

# Sowing Goodness



God's Goodness Flourishes  
Caring for the Earth and One Another

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Sister Yvonne Bondi, SNDdeN sits with Ivy, a Notre Dame Preschool student, by the tree planted in memory of Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN, martyred 20 years ago for her courageous environmental justice work in Brazil.

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Susan Dennin  
Director of Communications,  
Managing Editor



Check out more stories and videos at our website:  
[sddeneastwest.org/our-call-to-action](https://sddeneastwest.org/our-call-to-action)



**Sowing Goodness**  
Volume 4, Number 1

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) make known God's goodness through educating for life and taking a stand with people living in poverty, especially women and children.

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## Dear Notre Dame Friends,

The mission of St. Julie Billiart—to make known the goodness of God—continues to guide the many ministries of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur U.S. East-West Province. In this issue, we highlight how her spirit lives on through our commitment to *Laudato Si'*, care for creation and the sacredness of all relationships.

As our SNDdeN Constitutions remind us, “*We recognize all our relationships as privileged opportunities for encounters with God.*” This belief shapes our work, our communities and our vision for the world.

Our feature article explores our engagement with the *Laudato Si'* *Action Platform*, developing a province-wide land ethic, and how our consumer choices align with environmental justice. We honor the legacy of Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN, martyred 20 years ago, whose witness calls us to bold advocacy for the Earth and her people.

Notre Dame Mission Volunteers generously serve nationwide, extending St. Julie's mission through education and service, and our schools continue to embody the Hallmarks of a Notre Dame learning community, cultivating leaders committed to justice and peace. Across the province, we engage in anti-racism training, seeking transformation in ourselves and society. We are also joyfully focused on Vocations, walking with young women who are discerning the call to vowed religious life.

We are proud of our international work, including our participation at the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the continued impact of the African Photovoltaic Project, which began over 20 years ago. These global efforts reflect our belief that advocacy for women and care for the Earth are inseparable.

Grounded in a spirituality rooted in the goodness of God, we find strength and purpose in our lives together. We hope this issue inspires you to see the interconnection of all creation—and the good God present in every relationship.

With gratitude and hope,  
The Leadership Team of the U.S. East-West Province



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SISTER KATHRYN KEENAN

*Sister Maria*

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SISTER VIRGINIA SCALLY



# Our Community

## A Renewed Call to Religious Life: Vocation Ministry at the Heart of Our Mission

BY SABRINA HARPER, EAST-WEST VOCATIONS PROMOTER

THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR U.S. East-West Province opened a new Vocation Promotion Office with deep intention and hope. Rooted in the Hallmarks of a Notre Dame Learning Community, this ministry is a response to the ongoing need to invite and accompany young women who feel drawn to a life of prayer, service, community and Gospel-centered living. It reflects our conviction that the charism to make known God's goodness is as vital now as ever.

Today's young adults are listening for a deeper call. According to the 2023 CARA study *Women and Men Entering Religious Life*, the average age of new entrants is 29, with over half identifying as women. Of those, 50% are 25 or younger. The most common reasons for entering religious life include a strong sense of being called (86%), the desire to be of service (56%), and the appeal of a spiritual life within a supportive community. These findings affirm what we already know: religious life offers meaning, connection and hope in a fragmented world.

The National Religious Vocation Conference reminds us that our vocation ministry is not the work of one person or office—it is the whole community's responsibility. Each Sister and Associate has a role in witnessing joyfully to our charism while being rooted in prayer, justice and mission.

As we move forward, we invite every member of our Notre Dame family to reflect on key questions:

*What breathes life into our community?*

*What sustains that life?*

*And how can our witness inspire others to say yes to God's call?*

We are called to be visible signs of God's goodness—joyful in our commitment, hopeful in our outreach and bold in our invitation. Let us trust that the Spirit still stirs hearts, speaks through our lives and invites others to walk this sacred path with us. ✨



**ABOVE (TOP TO BOTTOM):** Sisters Bárbara Gutiérrez, Vivien Echekwubelu and Josita Colbert, SNDdeN at the 2024 Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice in Washington, D.C. Sisters Bárbara Gutiérrez and Vivien Echekwubelu, SNDdeN with NDA Hingham students.

Are you being called to consecrated life? Are you interested in learning more about the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur? Contact us at [vocations@sndden.org](mailto:vocations@sndden.org)

## Associates Engage Others and Care for the Earth

BY KATHY NOETHER, AND

NOTRE DAME ASSOCIATES, women and men who live out Saint Julie's charism, partner with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in lives marked by goodness, simplicity and service to the poor. They embody Gospel values and the Hallmarks of justice, inclusivity, peace and care for creation.

- Two Associates serve on the Board of BACAR, Inc. (Bay Area Conference of Associates and Religious), now in its 30th year. BACAR fosters prayer, mission and shared spirituality between Associates and religious communities, and has led over a dozen sessions inspired by *Laudato Si'*.
- The East-West Associate Discernment program offers monthly sessions on the Charism, Mission and Hallmarks, with a strong focus on *Laudato Si'*. Five Associates are active in the *Laudato Si'* Working Group, helping lead these efforts.
- Retreats sponsored by the Sisters in Carmel, California, often explore themes of creation and sustainability, welcoming Sisters, Associates and guests. Topics have included Native American spirituality, consumerism, migration and spiritual creativity.
- For over 35 years, the group *The Other Road*—made up of Associates, Sisters and friends—has gathered quarterly to advocate for ecological justice, long before the climate crisis became a global concern.
- At Mercy Retirement and Care Center in Oakland, California, Sister Theresa Linehan, SNDdeN and Kathy Noether led a session on sustainable living and ethical consumerism, featuring *The Better World Shopping Guide* by Dr. Ellis Jones.

Together, Notre Dame Associates and Sisters continue to share God's goodness through action, reflection and care for the Earth and all creation. \*

BELOW: Villa Angelica, Carmel



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## NDMV MidYear

BY ADAM EVERTZ

OVER 300 VOLUNTEERS, STAFF AND SISTERS of Notre Dame de Namur gathered in January for the Notre Dame Mission Volunteers (NDMV) MidYear Conference in Baltimore. First launched by the Sisters in 1992, NDMV participants serve in education, literacy, after-school programs, adult job readiness and other community initiatives nationwide.

The event opened with a keynote by NDMV Director Ted Miles, emphasizing this year's theme, "Unity through Community." Members shared service experiences, and Sisters from across the country joined to share their stories.

Participants engaged in four on-site service projects, including writing letters for environmental justice, making crafts for schools and community centers, creating Valentine's Day cards for homebound Sisters, and packaging meals for communities in need.

Attendees joined workshops on social justice issues—among them, a session on ethical consumerism by Sister Denise Curry, SNDdeN. At the closing ceremony, Miles reflected on the importance of relationships, saying, "Unity is not an abstract ideal but something felt in the grit and grace of daily life."

Thank you, NDMV, for this beautiful weekend of service, community and hope! \*

ABOVE: Sisters and participants package meals.



# Responding to the Call of *Laudato Si'*

BY SISTER JOAN BURKE, SNDdeN

AS DAUGHTERS OF ST. JULIE, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur resonated with Pope Francis' plea that all humanity pay attention and respond to the urgent cries of the Earth and poor and to "care for our Common Home." On Earth Day, April 22, 2022, we made a public commitment to work to realize the goals outlined in the *Laudato Si'* Action Plan (LSAP).

The three areas we chose to focus on were 1) Education, 2) Land, and 3) Individually and collectively living in a more ecologically responsible way. We were heartened by the enthusiastic interest shared by our Associates, staff, co-workers and network of friends.

The articles in this issue share how we have pursued these goals with our partners-in-mission. We recognize that the current political climate on the national level has seriously affected many initiatives set in motion by the government. This makes collaborating with others at the state and local levels of the country even more important. Our knowledge of the life-threatening impact of climate change on other parts of the world, as witnessed and lived out by our Sisters across the globe, also impels us to intensify all our efforts. Climate justice is imperative for all who share our Common Home, Earth, with us. \*

*The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur U.S. East-West Province are committed to promoting the LSAP Goals by working with others across the world to address the threat of climate change.*

*In our planning process, we will first listen deeply to the cries of Mother Earth and the cries of our sisters and brothers impacted by irresponsible human activity driven by systemic greed and hate that is destroying the planet and life itself (cf. Chapter Acts, 2021, p. 1).*

*Attuned to the stirrings of our inner depths and attentive to one another and to the communities we serve, we will discern and articulate our strategic response to *Laudato Si'* and the "signs of our times."*

# Sisters of the U.S. East-West Province Write Their Land Ethic

BY SISTER MARY ALICE McCABE, SNDdeN

ON MARCH 22, 2025, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur of the U.S. East-West Province, at their Town Hall Assembly, approved their Land Ethic, expressing the collective response to the call of *Laudato Si'* to care for all creation and specifically to care for the lands entrusted to our care.

*All of Creation is a manifestation of God's goodness. By honoring and protecting the land and its inhabitants entrusted to our care, we, as Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, remain faithful to our charism of proclaiming the goodness of God.* (Introduction, Land Ethic)

Inspiration for this declaration comes from *Laudato Si'*: The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in the face of a person made poor. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul but also to discover God in all things. (*LS* 233)

And the same inspiration comes from our own Notre Dame vision and heritage:

**St. Julie Billiart** wrote in 1795: "You will often be able to read in this great book of nature what grandeur there is to be found there! But only those souls can find it who have the happiness of seeing God everywhere!" (*Letter 1, July 15, 1795*)

**Sister Dorothy Stang** wrote in 2003: "All of us are part of a great Oneness. Let us pray for all of us and for a world where we can all live—plants, animals and human life—in peace and harmony."

**Our General Chapter Acts of 2021** declare: "Attentive to the Spirit, we hear the cries of those living in poverty as well as the cries of Earth. We see God's Creation scarred by systemic destruction, motivated by greed and hate, thus threatening the planet and life itself... We are called to deepen our commitment and to act with reverence for God's Creation." \*



## WHAT IS A LAND ETHIC?

The ecologist Aldo Leopold, who conceived the idea of a Land Ethic, says it like this: "A Land Ethic expands the definition of community to include not only humans but all other parts of Earth: soil, water, plants, animals... Caring for people cannot be separated from caring for the land and caring for all creatures. A Land Ethic is a code of moral conduct that grows out of these interconnected caring relationships." (To understand more, read his classic work *A Sand County Almanac*.)

## Laudato Si' at Ten Years



**BY KATHRYN YANIK, DIRECTOR OF JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION**

A DECADE HAS PASSED since Pope Francis introduced *Laudato Si'* (*On Care for Our Common Home*), a transformative encyclical addressing environmental justice, migration, family life and poverty.

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur embrace this mission through their *Laudato Si'* ministry, recognizing that care for creation extends to broader social justice issues.

### Immigration

*"...changes in climate... lead [animals and plants] to migrate; this, in turn, affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes..."* (LS 25)

Climate change has intensified migration, forcing many to seek stability elsewhere. As Pope Francis states in *Fratelli Tutti*, migrants bring cultural enrichment and opportunity (FT 133). Catholic organizations, including the Sisters' ministries, distribute "Know Your Rights" cards to support immigrants.

Volunteers at the Welcome Center in Phoenix, Arizona, extend dignity and compassion to newly arrived immigrants, offering vital resources. This ministry embodies *Laudato Si'*, recognizing the humanity of those facing immense hardship.

### Child Development, Education, and Family Life

*"What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us...?"* (LS 160)

Education remains central to the Sisters' mission, shaping young minds for justice and ecological responsibility.

The Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center in Ipswich, Massachusetts, instills environmental awareness in preschoolers, fostering lifelong stewardship.

### Eradicating Poverty

*"We are faced not with two separate crises... but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental."* (LS 139)

Pope Francis calls for holistic solutions, integrating poverty alleviation with environmental care. The Boulangerie Notre Dame in Haiti exemplifies this, offering families training, employment and education.

In the U.S., the Sisters continue their commitment to advocacy, education and social action. *Laudato Si'* challenges us to rethink how we live in community, urging creative solutions to injustice. As we mark ten years, we look ahead to new ways of serving and empowering vulnerable communities. ✱

## Environment Matters at Notre Dame San Jose

**BY SUSANA GARCIA, NDSJ ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL**

AT NOTRE DAME SAN JOSE (NDSJ), interdisciplinary field trips are offered at each grade level to extend academic curriculum into experiential learning and application. The freshman field trip, *Environment Matters*, takes students to the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy in San Jose, California. Students explore how communities balance environmental stewardship with social and economic needs. The morning is spent performing service to maintain the Heritage Rose Garden, which is the largest public collection of roses in the Western hemisphere. In the afternoon, students analyze demographic data on park usage to implement strategic plans for park development and community events. Students also learn about related careers along the way. This trip invites students to reflect on *Laudato Si'* and take action in their local community. ✱





## Doing our Eco-Best in Ipswich

BY SISTER JUDIANNE BELTZ, SNDdeN

AT ST. JULIE BILLIART RESIDENTIAL CARE CENTER in Ipswich, Massachusetts, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur remain deeply committed to the *Laudato Si'* Action Plan, even within the constraints of institutional living. Despite health and food service regulations, the Sisters creatively pursue environmentally conscious practices that reflect their care for creation.

Efforts include paper recycling, using single-sided paper as scrap, and transitioning from plastic to wooden coffee stirrers—a two-year process to get through our supply! Following a rise in single-use plastics after COVID-19, the Sisters replaced plastic water bottles with water pitchers. Energy-saving habits are encouraged, such as turning off lights in common areas and using LED lighting wherever possible.

Massachusetts requires proper textile disposal, and the Sisters follow suit. Clothing is sorted—gently worn items go to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, while unusable fabrics are repurposed. Sisters Trish O'Rourke and Pat Toce, SNDdeN

creatively reuse fabric scraps for décor and quilting projects.

Sister Ani Wihbey, SNDdeN initiated a small-scale composting effort, with kitchen scraps collected daily and added to the organic garden compost at the neighboring Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center. Sister Judi Beltz, SNDdeN offers ongoing education on sustainability, while Sister Mary Friel, SNDdeN maintains the grounds with native plantings and seasonal care.

Spirituality is also rooted in creation. Sisters Mary Boretti and Ellen Keane, SNDdeN created a forest trail and a seven-circuit labyrinth on an old tennis court site. With rocks, pine needles and help from volunteers, the space now offers a peaceful connection to nature—including a scenic marsh overlook.

Through these efforts, the Sisters deepen their relationship with God, creation and community—living their mission with reverence and responsibility and seeking new ways to care for the Earth and each other. ✱



## Choosing to Walk the Talk: Aligning Consumer Ethics and *Laudato Si'*

BY SISTER JOAN BURKE, SNDdeN & KATHY NOETHER, AND

### First Steps

Consumer ethics invites us to live more sustainably by aligning our choices with our values and Pope Francis' call to "ecological conversion." At the Belmont Retirement Community, Sisters meet monthly with Sister Joan Burke, SNDdeN for *Laudato Si'* conversations. Early on, they conducted an audit of their kitchen, laundry and personal care products. With help from staff and using *The Better World Shopping Guide*, they evaluated items for eco-friendliness and researched better alternatives. They even wrote to companies, explaining why they made more environmentally ethical purchases.

### Widening the Net

The U.S. East-West Province *Laudato Si'* Team created Zoom sessions to educate Sisters, Associates and friends on consumer ethics and its impact on plastics, food and clothing. The focus:

- Avoid single-use **plastics** and look for reusable, recyclable or biodegradable alternatives like glass or cardboard. New eco-conscious products—like laundry sheets and shampoo bars—are worth supporting.
- Make better **food** choices by buying organic, reducing packaging waste, eating less meat, and supporting local and fair-trade producers. Reusable bags and bulk purchases also reduce harm.
- Reduce, recycle and reuse **clothing**. Reading labels helps us avoid petroleum-based fabrics and support sustainable sourcing.

Through these everyday actions, we contribute to a "circular economy" that minimizes waste, circulates resources and regenerates nature—living more justly and responsibly with all of creation. ✨

**LEFT (TOP TO BOTTOM):** Sister Joan Burke, SNDdeN, Olga Ramirez, AND (staff), and Sister Lynne Knapp, SNDdeN. Staff member Sherry Chiapelone with Sisters Roseanne Murphy and Ruth Ella, SNDdeN. Sister Carolyn Buhs, SNDdeN.

# Partners in Caring for Creation: Cuvilly Arts & Earth Center and St. Patrick School & Educational Center

BY SISTER MARY ALICE McCABE, SNDdeN

WHEN THE YELLOW SCHOOL BUS ARRIVED at Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center in mid-September 2024 with 20 fifth and sixth graders from St. Patrick School, Lowell, Massachusetts, it was the beginning of exciting creation experiences among Cuvilly’s natural world of meadows, fields, woods and barn creatures. The students cheerfully took on the challenge of climbing the hill to Cuvilly’s forest-rimmed meadow, where they discovered the diversity of living beings sharing their meadow environment. One student’s reaction captured the moment, exclaiming, “This looks like heaven!”

On a second trip to Cuvilly, the students discovered Thomas Way, a wooded pathway where they constructed nature sculptures from branches, cones and leaves that they gathered. Another student said, “I learned everything in nature is a work of art.” The group then visited Cuvilly’s barn, where the staff explained the unique stories, needs and care of each barn creature: four pigs, two goats, four alpacas, a mini-Palomino and a donkey living together in a community of creatures.

During a third visit, St. Patrick’s students displayed their talents as actors, singers, rappers and poets as they creatively described nature’s food chain where all creatures have a fair and equitable chance to eat and to live.

**Poem:** “The eco-system is where we live/everyone has something to give!”

**Rap:** “That’s how we learn the food chain/Yeah! That’s what I’m talkin’ about!”

**Song:** “So now you see how the food chains run and show how energy starts with the sun.”

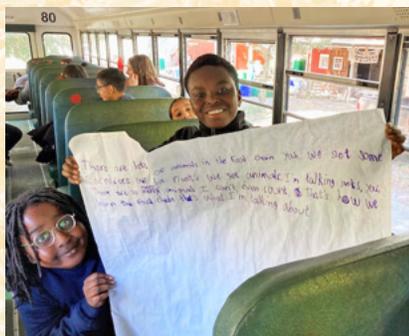


While on their final visit to Cuvilly, the students created a food web by passing yarn from producers to consumers to show the connection and interdependence among all creatures. They then formed a Council of All-Beings where, in groups of three, they chose to be one creature, made masks depicting their creature and prepared a message that their creature would speak to humans. Sitting in a circle on tree stumps, they formed a pow-wow and spoke their messages to humans:

“Don’t cut down the trees! We need them for our nests!”  
 “Don’t destroy the forest because we need it to hide from predators!”  
 “Don’t pollute the rivers and the ocean!”  
 “Don’t kill me with pesticides.”  
 “Don’t destroy the forest that is our habitat.”

This final day ended with a ritual song and dance: “The Earth is our Mother, she will take care of us! The Earth is our Mother, and we will care for her.”

Plans are underway to continue this partnership of mutual learning and caring for creation into 2026 and beyond. \*



**ABOVE:** St. Patrick’s students construct sculptures from nature.

**LEFT:** St. Patrick’s students create a food web and share poems about nature’s food chain.

# Shared Vision



## Global Leadership Meeting

### REFLECTION BY SISTER KATHRYN KEENAN, SNDdeN

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM of the Sisters of Notre Dame U.S. East-West Province had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Global Leadership Meeting of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in January. The meeting took place in Nairobi, Kenya. We gathered as Sisters from Japan, Peru, Brazil, Rome, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Britain, North and South Belgium and the U.S. The gathering was Spirit-filled, energizing, and filled with engaging input, dialogue and conversations across diverse languages and cultures.

The theme for the gathering was *Watering Our Deep Roots and New Growth: Strengthening Our Communion and Widening Our Vision*. We were surrounded by prayer in our meeting and across the Congregation. Throughout our time together, we practiced synodality, the way of being together that calls us to deep listening and dialogue. As leadership, a particular call was to look at how we are leaders in our world today, with its many needs and challenges.



**ABOVE:** Sisters Dorothee Nseye, Lucyane Diniz, Juana Rivera Jara, Patricia O'Brien, Kathryn Keenan, Maria Delaney, Virginia Scally and Roberta Rzeznik, SNDdeN.

**LEFT:** Sisters Ester Adama, Esther Judith and Kathryn Keenan, SNDdeN.

Our engagement with one another moved us from seeing ourselves as a global meeting to becoming an international encounter of Sisters with each other. The practice of synodality enabled us to become a globally discerning body rooted in our heritage and seeking the way into our future as Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. We were invited to consider the image of the mosaic as an image of who we are. Each Sister brings a piece of color and beauty to the whole; together, we reveal a picture we cannot see without each other. This image is the face of God's goodness that we reveal to the world. This image reflects the work of our time. \*

# Women's Rights Are Human Rights: Reflections on UN Conference

BY SABRINA HARPER, AND

IN 1995, U.S. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton famously declared at the UN Fourth Conference on Women in Beijing: “Women’s rights are human rights.” Thirty years later, this statement continues to inspire global feminist advocacy for gender equality.

In 2025, the UN Commission on the Status of Women marked its 69th session (CSW69) and the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Sisters Maria Delaney and Ann Howard, SNDdeN and Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation staff Kathryn Yanik and Sabrina Harper attended CSW69 at the UN Headquarters, invited by Sister Isabelle Izika, SNDdeN, NGO representative. The session reviewed

progress toward gender equality and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to build a better, more inclusive future.

The conference highlighted government, NGO, and faith-based efforts to combat gender-based violence, promote economic and educational equity, and elevate women’s societal roles. For example, India has launched a digital biometric ID system enabling fraud-free welfare distribution and expanded financial access. Over 1.4 billion people are enrolled, with 500 million bank accounts established, processing 11 billion transactions monthly. This free, open-source software lifts women out of poverty and enhances digital and financial

literacy across urban and rural regions.

Sisters Isabelle and Ann also joined an Intergenerational Panel, “Confronting Gender-Specific Violence and Promoting Justice and Peace,” hosted by the Global Solutions Initiative. Two students from Trinity Washington University presented research on gender-based violence in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Their work was supported by on-the-ground activists from those regions who advocate for women and girls through education and policy change.

CSW69 reaffirmed the urgent global need for inclusive action to ensure women’s full participation and equal rights in every area of society. \*



ABOVE: Sisters Isabelle Izika and Ann Howard, SNDdeN, Kathryn Yanik, Sabrina Harper, AND and Sister Maria Delaney, SNDdeN.



**LEFT:** Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur are pictured with members of Sister Dorothy Stang's family, students from Emmanuel College and Mount Notre Dame Academy in Cincinnati, Ohio.

**BELOW:** Sister Dorothy's sweater and a reliquary with soil from the site of her martyrdom.

## Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN Honored in Rome

BY SUSAN DENNIN

FEBRUARY 12, 2025, marked a poignant milestone—20 years since the martyrdom of Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN, a courageous advocate who dedicated her life to uplifting the marginalized communities of Brazil's Amazon. Her unwavering commitment to justice and service in the face of adversity remains a powerful testament to her legacy. Sister Dorothy spent nearly 40 years nurturing a vibrant community, tirelessly organizing schools and healthcare facilities for those in need while embodying the spirit of compassion and resilience. Tragically, her life was taken as a direct consequence of her advocacy for the rainforest and the rights of its inhabitants. Yet, her spirit inspires us to champion the causes she held dear. As we reflect on her extraordinary life, let us embrace her courage and reignite our commitment to social justice and environmental stewardship.

On January 10, 2025, the Community of Sant'Egidio honored the life and legacy of Sister Dorothy at a ceremony in the Basilica of San Bartolomeo all'Isola in Rome. Sister Dorothy's family attended this service with students from Mount Notre Dame High School in Ohio and Emmanuel College in Boston, Sisters, staff and friends. Sister Kathy

Harmon, SNDdeN from the Ohio Province, presented a small container of blood-soaked soil from the place of her murder and one of her sweaters to add to a permanent memorial at the Basilica, dedicated to martyrs of the modern age. Sister Dorothy is the first woman from the U.S. recognized with this honor. ✨



## The African Photovoltaic Project

BY SUSAN DENNIN & SISTER LORRAINE CONNELL, SNDdeN

IN 2005, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur launched the African Photovoltaic Project (APP), a transformative clean energy initiative envisioned by Sister Lorraine Connell, SNDdeN. The vision was inspired by a call from the General Chapter of 2002 to provide communications to the parts of the Congregation that could not access public provision of electricity, water and Internet. The General Government asked the Congregational Finance Office to research how to address the problem through a sustainable solution.

*“Empowering people to participate in the economic engine of their communities builds global peace and stability.”*

Sister Lorraine Connell, SNDdeN

Her answer came from the sun! Between 2003 and 2005, Sister Lorraine developed her idea into a fully operational project guided by research, consultation and on-site design. A prototype was first tested at Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center in Ipswich, Massachusetts.

Harnessing solar energy has proven to be a robust and sustainable solution. And, with the support of the whole congregation, the Photovoltaic systems now provide continuous, reliable electricity in rural African villages—empowering schools, clinics and entire communities. In areas where clean water is often unavailable and electricity is inconsistent, solar power enables the filtration and purification of water, reduces the burden of manual labor, and minimizes the spread of waterborne diseases.

Beyond electricity, the project enhances communication. Internet access, initially meant to connect Sisters across continents, now opens doors to education and medical resources for students and staff alike.

The Sisters learn how to operate, repair and maintain these advanced solar systems for long-term success. Clean energy isn't just lighting buildings—it's lighting futures. The APP is a beacon of sustainability, resilience and hope, proving that the sun can power technology and transformation.

New technological improvements and the expansion of renewable energy across the globe have provided additional resources in-country for many of these projects. Maintenance costs will continue to exist in the years ahead. As the Congregation grows in our less-developed areas, fundraising and oversight will continue to be needed and provided. \*



**ABOVE:** Village children in Pelende, Democratic Republic of the Congo, gather around to collect clean water.

# Education

## NDSJ Hosts International Students from Japan

BY SISTER GILLIAN WALLACE, SNDdeN

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL IN SAN JOSE (NDSJ), California, had the pleasure of hosting 11 students and two faculty chaperones from Notre Dame Seishin in Japan for two weeks during the 2024-25 school year, through their exchange program. During the summer of 2024, students and faculty from NDSJ visited Seishin. As part of the exchange program, everyone visiting stayed with a host student or faculty member.

Local Sisters Terry Davis, Anne Locke, Carol Miller and Gillian Wallace, SNDdeN enjoyed meeting students while frosting sunflowers on cookies. Each Sister sat at a table with a few of the Japanese students and got to know them better while painting. One challenge to this special time together was persuading the students not to eat their cookies and ruin their appetites before lunch! \*



## NDA Tyngsboro: Living the Spirit of *Laudato Si'*

SNOW IN APRIL? No problem! The New England “springtime” weather could not stop the students of NDA Tyngsboro from spending their mission week outdoors, experiencing firsthand the lessons and spirit of *Laudato Si'*. Sixteen high school students undertook the challenge of building new learning spaces around their Geodome. The improvements included seven wooden benches, three picnic tables and two garden boxes to brighten and enhance outdoor learning experiences for the entire school community. They cleared walking trails, helped with landscaping projects, and cleaned the outdoor play area for the younger students to enjoy. Everyone from Pre-K-3-Grade 8 planted a seedling—200 in total—to contribute to a healthy and beautiful campus environment for years to come. Summer campers will harvest food during summer camp and enjoy the fruits of their labors. Kudos to Campus Minister Jamie Deignan and school principal Jamie Flynn, who led the charge. \*

# Notre Dame Cristo Rey Students Continue to Believe and Achieve

BY AMY HITCHMOTH, NDCR DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

NOTRE DAME CRISTO REY HIGH SCHOOL (NDCR) in Methuen, Massachusetts, takes pride in its rigorous college preparatory program and the success of its students. This year not only did 100% of the Senior class gain acceptance to college, but they accomplished this feat at the earliest time in the school year! The future is bright for the class of 2025 who continue to believe and achieve. NDCR is part of the Cristo Rey Network, a growing association of 40 schools across the United States whose education model is built around the Corporate Work Study Program (CWSP), a unique and highly successful partnership with the business community developed by the Jesuits. Through the CWSP, each student works five full days per month during the academic year at one of 75 companies throughout the Merrimack Valley, I-93/495 corridors, and southern New Hampshire. NDCR believes that by serving the youth of its community and surrounding areas, it is uniquely placed to contribute significantly to the long-term growth and strength of this diverse, vibrant Merrimack Valley area. ✨



ABOVE: Senior Class President Aurelina Mercedes.



## NDA Hingham Supports Clean Water Project

STUDENTS AT NOTRE DAME ACADEMY in Hingham, Massachusetts, marked the Lenten season with an initiative aiming to raise funds for the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur's Clean Water Project. Lack of clean water puts communities at risk of disease, disproportionately affecting girls and women. The Clean Water Project provides safe drinking water to the communities our Sisters serve in Africa and Latin America. Through this initiative, the School enabled students to deepen their understanding of almsgiving and the Lenten season, while helping to raise much-needed funds for the Clean Water Project. ✨

## Exploring “the work that reconnects:” Notre Dame Belmont Sophomore Retreat

BY AMY JOBIN, NOTRE DAME BELMONT, DIRECTOR OF MISSION AND MINISTRY

IN MARCH, Notre Dame Belmont’s Sophomore class traveled to the California coast to learn about and engage in an eco-spiritual program, exploring how the values of our faith and spirituality link to caring for the natural world and God’s creation. Students met in Davenport near the ocean and visited the Santa Cruz Permaculture Farm near Pescadero.

They learned about the work of Joanna Macy, author of *Coming Back to Life*, studying her ideas around “the work that reconnects” and the “great turning.” Students made their

web of life with yarn and could feel how we are connected and how, when one part of the web experiences something, it affects the rest of the web.

Students also participated in a “storytellers convention,” imagining what it would be like 100 years from now if we took good care of our Earth and all of its life—plants, humans, animals, water, soil, etc.—and what we’ll need to do to ensure life and health for all parts of our ecosystem. They created mini murals to share their ideas and stories.

The Sophomores were encouraged to take “the work that reconnects”

back to campus and share it with their teachers and peers in the spirit of living out Notre Dame Hallmark #3: We educate for and act on behalf of justice, peace and care for all creation. ✱



## Inspiring Hearts, Minds and Voices: NDA Hingham Students Travel to France and Belgium

BY MARY HEISSNER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, NDA HINGHAM



IN FEBRUARY, students from grades 11 and 12 at Notre Dame Academy in Hingham, Massachusetts, spent a week traveling in France and Belgium.

The experience was especially unique to NDA Hingham as the girls visited places important to St. Julie Billiart and

the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. They toured St. Julie’s house and garden and the church where she was baptized and made her First Communion. They also spent time in the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Heritage Center, learning about the many good works that the Sisters spearhead worldwide.

There is no doubt that travel expands learning, helping students develop the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in our interconnected world. NDA Hingham goes further as a school sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Faculty and staff look to inspire students’ hearts, minds and voices. On this trip, students immersed themselves in the wisdom of the Hallmarks of a Notre Dame Learning Community as they traveled. They reflected on how words written long ago are profoundly relevant as they learn to improve the world. ✱



## Woman's Place Project: Honoring Founder Sister Maureen Hilliard, SNDdeN

BY CHRISTINA MORELLO, CREATIVE SERVICES MANAGER, NDSJ

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL in downtown San Jose, California (NDSJ), recently celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Woman's Place Project, honoring Sister Maureen Hilliard, SNDdeN, the project's founder. The Woman's Place project is integral to first-year students' Notre Dame education, serving as the rite of passage in their journey to becoming women of impact. For 30 years, it has empowered generations of students and showcased the accomplishments of women leaders in our local and global communities. The celebration was attended by Notre Dame alums, parents of current students and alums, board members, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and former and current faculty and staff. Santa Clara County Council member Betty Duong presented a commendation to NDSJ, recognizing 174 years of providing young women with an exemplary Catholic, college-preparatory education that fosters lifelong learners, spiritual seekers, justice advocates and community leaders. After honoring Sister Maureen, guests went to Julie Billiard Hall for a gallery walk to view the collective work from the Class of 2028. The event was a remarkable tribute to women in conclusion to Women's History Month. \*

**ABOVE (TOP TO BOTTOM):** NDSJ students. Santa Clara County Supervisor, Betty Duong, presents commendation to NDSJ Head of School, Ashley Rae Mathis, and a student. Sister Maureen Hilliard, SNDdeN speaks at 30th anniversary celebration.



**TO LEARN MORE** about the Woman's Place Project, please visit [www.ndsj.org/wpp30](http://www.ndsj.org/wpp30)

# Sisters in Ministry

## Strengthening Our Allyship: Anti-Racism Team Workshop

BY EMILYE LEWIN, U.S. EAST-WEST PROVINCIAL ARCHIVIST

IN LATE MARCH, the Belmont Province Center hosted the U.S. SNDdeN Anti-Racism Team (ART) for a workshop titled “*Courageous Conversations on Strengthening our Allyship Through an Understanding of the Traditional and Transformational Values within Notre Dame.*” The event was open to Sisters, Associates and staff, with nearly 40 in attendance. Members of ART called participants to reaffirm their commitment to anti-racism. They raised questions on how, as members of the SNDdeN community, we can challenge ourselves to deepen this commitment.

The workshop featured ART members’ presentations and small and large group discussions. Participants reflected on their own experiences with racism, challenged traditional ways of thinking, and shared actions our community can take to support those who experience oppression. Thoughtful conversations occurred about how conventional thinking fails us and were a powerful way to refocus ourselves on anti-racism work.

For 25 years, ART has worked against systemic and institutional racism and for policies, practices, procedures and actions that will move us toward a just society for people of all races. The Gospel of Jesus, Catholic Social Teaching and the values of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, affirmed by the Hallmarks of a Notre Dame de Namur Learning Community, compel us to constantly work for justice and compassion within our institutions. We pledge to raise our voices and to act now to end the scourge and sin of institutional racism, which has cost us so dearly. ✱



*“My sisters and brothers, if we want to create an institute that embodies inclusivity and justice, then a whole new set of values must emerge, a new way of thinking. A major paradigm shift of values within our organizational structures must take place so that we can all reimagine our ways of acting. This is hard work. It involves deep, inner soul work and equally deep sharing along the way with one another.”*

**Sister Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN**

From her speech *Embracing Transformational Values* delivered at the National Religious Vocations Conference, 2024

**FIRST ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):** Sister Marilyn Pechillo, SNDdeN, Vickie Virgo Christie, AND, Sisters Patricia Chappell, Martin de Porres Coleman, Gail Grimes, SNDdeN. **SECOND ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):** Lydia Wahab, AND, Sisters Linda Bessom, Elizabeth Smoyer, SNDdeN. **THIRD ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):** Sisters Kathryn Keenan, Maureen McLaughlin, Carmen Silva, Ann Kendrick, SNDdeN. **TOP ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):** Aulani Cler, AND, Sister Kathryn Camacho, SNDdeN, Teresa Phillips, AND, Sister Anne-Louise Nadeau, SNDdeN. Not pictured: Sabrina Harper, AND.



## Planting Seeds of Hope in Belmont

ON FEBRUARY 12, 2025, the 20th anniversary of the martyrdom of Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN, representatives from the Sisters, Notre Dame de Namur University, Notre Dame Belmont HS and Notre Dame Elementary planted a Brazilian rosewood tree in Belmont, California, to honor her courageous life and the ongoing impact of her advocacy for the land and people of the Amazon. A plaque that stands by the tree reads Sister Dorothy's "... legacy lives on in the countless hearts she touched and the forests she worked to preserve."

May this tree flourish as a symbol of Sister Dorothy's legacy! Thank you, NDNU, Notre Dame Belmont and Notre Dame Elementary. ✱

## Julie Community Center Marks 50 Years of Service in Baltimore

BY SISTER THÉRÈSE (TRACY) DILL, SNDdeN

THE JULIE COMMUNITY CENTER (JCC) in Baltimore, Maryland, celebrates 50 years! Although formally established in 1975, the Center's roots lie in the 1973 decision of six Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur of the Maryland Province to become residents of a struggling urban neighborhood. They sought to promote the skills and fortitude needed to

identify and address local problems and plan a positive future. The original initiatives centered around housing, health care, food availability and access to social services. Establishing the People's Rights Office, residents moved from determining rights to resolving problems. After two years, the work was formally consolidated under the umbrella of a new non-profit, the Julie Community Center!

The JCC functions as a partnership among the residents of Southeast Baltimore, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and a wide array of groups, associations and institutions, including Baltimore City government and schools. The Center's home is a typical Baltimore row house, but its services reach out across many cultures and generational lines, from toddlers to



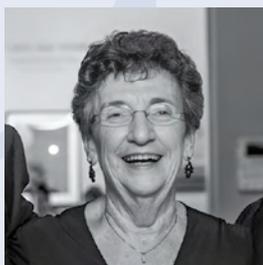
**ABOVE:** Pediatric CPR demonstration at the JCC's Child Care Training Program.

senior citizens, and across educational divides that can create "haves" and "have nots" in the community and limit employment opportunities and families' economic security. Indeed, seeds of goodness are sown and cultivated in Baltimore! ✱

# Support Our Ministry

## Become a Part of the Locke Family Giving Society: Why Monthly Giving Works for Me

BY MARYANN O. LORD



I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED in supporting causes that make a real difference and, for me, that's the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and their dedication to education. What I love about monthly giving is the sheer convenience. I simply set up a recurring donation on my credit card and don't have to think

about it constantly. Knowing I'm consistently contributing to their vital work is a weight off my mind.

The Sisters' unwavering commitment to education, particularly for economically marginalized communities, has always resonated with me. While they address various needs, their focus on education has remained constant. That steadfastness is something I deeply admire. Knowing my monthly donations support that mission gives me a sense of peace.

I'm also particularly moved by the Sisters' embrace of *Laudato Si'*. Seeing their commitment to these values strengthens my belief in their work. It confirms that my support is going to an organization that aligns with my principles.

Monthly giving allows me to provide ongoing support without the pressure of large, annual donations. I appreciate knowing that even when unexpected requests arise, my regular contribution is already in place, providing a reliable foundation for their work.

I often encourage others to consider giving monthly. The Sisters are a trustworthy organization with a clear, enduring mission. They're not a fleeting cause but a constant source of good. And monthly contributions make giving accessible to everyone.

For me, monthly giving is more than just a financial transaction; *it's a way to make a consistent, tangible difference*, helping to ensure that the Sisters can continue their crucial work, month after month. I highly recommend a monthly gift if you're looking for a simple, impactful way to support a worthy cause. It's a small commitment that makes a big difference.

## THE LOCKE FAMILY MONTHLY GIVING CIRCLE

Jack Locke, brother of Sister Anne (Mary Terence) Locke, SNDdeN considered our Sisters his family and generously supported our retired Sisters by making monthly gifts for many years. He would say, "All Anne's Sisters are my sisters, too." After Jack passed away in 2018, we recognized his care and commitment to his "sisters" and named our monthly giving program after him.

### Benefits of monthly giving

- **Provides** our Sisters with peace of mind, knowing they can count on the funds from monthly gifts. Monthly gifts help sustain resources for the Sisters to make known God's goodness and educate for life.
- **Reduces** administrative costs in donation processing so more of your gift goes towards what matters most to you.
- **Saves** you time each month and throughout the year in remembering to donate.

We invite you to join **The Locke Monthly Giving Circle** and make a monthly sustaining gift at an amount that is right for you.

Sign up online at [snddeneastwest.org/monthly-giving](https://snddeneastwest.org/monthly-giving) or call 617-387-2500.



**ABOVE:** Sister Anne Locke, SNDdeN (center, in purple) pictured with her extended family.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Sisters Barbara Metz and Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN. Sisters Ann Mary Donovan and Ani Wihbey, SNDdeN embrace at Jubilee Celebration 2024. Sisters Mary Alice McCabe and Josita Colbert, SNDdeN. Sister Nancy O'Shea speaks at a Nuns on the Bus rally in San Jose, California.



## TRIBUTE CARDS

To celebrate the lives of loved ones, you can purchase Tribute Cards showcasing artwork and photography of our Sisters. We have six cards for different occasions, and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur remember the recipient and the donor in their prayers. All donors are acknowledged. To order, please call our office at **617-387-2500** or visit our website, [sdddeneastwest.org/request-tribute-cards](http://sdddeneastwest.org/request-tribute-cards).

### MORE INFORMATION



For more information or to support the Sisters, please visit our website: [sdddeneastwest.org/ways-to-give](http://sdddeneastwest.org/ways-to-give) or contact us through email: [development@ewsndden.org](mailto:development@ewsndden.org)

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Sisters Serving in Africa and Latin America  
Retired and Infirm Sisters**

# Support Our Community



## Donor-Advised Funds Support the Sisters

DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS (DAFs) are now the fastest-growing charitable giving tool, with over two million Americans using DAFs to support causes they care about. According to the 2024 DAF Report by the National Philanthropic Trust, these accounts hold more than \$230 billion in assets.

DAFs act as charitable savings accounts, allowing individuals to contribute assets—such as cash, stocks, real estate, or cryptocurrency—and receive an immediate tax deduction. Any investment growth is tax-free, and donors can recommend grants to charities over time, choosing how much and how often to give.

Many well-known financial institutions like Fidelity, Vanguard, Schwab and Bank of America

offer DAFs through affiliated 501(c)(3) sponsoring organizations. Each sponsor has its fees and minimum requirements and offers different investment options and tech tools.

DAFs are popular because they offer flexibility, convenience and efficiency. Frank Hannig, a donor to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, says, “I chose Schwab for its automation. With a Tax ID, I can log into my DAF by phone and donate to a charity in minutes.”

Donor Giselle Anna Parry, Ed.D. adds, “It helps me keep organized. I allocate funds yearly for the nonprofits I support but no longer need to write or send checks—that is done for me. I also have excellent records for tax submission to my CPA.”

**ABOVE (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT):** Sisters Ellen Glavin and Jane McAndrews, SNDdeN at the 2024 Jubilee Celebration at Emmanuel College, Boston. Back row: Sister Patricia Babington, SNDdeN, Juliana Fernandez, AND, Sister Mary Donohue, SNDdeN; front row: Sisters Barbara English, Anne-Louise Nadeau, Anne O'Donnell, SNDdeN (Base Communities) at the Feast Day celebration, Baltimore. Sister Liz Tiernan, SNDdeN. Sisters Martin de Porres Coleman, Terry Davis and Beth Plesche, SNDdeN, at the Feast Day celebration, Belmont, California.

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur U.S. East-West Province is a qualified 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Tax ID: 04-3210469. **TO LEARN MORE** about supporting the Sisters through a Donor-Advised Fund, email [development@ewsnnden.org](mailto:development@ewsnnden.org) or call **617-387-2500**.

# Support Our Future

## A Family Legacy of Giving

IT ALL BEGAN IN 1945, when Leo Atkins was transferred from South Dakota to Fort Ord in California's Monterey Bay area with his wife Rose, three daughters and a Singer sewing machine. As Kathy Atkins Page tells the story, after a year of living in California, her mother proclaimed to her husband, "Leo, we are never going back!" Soon, the family expanded to include three more daughters, so the sewing machine came in handy.

Their life in Salinas revolved around Sacred Heart Parish, Palma, the grammar school, and Notre Dame High, schools run by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. They taught the Atkins girls how to become strong women, instilling Catholic values and the desire to exemplify God's goodness by caring for others.

"We were so blessed to have the nuns in our lives. They nurtured us and helped us develop our own interests," said Kathy. Her baby sister Janet, passionate about social justice, joined Child Protective Services and testified before Congress on behalf of social workers. Kathy traveled extensively as a flight attendant, deepening her knowledge of history.

In 1988, Maribeth Atkins Derichsweller became the first Atkins sister to pass away, followed ten years later by their father Leo. It was no surprise to family and friends that both Maribeth and Leo directed that gifts in their memory be made to the Sisters. Janet, who passed in 2023, named the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur among the beneficiaries of her own trust.

"It was a given in our family to make our wills. My relatives chose to focus on the Sisters' retirement in their charitable giving, but I want to empower them for the future," said Kathy, who has remembered the Sisters in her trust.

About estate planning, she advises, "Do it yesterday! Find an estate attorney to guide you or update documents as life changes. It's so easy now to go online and find low-cost resources. It's absolutely a path to help the Sisters continue their good work."

Kathy cites Ralph Waldo Emerson's inspirational quote: "The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived, and lived well."

*"The purpose of life... is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived, and lived well."*

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**



**ABOVE:** Kathy Atkins Page embraces Sister Barbara Ann Kavanaugh, SNDdeN, a former Sacred Heart Grammar School teacher. While Kathy was not taught by Sister Barbara Ann, a deep friendship has developed, lasting for decades.

**TO LEARN MORE** about how you can create a lasting legacy and support the Sisters and their ministries, please email [development@ewsndden.org](mailto:development@ewsndden.org).

# Spirituality



## A Spirituality of Wonder and Awe

BY THERESA LINEHAN, SNDdeN

THE BEAUTY OF our cosmos/universe, the natural world, is a miracle in itself and our existence; this gives us pause for wonder and awe. The Native American/Indigenous peoples understood this innate wisdom that we are from and part of this beauty; they intuitively knew that everything is interconnected. Mother Earth is alive and all beings, human and non-humans, are filled with spirit presence. All is One. There lies the awesome, enduring intimacy, our integral human-earth relationship and interconnectedness. What a gift!

Pope Francis appealed to our hearts with his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. He

reminded us that we are part of, not separate from, this integral human-earth relationship. "Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it." (LS 139)

Pope Francis expressed this need for awe and wonder, to be attentive to the world as relative and not as an object to be used as a natural resource only. (LS 11)

Awe and wonder are part of our innate wisdom as we are birthed into this world, this universe. We knew who we were and where we belonged ...

then life moved us quickly into other ideals, other distractions, away from protecting and loving to consuming and greed.

A Spirituality of Awe and Wonder? I wonder at daily waking up, ready for amazement, paying attention to ever-present revelatory signs of God. As St. Julie said:

*"You will often be able to read in this great book of nature what grandeur there is to be discovered in it! But only those souls can find it who have the happiness of seeing God everywhere!"* (St. Julie Billiard: Letter 1: To Françoise Blin, July 15, 1795) \*

# In Memoriam

We prayerfully remember our Sisters who have died between November 13, 2024 and May 10, 2025. The following brief obituaries are testaments to the rich lives that Sisters lead in fulfilling their vocation of service to God. Please remember them in your prayers.



**Sister Mary Louise Blanchard, SNDdeN**  
(formerly Sister Catherine Anthony)

Sister Mary Louise Blanchard was a gifted and faithful educator. She taught elementary school, middle school and junior high, and served as vice-principal

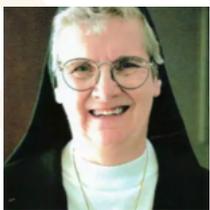
in many Notre Dame Schools throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire. After retiring from teaching, she continued to volunteer at nursing homes and hospitals. She went home to her good God on May 6, 2025, at 92.



**Sister Gemma Julie Buggle, SNDdeN**  
(formerly Sister Genevieve Julie)

Sister Gemma Julie took her first vows in 1963. Her ministry included teaching in several schools throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts. She

also participated in home health care in Connecticut and Washington, D.C., before retiring in 2019 to Julie House in Windsor, Connecticut. She completed her earthly journey on February 20, 2025, at 84.



**Sister Mary Michael Connolly, SNDdeN**

Sister Mary Michael Connolly was a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur for 75 years. During the challenging times of Vatican II, she lived and ministered at the Juniorate in

Wenham, Massachusetts, supporting Sisters in the early stages of their lives as religious. Sister Mary Michael generously worked in various ministries, including 20 years as a Certified Nurse Assistant at Notre Dame du Lac in Worcester, Massachusetts. She completed her earthly journey on March 10, 2025, at 94.



**Sister Lucy Julie Holguin, SNDdeN**

Sister Lucy Holguin was a devoted educator, who taught in 12 schools along the West Coast and Hawaii, serving as principal, superior and Director of Religious Education.

She was known for her outgoing nature, love of children, competent leadership and openness to new ideas. She went home to her good God on May 10, 2025, at the age of 97.



**Sister Patricia Jean Shanahan, SNDdeN**

Sister Patricia was a beloved Sister of Notre Dame de Namur who directed catechetical programs for the poor in several U.S. states and Peru. There, she supported families through a

home-visit program and cared for children with special needs. When she returned to the United States, she served as a Literacy Volunteer into her retirement years. Sister Patricia went home to her good God on December 17, 2024, at 94.



**Sister Janice Waters, SNDdeN**

(formerly Sister Margaret Cornelia)

Sister Janice Waters impacted the community through her many ministries, including education, leadership service for the Boston

Province, and time as Director of SNDdeN Associates. She volunteered in South Africa and worked in grant writing and planning for the Little Sisters of the Assumption. She went home to her good God on March 10, 2025, at 96.



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On the 20th anniversary of the martyrdom of Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN, representatives and students from Notre Dame Preschool, Elementary and High School in Belmont, Notre Dame de Namur University and Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur gathered to plant a tree in her memory. Pictured are: (top row) Amy Jobin, Director of Mission and Ministry, Notre Dame Belmont, Sister Yvonne Bondi, SNDdeN, Kurt Allen, Vice President, Marketing and Communications, NDNU; (bottom row) Anna Fox, ND Belmont, Ivy Ho, ND Preschool and Naoki Kagawa, ND Elementary.