

# GoodWorks

Worldwide Mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

“Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,  
so as to be fully pleasing, in every GOOD WORK...  
with joy giving thanks to the Father...”

Colossians 1:10-12



A New Reality for SNDs at Nativity School

See article page 4

My dear friends of Notre Dame,

Education is bedrock in the foundation of our Congregation. Marie Rose Julie Billiard brought personal experiences of teaching into the education and formation of women who would eventually become Sisters of Notre Dame. Long before the Congregation was founded in 1804, Julie Billiard had instructed village children about God's goodness and love. She was referred to as the catechist and young theologian among her peers. *Julie loved to teach!*



The charisma of making God's goodness known through many forms of education has remained steadfast through crisis, ecclesiastical opposition, rejection, class and civic revolution, violence and war. Education of the whole person in schools, learning centers, clinics and health centers is our mission in the world today. Educational certificates, degrees, diplomas and official records of progress are only one aspect of the mission of Notre Dame.

We thank you and we plead with you to continue to support the whole mission of Notre Dame, which is to teach and heal in a manner that acknowledges, respects and upholds the dignity and worth of every person. Our educational institutions and health centers face the same temptations that permeate contemporary society: self-centered competition, greed, global injustice, and the destructive systems of domination, exploitation, manipulation and oppression. You know and we sadly admit that some of today's ruthless leaders are graduates of Catholic high schools and universities. When education is used to control and oppress, it is an aberration of the mission of Jesus and Julie.

The Sisters of Notre Dame join you in the commitment to continue the mission of Jesus Christ and actively bear witness to the words of St. Paul: *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."* (Romans 12:2)

For all the *good work* that brought us to today and for the *good work* we strive to do with you for others, we thank you.

In God's goodness,

*Teresita Weind, SNDdeN*  
Sister Teresita Weind, SNDdeN  
Congregational Leader



Front Cover:

Sr. Julie Marie Thorpe  
tutors Juliana  
Martinez in English  
grammar and  
structure at  
Nativity School  
in San José, CA



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for SNDs at  
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Photos of Nativity  
School taken by  
Sr. Jon Julie Sullivan,  
SNDdeN.



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200 Years  
of Great Work

## GoodWorks

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## A New Reality for SNDs at Nativity School

By Sister Julie Marie Thorpe, SNDdeN

For those who are familiar with downtown San Jose, California and Sacred Heart Parish, a strong and vibrant middle school in the area is really good news. Since 2001, a committed faculty and staff serve in this school which receives more applicants than can be accepted each year. After an absence of thirty years, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDs) are “educating for life,” once again on the property called the “Willows” in this new reality: Sacred Heart Nativity School. Volunteers, including six SNDs, give their time and experience as educators to strengthen and reinforce the academic program and holistic development of the students.

The student body at Sacred Heart Nativity School, San Jose reflects the make-up of the surrounding Hispanic community. Students follow an intense program with varied educational experiences, including academics, activities and supervised homework periods. The daily schedule is rigorous: weekdays begin at 7:30 a.m. and conclude at 5:30 p.m. Two Saturdays a month students go on enrichment field trips. In addition, these students attend a four week summer school and a two week leadership training camp.



Six SNDs volunteer service at Nativity School for Boys and Girls. Left to right: Sisters Yvonne Bondi, Natalia Carrasco, Aileen Bermingham, Julie Marie Thorpe, Barbara Hamm and Ann Carmel Badalamente pose with Ms. Angela LoVasco, (middle of photo) Vice Principal of Nativity Girls' School.

This school belongs to the Network of Nativity Middle Schools whose sixty-five member schools are educating more than 4,400 students in twenty-seven states. The schools, founded by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), are guided by nine standards including explicitly a faith based mission, and offering a holistic education to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students from low income families.

### Sacred Heart's Story

The Sacred Heart story did not begin in San Jose with the Jesuits. It goes back many years with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. In 1906 three SNDs began teaching Italian immigrant children in a makeshift one-story building, located on the property known as the “Willows,” near the present day Sacred Heart Church. The Sisters walked daily to the little school and referred to it as “...really *Mother Julia's work.*”



Sr. Aileen Marie Bermingham is tutoring Francisco Villalobos in the school library.

Originally in 1905, St. Francis Xavier School had been started with three lay women as the first teachers. The Sisters of Notre Dame took it over the next year. In 1923, the school was renamed and included in the newly organized Sacred Heart Parish. The Sisters continued to serve the school gratuitously and to commute daily from their convent. Eventually in 1949, a new school and convent were constructed in Sacred Heart Parish. The school continued until 1971 when changed circumstances forced closing the school, where SNDs had served for sixty-five years. The building was to be used for other purposes! It took over thirty years to re-open a school in Sacred Heart Parish. When the current Nativity School was established in 2001, the Sisters of Notre Dame were there to serve once again at the day of opening!

### A Pastor's Dream Realized

The opening of Sacred Heart Nativity School for boys in 2001 and Our Lady of Grace Nativity School for girls in 2006 was the fulfillment of a dream of the pastor Father Mateo Sheedy. In the neighborhood of his Sacred Heart Parish, Father Mateo saw there was need to have a school nearby. He was aware that many students had dropped out of school and gangs were taking control of the neighborhood. Pursuing his quest, Father Mateo was able to gain the support of the local bishop, Bishop Patrick J. McGrath, and the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits of the California Province. A founding committee including two SNDs, Sisters Yvonne Bondi and Rosalie Pizzo, was called together;

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they succeeded in putting the pastor's dream into action. Although he was dying of cancer, Father Mateo was able to sign the school's foundational documents. The school became a reality and is thriving today with six SNDs involved in a vibrant ministry in this middle school.

**Notre Dame's Gift: Presence, Service and Funding**

Sister Yvonne Bondi is the school librarian, assisted by Sisters Ann Carmel Badalamente and Barbara Hamm. Sisters Yvonne and Ann Carmel are alumnae of the earlier Sacred Heart School. Sister Aileen Marie Bermingham has been a volunteer at the Nativity School since its opening. She tutors promising eighth graders in getting them ready for Catholic high schools. Sister Natalia Carrasco who began as a teacher at Nativity now tutors the girls. Sister Julie Marie Thorpe serves also as a tutor in the school for girls.



Sr. Yvonne Bondi, librarian, shows Moisés Murguia and Moisés Rios the newest text contributed to the library.

A funding grant from the Mother Saint Joseph Ministry Fund of the California Province of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur has made possible the expanding development of the school library.

In addition to the above named sisters, during the summer months, a team of five SNDs used their skills in organizing, cataloging and shelving the books in

the library to make a resourceful and functional middle school library. Continuing donations to the school enable the Nativity students to focus on strong reading interests and skills.

In spite of an absence in the sequence of service, the Sisters of Notre Dame are back in this area of San Jose, a home to various waves of immigrants. In 1906, the Sisters first brought the news that, "God is good." Now in 2010, they share in encouraging students to be "men and women for others." When the prayer is said, "St. Ignatius pray for us," we Sisters add, "St. Julie pray for us." Her spirit has permeated those halls for many years and is still there in the presence and influence of the Sisters of Notre Dame who have returned to teach, "educating for life," another generation of the children of immigrants.

[www.shnativity.org](http://www.shnativity.org)



Sisters Kathryn Webster SNDdeN (BZ) and Monica Umeh SNDdeN (NI) join the university community in Belém, Brazil celebrating the life and legacy of Sister Dorothy Stang on the 4th Anniversary of her martyrdom. ([www.SNDdeN.org](http://www.SNDdeN.org))

*Join us  
as a vowed member,  
associate or mission volunteer*



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## Julie's Ghent: 200 Years of Great Work



The students in the primary and secondary schools gather for the opening of the 200th Jubilee.

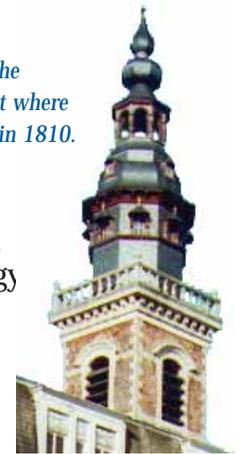


*"We still continue the work that started with Saint Julie Billiart, even if the school is now 200 years old."*

The children in Ghent, Belgium are celebrating a "year of Jubilee" on the **200th anniversary of Nieuwen Bosch** (Nouveau Bois), in the schools founded in 1810 in Flanders by St. Julie Billiart. The principals of the primary and secondary schools, Peter De Graeve and Micheline Dick, have organized several festivities throughout this Jubilee Year. On Sunday, March 14, the schools will welcome a delegation of Sisters of Notre Dame from Europe to join the faculties, staff, students and parents for a Liturgy of Thanksgiving, to be celebrated by the Bishop of Ghent.

Micheline Dick, Principal of Nieuwen Bosch Humaniora says: *"We still continue the work that started with Saint Julie Billiart, even if the school is now 200 years old."* On the historic site, formerly a Cistercian Abbey, two quality schools and an adjoining professional school, opened also by the Sisters of Notre Dame, continue to attract students from the cities/region around Ghent. Currently, there are 500 students in the primary school and 380 students in the secondary school who are being "educated for life" at Nieuwen Bosch. Both schools take pride in a quality education with a strong focus on the growth and development of the whole person. Even today, 115 boarders reside on this property. Following the inspiration of St. Julie, Nieuwen Bosch is a modern school where perseverance in learning and Gospel values with a social commitment are priorities.

The tower crowns the church of the former Cistercian Abbey at Ghent where St. Julie Billiart opened a school in 1810.



Jubilee activities reflect a holistic emphasis at Nieuwen Bosch. Extending from March through October 2010, the events include a special liturgy social receptions, an organ recital, a musical presentation, a planting ceremony and special programs for the students, faculty and parents. A special book, *Nieuwen Bosch 1810-2010*, has been compiled for the celebration. Students at all levels are enjoying the many "happenings" to mark this 200th anniversary. Sisters of Notre Dame internationally recognize and celebrate the "good work," begun by St. Julie, which continues the inheritance of "education for life" for the students at Nieuwen Bosch.

[www.nieuwenbosch.be](http://www.nieuwenbosch.be)

Sr. Marie Steenhaut, the first Flemish novice trained in Amiens, France by St. Julie, recounts the early history of the Congregation in Flanders. She was sent first to the new foundation at St. Nicholas in Belgium and



Sister Gaby Peeters retells the story of St. Julie's love for Nieuwen Bosch, Ghent.

later to Ghent. Her personal story shows Julie's call to further the Gospel Mission to people living in poverty. In her Memoirs, Marie herself reflects the fire of Julie's vision emanating from a loving and apostolic heart. She tells us: "I loved Nouveau Bois. During thirty years, I lived here, worked, suffered and prayed. I saw Nouveau Bois grow; now there are 500 impoverished children, 150 paying day students and 100 boarders.

I have lived to see the extension of the Congregation and I ask God to bless...all those who after us will be faithful to Notre Dame, everywhere in the world." Sr. Marie adds: *How happy I have been in the Congregation and in what a great work I have had the joy to serve the good God.*"

(Monograph entitled *An Act of Gratitude: Marie Steenhaut, Sister of Notre Dame 1782-1844*, written by Sr. Gaby Peeters, SNDdeN, Ghent, Belgium, November 23, 2003)

## SNDs *Open Clinic* in Kimwenzza, Congo

By Sister Marie-Jeanne Kuntonda, SNDdeN

*Miracles happen every day!*

The people of Kimwenzza, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and its surrounding villages marveled at the opening of the René de Haes Health and Maternity Center (Centre de Santé/Maternité René De Haes), a new health care ministry of the Congo-Kinshasa Province. In a poor and confined milieu, adjoining the property of the Sisters of Notre Dame



*Sister Chantal Nseka, an SND nurse, wearing gown sent by IMEC, cares for a young child.*

de Namur, Monseigneur Fidèle Nsielele, Bishop of the Kisantu Diocese, officiated at the opening of this center ("the Clinic") on October 31, 2009. Many religious, civil and political leaders joined the SNDs and the people for a joyous ceremony of blessing, marking direct access to a clinic in this area, so deprived of medical care for those living in poverty.

The Sisters opened wide the doors on November 2 to the sick needing immediate care. Directed, administered and belonging to the Sisters of Notre Dame, the Clinic has already served 658 out-patients, given consultations to 105 prenatal patients, assisted in the delivery of 27 babies. There have been 28 surgeries

since the opening. No deaths have been reported at the center in these two months. Examinations and vaccinations for babies and small children (infancy to 5 years old), will begin in early 2010.

Named for Father René De Haes, a Jesuit assassinated in May 2005, the Clinic expands the Mission of the SNDs, supported for many years by this priest. Built on property donated to the Sisters by the Jesuits, the center comprises four buildings: a dispensary, two maternity wards, a building with rooms for patient hospitalization, operating facilities and offices for consultation. The medical team includes a full-time doctor, three SNDs serving as administrator, pharmacist and nurse, five lay nurses and four mid-wives, and two laboratory technicians.

*Doctor Zifuakala Matumona Gerome treats a baby at the Clinic. The doctor's gown and equipment were sent by IMEC.*



There are also a business manager, two receptionists, with personnel for security, maintenance and cleaning.

*Need for a Clinic in Kimwenzza*

In 2006, the SNDs recognized the poverty of the people living in misery, without accessibility to medical care in Kimwenzza, due to the impassibility of roads to any city with hospitals or clinics. The major route to Kinshasa was eroded by the rains, and is still dangerous for travel today. A small dispensary at about 6 kilometers from Kimwenzza was destroyed. Although Kimwenzza and surrounding villages have a very dense population, there has never been any credible or viable medical service for the people of this region. Without this care, the rate of mortality for mothers and infants increased radically in the area during a three-year period. The population found itself in serious difficulty without medical help, especially during the night time. *Medical care reached a crisis point for a people struggling for survival without a passable route to any hospital.* Then, the pastor of the parish asked the SNDs to construct a Clinic. The people also went to the Sisters of Notre Dame for help. The Sisters decided to build, in spite of their own financial needs.

*Compassion in Action*

First, the Sisters asked for help from the Religieux de Saint Vincent de Paul (Vincentian Fathers) by submitting a grant proposal for funding. The Vincentians were able to obtain financial support from the government to build and equip a dispensary in Kimwenzza. They oversaw the project. The building, however, was incomplete in offering some necessary services.

Next, the Congolese Sisters requested assistance from the SND Congregation to expand and equip the Clinic as a tri-purpose facility. On the advice of consultants, the Congregational Mission Office staff sought assistance from the International Medical Equipment Corporation (IMEC). This agency of doctors and nurses donate time and energy to

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refurbish and send to deprived countries throughout the world surplus medical equipment and supplies from hospitals, rehabilitation clinics and laboratories in eastern Massachusetts. Medical personnel, such as doctors, nurses, hospitalists, and community helpers volunteer at least one day a week to sterilize, sort and categorize this discarded surplus equipment for export to underprivileged countries. Administrators at the IMEC facility, located in North Andover, MA, offered hospital supplies, furnishings and equipment for the Clinic.



*The shipping containers with furnishings and equipment arrive from IMEC.*

With the generous service of IMEC, medical supplies and furnishings were loaded into shipping containers to be sent to the Congo. Since the Sisters of Notre Dame were the shepherding organization for the shipment, the task of raising funds became their responsibility. The expensive project of transporting two containers from the United States was funded by the Conrad-Hilton Fund for Sisters, the SND Congregational

Leadership Team, Mission Support Fund and our generous donors. With the assistance of more donors, including Congolese Knights of Malta, the huge containers with furnishings and equipment were transported from Kinshasa to the Clinic in Kimwenza.

Financial resources provided by anonymous donors from overseas, contributed to finalize the construction of the buildings and defray other costs. With the arrival of the shipping containers, the Clinic was furnished with beds, nightstands, various types of medical equipment and supplies. The Clinic now functions as a vibrant ministry of our Congolese SNDs, with the ongoing assistance of our benefactors.

When the Congo-Kinshasa Province celebrated a Jubilee in 2009, the new Clinic marked the 50th anniversary of Congolese Branch of the SNDs in giving a tangible witness to the goodness of God and our Notre Dame Mission. The SNDs of the Congo thank all who have provided resources for giving birth to this new Clinic. At a time of worldwide financial crisis, the task of building, furnishing and providing necessities for a new Clinic seems miraculous. *It testifies to the compassion and the strength of our unity as Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.*

A YEAR OVERFLOWING WITH GRACES AND BLESSINGS...

*Celebrating the Education  
of Young Women Across Three Centuries  
(1860-2010)*

By Sr. Rita M. Sturwold, SNDdeN, President  
and Jenn Sennett, Director of Marketing and Communications

**M**ount Notre Dame High School (MND) in Reading, Ohio, celebrating 150 years, is the oldest Catholic girls' high school in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati! This 150th Jubilee is an amazing accomplishment for a US Catholic high school, sustained by tuition and fund raising, with relatively little government support!

MND celebrates 150 years of:

- commitment and sacrifice by the Sisters of Notre Dame and our lay colleagues
- teaching over 8,000 young women "what they need to know for life," to make a difference in their families, Church, communities and places of employment
- generous donors who enable the school to keep moving forward.

Searching for a "perfect" school theme for Jubilee prayer services and liturgies, MND students found St. Julie Billiart's New Year's greetings:

*"I wish you a year overflowing with graces and blessings."*

The Jubilee Year opened on September 17, 2009, with an inspiring Mass of Thanksgiving, celebrated by Archbishop Dennis Schnurr at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains in Cincinnati, Ohio. Alumnae from the classes of 1942 to 2009, students representing their 45 parishes, members of the Board of Trustees, school administrators and clergy processed into the cathedral. The voices of 750 students, over 100 staff members, parents, Sisters of Notre Dame and friends of MND filled the sacred space with beautiful music! It was truly a  *blessing!*

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**TODAY'S** Blessings

Mount Notre Dame, a respected college-preparatory high school, is alive with the friendliness and energy of 740 young women between the ages of 14 and 18. Catholic identity and family spirit set apart MND students. Walking through the halls, one sees the students supporting, encouraging and challenging each other. Faithful to

St. Julie's desire to educate young women, our Mission states: *"With faith in the 'goodness of God,' Mount Notre Dame High School empowers young women, guided by Catholic values, to recognize and develop their unique capabilities to live, lead, and serve in an ever-changing global society."* Deeply rooted in Catholic tradition, MND is committed to educating the whole person: body, mind and spirit by offering a unique educational experience to its students of varied ability levels and interests.



A student thanks Sr. Paula Marie Becker for her ministry as Administrative Assistant at Mt. Notre Dame.

Strong programs in the Humanities offer leadership opportunities and a greater awareness of the inter-connectedness of our global society. An engineering class prepares scientifically-talented young women for a career in a male-dominated field. About 50 clubs, service opportunities, mission trips, and retreats contribute to this holistic education. The athletic program, comprising 12 sports, brings home state championships and produces athletes sought after by competitive colleges. A Youth Philanthropy Council introduces the students to their role in philanthropy through a mini-foundation that makes grants to charities.

Sharing the property with the SND Province Health Center, over 100 students visit elderly Sisters each month, through the *Adopt-a-Sister Program*. Wonderful relationships develop and last beyond graduation. In addition, all first-year students visit the convent to learn about St. Julie and the Notre Dame charism. In *Life Choices* and *Prayer Styles* classes, seniors interview Sisters to learn more about religious life and spirituality. St. Julie's maxim, *"Teach them what they need to know for life,"* is as vibrant today as it was in 1860. Needlework samplers, produced by the students in the late 1800's and early 1900's, displayed in the media center are in contrast with a computer lab at the far end of the room.

Today every first-year student takes a one-semester course in technology applications, in MND's wireless environment. In September 2010, each incoming freshman will have a Tablet personal computer for storing class notes as well as submitting assignments. The Tablet PC will eventually replace notebooks and textbooks.

**YESTERDAY'S** Graces

Students wear their "heritage t-shirts" each Wednesday. "Heritage day" begins with Sr. Elizabeth Anne Schaad sharing a piece of history from MND's annals and capturing everyone's attention with her oratorical style. She narrates the history and heritage of MND's founding, dear to the heart of Sr. Superior Louise Van Der Schrieck. With an overcrowded boarding school and convent at Sixth Street in the city of Cincinnati, the father of a student begged Sr. Louise to open another boarding school on an available 53-acre farm about ten miles north of the city. Although \$2,850 for the property seemed costly, Sr. Superior made the purchase on September 24, 1859. Within a week, an architect had begun to design the large school and convent for MND.

On September 17, 1860, 21 Sisters watched Emma Taft run up the hill to be the first of 30 students to enroll at Mount Notre Dame Academy and Boarding School. In 1861, boarders came from the North and the South because parents wanted them safe during the Civil War. The boarding school continued until the 1930's; the Sisters taught young boys until the 1950's. In the mid-1950's, the Archbishop asked the Provincial to accept more high school girls, with a broader range of academic ability, and to change the school's name to Mount Notre Dame High School. Later, increased enrollment and 100-year old buildings necessitated demolition of the original school, convent and chapel and the construction of a new school in 1965.

**TOMORROW'S** Joy

Four SNDs, serving with over 100 staff, integrate the Notre Dame charism at MND. Staff and students are eager to establish stronger relationships with students and teachers in other Notre Dame schools internationally. Being connected with ND schools on other continents will provide a rich and unique educational experience for everyone. Truly this year at MND is "overflowing with graces and blessings"! *Relying on God's goodness, students and staff are confident of a future rich in blessings.*

[www.mndhs.org](http://www.mndhs.org)

## Chaplaincy at Gatwick/London Airport

By Sister Josephine Threlfall, SNDdeN

The early days of our Congregation resemble the present time, in the shortage of priests and the limited scope for women to use their God given gifts in the Church. In 2004, due to a shortage of priests for chaplaincy work at Gatwick Airport, London, England, I was the first woman asked to join a team with a Catholic priest, a permanent deacon, an Anglican priest and two officers from the Salvation Army. The Bishop saw airport chaplaincy as a good ministry for a Sister who had spent most of her life in Africa. Now in 2010, I serve on a team of three women with a Salvation Army officer and an Anglican lay woman.

This ministry has enabled me to experience internationality and reach out to people in real need. On week days, my work includes leading at midday the Liturgy of the Word and Communion Service and being a listening ear and support to passengers and staff using the prayer room. At other times I move around the airport landside and airside, “loitering with intent,” as a colleague said. In other words, I look out for vulnerable people who may need a bit of support or I talk to the baggage handlers, airline workers, security staff, immigration officers, or retail staff. Many airport workers are anxious about losing their jobs in this time of economic decline.

Moreover, I listen and try to give courage to people feeling isolated and having lost hope. I may be asked to pray for a mother who is flying across the world to visit a son in prison, or a husband hoping that his five-hour plane journey across the ocean to patch up a marriage will not be in vain. I see my role as listening to the *“mournings of our fragmented world, of those impoverished...trafficked, marginalised and abused women and children”* (Chapter Calls 2008). I see myself as very privileged in being able to stand with our brothers and sisters of every creed and colour, to share their struggles and to pray for their needs.



Multi-faith chaplains share faith and work: front row- Lieutenant Colonel Steve Pallant (Salvation Army), Sr. Josephine Threlfall SNDdeN; back row-Fr. Jonathan Baldwin (Anglican Chaplain), Deacon Chris Dobson (Catholic Permanent Deacon).

## Multi-Faith Society

In the 1960s, chaplaincy catered to a more Christian society; today we are a multi-faith society in Britain and welcome people of all faiths and none. Arriving in the morning for work, I may stumble over a person who has spent the night in the chapel or prayer room – if they have not been moved on by the police. The prayer room is used regularly by Muslims coming in faithfully to pray. Their fidelity and appreciation for this space are a real example and a great encouragement to us. Passengers stranded because they have missed their flights or may be homeless, spend the night in this safe, non-threatening place. In a warm, comfortable carpeted space, the chaplains engage in interesting conversations and hear some amazing stories, not pious talk. The stories often lead people to bring up questions of faith and the place of God in our confused world. Once a week, the chaplains of all Christian faiths share Scripture with staff and passengers – a very good way to share faith and pray together.

Announced over the public address system, the midday Liturgy of the Word and Communion Service attracts many staff and passengers who use the short-haul flights to Europe and Ireland. Many thank me for leading a service, particularly for the reflection and prayers so meaningful to them. I meet religious of various congregations both Anglican and Catholic. Often someone will say: “I was educated by your Sisters in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Congo, Scotland, Belgium or USA.” *Many have imbibed a love of St. Julie and her educational values and are passing them on to future generations.* I can always depend on ND alumnae/alumni to do the readings at the Liturgy.

In 2009, we were asked to be part of a team welcoming elderly people from Zimbabwe, who were being repatriated in the UK. They were being brought back in groups of 10 people at two week intervals. Many had gone to former Southern Rhodesia in the 1950s to farm or set up business; some were Southern African born. Having lost their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the regime in Zimbabwe, now in their old age, they do not have resources to support themselves. The British Government organised a scheme to bring them back and house them close to family and friends. Conversing over a cup of tea, I met many who knew SNDs in Pumula, Kroonstad and Johannesburg.



A woman and her son are happy to ask Sr. Josephine Threlfall for prayers on their journey home.

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## Airport Training Programmes and Networking

In this 21st Century, we need to be prepared for emergencies. The chaplains have regular training programmes dealing with fire, terrorism, airline crashes and natural disasters. We also respond to disasters around the world, being part of a support group welcoming people back to the United Kingdom. Communication and networking are very important aspects of chaplaincy work; we share a well-used intranet asking for prayers for special needs in different parts of the world. We participate twice a year in UK conferences treating issues such as our responsibility for the impact of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the airline industry. The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People organises every two years in Rome a Catholic Airport Chaplains Conference, attended by one of our chaplains. The local Church tries not to close a chaplaincy because of the shortage of priests.

Unfortunately we do not have contact with people who might be named asylum seekers or refugees, simply because they are picked up at border control before they reach us. The police are not likely to invite us to talk to people at that stage. Occasionally, staff members of the deportation centre have asked us to visit the border controlled area to give some comfort to people being deported. Many may face further suffering on their return to Africa, Arab Countries or South America; they are so grateful for a listening ear and prayers for their journey. In this varied, interesting ministry, I always pray that *“our individual and corporate actions will be a source of hope for our world”* (Chapter Calls 2008).

### Re-Connecting with Notre Dame in Zambia

The International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains Conference brought me last summer to Lusaka, Zambia. I met the only Airport Chaplain in Zambia, Sr. Bernard Nkando, a dynamic and highly respected woman. She is a Handmaid of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a diocesan Congregation under the Archbishop of Lusaka who sees himself only as their Juridical Founder, not their Spiritual Founder. Sr. Brigid Rose Tiernan, SNDdeN from South Africa researched these Sisters for me; she found that this Congregation was started by our SNDs in Chikuni in the 1940s. In staying with them before our Conference, I learned about their Religious Congregation. Many older Handmaid Sisters told me that they see St. Julie Billiart as their foundress.

## Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

### Invite You to

# Support Our Mission



Your donations energize and sustain our worldwide Mission on five continents.

The Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) is a charitable institution with 501©3 status in the United States. Contributions support our Mission in a variety of ministries across the world.

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# GoodWorks

Worldwide

## SNDdeN Mission

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, women with hearts as wide as the world, make known God's goodness and love of the poor through a Gospel way of life, community and prayer.

Continuing a strong educational tradition, we take our stand with poor people, especially women and children, in the most abandoned places.

Each of us commits her one and only life to work with others to create justice and peace for all.



### Africa

Democratic  
Republic of Congo  
Congo Brazzaville  
Kenya

Nigeria

South Africa

Zimbabwe

### Asia

Japan

### Europe

Belgium

France

Italy

United Kingdom

### Latin America

Brazil

Mexico

Nicaragua

Peru

### North America

Haiti

United States  
(29 states and the  
District of Columbia)



[www.sndden.org](http://www.sndden.org)

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