

**Together In Mission  
Associates  
And  
School Sisters of Notre Dame  
North American Major Area Guidelines, 2001**

The Associate Relationship

Associates are women or men over 21 years of age who are called to live Gospel values in the spirit and vision of Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, within their own lifestyle. Through this special relationship, associates and sisters together, continue Christ's mission, respond to the changing needs of the Church, and strive to live the charism, values, and ideals as seen in Blessed Theresa's:

- desire for union with God by doing God's will
- longing for oneness of all in God
- love of Eucharist
- devotion to Mary, Mother of Jesus
- spirit of prayer and sacrifice
- love for and commitment to those in need, especially youth, women, and persons who are poor
- empowering others to reach the fullness of their potential

Through a mutual sharing of spirituality and charism, associates and sisters enrich and challenge one another to share their gifts, prayer, and a commitment to risk in faith as people of peace, hope, justice, and love.

As Christians, the School Sisters of Notre Dame affirm and foster reverence for all the world's great religious traditions. For this reason, SSNDs welcome as associates persons of any faith tradition whose spirit is in harmony with our charism.

The Covenant

The covenant relationship between an associate and the congregation reflects unity and diversity to further the mission of Jesus Christ in the spirit of Blessed Theresa. The initial covenant is for one year.

The SSND Associate promises to live the charism of SSND through

- deepening personal and communal prayer,
- participating in appropriate congregational activities, and
- striving to live the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and extending that spirit into service for God's people

The School Sisters of Notre Dame promise to share with the associate our

- heritage
- spirituality,
- mission and ministry, and
- lived experiences

Together, in the light of the Gospel and in the spirit and vision of Blessed Theresa, we are called

- to bring all to oneness in God
- to empower others to reach the fullness of their potential, and
- to be transformed and to transform our world.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame make no claim on the financial or personal assets of associates. Associates retain full responsibility for their own financial, material, health, and legal needs and make no claim on the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

#### The Process

Inquiry about SSND Associates can be initiated by an interested person or by an invitation extended by a School Sister of Notre Dame or SSND Associate

Each province and region determines the following:

- initial meeting and discernment with an interested person
- application procedure and review
- acceptance as a pre-associate
- pre-associate orientation and ongoing discernment
- responsibilities of companion
- application procedure for acceptance as an associate
- initial covenant celebration and acceptance
- evaluation and covenant renewal
- continuing education
- ongoing participation in appropriate congregational activities