

## Mission Moment

### *Honoring the late Nancy Coonis ~ Educator Extradinoaire*

Nancy Coonis, our dear friend and colleague, passed into eternity unexpectedly on Wednesday, April 8. This is the same day as St. Julie Billiart, spiritual mother of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Many aspects of Nancy's life reveal how she shared St. Julie's desire "to make the good God known and loved."

Leaving her hometown of Sacramento, Nancy attended Occidental College and found her college years to be a time of deep spiritual growth. She participated in a prayer group at St. Dominic's in Eagle Rock and also taught CCD. In 1975, Sr. Louise Wanamaker hired Nancy to teach religion, English and music at St. Matthias High, and this was her entre into the SND family. Eventually, she became vice-principal and principal of St. Matthias.



In 2008, Nancy became an Associate of the Sisters of Notre Dame. As she wrote in her application, "The prayerfulness, simplicity and deep spirituality of the SNDs are all qualities I desire for my own life. I already feel like an adopted member of the community."

Nancy's journey continued in educational leadership ministries, as Superintendent of Secondary Schools of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, president of Notre Dame Academy and executive director of the Western Catholic Education Association. In 2018, she was a recipient of the SND Transformative Leadership Award.

Her love of music is legendary, inspiring her students and sharing her gifts with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, various choirs and inter-faith activities. In her own words, "I wish to continue to work to promote understanding between Catholics and those of other faiths."

SND Associate Margaret Meland once praised Nancy, her teacher and mentor, when she wrote, "Observing Nancy in the ministry of Catholic education, I have witnessed her unceasing efforts to provide for others, especially those less fortunate or without a voice to speak for themselves." Sr. Marie Paul Grech, her colleague, once noted, "Nancy has always been 'Notre Dame' at heart. She believes in our charism, mission and spirit and lives by a personal commitment to Gospel values. She is a wonderful, trustworthy friend, who truly respects and cherishes the Sisters of Notre Dame, is compassionate, concerned for the poor, and acts on her principles."

The SNDs can only thank God for bringing Nancy Coonis into our lives. Together, we have been able to "make the good God known and loved." Godspeed, dear friend.