

## INSTITUTE HISTORY WORKSHEET

**Sister Mary Daniel Turner (1978-1984) & Sister Catherine Hughes (1984-1990)**

**Places: Nicaragua, SND Base Communities; Chesapeake**

### **Chapter Acts of 1978:**

- Reaffirmed Acts of 1969 & 1975
- 6 page principles of Government and living them in line with Canon Law
- Articulated need for smaller units/minority voices be more represented at next chapter
- Mandated setting up Mission Education Center (based at Trinity College in Washington, D.C.) for communication and coordination of Justice & Peace efforts
- 3 page articulation on principles of mission. Specific issues: world hunger, arms race, global racism, discrimination against women.
- Encourages reflection/action/reflection to move towards corporate action & “corporate response” on issues.
- Mandated a congregational process of reflection on ministries (Renewal for Mission process was implemented by GGG with “Mission” being equated to “ministry”)
- Defines membership and differences between vowed members, associates and coworkers.
- Mandates process to move congregation to revision of Constitutions by next chapter

**1978: General Chapter elects** Sisters Mary Daniel Turner (Maryland), Elizabeth Michaels (Boston), Francis Ellen Henry (Britain), Margaret Loftus (Boston/Japan), Marlene de Nardo (California/Brazil)

- Known as the **General Government Group** - introduced the team form of government
- Re-began the revision of the Constitutions
- Developed Project Nicaragua in 1981 (funded out of the Generalate funds).
- Offices for Communications, Peace, Justice and Education were established. (MEC)
- “Renewal for Mission” - focus on “individually and corporately”
- Pedagogy Project 1981-1982 (Local Church cross-unit visits – 1 Sister from each province sent to each location: England, Brazil, Apopka) – Not enough people to make a difference? Based on Brazil educational philosophy.
- The rewriting of the constitutions – every Sister was involved in giving feedback, provinces were involved – the level of involvement led to a deep investment in the words I/MY group used. The biggest divergence between provinces was how to explain governance and relationship with the Church.
- Traveled widely throughout the Congregation – Visitation is done by whole GGG

### **Sister Mary Daniel (Margaret) Turner – who was she?**

b. November 21, 1925 in Baltimore; moved to Washington as a child, graduate of K Street

d. January 27, 2010

- entered in 1943; final vows 1951 (26 years old) & elected provincial 11 years later (38), 53 when elected Superior General
- degrees from Trinity College and The Catholic University of America; later earned a MA in Theology from St. Michael's College in Toronto
- Lecturer at Trinity's Philosophy and Theology departments
- 1962-1969: Provincial of Maryland
- 1963-1968 Chair of the Sisters Formation Conference
- 1972: Executive Director of LCWR
- 1978-1984: Superior General
- 1990s: Administrator for Joseph's House, a home for chronically ill homeless men – retired in 1994 – great outreach to poor children

### **1984: General Chapter writes the Constitutions;**

Elects Sisters Catherine Hughes (Britain), Elizabeth Marie Bowyer (Ohio), Emmanuel Heylen (Belgium South), Margaret Loftus (Boston), Mary Cecilia McCallion (England/Peru) (GGG)

- Already set up to deal with a great deal of tension over the new Constitutions and mandated to get them approved by Rome. (They were approved by Rome in 1989 (still agenda at Chapter of 1990 with statement on authority)
- October 7, 1984 – a full page ad appears in the New York Times entitled “A Diversity of Opinion Regarding Abortion Exists Among Committed Catholics.” Barbara Ferraro and Patricia Hussey were among the signers (180?) Barbara Ferraro (entered at Ipswich in 1962) & Patricia Hussey (entered in Connecticut in 1967), Both were serving in West Virginia when they signed the ad.
- (See November 30, 1984 letter from Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes to Catherine; memo dated December 1984 & letter received January, 1985.
- Our leadership did not see signing the ad as grounds for dismissal – even when Rome argued it was.
- All Congregations who had members sign the ad had to deal with this (180?)
- Leadership got Rome to move from demanding a “public retraction” to “affirmation of agreement with the official teaching of the Church on abortion”
- Barbara and Pat refused – and instead made their own public statement –
- The GGG asked Barbara and Pat to add a line expressing their belief in the sacredness and inviolability of life. Doing that would end the issue as far as Rome was concerned.
- The Sisters refused to add such a statement (leaving the SNDdeN the only Congregation with the issue unresolved)
- April 15, 1986 Catherine and Peggy flew to West Virginia to meet with Barbara and Pat. Barbara and Pat again refused because they felt such a statement would be used to compromise their true position. They also stated if given the chance, they would sign such a statement again. That, for the GGG, shifted the focus from dialogue around the New York Times Ad to “the consonance of the public witness of the Sisters of Notre

Dame” and activities in the public forum which go directly against the teachings of the Church.

- The GGG questioned their stance of non-negotiation and the manner in which they communicated with the media (disrespectful language?)
- The GGG also questioned the awareness of the 2 Sisters of their responsibility to the Congregation in their public statements and actions.
- The GGG respected their right to their opinions and their right to speak privately AND publically about those opinions as INDIVIDUALS. However, since both women had freely entered into the community of Notre Dame, they had taken on the responsibilities to the group which necessarily conditioned their exercise of their individual rights. So the GGG as the elected authority of the community, asked them in September of 1986 to abide by these 3 things:
  - Because education is central to the mission of the SND, would they refrain from making any further public statements which do not fully convey their position so that the possibility of such statements being interpreted as pro-abortion would be minimized
  - Because, as a community, the SND hold as a fundamental value respect for persons, would they please refrain from using in their public statements language which is abusive or disrespectful of persons.
  - Because they made commitment to membership in a religious community, would they please discuss and reach agreement with the sisters of their provinces before making further public statements on the subject of abortion until their provinces have developed a policy which will serve as a guideline to sisters who feel called to engage in public dissent.
- The sisters refused to abide by those three conditions
- In April 1987, the GGG wrote a letter insisting that the Sisters follow the 3 points and warned them that continual refusal would lead to dismissal.
- It was very painful for everyone involved. God bless the GGG – they did their best to stay rooted in our values and to call all of us to a deeper reflection on those values. We could say – pre-Vatican II the focus was on the group, it shifted to a focus on the individual – Catherine and the rest of her team challenged us to find a middle road:  
February 2 letter 1986 & 1988

### **What else did Catherine and her Team deal with?**

- Began continental formation programs in Africa and Latin America
- Generalate personnel had offices in Namur (Archives), Boston (Finance), Washington (Mission Education Center out of rented space at Trinity – communications, Justice & Peace) and Rome – home base for GGG and General Secretary.  
Congregational Vow Study from 1985-1987
- Translation of 1225 letters of Mother St. Joseph into English
- Julie Renewal Programs and international Final Vow Programs began in her term, 1987

- Leadership meeting in April 1987 – presented “Towards a Restatement of the Notre Dame Mission in the USA”
  - How could we ask people to contribute to our mission unless we clearly defined it?
  - Challenged individualism
  - Done in light of preparation for 1990 celebration (Ohio: Remember – Rejoice – Renew)
- They were in leadership during painful further separation of American provinces
  - 1989: September – General Government Group approves formation of SND Base Communities (division of Maryland Province);
  - 1990: April 8 – General Government Group approves formation of the Chesapeake Unit

### **Sister Catherine (Kathleen Margaret) Hughes**

- b. 27 April 1922 at Gillingham, Kent, England – moved to London at age 7; d. 17 March 2017 at Woolton
- Entered 8 October 1947; 1<sup>st</sup> Vows 18 April 1950; Final Vows: 4 August 1955
- Superior General 1984-1990 (62 when she is elected) Goes to Peru for a short time after her term, then serves almost 20 years in South Africa, returning to England in 2002.
- Favorite Scripture passage: I am who I am

### **Sister Mary Daniel (Margaret) Turner Memorials:**

Her foresight and understanding of trends in religious life for women in the United States and around the world resulted in her being elected finally to the position of Superior General of the whole congregation. (SNDBC) her leadership in this role led to the recognition by many religious women of her wisdom, her deep love of God and her willingness to challenge the status quo for the benefit of the people of God.

“...she spent her time reading, writing, traveling and dreaming together with communities all around the country-and beyond. And they loved her for it.”

Mentor, pioneer of justice and for women, risk-taker, courageous integrity, presence and wisdom.

Because of her previous work with the Sister Formation Conference and LCWR, seen as a great leader of renewal by other congregations – not always seen as positively within Notre Dame

### **From Eulogy of Sr. Catherine Hughes:**

Catherine maintained a deep simplicity throughout her life no matter what she was asked to do or wherever she was asked to go.

When the Second World War started, Catherine was at Notre Dame Southwark. Catherine won a scholarship to go to university at Kings College London to read history. She went in 1940 but, owing to the War, she was evacuated to Bristol. On 1st November 1940, their family home was bombed. Luckily, there was no one at the Hughes’ house...

At Kings, eight women students - including Catherine, formed a lay Christian group which they called ‘The Royal and Ancient Order of Pachyderms’ with a simple (but demanding) rule of life ... ‘You had to have a thick skin to continue your commitment for life’.

At age 25, Catherine decided it was time to enter Religious Life. After some hesitation as to which Congregation, she eventually settled on the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

She spent a few months at Battersea after her Profession and was then sent to Teignmouth for 2 years as 6th Form Mistress. In 1952, she was missioned to Notre Dame High School, Sheffield as Deputy Head but after a year she received a mission to Mount Pleasant and served there as a lecturer from 1953 – 1966. During these 13 years, Catherine had a profound and lasting effect on the students whose lives she touched and she kept up a lifelong friendship with many of them. In 1966 Catherine moved to Kirby where she lived until 1972 and where she was Head of Saint Gregory's Comprehensive School. Catherine was later to say that, looking back on her long and eventful life, probably it was in Kirby that she was happiest of all – living and working amongst its people. In 1972, Catherine was appointed Principal of Mount Pleasant College of Education. Her vision for the future did much to lay the groundwork for the eventual merger with Christ's College and St Katharine's Anglican College into what was later to develop as HOPE University.

Catherine became Provincial of the British Province in 1978 and was active in helping to shape the Conference of Major Superiors in England and Wales. Within our Province, she encouraged educational innovation in ministries, enabling sisters to reach out and develop programmes for children and adults with special educational needs; to work with 'Travelling People' and to live and work with the poor in inner city areas. Fearless in her desire to serve the poorest of the poor, she was not afraid to take risks.

Elected as General Moderator in 1984, Catherine faced many challenges. However, her desire to serve Christ in his poorest members enabled her to rise above all difficulties. In order to strengthen programmes for newer members and for ongoing renewal in the Congregation in the spirit of Vatican II, her General Leadership gave priority to on-going Formation.

Catherine was single-minded in her pursuit of what she thought was a right and just course of action in any given situation and she encouraged others by her vision. Following in the footsteps of Julie and Françoise, she always showed a preference for the poor in the most abandoned places.

It would be fair to say that Catherine's early training and that 'development of a thick skin' when she was a student in London, all enabled her to pursue her preferential option for the poor with a steely determination. However, the 'thick skin' often concealed a loving heart which she gradually allowed herself to show more freely the older she became. On completing her term in General Leadership, Catherine had a short spell in Peru and then chose a ministry in South Africa with people living in poverty. Catherine was always 'forthright'. As one of her closest friends said "She could '*annihilate*' with a glance but so too she could '*energise*' . . ."

However, formidable though she was at times, Catherine had a great sense of humour. Once, at a gathering in Nigeria, she was introduced to the crowd as Sr. Catherine 'Huggies' (Hughes presented a great problem for pronunciation!).

On returning to Liverpool and the community at 266 Woolton Road, Catherine continued to inspire others during these last years of her life. She loved being close once again to her family and enjoyed spending time with the younger generations of 'Hughes'. She rejoiced also in time spent with friends. Catherine kept up her links with South Africa and also encouraged friends and Sisters to fundraise for Kroonstad. Wherever Catherine was and at every stage of her life,

she settled comfortably into each ‘present moment’ and lived out that prayer ‘Lord, it is good to be here!’

**From Sister Teresita Weind (Congregational Leader at the time of her death):** Sister Catherine Hughes provided inspiration and leadership in her role as Congregational Leader, serving and working with the authors of the Vatican approved, 1989 Congregational Constitutions and Directory. She had the vision of a way forward to “*strengthen and preserve the unity of the Congregation*”. (Constitutions # 133)

We thank God for Sister Catherine, a woman of courage and stamina, who stood firm in the face of criticism and opposition from leaders in the Church and unrest in the Congregation. Is it possible that her gift of courage began on the day of her birth when she, apparently still born, was wrapped in newspaper and put aside? Was this Catherine’s first pause of contemplative-prophetic spirituality as she slowly responded to the breath and spirit of God moving through what was thought to be her lifeless body? [Silent PAUSE] God had a “call on Catherine’s life”, a call that overcame the apparent death at birth to development and growth! God remained faithful in calling Catherine, animating her to and through many phases of her ministry.

In preparation for today’s reflection, I read our Constitutions, watching for one or two articles that would be the appropriate link for sharing about Catherine’s gift to our Congregation. I paused at article # 82, which is about formation of novices:

In the novitiate period we foster a deeper understanding and experience of our contemplative-prophetic spirituality, our mission and vowed life.

We provide opportunities for a coordinated study of and analysis of our contemporary social reality.

Long before the Constitutions and Directory were written and approved, Catherine’s life bore witness to contemplative-prophetic spirituality and critical social analysis.

Thank you, Catherine, for being a model of how new members are formed; for being a model of courageous and authentic leadership. Thank you for serving with VISION, accompanying all of us who desire to be faithful to the Gospel call and imperative of justice, peace and care of our human family around the world.