



## CONGREGATION OF NOTRE DAME

*Blessed Sacrament Province • Development Office*

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Dear Christopher and Michelle,

In the story of Creation in Genesis, we read that God created the world and provided all that we would need to sustain all the different forms of life that we experience each day. God saw everything that had been made and found it very good.

You have an opportunity with this appeal to partake in a special project initiated by Sr. Jaculyn Hanrahan, CND who has been living and ministering in Southwest Virginia for 28 years advocating for the people and the land of this area.

You have read about Sr. Jaculyn's ministry in the fall 2008 newsletter in an article entitled "What We Do to the Land, We Do to Ourselves". It focused on the concerns of the people in the Appalachian area of Virginia and West Virginia. Through the strip mining done by large industries, the land has been devastated and the people have become poorer.

You may ask what is "strip mining"? Instead of going into the mountains and underground, huge power shovels strip the surface and gouge out the coal. The earth's surface is torn away scarring and acidifying the land rendering it uninhabitable. For the people it means a loss of natural resources, contamination of water, health problems; addictions and violence increase as the social structures are severely damaged.

In its social documents since the late 1890's, the Catholic Church has long advocated for the dignity of people. You are invited to read on-line documents that the Bishops of this area have written: "This Land is Home to Me" and "Home in the Web of Life". These documents explain what the devastation of the land has meant for the people and the natural resources.

CNDs went to Virginia in 1972 because of our concern for the people of the Appalachian Region. You have read about the tremendous work being done by Sr. Beth Davies, CND with the people suffering from medical and psychological problems all stemming from their poverty. This was in the Spring '07 Appeal.

Sr. Jaculyn went to the region in 1982 ministering in the Appalachian Office of Justice and Peace sponsored by the Diocese of Richmond, VA as Director of the office. Due to budget cuts and a diocesan wide reorganization the office closed in August 2009, concluding 44 years of a unique Catholic Church presence in the region.



*This photo shows the devastation of strip mining which causes loss of natural resources, water contamination and health problems for the people of Appalachia. Courtesy of Tim Mullins.*

You may ask: So what to do now? How can you, our benefactors, take part in this important endeavor? How do we continue our presence in this devastated area? Who will be a voice for the people? Who will bring the large industries to task over their policies that ruin the land and plunge the people into more poverty?

Sr. Jaculyn, her Associate Susan Hedge, CND Associates in the area and 21 regional groups are committed to the ongoing Appalachian concerns. And with this support have created:

### **The Appalachian Faith and Ecology Center**

- You are being asked to participate in preserving the oldest living mountain chain on our planet and thereby improving the lives of the people who have lived in this beautiful region of our country for hundreds of years.
- Your name can be added as a partner in this ministry by your donation to the Center.
- You are invited to be a part of an important endeavor to continue restoring what has been lost in the lives of the people and the land.

You continue to be in the thoughts and prayers of all our Sisters and with this appeal, you can count on the prayers of people you are helping. Thank you for your support which has enabled us to reach many people, improving their lives and giving them hope for a better tomorrow.

Sincerely,

*Kathleen Murphy, CND*   
Kathleen Murphy, CND



*Sr. Jaculyn  
Hanrahan, CND*



*Sheila Sullivan, CND (left) and Anna Hess, a local biologist, are doing a procedure called stream monitoring. This is done to measure the health of streams against the impact of the effects of mountain top removal mining practices on water sources.*