



SND USA VOCATIONS

*Embracing Our Shared
Future*

Summer 2016



SND Spirituality Retreat



Introducing our Retreatants

The ten participants of our first SND Spirituality Retreat came from six states: California, Florida, Indiana, Ohio, Virginia, and Wisconsin. They ranged in age from 29 - 49 and in interest from "convent curious" to "how to formally discern with this community?" Some participants work in the public sector while others work in various forms of Church ministry. Some retreatants were single; others had been married, and one was a young widow. They each came because either a Sister or a fellow retreatant saw in them the capacity and openness for religious life and then personally invited them.

Please hold these ten women in prayer as they sift through all that God awakened in their hearts that weekend. ♦

~ Sister Teresita Richards





SND Vocation Retreat Team

The Joys and Blessings of Inter-Province Retreat Coordination



Our *SND Spirituality Retreat* that was held June 9-12, 2016 in Covington, KY was the first time Vocation Directors from across the four provinces facilitated a retreat together. What a grace filled experience this was for all of us! We all agreed that this is the beginning of many more joint retreats. Through Skype calls, conference calls, and emails over the course of a year, the various components of the retreat all came together.

The retreat included:

- What is Spirituality?
- A reflection on the US Bishops' document *Called and Gifted*
- Active Apostolic Spirituality
- Contemplation in Action
- Founding stories of St. Julie and Coesfeld
- Conversations on Prayer, Community, Eucharist and

Openness to the Spirit

- Mary
- Julie and the Cross
- Coesfeld and the Cross
- Intimacy with God
- Guided prayer experiences
- Small and large group sharing times

No one province could have hosted the retreat and have had ten women from six states participate.

The retreatants remarked how they enjoyed seeing the sisters interact with one another. I personally felt so inspired by my co-sisters contributions to the weekend. We are all very different and brought our own unique gifts to the retreat, but we were truly united in one heart, one hope, and one mission. I am looking forward to our next cross province retreat together! ♦

~Sister Val Roxburgh

SND Spirituality Renewal in Germany Served as Impetus for this Retreat

In 2013 nine sisters from the four American provinces participated in the SND Spirituality Renewal in Coesfeld, Germany. For three weeks the participants were given the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the spiritual, cultural and historical factors that inspired our first Coesfeld sisters and St. Julie Billiart to respond wholeheartedly in giving their lives to a good and provident God.

An example of a deeper understanding would be a new perspective on devotion to the Sacred Heart. Traditionally as a community, we have embraced St. Margaret Mary's devotion of reparation to the heart of Jesus. However, for our Coesfeld sisters, the heart of Jesus, accessible through the wounded side of Christ, which is depicted in the Coesfeld cross, was a place of refuge in suffering and intimacy with God. That approach dates back to the time of the Rhineland mystics and the Black Plague.

Last fall the SND vocation directors from the four provinces decided it was time to offer an SND spirituality retreat. With new insights gleaned from the SND Spirituality Renewal, the six vocation directors were able to present a well-rounded introduction to SND spirituality and invite the ten women who participated in the retreat to consider how SND spirituality might help guide their busy lives. Sisters Mayra and Nicole added much to the conversation as they begin their journey with the community. And by the end of the retreat, everyone had something life-giving to take with her.

And for the future, imagine "making visible God's goodness and provident care" being quoted with Ignatius' "contemplation in action!" ♦

~Sister Kate Hine





Responses from the Retreatants

The “joy” that permeated this grace-filled experience of sharing SND Spirituality was evident in the feedback received from the retreatants about the presentations and group facilitation. Here are some of the highlights from their evaluations:

“Loved them All!”

“Fantastic!”

“Outside of the presentations themselves, I loved the camaraderie between the presenters. It was a beautiful lesson and example of friendship and family.”

“The presenters were great! I am a visual learner so I always appreciate PowerPoints to help solidify the information.”

“All were amazing. The sisters’ testimonies were nice to hear because each one is very different from each other.”

“Loved the spirituality talks on the Spiritual Life of St. Julie and also loved to hear about the history of SND.”

Many beautiful comments, reflections, and conversations were held throughout the weekend between the directors and the retreatants. God’s grace, the spirit of St. Julie, Sr. Aloysia, and the first Coesfeld community were so present in this entire experience. The grace of God working in and through everyone present and the bond of love through which this community effort and collaboration came together as one force was the beautiful expression of “joy” the retreatants kept naming! What gift and blessing from our Good God!♦

~Sister Kelley Rush

More Responses

“Sr. Teresita is a great presenter, very engaging and used PowerPoints well. All speakers were very good.”

“Loved Sr. Kelley’s talks. PowerPoints worked. Also, hand-outs are good since all materials were so good.”

“The Sacred Heart meditations were beautiful.”

“I like Sr. Jen’s questions. I liked how we were able to be guided by the Spirit in who to group with.”

“Loved how you switched up the groups and divided it up evenly with different variety.”

“Loved the idea of splitting up with others in the same phase of discernment.”



Community Response to Spirituality Retreat

What a great joy for the sisters of the Covington Provincial Center to have the retreatants and vocation directors in the house from June 9 – 12! The sisters were impressed with the women’s friendliness and openness, especially when they interacted during meals. As one sister put it, “It felt like they were part of our community.” Another sister said, “They mixed with us here at meals, and the communication, kindness, and interest were amazing.” The sisters could see God shining through the women; the Spirit was definitely a part of the gathering. Another sister commented that she was “happy to have the women here pursuing the Lord and to be able to be a part of it!” One sister shared she felt ten years younger with the warmth and enthusiasm the retreatants brought to the house. On Friday evening after supper in preparing for the Community Jubilee celebration, the retreatants “pitched in and helped wherever needed.” From yet another sister we heard, “From my perspective this was a very fruitful exchange for all involved. The lively and substantial table conversations that I had with several of them were enriching.”



A sister’s relative who was visiting for the weekend encountered one of the young women who shared with the visitor, “I didn’t know what to expect when I came here, but I didn’t expect to love (the sisters) so much, so fast.” The sisters in turn have come to love these ten women! ♦

~Sister Ruth Lubbers



Since the time of the SND Spirituality Retreat, Sister Mary Paul Zembrodt, pictured here, has gone home to God. Sister’s 101 years of wisdom and love had a positive impact on the women.



Extending the Invitation

As one of the newer Sisters of Notre Dame, with experience in leading retreats, I was invited to join the US Vocation Directors in helping to lead the SND Spirituality retreat in Covington, KY. I was happy to be able to say yes and for weeks, I looked forward to meeting the retreatants and spending time with my fellow Sisters of Notre Dame in Kentucky.

When I met the ten women attending the retreat, I was wonderfully surprised to find out that they were from six states! The women attended the retreat for many different reasons, however, they all shared one thing in common...they were all *invited* to attend the retreat, by a Sister or a lay person!



Have you ever
considered
Religious Life?

SND USA Vocation
Ministers:

Sister Kate Hine

Sister Ruth Lubbers

Sister Teresita Richards

Sister Val Roxburgh

Sister Kelley Rush

Sister Jen Zimmerman

A December 2015 article titled, "Understanding U.S. Catholic Sisters Today," discusses the history of vocational invitations. The article says that in the past, in regards to how to invite women to consider religious life, "sisters were compelled to tiptoe around the question," often using passive language. The article goes on to say, that today, while, "the call may indeed come first of all from God...it is the faithful who often create the conditions that will enable more women to answer it." This is giving us permission to move past the passive language of invitation and to be BOLD when we meet those interested in religious life or in our spirituality. Article 89 of the SND Constitutions reminds each and every Sister that, "we...share the duty and privilege of promoting vocations in the Church and to our congregation." The time is now! We each have an SND Constitutional "duty and responsibility" to boldly invite young women to join us for retreats, events, simple dinners and to consider the option of religious life.

Because of these bold invitations, ten women joined us for an amazing four-day retreat on our beloved SND Spirituality. Who are the next ten waiting for YOUR invitation? I can't wait to meet them!! ♦

~Sister Jen Zimmerman