

Circular 31-92 Rome, Italy April 1992
School Sisters of Notre Dame

Dear Sisters,

In the April 1992 circular officially announcing the results of the recent council elections in the congregation you will note that the general council has appointed a new provincial council for the province of Romania. I want to share with you some of the history and other factors leading to this appointment.

In 1941 the province of Romania had 424 sisters and more than 70 aspirants and candidates in various stages of formation. In 1949 there were 420 sisters and 11 candidates. The motherhouse in Timisoara and all the missions of the province were forced to close in December of that year, 1949. All members were "secularized." The religious habit was forbidden and the sisters had to live in private homes and find employment to sustain themselves. Contact between and among them was forbidden. No new members were allowed although three women who were candidates in 1949, and continued to live as "School Sisters," were secretly professed in the early seventies when Mother Georgianne first visited Romania.

Today, in 1992, little more than 50 years later, there are 78 sisters. It is a profoundly moving experience to see the names of these sisters published for the first time in 43 years in the SSND directory published in Europe, and to know that finally what had been held in the heart of the congregation could be publicly proclaimed. This we do with great joy and thanksgiving to God and to them.

It is fitting to turn to the prophet Jeremiah and read his message to the exiles of Babylon. His words speak to us and, in a significant way, to our sisters in Romania.

I know well the plan I have in mind for you,
says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for
woe: plans to give you a future full of hope.
When you call to me, when you go to pray to me
I will listen to you. Jer. 29:11-12

Part of the ongoing hope of this province has been their steadfast faith in God, their fidelity to the spirit of the congregation, and their sense of belonging even when they did not know what was happening in the province or congregation. Most sisters were cognizant of the spiritual support and material help offered by School Sisters around the world. Such help, as well as the visits of Mother Georgianne and members of her council and Sister Mary Margaret and members

of her council, strengthened their sense of bondedness with the congregation. Strengths which our sisters in Romania continue to share with us are their perseverance in conditions of hardship, their readiness and willingness to help each other and always their hope in the future – for their country, for their province, for the congregation

Many of these sisters live with the hope that with the presence of other SSNDs from other parts of the congregation new life and growth are possible in Romania. Urged by this spirit and believing with the sisters that a new beginning is possible, the general council, after months involving consultations with the sisters in the province, as well as with the present provincial council, has appointed the following sisters to be the provincial council with a two-year term of office.

Sister M. Relindsz Karpát (MG) {Hungary} Provincial Leader
Sister M. Margit Donhauser (BY) {Bavaria}, Provincial Councilor
Sister M. Donata Haubenreich (RO), {Romania} Provincial

Councilor

You will note that Sister Relindsz comes from the Hungarian province and Sister Margit from the Bavarian province. Sister Relindsz and Sister Margit have said YES to ministry in a new country because of their desire to be present to the sisters and to work together with Sister Donata and all the sisters of the Romanian province toward building a new future.

Mother Theresa, referring to the beginning foundation of our mission in Romania, wrote in April 8, 1861:

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“The beginning is always and everywhere difficult, until one has acclimated oneself spiritually and physically. We hope to God that each year will be better, if only the ground is laid so that we can build thereon.

May political confusion soon become less, and the Lord again grant us his loving peace. We have, in fact, complete confidence, that the Church will come forth more purified and glorious from the turmoil, but the difficulties are heavy, and of long duration.”

This new council builds on the service given by the provincial councils of the past years. At this time we want to acknowledge the courage and leadership of the provincial leaders and their councilors who were in office during these years of oppression and persecution.

1987-1992

Sister M. Heriberta Kugler, Provincial Leader
Sister M. Donata Haubenreich, Provincial Councilor

Sister M. Theresia Portscheller, Provincial Councilor
Sister M. Therese Domer, Provincial Councilor (until 1990)

1979-1987

Sister M. Albertine Kugler, Provincial Leader
Sister M. Donata Haubernreich, Provincial Councilor
Sister M. Theresia Portscheller, Provincial Councilor

1964-1979

Sister M. Domitia Hora, Provincial Leader
Sister M. Carissima Gyulay, Provincial Councilor
Sister M. Albertine Kugler, Provincial Councilor

1958-1964

Sister M. Gerta Kernweiss, Provincial Leader
Sister M. Leonilla Kilzer, Provincial Councilor
Sister M. Krizosztome Fabian, Provincial Councilor
(Sister M. Chrysosta Schon – Representative until a
new provincial leader was appointed.)

1946-1957

Sister M. Xaveria Aubermann, Provincial Leader
Sister M. Aeterna Wegling, Provincial Councilor
Sister M. Donata Haubenreich, Provincial Councilor

1929-1948

Sister M. Alexandra Rabong, Provincial Leader
Sister M. Nolaska Luckhaup, Provincial Councilor
Sister M. Alexia Fischer, Provincial Councilor

These our sisters in Romania have borne the burdens of the day; they have done so faithfully. We praise and thank God for them and their fidelity.

Now to the future – our sisters turn to their sisters in the congregation for help and support for the needs of the church and the province. Over the next few weeks the general council will be contacting specific provinces to ask them to consider preparing sisters to serve in Romania as teachers, pastoral ministers, health care workers. These sisters would form community with our sisters presently living in Romania or form new international communities. All communities would need to be open to provide formation for young women interested in SSND.

We ask each of you to pray for the sisters of the Romanian province, for the newly-appointed provincial council – and for those who may be called to minister there. It is to Mother Theresa we turn asking that her love and care for us will be our strong support and help us believe that “all the works of God proceed slowly and in pain; but then, their roots are the sturdier and their flowering the lovelier.”

In Notre Dame,

Sister Patricia Flynn, SSND
General Superior