ten days to spend with the Sisters gave us a totally different perspective as to who they were and what they

represent. The time we spent, praying, talking and laughing created confirmation that we were exactly where God wanted us to be. I also knew that I was right where I was supposed to be and doing exactly what I was called to do at SisterHouse.

Having had an opportunity to complete this experience with each other was definitely transforming. Prior to the trip, my husband knew the ministry that I ran and the population that I served. He was aware that the SSNDs sponsored the SisterHouse ministry. What Darnell didn't know was how the charism of SSND played a role in our present lives. He had no idea the impact and the alignment of the SSND mission with our daily life's mission.



Darnell and Lisa Baugh during a concert break at the Vienna Stock Exchange.

Sister Charmaine summarized in the words of Blessed Mother Theresa what came alive in us all, especially in Regensburg and Neunburg vorm Wald:

“Even though we are scattered throughout the world belonging to various countries and cultures, let us always maintain that true Catholic life which embraces all the faithful of the world.”



MINISTRY FORMATION PROGRAM

Another highlight for seven of our pilgrims was their conclusion of the ministry formation program. They went through all four components of the program, including the retreat, the four formation sessions, mentoring and now the pilgrimage. It was a special moment to recognize them in the chapel of the SSND Generalate at the end of our pilgrimage. Graduates were

(pictured from left to right): Suzy Blackburn, Director of Associates; Joan Finn Connelly, Director of Mission and Ministry, Academy of the Holy Angels; Lucy Freeman, Executive Director, Caroline House, Myra Pimentel, Volunteer and Intern Coordinator, Corazón a Corazón; Jean Miller, Principal, Academy of the Holy Angels; Margarita Silva, ESL Program

Coordinator, Corazón a Corazón; and Marylou Yam, President, NDMU. Congratulations to our graduates. I am happy to share that since its inception, the ministry formation program has now graduated 12 leaders. Blessings to all of you as you implement and advance the mission and charism of SSND in your own lives and ministry.



Reflection Question for Our Readers:

Blessings on your Fall, as you harvest and enjoy the fruits of summer,

Yvonne

Yvonne DeBruin
Director, Ministry Services

What was the highlight of your summer?

In what way(s) did you draw closer to God and/or to the mission of SSND?

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