

# Sowing Goodness

CELEBRATING OUR 2025 JUBILARIANS



God's Goodness Flourishes

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Sister Gillian Wallace, SNDdeN is joined by Sisters Maria Delaney (left) and Kathryn Keenan, SNDdeN (right) as she professes her perpetual vows at the Belmont Province Center chapel.

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Susan Dennin  
*Director of Marketing and Communications,  
Managing Editor*

We invite you to explore our newly redesigned website at [sddeneastwest.org](http://sddeneastwest.org)! Learn more about our mission, ministries, stories and ways to connect—now easier to navigate and more inspiring than ever.



**Our New Website is Live!**





### Sowing Goodness Volume 4, Number 2

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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Contact: [communications@ewsnnden.org](mailto:communications@ewsnnden.org)

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur  
U.S. East-West Province  
[snddeneastwest.org](http://snddeneastwest.org)

### Regional Development Offices

351 Broadway  
Everett, MA 02149-3425

1520 Ralston Avenue  
Belmont, CA 94002-1908

### Leadership Team

Sister Maria Delaney, SNDdeN  
Sister Kathryn Keenan, SNDdeN  
Sister Pat O'Brien, SNDdeN  
Sister Roberta Rzeznik, SNDdeN  
Sister Virginia Scally, SNDdeN

### Contributors

We are grateful for the Sisters and Associates of Notre Dame de Namur, U.S. East-West Province, Communications and Development staff, faculty and staff of our schools and sponsored ministries who contributed to this issue.

### Design

Stoltze Design Group

### Photography

SNDdeN, Associates and staff  
SNDdeN East-West schools and sponsored ministries  
Carlos Campos  
John Gillooly  
Dorothy Meyer

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## Dear Friends and Benefactors,

As we welcome this Winter season, we rejoice in the many ways God's goodness continues to flourish—in our communities, in creation, and in all who share in the mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

In this issue, we celebrate how the spirit of St. Julie Billiart—to *make known the goodness of God*—guides every facet of our lives and ministries. From our deep commitment to *Laudato Si'* and care for creation, to our work for justice and peace, the Sisters' presence continues to bring light and hope to the world.

We also share the joyful celebration of Sister Gillian Wallace's profession of perpetual vows, a beautiful witness to a life dedicated to God's goodness. Her "yes" echoes St. Julie's trust in God's ever-present love and strengthens our shared mission to serve God's people with joy and compassion.

Across our province—and throughout our international Congregation—God's goodness flourishes through our schools, global advocacy for women, and initiatives for sustainability and care of the Earth. In these pages, you will learn more about our support for our sponsored schools and ministries, which provides funding for students, staff and programs, as well as projects like the St. Julie Haiti Project, a community-led bakery in Les Cayes. Your engagement with us in these ministries is vital as we continue working together to nurture a world where all life is cherished.

We are profoundly grateful to you, our friends and benefactors, whose generosity sustains this mission. Through your prayers and support, you make possible our continued efforts to reveal God's goodness in all things—today and for generations to come.

God's goodness truly flourishes when we care for one another and for our common home.

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



*Sister Ginny*

SISTER VIRGINIA SCALLY

*Sister Maria*

SISTER MARIA DELANEY

*Sister Pat*

SISTER PAT O'BRIEN

*Sister Kathryn*

SISTER KATHRYN KEENAN

*Sister Roberta*

SISTER ROBERTA RZEZNIK



# Our Community

## A Journey Toward God's Goodness

### Sister Gillian Wallace, SNDdeN professes perpetual vows

BY SUSAN DENNIN, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

*The article below is from a recorded interview with Sister Gillian Wallace, SNDdeN at Notre Dame High School in San Jose, California, where she serves as a religious studies teacher.*

FOR SISTER GILLIAN WALLACE, SNDdeN the path to professing her perpetual vows with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur has been anything but conventional. From the halls of Notre Dame High School in Belmont, California, to the classrooms of Cambridge University and now to her ministry as an educator at Notre Dame High School in San Jose, her story is one of curiosity, courage and deep faith.

"I actually first met the Sisters of Notre Dame as a high school student," Sister Gillian recalls. "There was one Sister at the school, the principal, and as any student knows, you try to stay out of the principal's office! So, my vocation didn't begin there."

She says her early sense of call was to the priesthood—

something unavailable to women in the Roman Catholic Church. "But Jesus came knocking again," she continues, "this time in my early thirties, while I was living in England."

After earning her Ph.D. in environmental archeology from Cambridge, she began a career in anthropology and university administration. While it provided meaningful work, the experience left her yearning for spiritual depth and community. "I was helping people at work, but then I'd come home and there was no backup, no shared life," she reflects.

Her path led her back to California, where she worked at Notre Dame de Namur University and again encountered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. "When I met the Sisters of Notre Dame at Notre Dame de Namur University,



Sister Gillian Wallace, SNDdeN was joined in celebration by Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, friends, colleagues and staff, at the Belmont Province Center.



I thought, *Wait a minute—these amazing women have what I have been seeking all along,*” she said.

The Sisters’ commitment to education, social justice and the formation of community resonated deeply with Sister Gillian. Her decision to explore religious life grew from that encounter. “Everything came together—their joy, their intellect, their community and that deep desire to make known God’s goodness,” she says. “It just fit.”

The legacy of Saint Julie Billiart and Françoise Blin de Bourdon, foundresses of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, inspires Sister Gillian deeply. “They were mavericks,” she explains. “They broke boundaries to educate poor children, especially girls. Their courage and friendship remind me that goodness knows no class or border. It is on us to make that goodness known today.”

Her own vocation as an educator has flourished within that mission. Sister Gillian now teaches religious studies at Notre Dame High School in San Jose. “I used to think teaching high school would be terrifying—30 teenagers in one room!” she laughs. “But it is actually a joy. These young women are brilliant, engaged and full of heart. And I get to help them explore where faith meets life.”

And that joy radiates from Sister Gillian as she looks to humor—with an ever-present smile—to connect with those around her. She says her vows have transformed her teaching and her relationships. “I have always wanted to help people,” she says with happiness. “When I say I am here for you—that is literally what my life means now.”

Like many Sisters of Notre Dame, Sister Gillian values the congregation’s global perspective. During her preparation for perpetual vows, she spent time in Namur, Belgium, with Sisters from across the world. “We were so different, hailing from Nigeria, Kenya, Congo, the U.S., and yet we were completely one in spirit,” she says. “We listened, learned from one another and remembered that our hearts are as wide as the world.”

For Sister Gillian, religious life is not a restriction but a widening of possibilities. “I have always been happiest living in community—sharing life, prayer, laughter and purpose,” she says. “Professing my final vows is about saying yes, fully and forever, to God’s goodness.”

The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, she explains, are not limitations but sources of freedom. Poverty is about shared resources and care for creation; chastity allows her to love widely; and obedience becomes an exercise in listening to God and the wisdom of her community.

Looking back over her journey of faith, Sister Gillian recognizes God’s hand guiding her choices—from her academic pursuits to her ministry. Her journey affirms that faith, humor (and an occasional giggle) and community are essential companions in life.

“Through the years of discerning... I have learned it is about cultivating love, acceptance and peace globally. It is no longer about ‘I,’ it is about ‘we.’ Living and working with like-minded people allows you to make a real difference collectively,” Sister Gillian shared. ✨

## A HABIT OF GLOBAL SISTERHOOD

BY SISTER GILLIAN WALLACE, SNDdeN

During my two-month stay in Namur, Belgium, I admired the beautiful fabric of the Nigerian Sisters’ habits. I mentioned this to Sister Astrid, who is originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo and is currently missioned in Kenya. Weeks later, to my amazement, she handed me a packet of Nigerian habit material that journeyed from Africa to Belgium. Even the pattern, cut to my measurements, traveled across continents before it finally reached my hands.

When I struggled to find someone to sew the habit, I prayed for help. That prayer was answered through a generous couple from Colombia, who lovingly crafted the garment. Their immigrant story echoes my own family’s journey, making the gift even more meaningful.

This habit, carried across the world and stitched with care, is more than a garment—it is a symbol of God’s goodness and of the global Sisterhood that binds our hearts together. ✨



Sisters Michelle Henault, Gillian Wallace and Elaine Bain, SNDdeN

## Finding My Place Among Women of Courage

A REFLECTION BY MAUREEN PECCOLO, AND

BEING AN ASSOCIATE of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur is a special and meaningful highlight of my life. My love for St. Julie Billiart started at an early age when the Sisters taught me in elementary school and that relationship continued throughout college. Now, I work among the Sisters who live at the Province Center in Belmont, California, and have the unique opportunity to experience, on a deeper spiritual level, the charism of St. Julie.

For a long time, I felt St. Julie was whispering through the Sisters, Associates and several family members and friends who subtly suggested or even directly asked me to be an Associate at key moments in my life. Prayerful reflection and discernment led me to join in June 2022.

Throughout the years, the Sisters who have touched my life are far too numerous to name. I would like to thank Sister Pat Hutchison, SNDdeN my former history professor at Notre Dame de Namur University, and most profoundly, Sister Roseanne Murphy, SNDdeN whose cherished relationship with my family spans over four decades. I am honored that Sister Roseanne was my companion and sponsor during the Association discernment period.

The journey to Association with the Sisters and Associates has been a blessing and intimate process, solidifying my belief that I am connected to a religious community that includes brilliant “women of courage,” as eloquently referenced in the book about St. Julie by Sister Roseanne.

It is both a gift and a tremendous blessing to make this commitment and join in the charism of St. Julie Billiart and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. \*



**ABOVE:** Associate Maureen Peccolo with Sister Roseanne Murphy, SNDdeN and Catherine Rossi

# Spirituality

## The Spirit of the Good God Flows Like a River

A REFLECTION BY SISTER LIANE DELSUC, SNDdeN

THE CELEBRATION OF MY 50TH JUBILEE as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur has been a special time to reflect on how the Spirit of our good God has been at work in my life all these years. I stand in awe and wonder as I recognize the river flowing beneath, a Scriptural image of God's action in our universe.

I first discovered St. Julie Billiart's story in elementary school in California. Later, during my freshman year in high school, a powerful experience showed me the compassion of God toward people living in poverty, which began my sense of call to become a missionary. That call took years to surface again.

Looking back, a series of events reveals the flow of God's river: I thoroughly enjoyed my Spanish classes in high school, which led me to major in Spanish in college, and ultimately led to teaching in a public-school bilingual first-grade classroom in a low-income district of the San Francisco Bay Area. A tour of Peru before spending the summer with a Chilean family gave me a genuine experience of Peru's culture, history and art, which I had studied in college. After making my first vows and teaching children with learning differences in South Central and East Los Angeles for eight years, the call to Peru from our Sisters there awakened my missionary spirit. This is what I have been called to do. The next 16 years I spent at our school on a sand dune south of Lima.

Living and serving among people



**ABOVE:** After the Belmont Jubilee celebration in August 2025, these five women shared memories of their 50-year friendship, begun when they took first vows together in 1975. **LEFT TO RIGHT:** Laura Eakin, Sisters Liane Delsuc, Theresa Linehan and Sharon McMillan, SNDdeN and Lynne Lukenbill

living in poverty has taught me about the resilience of the human spirit and the deep faith of many marginalized individuals, whose only hope is in God. Teaching children with learning differences in a multicultural school amid the strawberry fields of Watsonville, California, for 16 years was then followed by an invitation to Phoenix to live in the first Habitat for Humanity community in the United States, a neighborhood of African-American and Latino people. As I taught English as a Second Language to adults, I became aware

of the plight of migrants and the harrowing journeys they undertake in search of safety, and so began my passion to serve and learn from asylum seekers from all over the world. That has led me to expand my tent to include companion volunteers from other faith traditions, who are also called to "welcome the stranger." Together, we strive to create a welcoming space of respect and dignity for migrants.

What a wonder! How the Spirit has led and prepared me one step at a time for the next step! Holy Mystery! Our God is very good! \*

# Education

## Sisters Academy of Baltimore: Two Decades of Empowering Girls

FOUNDED IN 2004, the Sisters Academy of Baltimore (SAB) was born from a call by parents and community leaders seeking quality education and hope for middle school girls in Southwest Baltimore. Created through the shared vision of four religious congregations—the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Bon Secours—SAB has become a beacon of empowerment and transformation.

Now celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Academy provides a tuition-free, faith-based education for grades 5–8,



Students at Sisters Academy in Baltimore form a strong, supportive community of learning.

**TOP:** Class of 2028 students engaged in a quilt-making activity with notable fiber artist and master quilter Joan Gaither, Ph.D. **MIDDLE:** Adjusting uniform ties. **BOTTOM:** Watching the solar eclipse.



with every student receiving a 100% scholarship. Small classes and an 8:1 student-to-teacher ratio ensure each girl's growth and success—100% of eligible graduates have earned their high school diploma.

Rooted in faith, leadership and justice, SAB nurtures confident, compassionate young women who will spark positive change in their communities and beyond. A recent grant from the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur supports just wages for the dedicated staff who make this mission possible. ✨



## United Nations: Day of the Girl

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

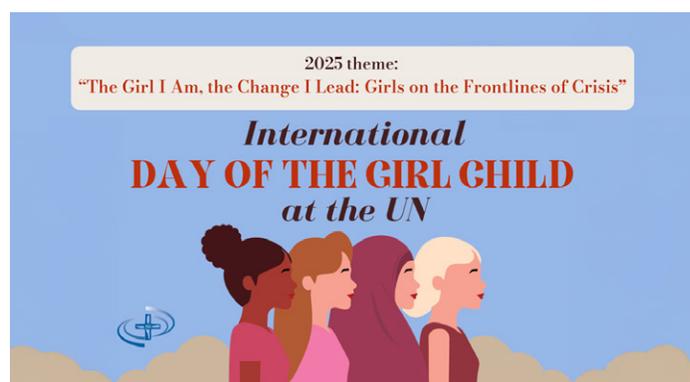
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD, held on October 11 each year, celebrates the accomplishments of young women and girls worldwide as they advocate for justice in their own communities. This year, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur hosted their second-annual virtual gathering for high school students to commemorate this special day.

Notre Dame students from our schools across the country gathered to reflect on the theme “The girl I am, the change I lead: Girls on the frontlines of crisis.” Students from Notre Dame Academy in Hingham, Massachusetts; Notre Dame Academy in Worcester, Massachusetts; Notre Dame High School in Belmont, California; Mount Notre Dame High School in Cincinnati, Ohio; and Maryvale Preparatory School in Lutherville, Maryland, prepared short presentations on how they are empowering young women to advocate for social change. As part of their presentation, they identified one Notre Dame Hallmark and one principle of Catholic Social Teaching related to their chosen topic, explaining how these values shed light on the issue and guide the necessary change.

Led by Sister Isabelle Izika, SNDdeN, the Congregational UN representative, the group reflected on the theme of

leadership, prompting deeper conversation on the role of women in our schools and communities. Students also shared their personal experiences, discussing ways that their schools have supported their personal and professional growth.

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur hope to continue to expand this program by offering more opportunities for students to visit the United Nations and share their justice and peace priorities. By including voices from young women in our community, we can advocate for greater representation of women and girls, as well as justice for all. \*



## 125 Years of Faith, Friendship and Foundation: A Jubilant Celebration at Moreland Notre Dame

JOY AND NOSTALGIA filled the air as the Moreland Notre Dame School community in Watsonville, California, celebrated 125 years of faith-filled



Sister Louise O'Reilly, SNDdeN (pictured, front row, in a green jacket) is surrounded by former students from the Moreland Notre Dame Classes of 1974 and 1975.

education and Notre Dame spirit. The September gala and fundraising auction brought together Sisters, alumni, parents and staff for a weekend overflowing with gratitude, laughter and shared memories.

The celebration began with a beautiful anniversary Mass led by Bishop Danny Garcia, followed by a warm reception in the school library, where guests admired memorabilia spanning generations and the newly refreshed library patio. Later that evening, the 125th anniversary dinner set a festive tone, with tables adorned in blue and gold, portraits of St. Julie Billiart and a palpable sense

of legacy linking past to present.

Among the honored guests were several Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur who once taught at the school, including Sister Liane Delsuc, SNDdeN and Sister Louise O'Reilly, SNDdeN, whose former students, now celebrating their 50th reunion, greeted her with hugs and laughter.

Founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1899 and dedicated in 1900, Moreland Notre Dame has remained steadfast in its mission: to educate for life, faith and service. One hundred twenty-five years later, that same spirit continues to inspire. \*

# Honoring Heritage and Faith: Notre Dame Student Portrays St. Kateri in Historic Cathedral Mural

BY TAMI McMANN, SENIOR MANAGER, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

A NOTRE DAME ACADEMY JUNIOR from Worcester, Massachusetts, recently had the extraordinary honor of portraying St. Kateri Tekakwitha in a newly unveiled mural at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City.

Dana Howling Wolf Keller, originally from North Dakota, is a proud member of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation (MHA Nation). After Dana was adopted from the foster system, her parents intentionally preserved her full name to honor her Native heritage and keep her connected to her roots—a connection that makes her portrayal of St. Kateri, the first Native American saint, significant. Known as the “Lily of the Mohawks,” St. Kateri is the patroness of Native Americans, orphans and the environment.

Dana was photographed in Native attire to inspire artist Adam Cvijanovic, whose 25-foot mural—titled *What’s So Funny About Peace, Love, and Understanding*—was commissioned by His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan. The vibrant, 12-panel work celebrates the Cathedral’s legacy as a sanctuary for New York’s diverse Catholic community, especially immigrants, and interweaves saints, civic leaders and everyday figures into a sacred narrative of faith, resilience and belonging.

Dana’s likeness now appears alongside St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, Dorothy Day and Venerable Pierre Toussaint. Installed in the Cathedral’s narthex, this is the largest permanent artwork in its 146-year history—a powerful testament to unity across faith, heritage and generations. ✨



**TOP TO BOTTOM:** Close up of the St. Kateri mural as modeled by Dana Howling Wolf Keller. Dana wore native attire to inspire the artist. The depiction is part of a large mural at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, New York City.



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Joe Tower, Sisters Anne Donovan and Kathleen Gallivan, SNDdeN and Tricia Tower. Photo by Emmanuel student, Carlos Campos.

## Sister Inducted into Athletic Hall of Fame

SISTER ANNE DONOVAN, SNDdeN was recently inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame at her alma mater, Boston's Emmanuel College.

A lifelong sports fan, Sister Anne played basketball at Emmanuel from 1958–61 but she is best known for helping transform the school's athletic program as the Vice President of Finance, a role she held until retiring two years ago. Her contributions include leading the development of a modern recreation center and a \$4 million renovation of the athletic facilities.

Modestly, Sister Anne says, "I wouldn't dignify it by calling it a vision. I just listened to what people needed and asked, 'How can we make this happen?'"

Emmanuel President Beth Ross calls her "legendary," and says Sister Anne's ingenuity and commitment have made the Division III athletic program what it is today.

*With thanks to Beth Rowen at Emmanuel College for her assistance with this article. \**

## Notre Dame High School Belmont "Adopts" Sisters

IN A BRAND-NEW "ADOPT A SISTER" PROGRAM in California, 11 Notre Dame High School Belmont students were matched with Sisters at the Belmont Province Center to explore and build new friendships.

Sabrina Harper, U.S. East-West vocations promoter, says the women will meet regularly during the school year to learn about each other's lives.

"It is a way for students to see that the Sisters are leaders in their communities and within the Church," she shares, "and to promote the charism of St. Julie and the legacy of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur." Students were gifted with a custom-designed journal to record their reflections on these topics.

With smiles on their faces, students and Sisters enjoyed the meet-and-greet event in October where a strong foundation toward friendship began. May our good God bless these new relationships. \*



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Sisters Maureen Hilliard, Yvonne Bondi and Karen Pozniak, SNDdeN join students from Notre Dame High School Belmont.

# Sisters in Ministry



**ABOVE:** Sunflower ice sculpture provides a stunning centerpiece at the 25th celebration.

## Heritage, Faith and Care: Notre Dame Health Care Center in Worcester

THE FACILITIES at Notre Dame Health Care Center (NDHCC) in Worcester, Massachusetts, are undergoing exciting updates. Rooted in the mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, these renovations reflect the deep commitment to dignity, hospitality and holistic well-being.

As part of this project, the “neighborhoods” within the center have proudly returned to their original names inspired by locations in France: Cuvilly, Amiens and Namur. These villages were significant in the life of St. Julie Billiart, foundress of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, and reflect NDHCC’s pride in our Congregation’s history and legacy.

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of Notre Dame du Lac, the assisted living facility, a reception was held on a beautiful evening in October and included music from a harpist and presentations from Sister Patricia O’Brien, SNDdeN, Jessica Brigham, vice president of Notre Dame du Lac and Worcester Mayor, Joseph Petty. The sunflower ice sculpture was particularly photo-worthy! \*

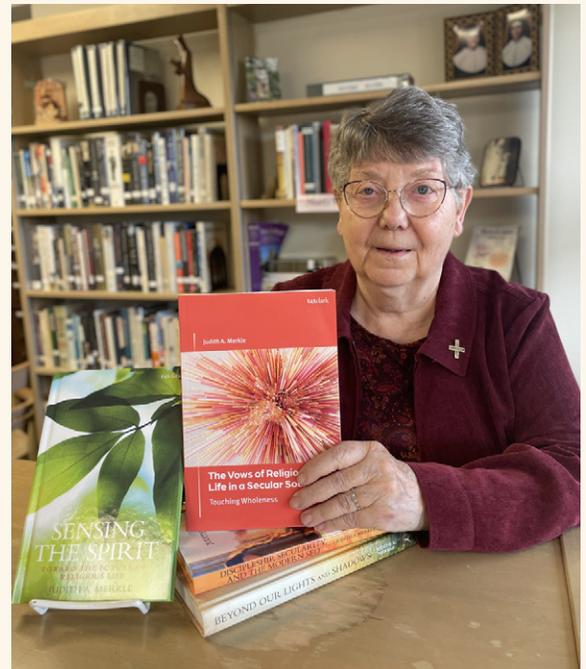
## Sister Judith Authors Book on SNDdeN Vows

SISTER JUDITH A. MERKLE, SNDdeN of the Ohio Province has recently released her eighth book. In *The Vows of Religious Life in a Secular Society*, she explores foundational aspects of consecrated life and delves deeply into the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity as applied to the modern world.

“These are not my spiritual thoughts on the vows,” says Sister Judith. “Rather, I take the vows, and I put them in conversation with contemporary research. It is an academic approach.”

Bloomsbury Publishing says the book, “invites us to consider whether religious life, despite contemporary criticisms, can be seen as ‘touching wholeness.’” It is now available on Amazon.

Sister Judith recently retired as Professor of Religious Studies at Niagara University. She holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in Theology from the University of St. Michael’s College, University of Toronto, Canada. \*



# Our Commitment to Care for the Earth

## Composting: A Community Effort

BY SISTER MARY ALICE McCABE, SNDdeN

### The Problem—Landfill Methane Emissions:

It is a common misconception that when we throw things away they simply disappear. In reality, much of what we discard ends up in landfills. In the U.S., food is the most common material sent to landfills, accounting for almost a quarter of municipal solid waste and generating 58% of landfill methane emissions. Methane has 80 times more global warming potential than carbon dioxide over a 20-year time scale.\*

### An Action—Composting:

Composting not only reduces these emissions but also reverses their effects. Microorganisms transform organic waste into a slow-release fertilizer that strengthens the soil, helps it store carbon, and increases its resistance to extreme weather conditions. Composting enables us to take responsibility for the waste we generate and work collectively toward climate solutions.

At the Notre Dame community in Ipswich, Massachusetts, composting has become a shared commitment. Beyond turning waste into a valuable resource, it unites Sisters and staff around a common goal and deepens ecological awareness.

Each day, food scraps—vegetable and fruit peelings, eggshells, coffee grounds and tea bags—are collected from the central kitchen and from compost pails on every floor. The scraps are brought to the Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center (Cuvilly) compost station. Sister Ani Wihbey, SNDdeN organized this system which over time has become a genuine community effort, involving a dedicated team of gatherers, deliverers and drivers.

At Cuvilly, organic farmer J.C. Sawyer and volunteer gardener Melinda Booy mix food scraps with used animal bedding from the barn to balance carbon and aid decomposition. Two methods are used: *hot composting*,



**ABOVE:** Melinda Booy works with J.C. Sawyer to turn the compost. **LEFT:** Sister Ani Wihbey, SNDdeN collects the compost from the Ipswich Province Center.

which requires frequent watering and turning and produces compost more quickly, and *cold composting*, which takes longer but requires less labor and water. Both create nutrient-rich compost that enriches Cuvilly's landscape and sequesters carbon in the soil. Sawyer has also introduced *vermiculture*—using red-wiggler worms to produce a nutrient-dense fertilizer known as worm castings.

A visit to Cuvilly's composting station offers a hands-on learning experience in all three methods. Together, the Sisters of Notre Dame-Ipswich and Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center model a small but powerful way to care for our planet—our common home. \*

\**The Spark: The Unforeseen Benefits That Blossom When You Reuse and Repair*, Oct. 2025 Newsletter  
<https://reasonstobecheerful.world/the-spark-repair-reuse-unforeseen-community-benefits/>



**LEFT:** Steve Mayo joins Sister Kathy O'Hagan, SNDdeN and Sister Gretchen Shaffer, CSJ at the celebration. **BELOW:** Sister Kathy O'Hagan, SNDdeN enjoys a ride on her quad with godson Luke Tierney. **BOTTOM:** Newspaper article from 1977 announcing the Big Laurel Mountain School.



## Pure Love: Fifty Years of Ministry on the Knob

BY TAMI McMANN, SENIOR MANAGER, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

IN A REMOTE APPALACHIAN TOWN few can find on a map, Sister Kathy O'Hagan, SNDdeN built a ministry of faith, education and service that continues to shape lives generations later.

Sister Kathy wouldn't be surprised if you've never heard of Kermit, a small West Virginia town near the Kentucky border. With fewer than 300 residents—about a third living in poverty—Kermit has been her home and ministry for 50 years.

Drawn by a pastoral letter on regional poverty, she arrived in 1975 at “the Knob,” a rugged forest with dirt roads and few resources. “I came from an inner-city school in Baltimore

where it was always hopping,” she recalls. “It was a big adjustment.” Locals helped her transform a dilapidated woodshop into her first classroom, planting the seeds for what became Big Laurel School.

The vision began with local benefactor Edwina Pepper, who donated 460 acres to establish a school and nature preserve. With Sister Mary Margaret Pignone, SNDdeN securing funds, and Sister Gretchen Shaffer, CSJ joining to teach, Big Laurel School opened in 1976 with 13 students. “The mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur is to go where the need is greatest,” Sister Kathy said. “In those days, this was it.”

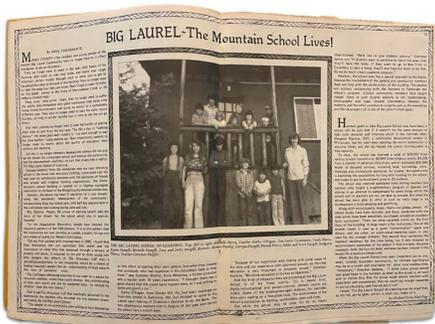
For 12 years, she taught young children while Sister Gretchen taught older ones. “Her students were always reading by year's end,” said Sister Gretchen. When the school closed in 1988, the Sisters adapted—creating community programs, a food pantry and an addiction recovery initiative inspired by Sister Kathy's own healing

journey. Earning a master's in mental health and addiction counseling, she extended care to the region's most vulnerable.

Today, Big Laurel Learning Center thrives under Executive Director Grace Williams, once a Notre Dame Mission Volunteer. Retreats, camps and service-learning programs continue the mission. “Sister Kathy is a great mentor,” Williams said. “Her knowledge of this place is priceless.”

At a festive celebration in late summer, laughter and stories echoed through the mountains. Former students, volunteers, and friends celebrated the legacy of a woman described by one admirer as “sweet but tough, funny but serious, realistic but idealistic—pure love.”

Reflecting on her journey, Sister Kathy said, “To serve here in the mountains, supported by my community and congregation, has been a double blessing. I am here in the name of all Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur to spread goodness.” ✨



# Pilgrimages of Hope for Creation

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

2025 MARKS THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY of the publication of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* and the 800th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of the Creatures*. To mark this occasion, Catholic organizations across the country gathered for *Pilgrimages of Hope for Creation*. These events inspired each of us to recommit to caring for the Earth and one another.

Led by the Catholic Climate Covenant, this initiative, centered on the theme of "pilgrimage," encouraged participants to walk in nature, pray for ecological healing and reflect on their spiritual connection to God and the Creation. During September and October, the Season of Creation, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and friends from across the U.S. East-West Province gathered on Zoom as part of our virtual *Series of Hope* events. All joined in prayer and reflection, celebrating Creation in all its forms and discussing ways to protect these gifts.

While the Season of Creation has passed, we encourage you to continue to be a Pilgrim of Hope. If you are interested in participating in a Pilgrimage, here are a few ideas:

- Plan a *Laudato Si'*-themed Rosary Walk.
- Reach out to local indigenous communities to collaboratively plan a prayer service or event that honors the sacredness of the land.
- Learn more about Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN who was martyred in response to her work to defend the land and people of the Amazon.
- Promote sustainable action through a letter-writing campaign or by scheduling advocacy visits to your elected officials, whether local or national. ✨



In 1859, the pastor at St. Mary's in Lawrence, Massachusetts, bought a tenement house and had it converted into a convent. The photo was taken around the time of the construction of the new St. Augustine's convent in 1893.

## A Swan Song at 1047 Essex Street: A Reflection

BY SISTER MAUREEN O'BRIEN, SNDdeN

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2, was the *Swan Song* party for an old duplex in Lawrence, Massachusetts—a building with a long Notre Dame pedigree. Since 1946, generations of Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and students have found their way to St. Augustine's Convent on Tower Hill, as well as the parish school and small church located around the corner on Ames Street—whether through summer school or Continuing Professional Education programs at Bon Secours Hospital in Methuen. The choice of the party name was apt. Swans are silent, majestic birds. The myth is that they only sing before dying. Not true! They have a variety of haunting calls, with an emphasis on *song*.

Houses can also sing—and they do—they tell stories and welcome storytellers. Sisters came from Boston, Ipswich, Stoneham and neighborhoods in the Merrimack Valley, as well as Windsor, Connecticut. A few had lived at 1047 Essex Street and came on a pilgrimage to see their old bedrooms. Others were curious about the house on the hill, hoping to see it one last time before its next incarnation. All were invited to share lunch and pop into the second-floor library to take a piece or two of nostalgia, including books, statues, plants and framed pictures.

Over the course of the afternoon, all enjoyed gathering to talk and reminisce. *The heart thrives on laughter, food and the experience of being together in a house that sings!* ✨



## A Diamond Jubilee Celebration in Kenya

BY SISTER NANCY O'SHEA, SNDdeN

THE SUN SHONE BRIGHTLY on Saturday, August 23, in Malava, Kenya, as the Diocese of Kakamega joined the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in celebrating 60 years of their presence and ministry in Kenya. The joyful gathering included Sisters, family members, colleagues, former students, Associates, parishioners and a lively local choir. Before Mass, groups planted trees, a fitting symbol of growth and gratitude, while others busied themselves with the final preparations that had begun the night before.

As the celebration opened, music filled the air—drums, dancing and singing resounding across the compound. Sister Everlyne Nekesa Oguba, SNDdeN representing the Kenya Leadership Team, and Sisters Evalyne Aseyo and Amarachi Ezeonu, SNDdeN representing the Congregational Leadership Team, warmly welcomed everyone. Spirits were high as the Papal Nuncio to Kenya, Archbishop Hubertus Matheus Maria van Megen, and Bishop Joseph Obanyi of Kakamega arrived. A particularly touching sight was a small child being carried in procession, holding the Lectionary—“A child will lead them,” came to mind.

The Nuncio's homily left a lasting impression. Speaking effortlessly in English, Swahili, French and Dutch, he reflected on the legacy of St. Julie Billiart and the Sisters' mission. Having grown up in the Netherlands 'across the river' from Namur, he was familiar with her story. Quoting Pope Francis, he said religious life is rooted in recognizing



**CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT:** Sisters from the Kenya Province begin the procession to the Mass celebrating the 60th anniversary; Statue of St. Julie Billiart finds a new home at the Kenya Province; Sisters Nancy O'Shea (second from left) and Anne Malone, SNDdeN (far right) join Kenya Province SNDdeN at the 60th anniversary celebration.



“what really matters,” finding God's presence not only in great moments but also in fragility and weakness. He continued, “Consecrated persons are signs of God in diverse environments of life... the leaven that carries the People of God forward.” He also shared Pope Leo's words, urging all to keep alive a deep love for Christ, and conveyed the Pope's gratitude for the Sisters' enduring witness.

Special recognition was given to the many Sisters who have served in Kenya over the past 60 years—those present, those unable to attend and those who now rest with God. Their courage and generosity were met with heartfelt thanks.

A memorable highlight was the presentation of a large statue of St. Julie to the Kenya Unit. The Ohio Unit sent it after a providential connection with the Sisters of Notre Dame of Coesfeld, who had one available from a school closing in Kentucky. St. Julie's statue arrived just in time for the Diamond Jubilee.

After Mass, a grand feast brought the community together in gratitude and joy—a celebration of 60 years of faith, service and the radiant goodness of God. ✱

# Hope 2025 Leadership Conference: A Global Witness

BY SISTER VIVIEN ECHEKWUBELU, SNDdeN

NEARLY 300 CATHOLIC SISTERS from six continents gathered just outside Rome at the Fraterna Domus Retreat Center in Sacrofano for the Hope 2025 Leadership Collaborative Conference held from June 3 to 8, 2025. Another 190 sisters joined virtually from around the world. This international gathering was not only a chance to reflect, reconnect and recharge—it was also a powerful moment of global witness. It brought together women religious across cultures, languages and traditions, united by their shared hope for the future of religious life and the Church.

One of the most potent themes to emerge was the call for deeper global sisterhood. Conversations throughout the week emphasized the strength that comes from being in communion with one another across borders and generations. Participants spoke openly about their hopes for religious life in the coming decades, imagining a future shaped by trust, accountability and mutual support. Despite the diversity in context and experience, there was a common desire to walk together more intentionally, to share leadership more generously and to make space for voices that have long been silenced or overlooked.

Young sisters played a vital role in shaping the tone and direction of the conference. Many of them lifted up synodality: the practice of walking together, listening deeply and discerning communally as a foundational model for how religious life should evolve. They spoke with conviction about the need for a new theological imagination, one rooted in inclusivity, vulnerability and shared power. Their insights challenged everyone present to re-examine long-held structures and consider how religious life can become more responsive, flexible and just.

The sisters also confronted difficult truths. Participants from Africa, Latin America and Asia spoke candidly about the very real challenges they face in religious life. Many spoke openly about racism, neocolonialism and systems of exclusion still present in some religious communities and Church structures. These conversations were not easy, but they were necessary. Naming these realities out loud, together, was a courageous act of collective honesty. It signaled that real change is possible when we're willing to hold space for truth and transformation.

Beyond the formal sessions, the conference provided an



opportunity for deep relationship-building and meaningful networking. Sisters under the age of 65 engaged in conversations around leadership, sustainability and the future of religious life. In small groups, hallway conversations and moments of prayer, bonds formed that will ripple far beyond the week in Rome. These relationships are the seeds of future collaboration. They offer the foundation for a network of women religious who are ready to lead with integrity, wisdom and a spirit of mutual support.

Ultimately, Hope 2025 was a pilgrimage: a journey toward a more just and inclusive religious life. It reminded everyone present, physically and virtually, that the future of religious life will not be written by a few, but by many; that the Church's future is being shaped not just by official declarations or documents, but by the daily acts of courage and compassion lived out by women across the world—women who dare to lead with tenderness, who listen with courage and who are willing to reimagine a Church that truly reflects the love and justice of the Gospel. In this gathering, a new chapter opened—one written in the language of hope, grounded in the strength of sisterhood and guided by the Spirit moving among us. ✨

# Celebrating Our 2025 Jubilarians

## 75 Years (1950)

Ann Carmel Badalamente  
Catherine Beauregard  
Joan Farley  
Kathleen Haughey  
Joanne Miller  
Irene Murphy  
Katherine Nelson  
Mary O'Malley  
Regina Whalen

## 70 Years (1955)

Barbara Beauchamp  
Joan Bernhart  
Mary Coffey  
Julie Michael Comperchio  
Mary Fitzpatrick  
Rosemary Grant  
Jean Kielyka  
Jacinta Martinez  
Joyce Ann McCauley  
Elizabeth McLaughlin†  
Margaret Frances Middleton  
Shawn Scanlan

## 60 Years (1965)

Geraldine Burns  
Thérèse Dill  
Sharon Joyer  
Patricia Kelly  
Kathleen Lynch  
Maureen Marr  
Nancy McCarron  
Louise O'Reilly  
Susan Thornell

## 50 Years (1975)

Marcia Joanne Billings  
Eileen Burns  
Liane Delsuc  
Theresa Linehan  
Sharon McMillan

## 40 Years (1985)

Kathy Camacho  
Janet Deaett

## 25 Years (2000)

Jennifer Pierce



STANDING, LEFT TO RIGHT: Sisters Kathleen Cassidy,\* Patricia Kelly, Joanne Sullivan,\* Susan Thornell, Maureen Marr, Diane Shaw,\* Janet Deaett, Eileen Burns, Mary Coffey, Marcia Billings, Geraldine Burns, Mary Farren,\* Alice McCourt,\* Mary Fitzpatrick, SNDdeN; SEATED, LEFT TO RIGHT: Sisters Margaret Middleton, Julie Michael Comperchio, Elizabeth McLaughlin,† Rosemary Grant, Mary O'Malley, Barbara Beauchamp, Kathleen Haughey, Karen Coakley,\* Barbara Collins,\* SNDdeN at the celebration at Emmanuel

\* 65-year Jubilarians who were unable to celebrate during 2020 due to COVID restrictions



**FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:** Sisters in Windsor, Connecticut, celebrated their Jubilee with Mass and a reception; Sisters, family, friends and staff gather at the NDNU chapel to celebrate the California Jubilarians; Jubilarians join in prayer at Emmanuel College.

# 75 Years of Service



**Sister Ann Carmel Badalamente, SNDdeN**

Sister Ann Carmel Badalamente, SNDdeN first met the Sisters of Notre Dame at Sacred Heart Elementary and Notre Dame High School in San Jose, California. Following graduation, she worked at the family’s grocery store before entering the Notre Dame community.

Her first mission was at Moreland Notre Dame School in Watsonville. Leadership roles followed, including the merger of two schools in Santa Barbara and the launch of St. Thomas More School in Washington, where she served as principal. “I felt the affirmation and privilege of being entrusted with beginning this school,” she said.

Back in California, Sister Ann Carmel mentored future principals and continued ministry in schools. At the Belmont Province Center, she served as office manager, receptionist and longtime coordinator of the Car Committee. Sister Ann Carmel also volunteered at Sacred Heart Nativity School, where her journey had begun. Now in Belmont, she enjoys life with gratitude and humor. She said, “I could go on and on about all the amazing things I have experienced!”



**Sister Catherine Beauregard, SNDdeN**

Sister Catherine Beauregard, SNDdeN was born Gloria Rita Beauregard in Lowell, Massachusetts. She entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1950 and received the name Sister Catherine Louise. She professed first vows in 1953 and perpetual vows in 1958.

During her active ministry she served as a teacher and worked in the laundry at community sites in Worcester, Boston and Andover, Massachusetts. Now a member of the Ipswich community, Sister Catherine takes part in community events and is dedicated to the ministry of prayer. Her life is characteristic of Sisters whose daily ministries—in classrooms, parish support roles and community life—quietly shaped generations and professed the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur’s mission to make known God’s goodness.



**LEFT:** Sister Theresa Linehan, SNDdeN (seated holding flowers) surrounded by loved ones at her 50-year Jubilee in Belmont, California.



### Sister Joan Farley, SNDdeN

Sister Joan Farley, SNDdeN grew up in Massachusetts, in a deeply Catholic community shaped by parish life. Inspired by her first-grade teacher, Sister Elizabeth St. Ann, she entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1950.

Sister Joan served as a dedicated teacher at schools in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, including long tenures at East Catholic High School and St. Rose School in East Hartford. Her ministry also led her beyond the classroom: as a prison chaplain in Cranston, Rhode Island, and later giving parish retreats across the U.S. with her twin brother, a Divine Word Missionary. These experiences deepened her faith and broadened her impact.

Grateful for the joy of religious life, she said, “Living in community has been a unique grace.” Her guiding scripture remains: “Do not be afraid, I am with you. I love you and you are mine.”



**ABOVE:** Jubilarians gather to celebrate at the Ipswich Province Center chapel.



### Sister Kathleen Haughey, SNDdeN

Sister Kathleen Haughey, SNDdeN celebrates her 75-year Jubilee with gratitude for the many gifts of her life and vocation. Born in White Plains, New York, in 1932, she and six siblings were raised by Irish immigrants, Eleanor and Patrick Haughey. She met the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur while attending West Catholic Girls High School in Philadelphia, where their example inspired her to enter the community in 1950.

Sister Kathleen began her ministry as an elementary school teacher before earning a degree in speech pathology, which led to many opportunities in education. She served in Baltimore public schools, volunteered in Glasgow, Scotland, and participated in programs in Mexico and Nigeria. She also gave many years of service in pastoral ministry at St. Thomas More Parish and with Notre Dame Associates. Sister Kathleen is now a cherished member of the community in Ipswich, Massachusetts.



**Sister Joanne Miller, SNDdeN**

Sister Joanne (Catherine Rose) Miller, SNDdeN grew up attending Catholic schools including Notre Dame High School in San Jose. She was greatly influenced by the example of the Sisters, especially Sister Mary Emmanuel, and felt the Spirit nudging her toward religious life.

Sister Joanne taught and led schools from Los Angeles to Honolulu, served parishes and the former California Province, and worked in retreat ministry in Santa Barbara. She especially treasures her years teaching the boys at Mission Dolores School in San Francisco, which she says, “surely taught me how to teach!”

Known for her quiet strength, love of play and commitment to justice, Sister Joanne has always hoped for a Church that welcomes all people and recognizes the equality of women. Today, she continues to embody gratitude, joy and trust in God’s goodness. “I love the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the community that always helps me grow.”



**Sister Katherine Nelson, SNDdeN**

Sister Katherine Nelson, SNDdeN has spent a lifetime making God’s goodness known through education and faith formation. Educated by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur herself, she dreamed of joining them. “Becoming a Sister was something I felt I HAD to do,” she said. She entered the novitiate in 1950.

Sister Katherine began teaching English, French, religion, speech and drama at schools across California before serving as principal of St. Charles School in San Carlos. After earning a master’s degree in applied theology, she directed religious education for the Diocese of Sacramento, forming catechists and lay ministers throughout Northern California. “I loved that job,” she says.

Later, Sister Katherine became a certified English as a Second Language teacher, guiding immigrants and refugees toward success. Today, she enjoys prayer, reading and time with loved ones within her Belmont, California community.



**Sister Irene Murphy, SNDdeN**

Born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, Sister Irene Murphy, SNDdeN grew up with six siblings and was taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Inspired by their joy, she entered the community in 1950 and taught in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut before serving as principal of Holy Name School in Chicopee, Massachusetts, for 28 years.

“My theory was to make the faculty enjoy coming to their job each day,” she said. “A happy teacher begets happy children who in turn go home having spent a profitable day at school. Last, but not by any means least, parents could breathe a sigh of relief, knowing all is well with their children.”

Now retired at Julie House, in Windsor, Connecticut, Sister Irene said, “I am proud to be a daughter of St. Julie and a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur. I only wish I had 75 more years to travel with all of you, my Sisters.”



### Sister Mary O'Malley, SNDdeN

Sister Mary O'Malley, SNDdeN grew up in a happy Irish-American family that included five children. With a deep desire to live a consecrated life, she was drawn to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and found a true sense of belonging within the community.

Over the years, Sister Mary has ministered as a teacher, principal, secretary, consultant and director of teacher education at Emmanuel College, in Boston. Her service has taken her from coast to coast as well as to Zimbabwe for a summer of outreach. She finds joy and meaning in all her ministries, saying each one has touched her life deeply.

As she celebrates her Jubilee, Sister Mary expresses gratitude for her life, family, faith, vocation, good friends and health. She draws hope from people actively working to heal the world. A favorite quote that inspires her is St. Julie's call to have "hearts as wide as the world."



### Sister Regina Whalen, SNDdeN

Sister Regina Whalen, SNDdeN joyfully celebrates 75 years of vowed life, reflecting gratefully on a journey enriched by God's abundant love. Inspired by Maria Montessori's vision, she devoted much of her ministry to education and the holistic development of children. With a theology degree from St. Bonaventure and training in spiritual direction, she served in parish retreats, SNDdeN retirement homes, and cross-cultural programs—including time with the Maryknoll community and ministry in Zimbabwe, where she joyfully witnessed the unit's first vocation.

She helped foster beauty and welcome in Notre Dame communities and played a key role in creating a sacred atmosphere at Notre Dame Cristo Rey High School when it was located in Lawrence. Now residing at the Notre Dame Long-Term Care Community, she continues to draw grace from music, prayer and community. With deep humility and joy, Sister Regina gives thanks for a lifetime of shared blessings, justice and love.



The U.S. East-West Leadership Team joins the congregation in blessing the Jubilarians at the celebration in Windsor, Connecticut.

# 70 Years of Service



## Sister Barbara Beauchamp, SNDdeN

Sister Barbara Beauchamp, SNDdeN celebrates 70 years as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, a vocation inspired in her childhood. “Growing up with two younger siblings, I naturally became their companion and caretaker,” she said. Babysitting for the children of 30 families in her neighborhood further sparked her passion for teaching.

Those early experiences with children led Sister Barbara to become a Montessori-trained teacher. She taught in Providence, Rhode Island; East Boston; Methuen; and Milton before spending 50 years at Notre Dame Children’s Class (NDCC) in Wenham, Massachusetts.

At NDCC, she found encouragement in the words posted at the school’s entrance: “Walk with love and joy into this House of Children, for here you will find God.”

Looking back over her decades as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, she gives thanks for a lifetime of ministry, and says, “Truly, how good is the good God.”



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Sisters Marianne Murphy, Immaculata Marie McDonnell,† Patricia Curran and Theresa Ryder, SNDdeN in Ipswich, Massachusetts.



## Sister Joan Bernhart, SNDdeN

Sister Joan Bernhart, SNDdeN felt God’s call as a young child, announcing to her mother, “I am going to be a Sister,” and follow in the footsteps of a beloved aunt.

At Notre Dame High School, San Jose, Sister Joan admired the Sisters. She began teaching throughout California in Santa Barbara, Carmel and Saratoga before moving to Notre Dame School in Chico, where she treasured the simple joys of children, creekside picnics and snowy retreats to Lake Almanor.

Later, Sister Joan taught at Notre Dame High Schools in northern California until health challenges and a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis led her to new ministries—in the College of Notre Dame Business Office and later as a teaching assistant.

Now she continues her ministry of “kindness, prayer and presence,” reflecting, “God is with us in all the ups and downs of life. God loves us.”



### Sister Mary Coffey, SNDdeN

Born in Boston in 1936, Sister Mary Coffey, SNDdeN is the oldest of seven children of Irish immigrants. Her parents' love of gardening, along with music and lyrical stories of their native land, shaped her early life.

She attended Our Lady of the Presentation School in Brighton, Massachusetts, where her teachers' vignettes about St. Julie Billiart and the kindness of her first-grade teacher influenced her decision to enter Notre Dame in 1955.

For 16 years Sister Mary taught in parish schools, sharing St. Julie's stories with her students. Inspired by Vatican II and the writings of Cardinal Suenens, she became a hospital chaplain, later earning a degree at Boston University School of Theology. Her ministry included clinical pastoral education, prison chaplaincy, pastoral counseling and practices such as body spirituality, healing touch and reflective writing.

Her heart is filled with gratitude for family, friends, colleagues and mentors who have nourished her as well as for God's abiding goodness.

**RIGHT:** Sisters Mary Fitzpatrick, Rosemary Grant and Mary Coffey, SNDdeN at Emmanuel College.



### Sister Julie Michael Comperchio, SNDdeN

Sister Julie Michael Comperchio, SNDdeN was born April 3, 1937, on Beacon Hill in Boston and grew up in a large family with six brothers and one sister. Her love of teaching began at home. "I told them [my siblings] if they'd be good and listen, I'd reward them with a sweet treat," she recalled. "I knew then it was meant for me to teach, and I wanted to teach as Jesus did."

Her vocation was shaped by her parents, especially her mother's devotion to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. "The faith of my mom and dad was passed on to all of us," she said.

Sister Julie entered the convent in 1955 and for more than 60 years, she taught throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Some of her favorite students were the children she tutored in special education classes. "How great you are, God, for giving me such a wonderful life," she said.





**LEFT:** Sister Ginny Scally, SNDdeN, a member of the U.S. East-West Leadership Team, lights the candles for the Jubilarians at the celebration in Belmont, California.

**BELOW RIGHT, FRONT ROW:** Sisters Geraldine Burns, Maggie McCarthy and Marie Verrilli, SNDdeN; **BACK ROW:** Kathleen Daly



**Sister Mary Fitzpatrick, SNDdeN**

Sister Mary Fitzpatrick, SNDdeN grew up the third of seven children in a home just steps from her parish church, where daily Mass became part of her rhythm of life. Inspired by the sisters who taught her at Presentation Academy in Brighton, she entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and began a teaching ministry that would span 67 years.

From her first mission at St. Mary's School in Boston's North End to teaching religion in high schools like Archbishop Williams in Braintree and Cardinal Cushing in South Boston, Sister Mary brought joy, commitment and love to every classroom. "I learned a lot from the children," she said.

At her Jubilee, she reflects with gratitude on the privilege of teaching within a religious community. She said, "You can always encourage people to be their best selves. People respond."

Her guiding Scripture, "I am the vine, you are the branches," continues to give her hope and joy.



**Sister Rosemary Grant, SNDdeN**

Sister Rosemary Grant, SNDdeN entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1955. Her ministry began in elementary education across Massachusetts and later expanded into social services where she used her gifts at a substance abuse shelter in Framingham, Massachusetts, and a family shelter in Raleigh, North Carolina. She also served as a certified nursing assistant and activities director before retiring to volunteer at Notre Dame Health Care in Worcester, Massachusetts.

"Retirement for me is not being a couch potato," she said, "but about coming alongside people at various stages of life."

Sister Rosemary's experiences have taken her across the U.S. and beyond to countries including Haiti, Ireland and France where her worldview and heart for others were expanded.

"It is a full life, and I am blessed with family and good friends and a deep commitment to faith in God and Notre Dame."



### Sister Jean Kieltyka, SNDdeN

In 1954, Sister Jean Kieltyka, SNDdeN graduated from Holy Name High School in Chicopee, Massachusetts, and wanted to enter the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur right away. At her family's request she waited a year to join.

Sister Jean's teaching career first took her across Connecticut before she settled at St. Rose Parish and School in East Hartford where she stayed for 23 years, serving first as teacher and then principal. A special experience was guiding the school as it transitioned from a junior high to a K-8 program. Her second career lasted 24 years, serving as the elderly outreach coordinator for East Hartford senior citizens until her retirement at age 84.

"The SNDdeN community since childhood has been my life," she shares. "I am filled with gratitude as I share a thought from St. Julie: 'My heart melted within me when I thought of all the graces we have received.'"



### Sister Jacinta Martinez, SNDdeN

At nine years old, Jacinta arrived in San Francisco from Nicaragua and began school with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Inspired by stories of the saints, she longed to "make God known in love." Her mother considered her vocation a blessing.

As Sister Jacinta, she taught first grade and later served as principal at Holy Angels School in Yuba City, California, where she developed a lifelong love for science and the natural world. After 30 years in education, she trained as a chaplain and spent eight years ministering at St. Luke's Hospital in San Francisco.

Now, at her 70-year Jubilee, Jacinta embraces prayer and service with gratitude. "Life is prayer," she said. "I want to reflect on the gift of these years."



### Sister Joyce Ann McCauley, SNDdeN

Sister Joyce Ann McCauley, SNDdeN grew up in Northeast Philadelphia, spending her childhood weekdays with her Nan and Grampy while her mother worked. "Grampy helped me with my math homework and taught me how to be a careful shopper," she remembers. The sudden loss of her grandfather at age 10 deeply impacted her. At St. Hubert High School, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur inspired her with their kindness and generosity—often saving her a seat on the school-monitored bus to ease her commute.

Sister Joyce Ann has served as a parish religious education director and in pastoral counseling. She is especially grateful for her years in Maryland, sharing ministry with Sisters and lay friends, and now values the community life at Ipswich, Massachusetts. When speaking to those discerning religious life, she encourages listening, prayer and presence. A favorite hymn, "I Have Loved You," reflects her lifelong trust in God's faithful call and love.



**Sister Elizabeth McLaughlin, SNDdeN (1937–2025)**

Sister Elizabeth McLaughlin, SNDdeN entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1955, fulfilling the calling she felt as a teenager. She began her ministry teaching fifth grade in New Haven, Connecticut, and went on to serve around the state in Springfield, Cranston, Providence and New Britain. She later became formation director in West Haven and spiritual life director at the Archdiocesan Spiritual Life Center. Her ministry also included pastoral care and spiritual direction. “Each ministry had its own unique experiences, and I enjoyed them all,” she shared. Sister Elizabeth was especially grateful for living in community at du Lac and remained committed to prayerful service and a peaceful spirit. With a strong, unshakable faith, she once said, “My hope is that we live in peace and are able to adapt to changes as they arise.” She returned to God on August 10, 2025.



**Sister Margaret Frances Middleton, SNDdeN**

Sister Margaret Frances Middleton, SNDdeN grew up in Andover, Massachusetts, the youngest of four children of Scottish immigrants. Educated by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, she entered the community in 1955 after initially considering a career in nursing.

She first taught elementary grades before pursuing health care ministry, training under the Sisters of Bon Secours as an infirmarian. Since 1963, she has cared for elderly and infirm Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, a vocation she calls “a gift to me from our good God.”

“Caring for so many women who had totally dedicated their lives to God ... has been an enriching experience,” she said. Her hope for the future is that God will continue to bless the congregation with vocations to carry forward its mission.



**Sister Shawn Scanlan, SNDdeN**

Sister Margaret Shawn Scanlan, SNDdeN grew up as part of a loving family deeply grounded in their Catholic faith and Irish heritage. Educated by sisters from three congregations, Shawn later attended Penn State, Catholic University of America, Washington Theological Union and West Virginia University.

Well prepared for a life of service, she first taught in elementary and high schools (religion, mathematics and science) and served as principal at Notre Dame High School (Moylan, Pennsylvania). Other roles include province leadership, justice advocacy, hospital pastoral minister, county extension agent, director of Catholic Committee of Appalachia and the Tug Valley Recovery Center and parish RCIA.

Sister Shawn reflects thoughtfully on Pope Francis’ Three Aims for Consecrated Persons: to look to the past with gratitude, live the present with passion and embrace the future with hope. At her Jubilee, she is grateful for the grace, hope and strength found in her community and for their daily lives reflecting God’s goodness.

# 60 Years of Service



**Sister Geraldine Burns, SNDdeN**

Sister Geraldine Burns, SNDdeN grew up in Charlestown, Massachusetts, the second of six children in a loving and hardworking family. Inspired by the joyful witness of the Sisters during her time at Julie Billiart High School, she entered the congregation in 1965.

Her ministries spanned more than four decades, including early years teaching in Leominster and Worcester, Massachusetts, followed by 43 years at Bishop Fenwick High School as a math teacher and later vice principal. “Interacting with all those young students was a gift,” she said.

Now serving as support coordinator for the U.S. East-West Province’s Northeast Region, Sister Geraldine remains grateful for her family, community and former students. “There is nothing I would have rather done,” she said. Even today, she finds hope in St. Julie’s spirit and mission as shared around the world with the international congregation of Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.



**ABOVE:** Sisters Betsy Flynn, Janet Deaett, Joan Farley, Ellen Agritelley, Irene Murphy, Peggy Evans and Kathleen Lynch, SNDdeN celebrate in Windsor, Connecticut.



**Sister Thérèse Dill, SNDdeN**

The third of Alma and Irving Dill’s four children, Sister Thérèse (Tracy) Dill, SNDdeN was nearly educated by the Sisters of Mercy like generations of women in her mother’s family. Instead, she enrolled at Maryvale in Baltimore, where the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur became, as she later said, “a total, wonderful surprise in my life!”

Encouraged in her love of science, Sister Tracy began her teaching career at Little Flower School in Great Mills, Maryland, where she taught middle school classes including math, science and religion. After earning a degree in biology at Trinity College (now Trinity Washington University) and then a doctorate from the University of Maryland, she spent the next 30 years mentoring college students as a professor and director of science programs. Retiring from teaching in 2011 allowed her to volunteer at the Julie Community Center, in Baltimore, Maryland, and serve the Sisters as an IT consultant.



**Sister Sharon Joyer, SNDdeN**

At age 17, Sister Sharon Joyer, SNDdeN was drawn to enter the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur by the feeling of “joy in the presence” of the Sisters. She taught in California before a pastoral letter on Appalachia inspired her to minister in West Virginia.

“It was total immersion in all of life,” she recalls. “Teaching, gathering wood, burying the dead, serving as an emergency midwife, but also learning. I learned so much from the folks there. They were mountain-wise and had a reverence for the land.”

Her work later took her to Oakland, California, where she and Sister Pat Nagle transformed grief over a neighbor’s murder into a thriving community garden. Years of Earth Home Ministry followed in the Pacific Northwest before returning to the Bay Area to accompany senior Sisters. “The Spirit works marvels in my life,” she says. “It is a grace to be here.”



**Sister Patricia Kelly, SNDdeN**

Sister Patricia Kelly, SNDdeN grew up in South Boston, the eldest of four children of Irish immigrants. Taught by Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur throughout her school years, Sister Pat felt drawn to their simplicity, dedication and joy.

After graduating in 1965, she entered the convent and studied education at Emmanuel College, in Boston. Teaching first grade for three years, Sister Pat realized, “it takes a certain kind of person to teach young kids, and I was not that person.” Instead, she pursued nursing, a vocation sparked by summers as a nursing assistant.

Sister Pat went on to devote more than 40 years to caring for others. Her inspiration was the Sisters she met and the power of their life stories, especially when she provided end of life care.

“I was privileged to be a companion to some very wonderful women in their final moments,” she said. “It is a sacred honor to be present when a Sister completes her journey.”



**LEFT:** Sister Julie Michael Comperchio, SNDdeN is welcomed with a lovely corsage at her 70-year Jubilee celebration at Emmanuel College.



**Sister Kathleen Lynch, SNDdeN**

Sister Kathleen Lynch, SNDdeN was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, the eldest of three children in an Irish-Slovak family. She met the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur at Notre Dame High School and was inspired by their warmth, community and joyful spirit.

Teaching allowed her a full life “of learning from others.” Her most beloved ministry was serving the Caribbean community at St. Justin’s School in Hartford. Years later, she returned to the same parish as a pastoral assistant, deepening relationships that still remain close to her heart. Sister Kathleen also served at St. Augustine School and Our Lady of Pompeii Church in East Haven. Currently, she is the part-time pastoral associate at St. George Church in Guilford, Connecticut.

To anyone discerning a religious vocation, she advises: “Follow your heart! God will lead you to whom you are meant to become. Pray always—for others and for yourself. Volunteer as much as you can.”



**Sister Maureen Marr, SNDdeN**

Sister Maureen Marr, SNDdeN was born and raised in Pepperell, Massachusetts, in a faithful family of five. She entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1965, drawn by the faith and witness of the Sisters she first met as a child at her parish and later at Emmanuel College, in Boston. Her ministries have spanned education, pastoral work, administration and international service including teaching English and Latin at Bishop Fenwick High School and serving as general secretary in Rome.

Among her most formative experiences were working in campus ministry at the University of Maine and living in a safe house for trafficked women. “They taught me about resilience and strength,” she says. Sister Maureen finds deep hope in the faithful lives of her fellow Sisters and trusts in God’s plan unfolding in ways beyond our imagining. She encourages those discerning religious life to “trust in the Spirit” and listen to the quiet voice within.



**Sister Nancy McCarron, SNDdeN**

An educator first, last and always, Sister Nancy McCarron, SNDdeN began her teaching career in the 1960s at Hunter’s Point, San Francisco, where she saw the life-changing impact of education for children living in poverty. Drawn to the spirituality of St. Julie Billiart and the international mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, she entered the novitiate in 1966, joining two of her sisters already in religious life.

Sister Nancy’s teaching in California spanned first grade through college, including Sacred Heart, Saratoga; St. John, Folsom; and Notre Dame, Chico. She went on to earn a master’s in religious education and a Ph.D. in education, later serving 23 years at Notre Dame de Namur University. There, she mentored future teachers and collaborated on innovative projects.

As Director of Mission Integration, she guided schools in living the Hallmarks of a Notre Dame Learning Community. Quiet yet steadfast, Sister Nancy embodies the conviction: “God is good.”



**Sister Louise O'Reilly, SNDdeN**

Sister Louise O'Reilly, SNDdeN first considered religious life while a student at Notre Dame High School, San Jose, when she was drawn to the Sisters' charism, "God is good."

Once she joined, the transitional years of Vatican II had a profound impact on her spirituality. "Community, prayer and reflection became ever more important in my life," she said.

Sister Louise has given her heart and gifts to many ministries including teaching in California and Hawaii, serving as principal, formation director, pastoral associate and in leadership for the Sisters in California. She also worked in mission integration, sharing the legacy and Hallmarks of a Notre Dame de Namur Learning Community.

"My life has been rich with unexpected blessings," she said. "I am grateful for our Notre Dame community, the Sisters I have lived with, the many people I have worked among and learned from and my family and their own examples of fidelity and living life well."



**ABOVE:** Sister Amarachi Ezeonu, SNDdeN from the Congregational Leadership Team celebrates with Sister Betsy Flynn, SNDdeN at the Windsor, Connecticut Jubilee.



**Sister Susan Thornell, SNDdeN**

Sister Susan Thornell, SNDdeN grew up in Brighton, Massachusetts, where her mother's teaching and the joy of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur inspired her to pursue both education and religious life. "I knew I wanted to be a teacher, and I loved watching how happy the Sisters who taught me were," she said.

Her first teaching mission was with a lively class of sixth graders. A special memory is producing a Christmas musical written by a student's father. "We were a success and thought Broadway was our next stop," she said with a laugh.

Sister Susan's ministry took her to St. Charles School, Bishop Fenwick High School, Marian Court College, Mother Caroline Academy and Emmanuel College where she currently serves as a senior academic advisor. Her years at Mother Caroline, preparing underserved girls for scholarships and mentoring them through high school, remain especially dear.

Grateful for colleagues devoted to the Notre Dame mission, she shares this wisdom: "Follow your heart ... you will be led and find peace and happiness."

# 50 Years of Service



**Sister Marcia Joanne Billings,  
SNDdeN**

Born in Salem, Massachusetts, Sister Marcia Joanne Billings, SNDdeN grew up in a close-knit family with five siblings. Her parents, Alvin and Patricia, emphasized the importance of education, and all six children went on to earn college degrees. Inspired by nature and the sea, she developed a profound sense of wonder and reflection at an early age.

Sister Marcia thrived in academics and athletics at Bishop Fenwick High School before earning her Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from Salem State University. She also completed a master's degree in school administration at Boston College.

Drawn by the joyful witness of women religious and her own call to teach, Sister Marcia entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1975. She treasures her ministries of teaching, school leadership, community coordination and spiritual formation for the grace and mutual love they fostered.

Today, she serves at the Notre Dame Spirituality Center in Ipswich, Massachusetts, grateful for a life of community, mission and love.



**Sister Eileen Burns, SNDdeN**

Sister Eileen Burns, SNDdeN celebrates 50 years as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur with gratitude for a life of service, justice and faith.

Raised in Methuen, Massachusetts, she met the Sisters at St. Monica School and St. Mary High School in Lawrence and was drawn to their deep faith. Entering the community in 1975, she later taught science, math and religion in middle and high schools and served as a parish pastoral associate in Lowell and Lynn, Massachusetts.

With a master's degree in ministry with a focus on justice and peace, Sister Eileen brought compassion and leadership to ministries with immigrants, the homebound and low-income families. From 2008 to 2019, she led the Notre Dame Education Center in Lawrence and most recently served on the U.S. East-West Province leadership team. During her sabbatical, she reflected, studied and gave thanks for God's goodness and her ongoing journey of religious life.



Sister Kathy Camacho, SNDdeN (front row center) is surrounded by family and friends at the Jubilee Celebration in Belmont, California.



**Sister Liane Delsuc, SNDdeN**

Sister Liane Delsuc, SNDdeN attended Catholic schools and became a public school teacher before entering the convent after Vatican II. Her early missions in Los Angeles focused on reading support and learning disabilities, an area where she earned a master's degree.

In 1985, a summer in Peru turned into 16 years of ministry, including serving as principal of a school built through grass roots community effort. Back in California, she worked with special education students and bilingual families. Now living in Arizona, she uses her Spanish language skills to teach English as a Second Language and minister to immigrants and refugees.

Reflecting on 50 years as a Sister, she said, "Life among those made poor has broken open my heart ... I now stand in awe ... aware of the resilience of the human spirit."



**Sister Theresa Linehan, SNDdeN**

Born in San Francisco and shaped by Catholic education, Sister Theresa Linehan, SNDdeN was a teacher even before joining Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1975. She taught preschool and kindergarten and spent two years as a Jesuit volunteer on the Crow Reservation in Montana. As an adult, she learned of her Native American heritage and became an enrolled member of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans in Wisconsin.

Sister Theresa's early years of ministry were spent in education but later she identified a strong need for healthcare practice and education that served agricultural workers. In response, she became a nurse practitioner specializing in diabetes education. She later served in province leadership and at Springbank Retreat Center in South Carolina, deepening her work in eco-spirituality and Native American traditions.

Now back in California, she continues to work at Casa de la Cultura in Pajaro as well as lead retreats on Native American spirituality.



**Sister Sharon McMillan, SNDdeN**

Sister Sharon McMillan, SNDdeN entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1975 in Saratoga, California, and began teaching at Notre Dame High School in San Jose. During her novitiate, she discovered a deep love for liturgy, which became her lifelong passion. While teaching at Mission Dolores School, she also served in bilingual parish liturgies, learning from Mexican and Central American parishioners.

Sister Sharon studied liturgy at the University of Notre Dame and later in Rome at a Benedictine university while living at the SNDdeN Generalate. From 1994, she taught liturgy at the Sulpician Seminary in Menlo Park, California. In 2009, she joined the novitiate community in Kenya and was invited to teach liturgy at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. Now residing in California, she has continued liturgical ministry at San Carlos Cathedral and teaches occasionally at Santa Clara University. Her most rewarding ministry has been following her heart in praising, thanking and humbly praying to God.

# 40 Years of Service



**Sister Kathy Camacho, SNDdeN**

The path to religious life was untraditional for Sister Kathryn “Kathy” Camacho, SNDdeN. Born in Sacramento, she first felt called after high school but delayed entering to attend college and explore the working world. After a short stint in retail management, she shifted to nonprofit service, where her call to join the Sisters deepened. In her 30s, she made her first vows.

Sister Kathy served in parish ministry, led schools in San Francisco and Sacramento—including founding Cristo Rey High School—and worked in campus ministry at California State University in Sacramento. Her leadership blended compassion, faith and administrative skill. She later served as a national formation minister and currently serves as a support coordinator for the U.S. East-West Province.

Inspired by her mother’s steadfast faith, Sister Kathy continues to trust in God’s presence through every season of her life.



**ABOVE:** Sisters Geraldine Burns, Susan Thornell, Pat Kelly and Maureen Marr, SNDdeN celebrate their 60-year Jubilee at Emmanuel College.



**Sister Janet Deaett, SNDdeN**

Sister Janet Deaett, SNDdeN was born in Brattleboro, Vermont, and grew up with four siblings. After earning a psychology degree from the University of Connecticut, she worked at a newspaper in Arizona before returning to New England, where a deepening commitment to her faith led her to enter the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1985. She later earned a master’s degree in educational and pastoral ministry from Emmanuel College.

Her ministries have included work with diverse cultural communities in Cambridge and Lowell, Massachusetts, which she says, “helped to expand my understanding of who our Good God is.” She is grateful for her vocation, calling it “a second birth,” and continues to serve as a spiritual director. Inspired by the words of St. Julie, she lives in “continual gratitude to the good God,” and encourages those discerning a vocation to “listen to God within.”

# 25 Years of Service



**Sister Jennifer Pierce, SNDdeN**

Sister Jennifer Pierce, SNDdeN grew up in Danvers, Massachusetts, the youngest of six children in a family that valued education deeply. She first felt called to religious life in college. Drawn by the joy and vibrant spirit of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, she knew she had found her true home.

She has taught children and adults, but her most meaningful ministry has been working with immigrants, sharing in their journeys and being transformed by their courage. Her first mission was at Saint Patrick School in Lowell, Massachusetts, and once, while watching her diverse second-grade class sing, Sister Jennifer was moved to tears.

Now serving at the SNDdeN heritage center in Namur, Belgium, she treasures the opportunity to connect with the congregation's rich history. "God's call is renewed each day," said Sister Jennifer. "That gives me hope and great joy."



**ABOVE, STANDING, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Sisters Joyce McCauley, Pat Kelly, Marcia Billings, Diane Shaw, Kathleen Cassidy, SNDdeN. **SEATED, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Sisters Barbara Beauchamp, Kathleen Haughey, Catherine Louise Beauregard, Margaret Middleton, SNDdeN celebrate at Emmanuel College.



**LEFT:** Sister Janet Deatt, SNDdeN leads the procession of Jubilarians to open the celebratory Mass in Windsor, Connecticut.

# Celebrating Associate Anniversaries

SNDdeN Associates are women and men who promise to live out the charism, spirituality and mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in their lives. They daily witness God's goodness and provident love. This is the charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Join us in celebrating these special anniversaries.

*"I have interacted with many Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. There was always wisdom, kindness, spiritual sharing and fun. There was encouragement, and delight in the beauty of the day. We honor each other's faith journey, and we see the goodness of God all around us."*

**Lydia Wahab, AND 35 Years**

## 35 Years

Mary Lenahan Cea  
Camille Cordero  
Borgia Izard  
Lydia Wahab

## 20 Years

Rose Flahavan  
Libby Hagman  
Laverne Poturalaski

## 15 Years

Arnell Etherington-Reader  
Jan Lennon



*"Over my years as an Associate of Notre Dame de Namur, God has touched my heart in many ways. In 2023 and 2024 my experience in Phoenix with Sister Liane and Sister Meg was most meaningful. This experience gave us firsthand witness to the needs of our asylum-seeking brothers and sisters."*

**Libby Hagman, AND 20 Years**

# Your Gift Makes a Difference



## Serving Immigrant Families

**St. Patrick School and Education Center** is a culturally and religiously diverse school that was founded in 1852 by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. It remains constant in its original mission to meet the educational, spiritual and human needs of the children of Greater Lowell, especially those who are economically poor or new to this country. The Sisters' grant provides tuition assistance for families in need, with particular attention to refugee families, newly arrived immigrants and families impacted by loss of employment.

## Creating Enduring Pathways Out of Poverty

The cornerstone of the **St. Julie Haiti Project** is a community-led bakery in Les Cayes that was launched in 2018. The bakery employs 70 people in the production, distribution and sale of bread and water, offering jobs and training. Workers bake 600 bags of bread multiple times per week, providing affordable nutrition and safe water for the community. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur contribute funds to offset bakery and water supply costs and help with workers' earnings. When asked what they needed most amid economic instability and civil unrest, the Haitians responded that they needed jobs. Your generous gifts enable these opportunities to work and nourish the community.

*"I want to support the spread of the values and love our world needs so much."*

2024–2025 Donor



## Connecting to and Caring for the Earth

Through educational programs and community building addressing ecological justice, the **Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center** inspires people of all ages, preschool through adult, to explore their creativity and connect to the Earth. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur are expanding the lifelong learning program for young children, which includes outdoor activities such as gardening, hiking, pond exploration and farm chores.

## 24 Mission Fund Grants Awarded in the Fiscal Year 2025

**Academy of Notre Dame**  
Tyngsboro, Massachusetts

**Albertus Magnus College**  
New Haven, Connecticut

**Big Laurel Learning Center**  
Kermit, West Virginia

**Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center**  
Ipswich, Massachusetts

**Grace Academy**  
Hartford, Connecticut

**Home Economics Education for Single Mothers/Education for Life for Children**  
Les Cayes, Haiti

**Julie Community Center**  
Baltimore, Maryland

**Julie's Family Learning Program**  
Boston, Massachusetts

**Moreland Notre Dame School**  
Watsonville, California

**Notre Dame Academy**  
Worcester, Massachusetts

**Notre Dame Cristo Rey High School**  
Methuen, Massachusetts

*“[I donate because of] the wonderful Sisters I have come to know, the wonderful education they gave me and continue to provide for students today.”*

2024–2025 Donor

### **Nourishing Families and Strengthening Community**

With the help from a grant awarded by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, **River City Food Bank (RCFB)** is working to alleviate hunger and foster hope in Sacramento County, California. RCFB is Sacramento’s oldest, continuously serving food bank. The Sisters’ grant supports RCFB’s Emergency Food Distribution Program, which provides healthy, culturally meaningful groceries to more than 30,000 people each month, including many families seeking food assistance for the first time. By offering not only food but also referrals and resources, RCFB helps families stabilize and move toward greater self-sufficiency. The Sisters’ support extends the reach of this vital program, ensuring that children, seniors, refugees and individuals experiencing homelessness or economic hardship are met with dignity, compassion and respect.

*“I have much love and gratitude for St. Julie and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. I believe my life has come full circle because of the ongoing relationship.”*

2024–2025 Donor



## Dear Friends and Benefactors of Notre Dame de Namur,

With full hearts, we offer our deepest thanks for your enduring support of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Your generosity allows God’s goodness to flourish—in caring for the Earth, in serving one another and in nurturing hope where it is needed most.

Through your gifts, you help us live out the legacy of St. Julie Billiart, who taught that “the good God is so very good!” Because of you, we can provide scholarships, vital resources and opportunities for education and advocacy that uplift those most in need. You are helping communities around the world experience the transforming power of God’s goodness—in clean water initiatives, in classrooms filled with possibility and in acts of compassion that sustain life and creation.

As we look back on this past year, we are profoundly inspired by the loyalty of our friends, families and alums. Your steadfast partnership strengthens our mission and allows goodness to grow—from one heart to another, from one generation to the next. Together, we are tending both the Earth and the human spirit. Your care, faith and generosity help us light the way forward, offering hope and inspiration to all.

With gratitude in St. Julie,  
**Sister Kathryn Keenan, SNDdeN**  
For the U.S. East-West Leadership Team

**Notre Dame Education Center**  
Lawrence, Massachusetts

**Notre Dame Elementary and Preschool**  
Belmont, California

**Notre Dame Health Care Educational Bridge Center**  
Worcester, Massachusetts

**Notre Dame High School**  
Belmont, California

**Notre Dame High School**  
San Jose, California

**Notre Dame Virtual School**  
Everett, Massachusetts

**Pajaro Valley Family Shelter Services**  
Watsonville, California

**St. Columbkille School**  
Los Angeles, California

**West Broadway Task Force**  
Boston, Massachusetts

**River City Food Bank**  
Sacramento, California

**Saint Julie Haiti Project**  
Les Cayes, Haiti/Baltimore, Maryland

**St. Patrick School and Education Center**  
Lowell, Massachusetts

**Sisters Academy of Baltimore**  
Baltimore, Maryland

# Supporting Our Ministry



## Pajaro Valley Shelter Services: Investing in Families

IN FISCAL YEAR 2025, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur supported Pajaro Valley Shelter Services (PVSS) with a grant for the staff of its Coordinated Economic Development (CED) Program—investing in the future of families striving for a better life.

Founded in 1983 by Sister Marie Veronica Wagner, SNDdeN with cofounders Sister Susan Olson, SNDdeN and A.V. Coyle (formerly Sister Ann Veronica), PVSS has grown into a lifeline for families across Santa Cruz County, in California, offering safe housing and transformative support services.

At the heart of PVSS is its “Three Pillars of Self-Sufficiency,” guiding families from crisis to lasting independence. The first pillar, Emotional Stability, helps parents and children heal from trauma, build resilience and gain the confidence to face life’s challenges.

Financial Stability, the second pillar, equips adults with job training, professional development, financial literacy and savings programs—empowering them to achieve economic security and pursue dreams once thought out of reach.

As Sister Susan reflects: “When the shelter began in 1984, we realized that without new skills, the families were likely to repeat the behaviors that led to homelessness. Setting up a savings program and teaching new ‘survival skills’ could help end the cycle of homelessness. The programs today continue this important work.”

The third pillar, Housing Stability, ensures that families can thrive long-term. Through the Hope and Home Tenant Education Program, families learn practical skills, understand their rights and gain the tools to maintain stable, safe homes.

By blending education, counseling and hands-on guidance, PVSS doesn’t just provide support, it transforms lives. Families gain the skills, confidence and resilience to break the cycle of poverty, build a secure future and pass hope on to the next generation. \*

## Notre Dame Education Center: A Bridge to a Better Future

FOUNDED IN 1997 and sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, the Notre Dame Education Center-Lawrence (NDEC-L) serves as a vital bridge of hope for diverse, underserved adults in the Greater Lawrence, Massachusetts, area. For over two decades, NDEC-L has been committed to transforming lives by offering an inclusive community of learning where students gain essential tools for enhanced professional opportunities and deeper community engagement.

NDEC-L provides high-quality, tuition-free or low-cost education in a welcoming and dignified environment. Core programs include English language (ESOL) classes, preparation for the U.S. Citizenship Exam and career-focused training like the Nursing Assistant Training program. The center’s philosophy is rooted in active engagement, encouraging students to lead their learning through discussion and collaboration rather than relying on memorization or lectures.

The grant funding supports existing educational programs, the expansion of citizenship and immigration support services and the continuation of the immigration support specialist position. This comprehensive approach underscores the mission to empower adults to instill the confidence students need to achieve their academic and employment goals, preparing them for success. \*

*“Notre Dame is more than a school; it is a place where you can find emotional support, financial support and more.”*

**Johanna, Nursing Assistant Training program graduate**

# Supporting Our Community

## Warming Heads with Gifts from the Heart

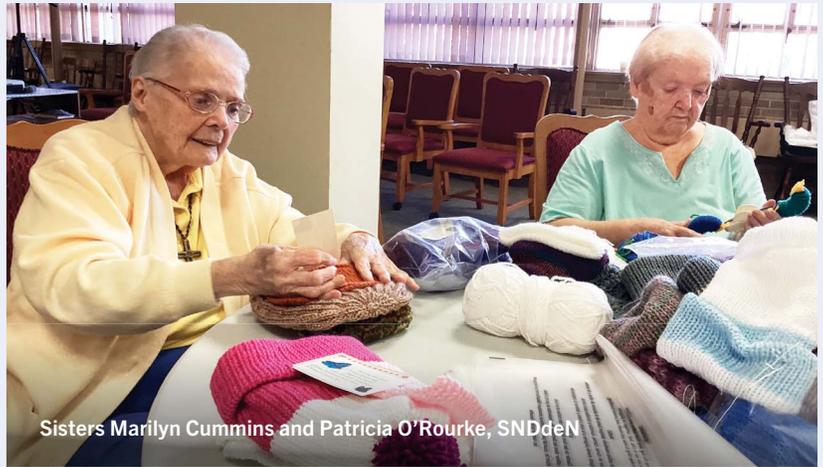
FOR MORE THAN 220 YEARS, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur have responded to the needs of their time with creativity and compassion. In Ipswich, Massachusetts, that spirit continues—one knitted hat at a time.

What began as a simple act of kindness has blossomed into a ministry of warmth and hope. When activity coordinator Randee Michaud recognized a need for winter hats, she taught the Sisters how to “knit” using small machines. Four years later, their one-time project has produced more than 3,500 hats—each one a tangible sign of care.

“God keeps it going,” Michaud said with a smile.

The knitted hats and scarves have traveled near and far—to shelters in Boston, families in need and communities as distant as Ukraine and Turkey. When the Capuchin Mobile Ministry requested black hats for those they serve locally, the Sisters answered without hesitation.

Yarn donations pour in from Sisters and friends alike, and the Ipswich community gathers regularly to package and bless each bundle before it is sent. Through these simple stitches, the Sisters continue to do what they have always done—make known the goodness of God, one act of love at a time. ✨



Sisters Marilyn Cummins and Patricia O'Rourke, SNDdeN



Sister Gerry Stanton, SNDdeN



## 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, [snddeneastwest.org/request-tribute-cards](http://snddeneastwest.org/request-tribute-cards).

# Supporting Our Community

## Hope and Dream Realized

### A Return to Congo: Honoring a Mentor and a Friend

BY SISTER JOAN BURKE, SNDdeN

WHAT BROUGHT ME BACK to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) after nearly 40 years? Gratitude. I returned to thank the Sister who mentored me through my first years on the continent—Congoese Sister Marie-Hélène Ntieiti, SNDdeN, the first African Sister of Notre Dame de Namur. Now 103 years old, Sister Marie-Hélène first entered the Soeurs de Ste. Marie de Kisantu in 1940 and later joined the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur when local vocations were welcomed.

As St. Julie often said, “Beginnings are always difficult.” When I arrived in the Congo in 1980, I was assigned as secretary to a small rural high school in Mpese, which translates to “cockroach.” Mid-year, when the lay principal resigned, Provincial Elisabeth-Marie Mbwanga asked me to step in “temporarily” until a Congoese Sister could be trained. I felt like an “over-qualified incompetent,” but she assured me I would manage because Sister Marie-Hélène, the Directress of the Boarders, would be my support. She became not only my right arm, but my Sister and friend.

Those early days were challenging. We shared no common language—she spoke Kikongo and French; I spoke English. Slowly, through patience and humor, we found our way. Sister Marie-Hélène possessed profound wisdom and an innate ability to understand people. I valued her rich store of practical wisdom and deep-lived knowledge of her people. When I peppered her with questions, she would often say in Kikongo, “That’s the way it is.” Over time, she taught me to observe carefully, listen deeply and learn from what I saw. Locally, she was respected as a gifted mediator (*nzonzi*). When disputes arose, she was called to resolve them with patience, timing and peace. Her gentle authority



**ABOVE LEFT:** Bust of Sister Marie-Hélène Ntieiti placed at the property entrance on the occasion of her 100th birthday in 2022. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Sisters Marie-Hélène Ntieiti and Joan Burke, SNDdeN after community Sunday Mass, Kimwenza. **LEFT:** Mural of St. Julie’s vision at Compiègne on the outside wall of the Provincial Offices, Kinshasa, DRC.

brought harmony where words alone could not.

During my visit to Kimwenza this August, we spent mornings reminiscing while she strung rosaries for villagers, still sharp and curious as ever. In the afternoons, I explored the community’s new ministries, spent some time in the cemetery where I paid my respects to our ancestors, and chatted with several other long-time friends from my early days in Africa.

I returned home with a heart full of gratitude for my visit with “Ya Lene,” as she is fondly called. Her long life and unwavering fidelity are a blessing—for the Province, for all of Africa and for our entire congregation. \*

# Supporting Our Future

## Family Giving: Extending the Circle of Love and Sustaining the Sisters' Legacy

FAMILY IS AT THE HEART of every strong community—and it is at the heart of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. United by faith and love, our Sisters share a divine bond that makes their community both sacred and life-giving. Through their charism of making known God's goodness, they have formed generations of lasting relationships rooted in compassion, education and hope.

The Sisters' community reaches far beyond itself. It includes every child they've taught, every young person they've encouraged and every family they've walked beside in faith. Their mission continues to ripple outward—touching lives and inspiring others to live out that same goodness.

Family giving offers a beautiful way to take part in this mission. When families join in generosity, they extend God's goodness into the world. It is an opportunity to:

- **Collaborate** across generations in faith and purpose
- **Share** and **strengthen** family values rooted in service and gratitude
- **Inspire** younger family members through shared acts of giving
- **Build** a legacy of love and generosity

Your family's support helps the Sisters continue to make God's goodness known—today and for generations to come.

We invite you to speak with your loved ones about how family giving can be part of your legacy of faith, compassion and goodness. \*



Sisters Josita Colbert and Amarachi Ezeonu, SNDdeN



ABOVE: Sisters Ellen Gavin and Jane McAndrews, SNDdeN at SNDdeN 2024 Jubilee

## Act Now to Build a Legacy of Faith, Compassion and Goodness

SUPPORTING THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR, U.S. East-West Province, is more than a charitable act—it is a partnership in mission. For over 175 years, the Sisters have served those most in need through education, justice and compassion. You can help sustain this legacy while meeting your own financial goals.

Planned gifts offer flexible, meaningful ways to give:

- **Bequests** ensure your values live on through the Sisters' ongoing work.
- **Donor-Advised Fund (DAF) grants** provide a simple, impactful way to support the mission.
- **Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)** from IRAs—available to those 70½ and older—can satisfy required distributions while offering tax benefits.
- **Life insurance beneficiary gifts** create a lasting legacy without affecting current finances.

Your gift helps make known God's goodness for generations to come. \*

### TO LEARN MORE:

Please visit [sdddeneastwest.org/ways-to-give](https://sdddeneastwest.org/ways-to-give) or call 617-387-2500 ext. 2011.

# Ensuring the Blessing of St. Julie's Mission on Future Generations

CREATED TO HONOR THE SPIRIT of philanthropy and a commitment to make known the goodness of God, the St. Julie Billiard Legacy Society recognizes those individuals who thoughtfully have included the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in their estate plans through a will, trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy or other charitable gifts.

Legacy Society donors come from all walks of life and income levels, yet they share the same visionary goal to strengthen the transformative ministry work of the Sisters beyond their lifetime. You may be a loyal alum with treasured memories of your school days or have deep gratitude for a special Sister who guided you along your path. You may be a parent who has witnessed your child thrive in the Notre Dame academic environment, receiving both knowledge and strong Catholic values. Or, you may be a community member with a passion to stand with people living in poverty, especially women and children.

No matter your connection to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, your decision to leave a legacy gift will play a pivotal role in sustaining vital, life-changing ministries in the United States, Africa and Latin America. It also ensures the well-being of our Sisters in their retirement years.

We extend our heartfelt invitation for you to consider becoming a valued member of the St. Julie Billiard Legacy Society. Our website offers comprehensive information to help you identify the most suitable planned-giving options that align with your aspirations. Please visit <https://sddeneastwest.org/support-us/planned-giving>.

For more information on how your legacy gift can make an impact or to notify the Sisters of your estate plans, please contact the Development Office at [development@ewsndden.org](mailto:development@ewsndden.org) or call 617-387-2500 (East) or 650-593-2045 (West). \*



Support the work of the Sisters  
and leave a legacy at:  
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## St. Julie Billiart Legacy Society

We are grateful to the following generous friends who have let us know they are remembering the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in their estate plans. These legacies will ensure the Sisters' continuing work and the care of our elderly and infirm Sisters.

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Anonymous (4)	Thomas Gates <sup>*</sup>	Germaine Orlando
Karen Albertus	Rita Gleason <sup>*</sup>	Mary O'Rourke <sup>**</sup>
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Chenna Bonequi <sup>*</sup>	Robert Jamieson	Carl Rudey <sup>**♥</sup>
Rita Brennan-Leitner <sup>†</sup>	Paul & Lynn Kalcic	Rita Ann Russo <sup>†</sup>
Virginia Brewer	Roseann Kalich <sup>*</sup>	Mary R. Ryan
Teo & Del Bumgardner <sup>*</sup>	Adrienne Krause <sup>*</sup>	Estate of Winifred M. Ryan <sup>†</sup>
Kathy Burns	Catherine Krueger	Janice Perlenda Salberg <sup>*</sup>
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Irene Day <sup>†</sup>	Judith Mahnke & Marc Baum <sup>*</sup>	Henry J. Thierry <sup>*</sup>
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Marlene DeNardo	William <sup>†</sup> & Claire Marmion <sup>*</sup>	Eileen P. Rodman Trust <sup>**†</sup>
Cynthia A. Dodge <sup>♥</sup>	Joanne Lucchesi Martin	Michael Tuite
John Donnellan	Monica May <sup>*</sup>	Dolores Tukich <sup>†</sup>
Kathryn M. Donovan <sup>†</sup>	Mary Ann & John McCarthy <sup>*</sup>	Estate of Dennis O'Leary Ushkoff <sup>†</sup>
Bill & Lynn Dorland <sup>*</sup>	Joan E. McCormick 2005 Trust <sup>†</sup>	Phillip M. Vitti & Kimberly J. Doe
Shirley Dorsa	Patrick & Shyrl McCormick <sup>*</sup>	Dede Waters-Masters <sup>*</sup>
Estate of Nancy (Mahoney) Duddy <sup>†</sup>	Marilyn McElhaney	Cyril G. Weinberger
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	Virginia S. Myers Trust of 2007 <sup>†</sup>	Kris Zavoli <sup>*</sup>
	Kathy Terranova Noether <sup>*</sup>	John & Marie Zderic <sup>**†</sup>



## Reunited in Joy and Gratitude

LAUGHTER, SONG AND SUNFLOWERS filled the air as former members and Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur gathered this past Fall to celebrate their shared story. Two reunions—held September 13 in Wenham, Massachusetts, and October 4 in Belmont, California—brought together nearly 150 women to rekindle enduring friendships.

The gatherings overflowed with connection and gratitude. One attendee shared, “I never regretted the 10 years I spent in Notre Dame. It has influenced my whole life. St. Julie has been an important part of my prayer life and ministry as a teacher and catechist.”

From archival slideshows set to a SNDdeN chorale playlist to spontaneous hymn singing, joy was unmistakable.

Each event also featured a replica of the “Black Element,” the walls in Namur, Belgium, engraved with the names of every woman who has taken first vows as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur.

We are deeply grateful to all who joined us—in person and in spirit—for these moments of grace and reunion. ✨

**ABOVE:** Sisters Monica Madden, Nancy Simonds and Geraldine Stanton, SNDdeN and former members Mary Margaret Quinn Devine and Eleanor (Crowley) Healey.

**LEFT:** JoAnn Shaw, Sister Carolyn Buhs, SNDdeN and Dolores Quigg.

*“I never regretted the 10 years I spent in Notre Dame de Namur. It has influenced my whole life. St. Julie has been a very important part of my prayer life and ministry as a teacher and catechist.”*



# In Memoriam

We prayerfully remember our Sisters who have died between June 1 and September 30, 2025. The following brief obituaries are testament to the rich lives that Sisters lead in fulfilling their vocation of service to God. Please remember them in your prayers.



**Sister Elizabeth McLaughlin, SNDdeN**

Sister Elizabeth was a trained mathematician who taught both math and religion at the high school and college levels. She also served in the ministries of formation, spiritual

direction and province leadership for the Connecticut Province. She gratefully celebrated her Platinum Jubilee (70 years) with her band in June and returned to God on August 10, 2025, at the age of 88.



**Sister Sandra Price, SNDdeN**

Sister Sandy's life of service was marked by courage and compassion. After being detained on a 1980 fact-finding mission to El Salvador, she remained undaunted and accepted

a mission assignment to Nicaragua the following year. For the next four decades, she became a pillar of hope for countless families, helping local communities build 64 one-room schools, 18 preschools, and numerous footbridges so children could reach their classrooms safely. She also founded the Indigenous community *Misioneras de Cristo*, guiding them in religious life and ministry. A Sister of Notre Dame de Namur for 65 years, she completed her earthly journey on September 26, 2025, at age 83.



**Sister Carole Proctor, SNDdeN**  
(formerly Mary Alma)

Sister Carole was a devoted teacher in California before spending 13 years in the ministry of formation in Kenya.

While there, she was the foster mother to four orphans. After returning to the U.S., she became a licensed marriage and family counselor and served throughout San Jose. Sister Carole returned to God on July 24, 2025, at age 91 after completing 71 years of consecrated life.



**Sister Caroline Sanchez, SNDdeN**

Sister Caroline served our good God as an elementary school teacher, infirmarian, licensed vocational nurse and coordinator of Notre Dame Mission Volunteers in Los Angeles.

In 2017, she was honored with the prestigious Benemerenti Medal, a papal award recognizing exceptional service to the Catholic Church. Sister Caroline completed her earthly journey on July 15, 2025, at age 90 after 73 years of ministry.



**Sister Bernadette Turgeon, SNDdeN**

Sister Bernadette was devoted to the education of children and worked for 14 years as a teacher and 27 years as director of religious education.

In retirement, she volunteered at a diocesan camp for girls. She felt "blessed, honored and privileged" to walk alongside children in faith. At age 85, she returned to God on August 24, 2025, after 68 years as a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur.



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## Join Us in Celebrating an Enduring Legacy of Goodness in California in 2026!

We celebrate the Sisters' arrival in California in 1851 and their courage and steadfast commitment to making known God's goodness. From the congregation's founding in 1804, the mission to educate for life and stand with people living in poverty, especially women and children in the most abandoned places, is evident in the enduring legacy that continues to shape our California communities today.

**175** IN CALIFORNIA  
1851 - 2026

Celebrating an Enduring Legacy of Goodness

Stay up to date with the latest events and stories highlighting this special milestone.



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