



Blessings

SCHOOL SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

Transforming the World Through Education

SPRING 2010



St. Matthias: 100 Years of SSND Service

Sister Madeline Keller with students during Ascension Thursday procession in neighborhood streets.

A Rich Tradition

In 1910, four SSNDs arrived at St. Matthias to take over a school that had been founded the year before by the first pastor and also teacher, Father Nicholas Wagner, and three lay women. Mostly of German background, 175 children came that August 29, 1910; enrollment grew to 354 by the following September.



by S. Kay O'Connell, SSND

Now, one hundred years later, six SSNDs and over 20 lay teachers and staff are educating 400 pre-K to 8th graders in a strong community of students, teachers, administrators, and parents. A rich tradition of academic excellence

is permeated by formation in the Catholic way of life. St. Matthias seeks to strengthen families and to make its students keenly aware of the needs of others. Reflecting a neighborhood of many struggling families, some children come from several East European backgrounds and several different Spanish-speaking countries. In the eighth grade, 12 nationalities are represented. Sixth grade teacher Sister Theresa, who has been at Ridgewood for 30 years, says, we work hard to integrate children, to encourage, them to appreciate each other's cultures.

Last year, to celebrate the school's centenary, each class carried out a project that highlighted the number 100. Pre-K went over the

top, collecting 112 jars of peanut butter and jelly for the parish food pantry where 40 people who are homeless are fed each day. The first grade raffled off a five-pound bar of chocolate. Several classes sent \$100 to World Vision to buy goats and chicks for families in the third world.

Blessed Mother Theresa

A picture of Blessed Mother Theresa, SSND's foundress, graces every classroom. At the parish centennial dinner, all 227 sisters who had ever served at St. Matthias were inducted into its Hall of Fame at the recommendation of the Alumni Association.

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Women of Faith, Women in Mission

S. Frances Lawrence

May 31, 1923 - March 18, 2010
Chicago, IL

S. Joan Armstrong

January 12, 1940 - February 10, 2010
Wilton, CT

S. M. Janice Colgan

January 14, 1920 – January 6, 2010
Baltimore, MD

S. Mary Nora O'Connor

February 16, 1917—February 3, 2010
Chicago, IL

S. Joanne Nee

March 21, 1929 – December 12, 2009
Wilton, CT

S. Edith Ann DeGiosio

November 29, 1921 – December 18, 2009
Baltimore, MD

S. M. Dulcide Chell

May 27, 1917 – December 21, 2009
Wilton, CT

S. Mary Giles Reilly

June 14, 1925 – November 12, 2009
Wilton, CT

S. Maura Eichner

May 5, 1915 – November 15, 2009
Baltimore, MD

S. Freda Gould

September 14, 1931 – November 14, 2009
Wilton, CT

S. M. Materna Zienne

February 8, 1917 – November 26, 2009
Baltimore, MD

S. M. Amata Schneggenburger

January 10, 1913 – November 28, 2009
Wilton, CT

S. Anne Kamieniecki

April 1, 1910 – October 20, 2009
Chicago, IL

S. Miriam Jude Sweeney

July 21, 1938 – October 20, 2009
Baltimore, MD

S. Joan Marie Backes

November 4, 1921 – October 18, 2009
Wilton, CT

S. M. Valentino Smaldore

March 23, 1915 - September 23, 2009
Baltimore, MD



Dear Friends,

Spring is a time of promise. During this wondrous season let us take time to look around and see life on the edge of happening: in trees, flowers, the young and in each of us. We celebrate God's gifts as we give thanks for the beauty of spring and the mystery of God's unconditional love for each of us. We are people of faith and hope.

In this issue of Blessings we share with you two ways that your generosity and care assist us in carrying out our mission. Rejoice with us in the 100 years of service we School Sisters of Notre Dame have given at St. Matthias in New York. The sisters there continue to empower children through education, as SSNDs have been doing since our beginnings in 1833.

Begun in 2003, Salvadoran Enterprises for Women (SEW) educates and empowers women in El Salvador— one self-esteem workshop, one skills training program, one business at a time. As SSNDs we are called to meet the needs of the times through education, encouraging other women to be women of faith, women in mission.

We are meant to minister --- through teaching, through prayer and presence, through education that empowers. We thank you, our families and friends, for supporting us in so many ways. You and your gifts are precious to us and we are grateful.

Easter blessings of peace and joy,

Kathleen Cornell, SSND
Provincial Leader
Atlantic-Midwest Province

Charitable Checklist

Please support the School Sisters of Notre Dame and their ministries.

- Retirement gift
- Remember SSNDs in your will
- Gift of securities
- Matching gift
- Wish list items

For more information, please call (800) 993-7763 or email Leslie Lopez at llopez@amssnd.org
Thank You!

Imagining Futures: Salvadoran Enterprises for Women



SEW's mobile kitchen in Palacios. Women making tortillas.

The legacy of Blessed Theresa and Mother Caroline to School Sisters of Notre Dame calls us to promote the dignity of all, especially women and children, to be evangelized by the materially poor and to change unjust structures. Salvadoran Enterprises for Women (SEW) works with women in El Salvador—one skills training, one self-esteem workshop, one business at a time—so they have employment and with employment, dignity and hope.



by S. Anne Marie Gardiner, SSND

With initial funding from the former Baltimore Province, I began SEW in 2003 to empower women by developing small businesses. Currently, through 14 such projects, including bakeries, sewing groups, natural medicines, two poultry farms and cheese processing, women in El Salvador are working their way out of poverty.

A Source of Hope

SEW women have found hope in learning to do new things. Having support in the business group, receiving the respect of community leaders, serving as models for other women and experiencing the possibility

of more secure lives, they can now imagine their own futures and they can contribute positively to the futures of other women. (See their stories www.sewinc.org) Three SEW women have been elected to their respective City Councils; the daughters of one group saw the benefit of “our mothers organizing” and organized a teen group to work with children after school. The success of one is the success of many. Hope is contagious.

Isaiah's call (5:1-9) mirrors Mother Theresa's: “This is the fasting that I wish...releasing those bound unjustly....setting free the oppressed...” Salvadoran Enterprises for Women is just one example of SSND solidarity with the materially poor and of our concrete efforts to address unjust structures. It is one of many examples of women of faith, women in mission.



Women in San Antonio preparing pan dulce (sweet bread).

For All Ages: Mary, Mystic and Minister

Sister Rea McDonnell, SSND

As School Sisters of Notre Dame, Mary the mother of Jesus is central to our congregation. Woman of faith, woman in mission, Mary is both mystic and minister.

On Pentecost, in her midlife, Mary again was flooded by the Spirit. When the Spirit overshadowed her as a young

woman, the Word would become flesh in Jesus; at Pentecost, the Risen Christ gave her a mission and gifted her for ministry.

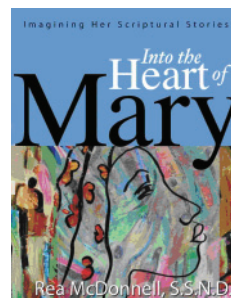
How did Mary, who has been called the first disciple, envision her mission? Because of her personal experience of the risen Jesus, Mary was made missionary, an apostle. To whom was she sent? The women of Jerusalem (as most scholars agree) or the people of

Ephesus (as legend has it)? Did she begin to learn Greek so she could spread the good news to the people of Ephesus, or did she stay among the Jewish women, attracting them to the Body of Christ?

Even as she aged, her zeal would not have dimmed. She was sent to witness to her Son's death, bringing into one new family all the scattered children of God (John 11:52). That was his passionate desire: that all be one. Until her last breath, she would continue that mission.

Mary is like us in all things, growing in wisdom, age and grace. She would have treasured each relationship, each event as a way of discovery. Now she shares her mission with us, her deep desire for unity, and her urgency to share the good news.

With Mary, woman of faith, woman in mission, we are reminded that that the Word is always becoming flesh.



Ava Marie Press 2009





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Atlantic-Midwest Province
Department of Mission Advancement
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www.amssnd.org



Dear Friends,

One hundred seventy-six years and counting—that’s how long the School Sisters of Notre Dame have been seeking, praying, and working to transform life through education. Because of you and the faithful way you support our ministries, the work continues.

Women in mission are women of faith who have taken a leap into the unknown, based simply on their trust, hope, and love of God. In this

issue of Blessings, we begin with Mary, a model of faith for everyone in the church. As a young woman confronted with a mysterious messenger asking her a momentous question, Mary bravely took a leap of faith and her life changed from that moment. She successfully faced the challenges that came to her over her lifetime and, through it all, remained true to her promise to God.

Learn about Rea McDonnell, SSND, and her recent book, *Into the Heart of Mary*, where readers are called to prayerfully ponder and

meditate on passages about Mary from Scripture and ancient tradition.

Next you’ll see an article applauding everyone at Saint Matthias School, Queens, New York as they celebrate the arrival of the SSND one hundred years ago. Today a wide variety of cultures are represented in the student body.

In 2003 Anne Marie Gardiner, SSND began Salvadoran Enterprises for Women, promoting economic and social development of Salvadoran women by funding job training and employment opportunities.

As this season brings the beauties of springtime and the celebrations of the Easter mystery which stretch on until Pentecost Sunday and the birthday of the church, let us continue to remember one another in prayer. We thank God for you and for what your gifts mean to our ministries.

With sincere gratitude,

Leslie A. Lopez, JD
Director of Mission Advancement

St. Matthias: 100 Years of SSND Service

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The Deepest Ideal

In their daily instruction and formation, the present “bearers of the vision,” Sisters Bernadette Alfieri, Eileen Denny, Madeline Keller, Katharine Lawless, Earl Mary Moores, and Theresa Torson, live out daily the deepest ideal of SSND as it is expressed in their Constitution—“we try to make sure that all our students are enabled to reach the fullness of their potential and then share their gifts with others.” Women of faith, women in mission, they celebrate with their presence the one hundred year history of St. Matthias.

Sister Bernadette Alfieri having story time in the primary library.