



UNITED IN MISSION

JUNE 2010

VOLUME 9



A MESSAGE FROM JUDITH SCHAUM, SSND, DIRECTOR OF MISSION EFFECTIVENESS

Dear Colleagues,

Recently we celebrated the solemn feast of Pentecost. Imbued with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles not

only embraced the message and way of life of Jesus, but they were impelled to announce this good news to people of all nationalities. May each of you experience many Pentecost moments that will open you more widely to the gifts of the Spirit, and energize you in your ministry to our sponsored organizations.

In January of this year we welcomed Ms. Ana Cruz, the new executive director for SisterHouse in Chicago. In July we will welcome two more new directors: S. Evelyn Breslin (Notre Dame Learning Center, Rochester) and S. Peg Regan (Caroline House in Bridgeport). Join me in wishing them abundant blessings in their new ministries. Let us also thank Sisters Shannon Scallon, Lorraine Burns and Ann Moles for their dedication and passion for educating women and children to reach their fullest potential.

We continue in this newsletter to share what the School Sisters are doing in other countries. This edition features Guam and Japan, and it is truly awesome to learn about the pioneers to these two places. I believe that same spirit of trusting and daring is present in each of you. Thank you.
Sincerely,

Judith Schaum, SSND

Judith Schaum, SSND
Director of Mission Effectiveness
410-377-7774 Ext. 1107
jschaum@amssnd.org

THE ISLAND OF GUAM



G U A M

Situated in the western Pacific Ocean, the island of Guam is the largest of the Mariana Islands. As an unincorporated territory of the United States, housing a large naval base, Guam is only 209 square miles and has a population of 105,800.

SSNDs IN GUAM

In 1949, the Bishop of Guam wrote to Mother Fidelis Krieter in Milwaukee and asked for School Sisters of Notre Dame to minister on the island by educating children. In the spirit of Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, Mother Fidelis sent seven willing and excited sisters to the city of Yona on the central east coast of Guam. There, with the help of the people and clergy, they established St. Francis School. The sisters arrived Aug. 16 and opened the school



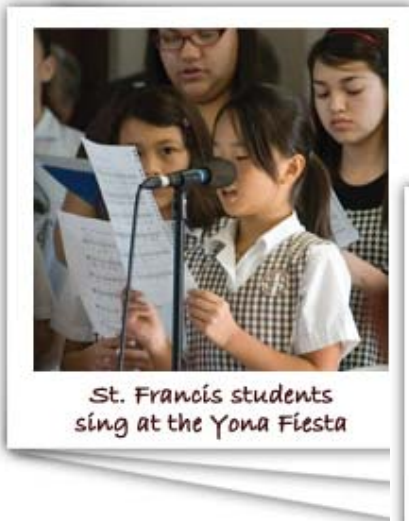
Courtesy: St. Francis School

(Continued on page 2)

SSNDs IN GUAM (CONTINUED)

Sept. 12, teaching in Quonset huts until a school could be built. Two shifts had to be established in order to accommodate the 301 students who were enrolled, and this number increased every year.

By 1958, the school had grown so rapidly that a new and larger building had to be erected and 20 more School Sisters arrived to staff the school. It was the kindness and generosity of the people that made this building possible. Unfortunately, only 40 years after this new building was completed, Typhoon Paca devastated the island and destroyed the school except for the administration building. The teachers and students returned to the 1949 building. In due time another

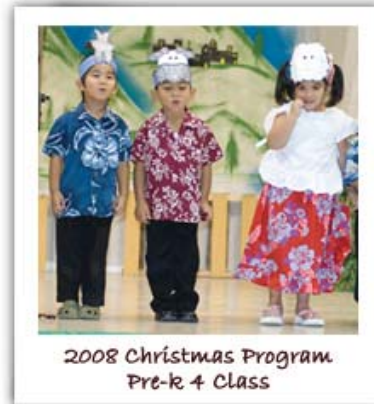


St. Francis students
sing at the Yona Fiesta

Courtesy: St. Francis School

new building was erected and St. Francis School continues to further the mission and charism of Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger.

Gradually the Sisters broadened their teaching field and, at the request of the local Bishop, taught religious education and music in other villages. In 1955, they opened the second school at the San Vicente parish in Barrigada, and two years later, Mount Carmel School was opened in Agat. Although there are fewer than 20 Sisters in Guam, the SSND influence continues to have an impact, not only



2008 Christmas Program
Pre-K 4 Class

in the above mentioned schools but also in Notre Dame High School and the Neumann Center for the University of Guam.

J A P A N

Consider the year 1948, just six years after Pearl Harbor and three years after the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. The Catholic Church in Japan has invited School Sisters of Notre Dame to open a secondary school for girls. Church leadership desired to provide a quality education for girls who could then help rebuild society. How could SSND refuse this call when it was so similar to Blessed Theresa's reason for beginning the Congregation in 1833?

The coalition government of Japan granted permission for the Sisters to come, provided they bring everything they need to open a convent and school. Four School Sisters responded to this call and through the generosity of many people, they collected the necessary goods and money needed for this mission. Although the religion, culture, language and social systems were completely foreign to the Sisters, they were eager to answer the call because of their sincere desire for reconciliation between the United States and Japan.

LEARNING JAPANESE

Upon arriving, the Sisters began to learn the Japanese language and culture, while planning to build Notre Dame Secondary School. It opened in 1952. Two years later Notre Dame Elementary



(Continued on page 3)



S. Rosemary Dougherty visiting a classroom in Japan

School began and in 1961 Kyoto Notre Dame University was founded. Today there are 3,500 students from elementary school to graduate school being educated in the SSND tradition.

In 1983, the region of Japan opened its own mission in the mountains of Nepal. Currently there are four School Sisters ministering at Notre Dame School, where 600 girls and boys are attending classes in grades kindergarten through junior college.

MEETING THE NEEDS IN JAPAN

While additional School Sisters from the States went to Japan to staff these institutions, young native women felt called to religious life and entered the Congregation. Only two months after the Sisters’

arrival, Gemma Kaifuku (Sister Mary Catherine) entered and became the first Japanese woman to profess her vows as an SSND. Other women did the same.

In 2010, there are 70 Japanese Sisters, 2 American Sisters and 1 Korean Sister who minister in either Japan or Nepal in education, parish work



and in their house of prayer on the lake. True to Mother Theresa’s vision and spirit, they respond to needs and plant the seeds of unity.