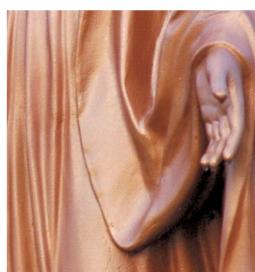
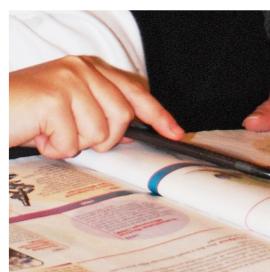


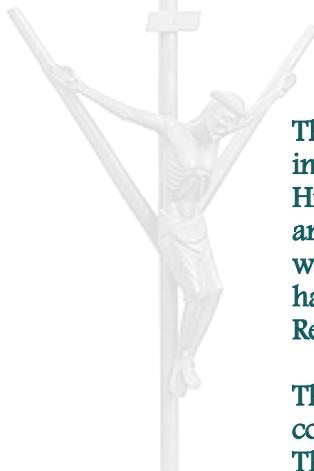
The
**EDUCATIONAL
VISION AND
PRINCIPLES
of the
Sisters of Notre Dame**



Collaborating for Mission

CONGREGATION

Introduction to the Congregation



The Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame came into being in Coesfeld, Germany in 1850. In 1849, two young teachers, Hilligonde Wolbring and Elisabeth Kühling, befriended orphaned and neglected children and took them into Hilligonde's home where they educated and cared for them. Both young women had been educated in the spiritual and pedagogical tradition of Reverend Bernard Overberg.

Their spiritual director, Reverend Theodor Elting, invited them to consider religious life. Three sisters of Notre Dame of Amersfoort, The Netherlands, came to Coesfeld in 1850 to give these two women preparatory training for religious life. The Amersfoort congregation had received their spirit and rule from the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, founded in France by Julie Billiart in 1804.

Hilligonde became Sister Maria Aloysia, and Elisabeth, Sister Maria Ignatia. Both these pioneers were soon joined by Gertrud Perger, later known as Sister Maria Bernarda, who was pivotal in engraving educational principles in the sisters and lay staff, both in Germany and the United States.

Today the Sisters of Notre Dame and their collaborators serve the Church throughout the world in 18 countries on five continents in education and other ministries. Out of their rich heritage, they have articulated anew this educational vision and principles to respond to the realities of the 21st century world. Together they continue to be bearers of hope and joy, witnessing to God's goodness and provident care.



EDUCATIONAL VISION

The Educational Vision of the Sisters of Notre Dame

Impelled by Jesus Christ and his mission
and our rich educational heritage,
we provide a Catholic-Christian environment
of educational excellence
for the transformation of individuals and society.

We form persons who are skilled and committed
to journey together in hope
as witnesses and catalysts
for the responsible care of all God's creation
and for justice and peace,
especially for those on the margins of society.



CENTRALITY OF GOD

PRINCIPLE ONE:

The Centrality of a Good and Provident God

1. We are grounded in the Word of God and share this source of light and strength.
2. We cultivate a sense of the sacred and search for transcendence that leads to a deeper meaning in life.
3. We integrate the teachings and values of Jesus in all aspects of our educational ministry.
4. We provide religious and moral education to develop an integrated spirituality for global citizenship.
5. We initiate and deepen faith formation of Christians through a variety of specific programs and experiences.
6. We promote a spirit of dialogue with diverse cultures and religions and are open to mutual enrichment.
7. We live a simple Gospel life-style and educate for solidarity so that all may enjoy the blessings of the earth.
8. We commit ourselves through selfless serving to be bearers of hope to a world in need.



Seek to make it ever more clear to your students that to love God and to consciously do good is the only thing that makes human beings truly happy.

Bernard Overberg,
Directives for Purposeful
School-teaching, No. 105



HUMAN DIGNITY

PRINCIPLE TWO:

The Human Dignity of Each Person as an Image of God

1. We appreciate, respect and reverence the uniqueness of each individual and the diversity among all persons.
2. We actively support a holistic education which encourages a positive sense of self-worth and the full development of the person.
3. We reverence the image of God in each person we encounter through respectful listening and availability.
4. We create a welcoming atmosphere that builds relationships leading to unity and community.
5. We provide opportunities and environments to help persons to claim and regain their human dignity, identity and self-worth.

So far the dear God has always taken care and will certainly continue to do so. And we accept the little ones so much more lovingly, the poorer and more abandoned they are.

Sister Maria Aloysia, SND
Letter VI, October 25, 1886



GOSPEL WITNESS

PRINCIPLE THREE: The Notre Dame Educator as a Gospel Witness

1. We follow Jesus, our Master Teacher, and give witness to his spirit of compassion, hope and joy, especially to those who experience poverty in its various forms.
2. We nurture the Notre Dame charism, spirit and mission among ourselves as educators and among all with whom we work.
3. We reverence Mary, the Woman of Hope, who made visible the glad tidings of the Gospel.
4. We share the rich spiritual and educational heritage of the Sisters of Notre Dame by using opportunities for ongoing formation and professional growth.
5. We promote collaborative programs and processes that assure the continuity of the excellence of Notre Dame education through our commitment, competence and dedication.
6. We affirm that goodness supported by firmness is a characteristic mark of our educational heritage.
7. We create clean, orderly and attractive surroundings in order to provide a safe environment conducive to learning and respectful of all.

I am a teacher...what profession can be greater and holier than to be a teacher of truth and virtue for so many children...



Bernard Overberg,
Well-directed Principles and
Directives for Teachers,
English Trans., p. 8



TRANSFORMATION

PRINCIPLE FOUR: An Integrated Education for Transformation

1. We ensure a thoroughness of instruction that is rooted in Gospel values, the Social Teachings of the Church and an understanding of complex world realities.
2. We provide an integrated education, one that leads people to a fully human life in relation to themselves, God, others and all of creation.
3. We create the environment to develop value-based leadership skills and the ethical use of communications media and technology.
4. We form students to be reflective critical thinkers and life-long learners who have the determination to influence systemic and structural change.
5. We nurture in ourselves and others an ongoing commitment to act with preferential care and love on behalf of those who are poor and marginalized, especially women and children.
6. We transform our institutions to be centers of non-violence, compassion and justice, and give personal and corporate witness to peace-building and the responsible care of creation.



*The more difficult the times are,
the more we must expect and
hope everything from the
goodness of the good God.*

Saint Julie Billiart,
Letter 260





*Sisters of Notre Dame
of the United States*

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SND National Sponsorship & Network Office
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