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SND de N focus

Issue 7, Volume 2

This series is compiled from the Constitutions and Directory of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur—an international Roman Catholic congregation of women religious serving on five continents.



COMMUNITY AND SPIRITUALITY, Part 3

Our spirituality is apostolic in the tradition of St. Julie whose unique experience of prayer and action enabled her to find God's presence everywhere and in a special way among the poor.

We too strive to be women of prayer who seek in every aspect of our lives to be united with God and to be responsive to the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of love.

As the quality of our life response flows from our personal and communal prayer and asceticism, so the authenticity of our prayer flows from our life response.

Like Mary, whose name we bear, we are called to hear the word of God and keep it. Our attentive listening shapes in us a contemplative and prophetic attitude toward the whole of life and enables us to act in ways which witness to God's love and justice.

Knowing that God acts in the stillness of our hearts and in the realities of our world, we give time each day to prayer in solitude and silence; we make an annual retreat, and set aside other times for extended periods of prayer.

We pray for our deceased sisters and remember with gratitude their participation in our community and mission.

As Sisters of Notre Dame we give a special place to Mary in our lives. We strive to grow "in the spirit of Mary, the virtue of Mary, the strength and power of Mary." (St. Julie)

We hear the call of the Gospel to resist the power of sin in ourselves and our world. We rely upon the Spirit of Jesus to strengthen us as we join with one another and with the whole people of God to realize the kingdom. We recognize all our relationships as privileged opportunities for encounters with God. We try to understand and respond, simply and courageously, to the calls inherent in these relationships.



As we live community-in-mission, we recognize the strength of belonging to a congregation of sisters who share a similar hope and vision, and we rejoice in the goodness of God and one another. (C44-52 excerpted)

Each sister has a responsibility to herself and to the community, to establish a habit of prayer which fosters and enriches her life of faith and mission. The community ensures that sisters have a time and an opportunity for prayer. Our norm is traditionally one hour daily. (D20)

As prayer informs our whole life, we take time regularly for meditation, and for shared and personal reflection on

- * Sacred Scripture,
- * our Constitutions and Directory,
- * church documents,
- * the letters and writings of our co-foundresses,
- * other congregational literature,
- * other spiritual reading. (D23)

We honor Mary according to personal choice. The rosary is a traditional form of Marian devotion in the Congregation. (D24)



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Our spirituality is “contemplative” and “active.” This means that our prayer informs our action and our actions inform our prayer.

- Does your prayer inform your actions? Do your actions inform your prayer?
- Are you united with God throughout your day? What enables you to be “united” with God?
- How do prayer (communal and personal) and “asceticism” shape your life response?
- How are you like “Mary?” Are you an attentive listener to God and to the cries of the poor today? How do you witness to God’s love and justice?
- Do you recognize God’s action in the stillness of your heart as well as in the realities of our world? Do you set aside time each day to pray in solitude and silence?
- What are some of the qualities, virtues, strengths, and powers of Mary that you admire?
- Why are relationships important for the work of building the kingdom of God?
- How is “community” an important element for witnessing to the Kingdom of God on earth?



WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

Spirituality is the way an individual responds through grace to the call of Christ to discipleship. This always involves conversion (or change of heart), on the part of those called by Christ. We are called to renounce sin and unite ourselves to the Lord’s preeminent victory over sin and death, the Pascal Mystery. While this call is intensely personal, it simultaneously brings us into communion with the Church, the Body of Christ. (“Spirituality,” *Fireside New American Bible*, Encyclopedic Dictionary, p. 142)