



CONGRÉGATION DE NOTRE-DAME

Éducation libératrice - Liberating Education
真の自由への教育 - Educación liberadora

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Partners in CND Mission

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Dear Friends of the CND Sisters,

The changing of seasons almost always brings with it the hope for refreshment and new activities. This is especially true when Winter turns to Spring. The beautiful array of colors: shades of green, pastel flowers, multicolored birds, and tree branches suddenly alive with leaves. Isn't God's imagination magnificent?

You are welcome to our latest edition of "Partners in CND Mission", sent to you twice a year highlighting different ministries in which our Sisters are involved. As with many religious communities of Sisters, we have held on to our traditional ministries of teaching and school administration. And we have also moved to more collaboration with other communities and agencies. You will read about two of our Sisters who work with two different communities of Religious Brothers. They work with teams who enable the staffs of schools to become familiar with the mission of the Brothers' communities. In that way the mission of the school keeps the spirit and charism of these communities alive.

St. Marguerite was always concerned for the welfare of children. One of our Sisters is a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner in Chicago, IL. You will read how she brings the call for New Evangelization to her ministry especially to the parents of these fragile children and also to the staff with whom she works.

The last feature article was written with the collaboration of a graduate of St. Patrick's School in Lewiston, Maine. She has very fond memories of her years with the CND.

You, our benefactors, are very important partners in our CND mission and your generosity is deeply appreciated. You make a difference in our Sisters' lives and in the lives of those with whom they minister.

Please know that you are in our daily prayers and remembered at Liturgies when we gather together.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Murphy, CND
Director of Mission Advancement



Collaborating in the Mission of Liberating Education

Catholic education is an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to the Church. Through education the Church seeks to prepare its members to proclaim the Good News and to translate this proclamation into action. Our CND mission orientation of liberating education highlights the dual nature of this educational effort of the Church – to invite everyone to personal holiness and to work towards social transformation in light of Christian values. St. Marguerite’s gift to the Church is to invite everyone to bring the knowledge and love of Jesus to all our Brothers and Sisters so that their lives may be transformed and they may in turn bring about the liberation of others.

Collaboration and sharing of resources are essential components in the success of Catholic education today. Excellence in education that has been the hallmark of CND Sisters since the time of our foundation. As CNDs, Sisters Ona Bessette and Patricia Ells share the charism of St Marguerite - of liberating education - with the wider Church. They collaborate with the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers and the Xaverian Brothers respectively in their network of schools. Charisms are gifts for the entire Church and so they evangelize in partnership with the Brothers.



Grace D'Amico, SSND, left and Ona Bessette, CND, right.

By: Ona Bessette, CND

Edmund Rice Christian Brothers

Sr. Ona is the Director of the Office of Educational Service (OES) for the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers, North America. OES provides programs, services, resources, and consultation to a network of 20 Edmund Rice Schools in North and South America. (See www.edmundriceschools.org for more information about the Edmund Rice Schools) Working with Sr. Grace D'Amico, SSND, Associate Director, they embody the Visitation spirit and bring the Good News to school leaders, boards of directors, faculty, and students. Because of the geographic spread of the schools from Boston to Honolulu and Detroit to Miami, frequent flyer miles pile up quickly.

Formation is the central task of the Office of Educational Services. As the number of Christian Brothers in the schools has declined over the past decades, the leadership of lay men and women has grown in all schools. Each year, school leaders from the Edmund Rice Network come together to pray, learn, network, and deepen their commitment to foster a strong Catholic education. The Annual Meeting is held at one of the schools where leaders share best practices and strengthen their understanding of what it means to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and Blessed Edmund Rice.

Blessed Edmund Rice was an Irish businessman, husband, father, widower, and founder of the Christian Brothers. He was given the grace to respond to the call of Jesus by iden-

tifying with Christ in the poor. He invited his followers to share the Gospel insight to reach out to the needy, especially the material poor.

Each school strives to bring to life the spirit of Blessed Edmund in their actions and practices. *Standing in solidarity with those marginalized by poverty and injustice* is a core value of the schools. This past summer, Sr. Ona journeyed with five teachers from the Edmund Rice Network of Schools on a pilgrimage to the Brothers' missions in the barrios of Lima, Perú. Sr. Ona writes of this experience:

In my preparation for the pilgrimage, I asked for the grace to meet God in the experience. For me this moment of Visitation was evident in the stories and the courage of the women of Villa El Salvador and Canto Grande. I see the face of God looking at me in these women. There is compassion in their eyes and they speak of liberation and hope. Their eyes and smiles radiate a deep trust and a faith born in suffering and sacrifice. Their lives are not easy, but they meet it with courage and determination to walk together and find joy in the small things of life.

During their pilgrimage in Perú, the teachers built a house for a poor family in the barrio of Canto Grande, spent time at an orphanage for abandoned children, peeled beans, and sewed beads on shirts with women who work

for 14 hours a day to earn three dollars so that their families can eat. Each pilgrim returned home transformed by the witness of faith and courage they found in the lives of the families they met. The Risen Christ was found in the barren hills and loving hearts of all who opened their doors to invite the pilgrims into their homes.

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***Builders of the home
in Canto Grande.***



Building a house in Canto Grande, Peru

Photo By: Ona Bessette, CND

Collaborating in the Mission of Liberating Education

continued from page 3

By: *Patricia Ells, CND*

Congregation of the Brothers of St. Francis Xavier

Sr. Patricia is the Associate Director of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools (XBSS) and collaborates with Director, Alice Hession, and Associate Director, Br. Richard Mazza CFX. There are thirteen (13) schools in the network which covers MA, CT, NY, MA, and KY. The major role of the Office is to develop and offer programs and services that assist each sponsored school in understanding and living the vision and mission of Xaverian spirituality as an educational community. The Xaverian charism is at its core relational; they strive to create an atmosphere in which enduring personal relationships can grow and thrive. In order to grow in relationships, people need to spend time together to build bonds that enable collaborators to share their gifts and grow their gifts.

The XBSS hosts semi-annual meetings with chief administrators that provide time for prayer and reflection, sharing best practices, professional growth, and relaxation.

New teachers gather in August as a group so they can experience the support of the XBSS network. The workshop is enhanced by classroom teachers from a few schools and a group of students from two different schools. Students can so readily speak to the hearts of teachers, and don't mince words about dos and don'ts.

One event that stands out from the rest is the annual XBSS Student Leadership retreat. Six to twelve juniors (boys and girls) from each school gather at a retreat center for a powerful 5 day retreat. A senior who attended the previous year from each school leads small group sessions along with a moderator. These seniors give a talk during the course of the retreat on one of the five Xaverian values,

Xaverian Brothers XBSS Teacher Orientation.

Sr. Patricia Ells, first on left in middle row.



Xaverian Brothers Leadership Retreat with students.

their service outreach experiences, and reflections on their goals from last year. The entire group goes out for a service day in the local community, and rich reflections are shared about the experience. There are opportunities to share campus ministry activities from each school and plans are made to bring back one or two ideas to implement in their own school. Lasting friendships are made at these retreats.

For Sr. Patricia working with the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools is a rich opportunity to connect with lay men and women who are the Church of today. The following is an excerpt from *A Description of the Xaverian Charism as lived by Collaborators*:

As collaborators, we freely respond to the call to minister in a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School. We commit ourselves to ongoing personal and communal formation that fosters the orientation of ourselves and of our students toward God. We live that orientation without privilege or entitlement, seeking to find God and to be formed by the "common, ordinary, unspectacular flow of everyday life." Motivated by the lofty purpose proposed for the Congregation by the Founder, we give witness to the values passed on to us from the Brothers and that currently animate our school communities: the values of humility, trust, compassion, simplicity and zeal. ✿

Approved at the 27th General Chapter, August 2013

Created in the Image of Love

By: Janet Lawrence, CND

It is hard to believe that 23 years have passed since I first entered the Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery. I remember seeing a 24 week girl infant, she was so tiny only weighing 1 lb 5 oz on the respirator, hooked up to so many IVs, and I found her to be so beautiful. I remember staring at her, amazed at how fragile she was and yet so active. I fell in love that day with what became my life's work. As a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner I work with other NNPs and Neonatologists in caring for not only premature infants but also any infant who has had a difficult start and needs further observation, evaluation and stabilization.



Since becoming a CND Sister in 2011 my way of encountering families at the hospital has changed due to my complete and utter dependence on Jesus. I am a convert from Judaism and have been given the gift of Faith to believe that there is a God who loves us so much that He gave Himself through His son Jesus to show us how to love all those that we encounter. It is with this belief that as I enter the NICU I ask Jesus to walk with me and to bless, my head, my hands and my heart along with all my coworkers. To bless us with the abilities necessary to care not only for the infant but the family as a whole, no matter the makeup of the family. I leave the debates about what the definition of family is to others, both in the Church and the secular world outside the NICU doors.

My purpose is to help families to understand why their baby is in the NICU and to answer their questions during a time when they are filled with intense fear, doubt, and sadness and perhaps even guilt. The life they dreamed for their baby may not come true and this can be devastating to them. It is important as healthcare providers that we are aware that these families come to us with their own stories rooted in the context of their culture, faith or lack thereof, financial state and even their educational background. I heed the words of Pope Francis, "Who am I to judge", when I hear my coworkers saying something derogatory about a particular family and their situation. When I find myself falling in to the same behavior I look to Jesus to help me to "see" clearly again.

At work I hear the cries of the poor, those lacking the most basic of needs, like, food, medicine, housing, even love. In the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, he writes, "to sustain a lifestyle which excludes

others, or to sustain enthusiasm for that selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this was someone else's responsibility and not our own (#54)." In the Gospel of St. Mark he tells us how Jesus was moved with pity when he saw the great crowds of people who came to listen to him speak (6:34). I could imagine Jesus telling the crowds to really look into their neighbor's eyes and you will "see" their soul where God lives, that we need to care for one another. As a Sister I remind my friends that we are all created in God's image, created in the image of love. This is the central tenet of Christianity. This is the New Evangelization, to speak about love and charity to all of humanity. St John of the Cross wrote, "Where there is no love, put love, and you will draw love out." ❁

Janet Lawrence, CND,
in the Neonatal
Intensive Care Unit.



Photos By: Staff



SMAV – CLASS OF 1963 50TH REUNION, SEPTEMBER 13, 2013

STANDING LEFT TO RIGHT: Kathleen Toolin Ryan; Lynn Choiniere Dingle; Roberta Dunford McNamee; Ann Marie Bertoncini Toolin; Karen Schmidt Mahoney; Louisa Sabatini Napolitano; Cheryl Russo Hahn; Chira DiGiancinto DiStefano; Eileen McDonough Lussier; Mary Carol Whalen Fitzgerald; Priscilla Faraone; Rosanne Lambrese Mungoven
SITTING LEFT TO RIGHT: Geraldine Dolan Wholey; Sr. Sally Norcross, CND; Mary Alyce McNamara Gasbarro; Carol Ottaviano Warren; Rita Gama Lavigne; Mary Beth Hackett Pike

News FROM THE OFFICE OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT

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AND CLICK more on A Card for Every Occasion

Ordering information is also on that page

YOUR STAMPS HELP TOO

We continue to be grateful for the cancelled stamps that you send to us which benefit our foreign missions in Central America and Cameroon.

We also cut stamps from the donations that you send so you gift us twice! Please remember that ¼" is needed around the stamp for it to be of value. Please be mindful of that when you are placing your stamp on the envelope.

POSTAGE

Memories of St. Patrick School, Lewiston, Maine

By: Kathleen Murphy, CND

“Reverend and Dear Sisters,

I wish I could find the words to express the gratitude of my little sister Stella and I owe to our beloved Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Their role and their influence in our lives played a major part in our many blessings.”

So begins the letter that Lorraine Blais Dube sent. She was a student at St. Patrick’s School in Lewiston, Maine; presently she is 82 years old. The memories she has are a precious part of the years God has granted her.

She remembers Mother St. Laurianne, and a classroom she created which had many interesting items to see. There was a large table filled with fine sand and many little houses and figurines of people, dogs and cats. If the children were good they could play at the table. Sister was loved by all the classes. Many came from French-speaking families and Mother St. Laurianne taught them the alphabet, numbers, how to write their names in English.

Lorraine went on through the grades being taught by Mother St. Veronica, Mother St. Ann, their music teacher, Mother St. Martinain. Lorraine talks about always being welcome at the convent (she lived next door), attending prayers during the month of May and on some Fridays she and her sister would help dust in the chapel. In those days that was considered a privilege!

In closing these are Lorraine’s thoughts: “I wish with all my heart that every child could attend a Catholic school especially taught by the Congregation of Notre Dame. Those years were the ‘best’ years. I am and will forever be grateful to Our Blessed Lord for sending you to us!”

As I read through Lorraine’s letter, it brought back memories of my own grammar school days in the ‘50s’. So much of what she experienced, even though later, was still a part of my experience. Hopefully these reflections have brought back memories that you cherish. ❁

CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



Congregation of Notre Dame/USA



A heartfelt thank you to all of our donors who gave to the

2013 Spring Appeal for the Ministry of Sr. Mary MacIsaac, CND

2013 Summer Appeal in honor of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys

2013 Christmas Appeal for our Sisters’ health and retirement needs

We are most grateful!

 IN GRATITUDE 

The Congregation of Notre Dame received donations
to the CND Retirement Fund in memory of

Sister Mary Nerney, CND

The Sisters of the Congregation are most grateful!

Please join us in praying for our deceased Sisters

IN MEMORY OF

Mary Nerney, CND (Mother St. Thomas of the Sacred Heart) d. November 27, 2013

*All I have ever desired is that the great precept of the love of God above
all things and of the neighbor as oneself be written in every heart.*

ST. MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS

May their souls and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

**Mission Orientation of the
Congregation of Notre Dame**

To follow Jesus in a preferential option for the poor and to live our mission of liberating education in fidelity to the prophetic charism of Marguerite Bourgeoys in today's world, we commit ourselves to live closer to the reality of the impoverished, the excluded and the oppressed. In solidarity with them, we commit ourselves to protect our planet and to participate actively in the transformation of Church and society for a more just world.

(Mission Orientation, Chapters 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011 with additions)

Ways of Giving: Planned Giving

When you leave a share of your estate to the Congregation of Notre Dame, Blessed Sacrament Province, you leave a living legacy to further advance the mission of the Congregation. The Congregation of Notre Dame relies on gifts from generous friends to partner with us in supporting the presence of a CND in our varied ministries. Your bequest of stocks, bonds, cash, trust funds (by naming the Congregation of Notre Dame as beneficiary of a trust), the proceeds from life insurance policies or other property will help assure our life and work in the future. Please contact us for our current literature.