

# UNITED IN MISSION

ATLANTIC-MIDWEST PROVINCE

Transforming the world through education

March 2020

## Welcome



Springtime is upon us as today marks the first day of spring! While flowering trees and shrubs greet us this day and speak of new life after a wintry season, we at the same time feel the impact – personally, within the SSND community and the entire world - of the daily reports of the coronavirus spreading. Our lives and planned activities are unsettled and we have to practice a new kind of ‘letting go’ and ‘letting come’. As the season of Lent calls us to transformation, may we draw hope and comfort knowing that we are “resurrection” people. May we also live up to the challenges of this time by proclaiming a spirit of hope. As *You are Sent* states:

In this newsletter, we will highlight Council’s work with leaders at the Annual Leadership Meeting, which took place February 6-7 at Villa Assumpta in Baltimore. Ministry Services was part of the planning committee, assisting Council with preparations as 75 leaders from our sponsored and co-sponsored ministries gathered to explore the theme “Mission Leadership in Challenging Times.” We were blessed to have Sister Roxanne Schares, SSND, General Superior of the congregation join us from Rome as a keynote speaker.

Patrick Laorden  
Associate Director  
of Ministry Services

Yvonne DeBruin  
Director of  
Ministry Services



Patrick and Yvonne with Sister Grace at her farewell luncheon December 2019

## Extending Gratitude to Sister Grace D’Amico, SSND

Ministry Services bid farewell to Sister Grace, who completed her time as Coordinator for Board Development just before Christmas. In her three years, Sister Grace conducted a board needs assessment, updated board guidelines for SSND sponsored and co-sponsored ministries, developed a framework for viability and sustainability, facilitated a webinar series covering board orientation and development, and offered board retreats. A luncheon was held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help House near Villa Notre Dame in Wilton, where colleagues, friends and a few members of Council were present to thank Sister Grace for her invaluable service and presence, wishing her well as she transitioned to the next chapter of her life. Thank you, Sister Grace, we hope you stay in touch and that we see you around.

*“We are sent to make  
Christ visible by our love,  
faith and hope.”*

*(YAS, C 4)*

# Annual Leadership Meeting 2020



Participants gathered at the 2020 Annual Leadership Meeting

Chief administrators, board chairs, board members, and senior staff were in attendance to explore the theme, “Mission Leadership in Challenging Times.” Sister Charmaine revisited SSND governance, particularly the meaning of sponsorship, reserved powers and the two-tier board, which collectively make up the current sponsorship model used by the province. Sister Roxanne followed, her keynote exploring the theme “Mission Leadership in Challenging Times.”



Sister Roxanne Schares, SSND, General Superior of the Congregation, giving her keynote presentation

Mission leadership calls us to focus on the present, not to dwell on the past or fear what is to come in the future. Sister Roxanne exclaimed, “Now is sacred. No matter how limited and imperfect our situations, our choices and actions; God is present, creating, mysteriously bringing about good, and nurturing new life with new possibilities.”

Time is of the essence and given all the minutes and seconds of our work days, it’s tempting for us to be consumed by all that we do that we lose sight of the “why.” More importantly, we neglect the need to step back from the work and reflect on our experience. The “why” of our work is a good moment for reflection, that we are called to revisit. “Why am I here? Why am I doing this work?” Sister Roxanne stressed the importance of asking this question in our ministries, “For what do our ministries, our communities, or province and congregation stand? How are we living the charism entrusted to us in a way that speaks the truth needed in our world today, in these challenging times?”

Towards the end of her keynote, Sr. Roxanne, highlighted three essential elements needed for mission leadership: transformation, contemplative practices and fostering communion:

**Transformation:** In ministry we are called to mutual transformation, of ourselves and those we serve. Sister Roxanne noted that leading for transformation “creates a fundamental shift of one’s life: in how one is in the world, how one sees the world, and how one engages the world.” She stressed that transformation does not occur in isolation. Rather, real transformation is “intertwined and interrelated with the global transformations. The three will evolve together, or there is no real transformation. There may be a change, but no transformation.”

**Contemplative practice:** Contemplation is what roots us, an opportunity to reflect on our experience and ponder the meaning behind them. Contemplation gives space for deeper engagement and if we are faithful to it, we begin to see much more in our surroundings, where we realize that our identities “are much more than nationality, culture, race, gender or other descriptive labels.



Continued from page 2

We come to know our true selves, who we are in God.”

**Fostering communion:** Building oneness and unity in our ministries requires us to foster a culture of encounter. When it comes to making decisions and working together, we are called to operate with a “we” mindset. Sister Roxanne said, “One area of growth greatly needed today is to be able to recognize the limitations of our consciousness, the sense of ‘Us,’ the who included in our encounters and relationships.”



Lucy Freeman (Caroline House) and Lisa Steward-Baugh (SisterHouse) reconnected at the Annual Leadership Meeting. The two attended the Heritage Pilgrimage together last summer.



Rachel Trask (Mother Seton Academy) and Jean Miller (Academy of the Holy Angels) at the Annual Leadership Meeting

You can access the full script of Sr. Roxanne’s keynote [here](#).

Friday evening featured a panel discussion exploring the questions: **How does the SSND lens help you navigate a challenging experience in ministry?** Sister Cathy Feeny, SSND from the SSND Educational Center in Woodhaven, NY, shared, “During these tumultuous times, I believe our women are witnesses



Sisters Debbie Liesen, SSND (Caroline Center) and Pat Murphy, SSND (Institute of Notre Dame) with Martha Welter (Corazón a Corazón) at the Annual Leadership Meeting



Participants in the Friday evening panel discussion (right to left) with Patrick Laorden: Lisa Wetzel, Institute of Notre Dame; Sr. Cathy Feeny, SSND, SSND Educational Center; Sr. Miriam Patrick Cummings, SSND Corazón a Corazón; Dr. Marylou Yam, Notre Dame of Maryland University

to each other and our neighborhood, that all can be one.”

On Saturday, participants also got to choose two of five breakout sessions:

1. Fostering Spirituality in a Diverse Environment
2. Communications: Proclaiming the Good News
3. Board Development: Promoting diversity and motivating board member to “show-up”
4. Adapting Leadership Styles to Changing Environments to Ensure Sustainability of Our Ministries
5. Development

• How does my leadership bear prophetic witness in these challenging times?

• How do I reframe difficult realities to shape a new vision for the future?

• What are signs of hope growing within me and whom I serve?



## Survey Response ...



# Thank You

Thank you for responding to our January survey, asking our readers about the types of content they would like to see in *United in Mission*. We received a great response, over 50%, with informative feedback that will give us new avenues to explore with future newsletters. Content readers would like to see in the future are:

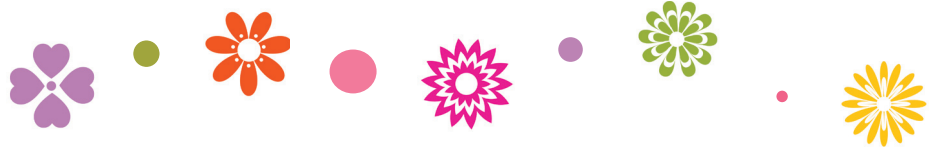
Theological and spiritual resources

Best practices from sponsored and co-sponsored ministries

Resources related to the Directional Statement

We want to ensure that *United in Mission* remains an essential and inspirational resource for you and your ministry. We will engage you in the future to build this newsletter. Thank you!

## UPCOMING Events



- **Proclaiming the Fire Within Retreat (June 22-24th, 2020)**
  - \*For those who previously attended “Claiming the Fire Within” in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017
  - \* Since the date is far out, there are currently no plans to cancel or change this retreat due to the Coronavirus situation. We continue, however, to monitor the evolving situation and will make decisions accordingly and in a timely manner.
- **Ministry Formation Session 1 (October 23-24th, 2020)**

### Resources:

- [Companion Questions for AMSSND Heritage Videos](#)
- [Lenten Board Address 2020 by Sister Charmaine Krohe, SSND Provincial Leader](#)
- [Integral Vision Video #4 - That All May Be One](#)
- [Pope Francis’s prayer to Mary during coronavirus pandemic](#)
- [A Prayer Amid an Epidemic by Kerry Weber \(America Magazine\)](#)

*United in Mission* is a quarterly publication of the Department of Ministry Services – School Sister of Notre Dame, Atlantic-Midwest Province.

UNITED IN MISSION

Yvonne DeBruin  
Director of Ministry Services  
(410)377-7774 x1153  
ydebruin@amssnd.org

Patrick Laorden  
Associate Director of Ministry Services  
(203)762-4113  
plaorden@amssnd.org