

UNITED IN MISSION

ATLANTIC-MIDWEST PROVINCE

Transforming the world through education

March 2021

The Gold Lacquer of Hope: What Mends Heartbreak



Last year, we explored the depths of mission leadership, from our sponsored and co-sponsored ministries. How have you grown over the year since the pandemic? As Pope Francis [mentioned](#), we either come out of the pandemic better or worse. We journey this Lent with heartbreak, but we look towards the light of hope, as expressed by the psalmist:

“The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem, and gathers the dispersed people of Israel, healing the brokenhearted, and binding up their wounds.”

(Psalm 147: 2-3)

The light of hope can mend and strengthen our brokenness, much like the Japanese restorative art, kintsugi (see picture below). Kintsugi involves restoring ceramics that have cracked with gold lacquer. The ceramic piece is fully restored, with its cracks still visible. Kintsugi does not hide the blemishes that were initially there. The restoration brings forth a certain newness – the once fractured piece now a beautiful piece of art.

Reflecting on our heartbreak, we look at how hope restores brokenness. Hope is the golden lacquer that mends our heartbreak, which does not hide the

brokenness of our experiences, rather gives meaning to them. David Whyte in his book *Consolations: The Solace, Nourishment, and Underlying Meaning of Everyday Words* writes this about heartbreak, that it “may be the very essence of being human, of being on the journey from here to there, and of course to care deeply for what we hope to find along the way.” All of us have experienced heartbreak during this pandemic. What broke your heart?

As you go through this newsletter, look at the heartbreak that the leaders, faculty and students from our ministries experienced and how hope moved them to a new horizon. Ministry Services holds with the Atlantic-Midwest Province the heartbreak of the recent passing of Sister Grace D'Amico, former Coordinator of Board Development. We thank those who kindly submitted a story to be featured in this March issue of United in Mission. We wish you a blessed journey from Lent to Easter!

In Solidarity,



Patrick Laorden
Associate Director
Ministry Services



Yvonne DeBruin
Director
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Photo by Haragayato

In Memory of Sister Grace D'Amico, SSND

December 2, 1945 - February 27, 2021



“In the depths of every heart, love creates bonds and expands existence, for it draws people out of themselves and towards others.”

- Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (no. 88)



Notre Dame of Maryland University - Baltimore, MD

*Sr. Mary Fitzgerald, SSND, ThD
Associate Professor*

In a beautiful [prayer](#), attributed to Jesuit Father Pedro Arrupe, we read, “Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. ... It will decide... what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.” The past twelve months have certainly provided us with

events to break our hearts. We felt the tremendous shock of the unjust killing of George Floyd, as local communities across the nation took to the streets, giving voice through peaceful protests. We watched in horror as a mob of lawless, violent rioters stormed and destroyed our nation’s capitol and threatened our whole democratic system. We have watched helplessly as family, friends, and colleagues have suffered

with and perhaps even died of COVID-19.

At Notre Dame of Maryland University, we have watched with bated breath as government regulations were designed to remove all protections from DACA children. These things all broke our hearts. We, women and men of faith, know that “action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel...” (1971 Roman Synod of Bishops, *Justitia in Mundo*, no. 6). Taking part in peaceful protests, sharing our pain and faith in discussion groups, writing to political figures were all elements of healing our souls.

Heartbreak becomes hope when we remember to join ourselves with our sisters and brothers in the healing process. Our newly elected president has called us to unity and called us to love one another. What a breath of fresh air! We remember Pedro Arrupe’s words, “Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.”



Notre Dame Preparatory School - Baltimore, MD

Faculty and Students

Notre Dame Preparatory (NDP) has been educating young women for nearly 150 years, an expanse of time that saw our nation recover from civil war, endure economic depression, two world wars and countless national tragedies. For those students, teachers and staff members who currently count themselves members of the NDP community, events of the past twelve months will live indelibly in their minds and will serve to remind them of the power of resiliency, faith and unity.

Pandemic

"This experience has forced me to dig deep and draw

upon my faith that God can use any situation for good purposes." *Ms. Susie Cahill, Science Teacher*

"It was challenging at the beginning, but I have learned the value of an open mind, optimism, and innovation." *Anna Seal '21*

"The pandemic has changed how I study, work and learn...I definitely prefer to come to school...it brings some sense of normalcy to my life." *Tricia Kohler '24*

"I love coming to campus because I get to experience those tiny irreplaceable moments... that you can't have on Zoom." *Ryland Sachs '22*

Racial Injustice

"As a teacher, I knew I had to create safe space in our class for conversations about racism...our faith calls us...to explore the racism around us and within us." *Libby Keady, Campus Minister*

"...The events allowed for a release of pain, frustration, and anger through discussion and activism." *Lauren Dana, Humanities Teacher*

"It was the willpower, the anger, the passion, and the pain of every protestor-of every race-that did it for me. It was the unified stand that led to the physical and spiritual awakening of people on a global scale." *Taylor Leonard '21*

"There was a difference in the way America, specifically minorities, responded to the issues...it was an ongoing, still is an ongoing, demand for equality..." *Alannah Moore-Boyd '23*

Like all families, NDP faced adversity by turning to God and each other and emerged from 2020 stronger and more united.



NDP students resume in class learning, observing the COVID-19 guidelines.

Annual Leadership Meeting 2021

The first virtual Annual Leadership Meeting was held on Friday, February 26th. The opening prayer, led by Ministry Services, featured a Visio Divina of the "The Boat Church" by Julia Stankova. Sister Charmaine Krohe, Provincial Leader, introduced the topic by highlighting key sections from

last year's keynote by General Superior, Sister Roxanne Shares, SSND, which this year's theme flowed from. Diane Artis, EdD of Olive Branch Educators, delivered the keynote, "Mission Leadership in Challenging Times, Take Two: Strategies of Self-Care."

Diane engaged participants on sources of burnout during the pandemic and invited them to reflect on where they find themselves on the journey of self-care. Leaders shared moments of hope in their respective ministries and the Provincial Council offered province updates. The

afternoon concluded with a powerful prayer of anointing of all attendees by Sister Sharon Kanis. This event, too, was a story of journeying from heartbreak to hope - or to say it in the words of Pope Francis - we came out better from the pandemic.



UPCOMING EVENTS

**Journey to the Heart:
Falling in Love with Earth**
April 22, 2021 3:00 - 4:00pm (ET)
Zoom ([see flyer](#))

Claiming the Fire Within
June 27-30, 2021
Malvern, PA - Virtual/Onsite (TBD)

Proclaiming the Fire Within
June 22-24, 2021
Malvern, PA - Virtual/Onsite (TBD)
*Pre-Requisite: Claiming the Fire Within

Ministry Formation Session III
October 22-23, 2021
Virtual/Onsite (TBD)



RESOURCES

Resources for Minstry Boards
[Resources on Catholic Teaching](#)

Heritage Resources
[SSND Heritage/Life & Leadership of Blessed Theresa](#)
[SSND Educational Vision/Life & Leadership of Mother Caroline](#)

Resources for Faculty
[AMSSND Values for Ministry](#)

Other Resources
[Integral Ecology - Lent 2021 \(AMSSND\)](#)
[The Healing Potential of the Nonprofit Sector \(BoardSource\)](#)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Whatever brokenness you carry this Lent, can you visualize how hope can mend that brokenness, as seen in kintsugi?
- How has the SSND mission deepened your consciousness to social inequities, revealed by the pandemic?



“May the Lord Jesus pour into your hearts comfort, peace, and joy, as he once did for the holy women who wept for him on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and for the disciples who went to Emmaus. This is our Easter greeting and wish for you.”

- Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, (3537)

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