

## My Living of SSND Charism

By Sister Anne Atieno Ogallo (AF)

I came to know the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1988 when I was a first-year secondary school student. At that time, I did not know the meaning of “charism,” nor did I know that there were differences in religious congregations. One thing struck me, however, and stayed with me about the School Sisters who were in the Ojolla community at that time. They loved and respected those who were around them in a way that showed that all people were important, equal, and loved. It was their way of relating that drew me to them. I did not know about their charism then, but now I can say that the SSND charism was very alive in those sisters.

I later came to realize that the SSNDs dedicated their lives to the education and development of girls and women. This struck me very much. I loved education and—since I struggled to get into secondary school—I knew how much one could thirst for education. I valued education so much that I wanted to dedicate myself to the SSND way of life, hoping that I could join the effort and assist even one girl to complete school.

After I entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame, and especially in December 1999 when I attended an international meeting in Germany, I grew more aware of and more enthusiastic about my living the SSND charism. I became very grateful for the various ways our sisters offer their services to people all over the world. I visited the places where our foundress, Mother Theresa, started. I met our elderly, retired sisters and talked with Mother Theresa at her graveside.

The stories of our sisters all over the world lit a fire within my heart. Today, after I finish writing this story, I will be offering my life totally to God as a finally professed member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. I pray that we—as the sisters who attracted me—may continue to struggle to love as Jesus loves us.