

Telling the story....

The Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame was founded in 1850 in Coesfeld, Germany. The Sisters of Notre Dame are dedicated to Mary. We believe Mary is our special intercessor and is present in our lives, drawing us closer to her son in everything we do.

Two Kindred Hearts

- Hilligonda Wolbring and Elisabeth Kulhing were two young teachers in Coesfeld, Germany.
- Hilligonda was an orphan herself and she felt God's call to care for poor and orphaned children.
- With her inheritance and Elisabeth's support, Hilligonda determined to provide care for needy children. The first child to "share her sandwich" was a little girl.
- In 1850, these two young women realized that their work would more effective if they would form a religious community for this purpose.
- Providentially, this early community was formed under the guidance of a community formed in the spirit of St. Julie Billiart.
- In 1853, Sister Marie Aloysia and Sister Maria Ignatia began their ministry, proclaiming **God's goodness and provident care!**
- Sister Maria Ignatia died in 1869 at age 47 in Germany.
- Sister Maria Aloysia died in 1889 at St. Mary's Orphanage, Cleveland, OH.



Sister Maria Aloysia's words:

"Make gold out of stones!" (finding the good in everything)

"For food, clothing and so on, the dear God must often provide, for we have comparatively many children who can pay nothing . . . we accept the little ones so much more lovingly the poorer and more abandoned they are." (written from the U.S.)

In her life of faith, Sister Aloysia gave the example of "Doing the next thing!"

In her life of faith, Sister Maria Ignatia gave the example of helpfulness, "Why don't you ask me to help you?"

St. Julie Billiart



- Considered spiritual mother of the Sisters of Notre Dame of Coesfeld
 - French peasant girl who grew up in the era of the French Revolution and was hunted down for her allegiance to fugitive priests
 - Experienced trauma of a "drive-by" shooting which caused paralysis
 - Despite 20 year paralysis, Julie catechized and offered spiritual advice; miraculously cured of her paralysis through prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
 - Julie founded the Sisters of Notre Dame (de Namur) in 1803
- St. Julie died in 1816 and was canonized in 1969
 - St. Julie's medal as a Sister was that of Our Lady of Guadalupe

"Julie's immobility in no way impeded her activities. In spite of her suffering, she managed to co-found a teaching order that tended to the needs of both the poor and the well-to-do. Each of us has limitations, but the worst malady any of us can suffer is the spiritual paralysis that keeps us from doing God's work on earth."



Julie's words:

"How good is the good God!"

"You are not asked to do all the good in the world,
but just the bit that lies within your power."

"In whatever way God comes, he is always welcome!"

SND's French Influence from St. Julie Billiart

- Name of congregation: "Notre Dame"
- French inscription in ring: "All for Jesus through Mary"
- Importance of "sunflower" spirituality

