



## Annabelle Gordon: sharing SND joy

Annabelle Gordon has known and collaborated with the Sisters of Note Dame for 25 years. Her first SND encounter was with Sr. Jolisa Lazaro, who was the Director of Evangelization at St. Anthony's in Long Beach. They began working together on projects such as the 100th Anniversary of the parish, the installation of new clergy members within the parish, and implementation of the RENEW International program “to renew personal faith and parish life—unlocking the power of small groups by equipping laity and clergy to share their Catholic faith and live it every day” (from RENEW mission statement).

In 1999, Sr. Jolisa approached Annabelle with an invitation to become an SND Associate. She was a member of the first class of Associates missioned to embody the SND spirit and charism, making her covenant in June 2000. She recalls, “For some time I had been seeking ways to deepen my prayer life. I thought that a closer connection with the SNDs who integrate prayer as a way of life would be instructive and encouraging—and I was right!”

Annabelle was born in San Francisco and raised in the East Bay. She was baptized at St. Ignatius in San Francisco and made her First Communion at St. Paschal Baylon in Oakland. After attending college at California State Monterey Bay, Annabelle relocated to Southern California in 1979 for work. Her career with Air France as a logistics manager spanned more than 30 years, until her retirement in 2010.

In 2013, Annabelle transitioned from St. Anthony's to St. Cornelius (both Long Beach parishes), where she joined the RCIA team under the leadership of Sr. Kathleen Burns. Of her experience with the RCIA candidates, Annabelle affirms, “I found utter joy in accompanying someone on their own faith journey and this led me to becoming involved as a sponsor, team member and eventually RCIA Director.”

Following the deaths of her parents in 2013 and 2015, Annabelle found a deep source of strength from the SNDs. In 2018, she decided to make a quantum change in her life by moving to Thousand Oaks from Long Beach. She explains, “I chose moving in large part, because of the connections I made as an Associate. The Associates and the Sisters are my social network!” Annabelle is currently a proud parishioner at St. Julie Billiart Parish in Newbury Park, where she is a lector and a Stephen Minister. She is also a member of the SND JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) task force and she assists Sr. Marie Paul Grech and Sr. Antoinette Marie Moon with the St. Paschal Baylon RCIA ministry.

When asked to describe the SNDs in one word, Annabelle smiles and replies, “Joy! The word, ‘joy,’ comes to my mind most often with the SNDs. I have known many religious sisters from many congregations, but none are as joyful as the Sisters of Notre Dame. Their commitment to living a life of joyful simplicity is something to strive for. They are serious about spreading the message of a good and provident God!”