

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Sister Patricia Flynn, SSND
General Superior

Circular 68/9
Rome, Italy
July 31, 1996

Arrival of Blessed Theresa and missionaries
On the North American Continent (July 31, 1847)

School Sisters of Notre Dame
Dear Sisters,

Participants in the Eighth African Assembly held at the generalate June 2-6, 1996, thank you for your prayerful support during this time of discernment. This unique gathering of School Sisters had one particular focus – to discern the future governance structure of Africa. Members of this assembly included all of the School Sisters of Notre Dame who live and minister on the continent of Africa as well as those going to Africa in the near future. There were the 14 indigenous sisters from the countries of Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Sierra Leone and 51 expatriates from all of the North American provinces and the provinces of Bavaria and Poland. Also present as participants were the eight members of the general council and the ten provincial leaders and/or their representatives who have personnel serving in Africa.

As a result of these five days of discernment the assembly reached a consensus decision on a transitional model for the governance structure for Africa as it was not yet the time for it to be a province. Details concerning membership, modes of participation by all the sisters, leadership, responsibility/accountability were described in this governance model which was presented to the assembly for their decision and then to the general council for its approval.

The members of the general council, taking time for reflection, prayer and dialogue during the assembly itself, affirmed the decision made by the assembly. We announce that

The School Sisters of Notre Dame from the mission extensions of Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Sierra Leone will become the DISTRICT OF AFRICA.

At the request of the provincial council and the provincial assembly of Poland, the general council agreed that The Gambia would remain a mission extension of the province of Poland at this time. The members of the assembly accepted the decision as part of the transitional model.

As called for in YOU ARE SENT, this new district government will be based on the vital participation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Africa and on the ministry of authority. A district leader will be appointed by the general superior, the provincial and regional leaders of North America and the provincial leader of Poland (PONA) and will be responsible and accountable to them through one of their members. Many of the rights and responsibilities of the provincial leaders of the respective mission extensions will be delegated to her. This leader will work with an area leader elected in each country and, together, they will form the district council. The sisters who are members of the District of Africa also retain their membership in their own province until Africa becomes a province. This new structure is scheduled to be in place by February 1, 1997. This new entity in our congregation is one more reason to make 1997 a year of celebration.

The REPORT of July 1996 from the Communications Office of the general council contains a day-to-day account of both the content and feelings of this significant gathering of School Sisters.

In the name of the general council I express deep gratitude to Sister Mary Kerber, interim coordinator of the restructuring process in Africa and chairperson of the assembly who, together with those who helped to plan it, enabled the African Assembly to live out its theme:

United in Christ's Love
Rooted in Our Charism
Flowering in African Soil
May we bear fruit for the Kingdom of God!

Let this continue to be our prayer for the new DISTRICT OF AFRICA.

In Notre Dame,

Sister Patricia Flynn, SSND
General Superior