

That all may know the Savior



# SISTERS OF THE DIVINE SAVIOR

SPRING 2016

## Salvatorian News

*focus*



Dear Friends,

About the time this Salvatorian News lands in your mailbox, I'll have landed on U.S. soil after three weeks in Medellin, Colombia. Gathering in South America with our international leaders from Rome and Salvatorian Sisters' Unit leaders from around the world created a colorful snapshot of our universality. And, a new opportunity to review our life work and ask, "Where does God want us to be, and what does God want us to do?"

A similar encounter some years ago sparked our Professional Education Initiative to support our Salvatorian Sisters in Africa. Our Page 1 story shares how this ongoing initiative has gained momentum, thanks to our English as a Second Language program now beginning its eighth year. You'll read how advancing education opens doors for our African sisters and ultimately enriches their ministries to their people.

For Salvatorian Sisters, a Jubilee year brings together family and friends much like a milestone wedding anniversary. We look forward to celebrating with our 2016 Jubilarians later this year. You can read about their lives of service on Page 3.

As we move through this Lenten season, please keep us in your prayers. We will do the same for you.

Blessings in the Savior,

*Sr. Beverly Heitke, S.D.S.*

Sr. Beverly Heitke, SDS  
Provincial Leader

## Opening doors for Salvatorian Sisters in Africa



Sr. Jenada Fanetti, SDS will return to Tanzania in May 2016 to teach English as a Second Language to Salvatorian Sisters there. She taught the class in summer 2010.

*My father was a fisherman and my mother was caring for our family. My father died in 1993 due to malaria. I completed primary school in 1994 so it was difficult for me to go to secondary school due to the death of my father. I decided to help my mom at home.*

The realities of life shared above by Salvatorian Sister Dorothea James, SDS help us to understand the faltering path of education for many young women in Africa. Sr. Dorothea entered the convent in 2001 and made final vows in 2012. Today, she is a "form three" student at a secondary school in Tanzania – equivalent to a high school junior in the U.S.

Secondary school and even more importantly, professional education is a high priority for our sisters in Africa. At the request of SDS international leadership in Rome, our North American Province is supporting that priority. This professional education initiative is vital for Salvatorian Sisters to improve quality of life for their local people. On-the-job training they received in the past is no longer enough. For example, advanced medical training enables the sisters to teach villagers pre- and post-natal care, how to treat malaria, and how to prevent disease. Professional education also equips the sisters to train people in important life skills to become more self-sufficient.

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# Legacy gift is part of God's plan

Rae D. believes connecting with the Sisters of the Divine Savior was divine providence, much as her life has been. In fall 2010, she and her husband Gary G. attended a religious conference where they heard about Salvatorian Sister Jean Schafer's Stop Trafficking Newsletter. After contacting Sr. Jean, the Florida couple made a decision to support the Salvatorian Sisters' ministry to combat human trafficking and assist survivors of this modern-day form of slavery.

Rae explains their passion for the cause, saying, "Individuals living in bondage, with no name, no rights, and no means of escaping is devastating to me. The work that SDS has done and continues to do in this area has been tremendous. We wanted to support their efforts."

That plan didn't change when Gary passed away last year. Rae shares honestly how her faith has carried her through the loss of her husband and her mother a year earlier.

"It is always good to place your suffering in perspective with the crosses others carry. Looking at the crosses of human trafficking

victims really places things in perspective. I always say, 'God has a plan and it is a perfect plan.' If you keep focused on the fact that you are called to walk the will of God, there is a grace that is given to you to continue on your path, whatever it may be."

Rae says personally and in their profession as pharmacists, she and Gary found strength in each other, and helped each other make the best decisions for their family. One of those decisions was to leave the majority of their estate to charity. Rae says, "It made perfect sense that we would leave the monies to what was near and dear to our hearts; to help those most vulnerable in society – human trafficking victims." ☩



Through faith, trust, discernment and love, Rae D. and Gary G. felt called to help those who could not help themselves.

*Including Sisters of the Divine Savior in your will leaves a legacy of love and generosity.*

Sharing your plans with us in advance gives us the opportunity to recognize your generosity by welcoming you to our Apostolic Circle. As a member of the SDS Apostolic Circle, you join others who share your values in leaving a legacy for the future of service to God's people. If you prefer to remain anonymous, we will honor your wish.

For information on planned giving, contact Lori Land at 414-466-7414 or [landl@salvatoriansisters.org](mailto:landl@salvatoriansisters.org) ☩



## You wrap our retired sisters in your love

Your generous response to our 2015 Christmas appeal will help us ensure dignity and joyful lives for our sisters who are aging in wisdom and grace. Your donations to the Salvatorian Sisters Retirement Fund are a meaningful way to honor these sisters for their many years of service in our Savior's name.

We are especially grateful to first-time donors who raised the total number of year-end gifts compared to 2014, and to longtime friends who increased their donations from last year. Each and every gift – no matter the amount – strengthens the foundation for our mission. Your generosity and genuine trust in our stewardship are true blessings not only for our retired sisters, but for our entire congregation. We ask God to bless you in return as we hold you in our prayers. ☩

**Left:** Sr. Alice Gindt, SDS (formerly Sr. Herman Joseph)

## Tax benefit of IRA gifts is a sure thing

The tax benefit of giving to the Sisters of the Divine Savior through your IRA is now permanent law. On December 18, 2015, Congress passed and the President signed the IRA Charitable Rollover originally set up under the Pension Protection Act. It allows individuals who have reached age 70½ to donate up to \$100,000 to charitable organizations such as SDS directly from an IRA, without treating the distribution as taxable income. The provision first enacted in 2006 was extended several times and is now permanent.

If you have questions on transferring your IRA gift to SDS please contact Lori Land at 414-466-7414 or [landl@salvatoriansisters.org](mailto:landl@salvatoriansisters.org) ☩

### SDS Mission Advancement Office

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# Jubilee celebrations in the Jubilee Year of Mercy

60 years

*"Whatever it takes"  
is her ministry*

Sister Dora Zapf, SDS has slowed her pace since retiring last June, but slowing down is a relative thing. For 42 years, Sr. Dora sifted through mounds of donations at Salvatorian Mission Warehouse in New Holstein, Wis. She helped sort and pack donated goods to ship to missions all over the world. When the warehouse opened, Sr. Dora was on the receiving end in Tanzania, East Africa. Back then, she unpacked clothing, medical supplies, foodstuffs and toiletries for delivery to sites with the greatest need. In 1973, Sr. Dora came to the U.S. to serve at the warehouse.



Sr. Dora was born in Germany and completed her Salvatorian formation there. After four years in England to learn English, she went to Tanzania where English-speaking Salvatorian Sisters ran a primary school. Sr. Dora served as a housemother for boarding students, and shopped for electrical parts and other supplies for missions in the rural southern region. She also taught Tanzanian girls sewing, first aid and other domestic skills, and coordinated the kitchen and workers at the Nandembo mission. From 12 years serving in Africa, Sr. Dora understands the great need Salvatorian Mission Warehouse helps to fill. Today, Sr. Dora remains in New Holstein and offers pastoral care to people who are homebound or living in assisted or nursing care facilities.

60 years

*She helps others to  
find God's footprints*

Stairs leading to the office of Sister Pat Kieler, SDS are well worn. Lay persons, married and single, clergy and religious have been climbing them for many years seeking spiritual direction. Sr. Pat explains, "Individuals already have a spiritual direction, which I seek to support.



Faith in a living God is often absent in our culture, yet there is a great hunger for God. It is a great privilege to reverently hold the story of another. I encourage others to discover God's footprints in their lives, find healing, stay close to their inner fire, and be light for the world."

Thirty-five years ago Sisters of the Divine Savior leadership invited Sr. Pat to create her spiritual direction ministry. It has included giving directed retreats and guided retreats on contemplative prayer for retreat houses and religious communities in Wisconsin and Illinois. Her international experience includes a retreat for Salvatorian men and women in Taiwan. Earlier, she taught 15 years at Divine Savior High School in Milwaukee and did vocation ministry for three years.

Since 1960, Sr. Pat's complementary ministry has been directing the SDS choir and coordinating liturgies for special Salvatorian events such as jubilees, professions and funerals. "I love this ministry for the way it enhances our praying together from the deepest places of our Salvatorian calling."

65 years

*School children  
kept her young*

Sister Jane Barman, SDS (Sr. Jane Frances) once said, "You don't retire when you come to St. Nazianz." She was right. She cherishes her 24 years in the tight-knit Wisconsin village steeped in Salvatorian history. In early years, she cared for aged Salvatorian Sisters. Before departing St. Nazianz last year, Sr. Jane drove 38 miles each week for Meals on Wheels, and tutored kindergarten through second graders at St. Gregory School. She says teaching little ones to tie their shoes and recite the alphabet kept her young.



Perhaps Salvatorian Sisters said the same about Sr. Jane when she attended St. Joseph's School in East Bristol, Wis. She graduated from eighth grade amid World War II, but didn't begin high school until entering the convent. Sr. Jane earned a degree from Milwaukee's Mount Mary College, and served 38 years in education. She taught five years at Divine Savior High School and served four years as principal at Mother of Good Counsel, both in Milwaukee. Her longest teaching assignment was 22 years at Holy Name School in Wausau, Wis.

Sr. Jane once joked about early retirement to make time for all her hobbies that include gardening, bird watching, sewing and candle making. She has always managed to wrap them around her ministries.

75 years

*Her golden years glow  
in service to others*

When Sister Rita Faust, SDS (Sr. Frederick) departed St. Nazianz, Wis. in 2015, she left behind a community she loved and ministries that fulfilled her long past typical retirement age. She moved to St. Nazianz in 1997 after retiring from full-time ministry, and before long was volunteering with Meals on Wheels and at St. Gregory Church and parish school.



Sr. Rita acquired her work ethic as sixth of 14 children raised on a farm in Elkhart Lake, Wis. She attended high school at Sisters of the Divine Savior convent, and earned a degree from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee. Sr. Rita taught first through eighth grades. For many years at schools in Bloomer and Rothschild, Wis., and Huntsville, Ala., she served as principal while also teaching. In 1973 she shifted to parish religious education, including sacrament preparation.

In 1983 Sr. Rita moved to Sisseton, S.D., where she served as director of pastoral care in a nursing home and visited elders in the community. She came well prepared to coordinate care for elder Salvatorian Sisters upon returning to Milwaukee in 1991. Now at age 91, Sr. Rita is an elder, but since moving to Portage, Wis. last summer, she's already found new ways to continue serving in our Savior's name. ☩

# Opening doors continued from page 1

In Africa, most secondary and all university classes are taught in English. Many of our African sisters enter the convent with poor English skills due to lack of books and other classroom essentials in the primary grades. Low confidence in using English is a major barrier to the sisters advancing their studies in social work, health care and teaching. Our English as a Second Language (ESL) program has been breaking down that barrier since 2009.

Salvatorian Sisters travel from the U.S. to Tanzania each summer to provide an English language immersion experience. The language immersion is intense: 73.5 hours of instruction over three weeks. (To compare, a three-credit university course in the U.S. typically meets 45 hours over 12 weeks.) From the start, the African sisters are encouraged to use English they learn in class beyond the classroom, including during meals and at prayer. After the three-week session ends, they keep their ESL learning materials to continue building their confidence.

Sister Beverly Heitke, SDS, North American Provincial Leader, says we are committed to the ESL program at least through 2018. She emphasizes its broader impact saying, “The ESL program lays a firm foundation to raise the level of education for our sisters in Africa.”

In 2013, French-speaking sisters from the Democratic Republic of Congo began traveling to Tanzania to learn English too. Sister Laurence Kibambe Kutshina, SDS is one of them. She is a nurse in an orphanage, one of three sisters caring for 89 babies. Using her newfound English skills, Sr. Laurence shares her story:

*I was born in Lubumbashi in the Congo. There are eight children in my family. . . I am fourth born. I entered the Salvatorians in 2000. . . The congregation sent me to work at the hospital. I worked as a receptionist for three years.*

*I also began working with the doctors in the operating room. The doctor noticed that I had a talent for medical work and recommended me to go to nursing school . . .*

*I graduated with my nursing degree in 2011.*

The ESL program has also strengthened collaboration between our Tanzanian and Congolese regions. Since participating in the summer classes, our Congolese sisters have opened a mission in



Language isn't the only barrier to our African sisters advancing their education. They lack a lot of things we take for granted in the U.S. Back in 2009, Sr. Jane Eschweiler, SDS adapted to an electrical outage to keep her ESL lesson on track.

English-speaking Zambia. The new mission is a testament to the promise professional education offers Salvatorian Sisters in Africa to strengthen their ministries.

Sister Astrid Kateni, SDS, also from the DR Congo, used her final ESL class assignment to express her feelings about the program:

*I entered the Salvatorian Congregation in 1995. . . and took my final vows in 2004. In the same year, I started at Lubumbashi University and earned my diploma as a financial administrator. . . In these times English has become an important language throughout the world and most importantly throughout our congregation. Before coming here, I had many difficulties to understand English well. . . I feel much gratitude to the United States region for their collaboration with us. May God bless them.*

Sister Marion Etzel, SDS served as North American Provincial when our province began the ESL program in 2009. She has witnessed its cumulative impact over the last three years from her position as general secretary on the international leadership team. Sr. Marion says, “Thanks to creativity of the teachers, our African sisters have grown confident in reading, writing, speaking and problem-solving in English. These classes open up a new world to them, and instill confidence needed to become our future leaders.” ☪

**Far left:** Sr. Laurence Kibambe Kutshina, SDS earned her diploma for teaching before entering the convent in 2000. She returned to school in 2008 and graduated with a nursing degree.

**Left:** Sr. Dorothea James, SDS is completing her secondary education, which she delayed due to her father's death. Her favorite subjects are English, biology, history and math.

