

Celebrating the Bounty of 20 Years of Partnership

Dear Benefactors and Friends,

After three years of the pandemic, both Sister Kathleen Hilton and I felt privileged to return to Vietnam this past July on behalf of the A Call to Vietnam (ACtV) ministries. What a joy it was to bring the monies and medical supplies your contributions made possible. During our visit, I was able to make deliveries to five centers where children who are handicapped, orphaned or from poor rural regions are able to benefit. And what a pleasure to visit students and friends, including members of the Lovers of the Holy Cross community! I found them healthy and well.

Early in our visit, we were entertained by 45 of our scholarship recipients. They shared their experience of what studying was like during the pandemic. Yes, studying on-line was a challenge for them – and their families – but they persevered and advanced in their classes. After hearing of their successful progress, we awarded scholarships for the 2023-2024 academic year. Let us celebrate that three of our long-term scholars received University degrees



Scholarship recipients.

last year; four more started at universities; and seven graduated from secondary school.

While we were in Vietnam, we were able to visit several of the ministries of the Lovers of the Holy Cross Sisters, including Lam Bich Dong Ha Center, the Cam Lo boarding school (featured inside this issue) and the Nguyet Bieu Center for children with developmental handicaps. Everywhere, we were met with the delightful smiles of children, looking healthy and well-cared for. I hope you will enjoy seeing these same smiles in the photos we took.

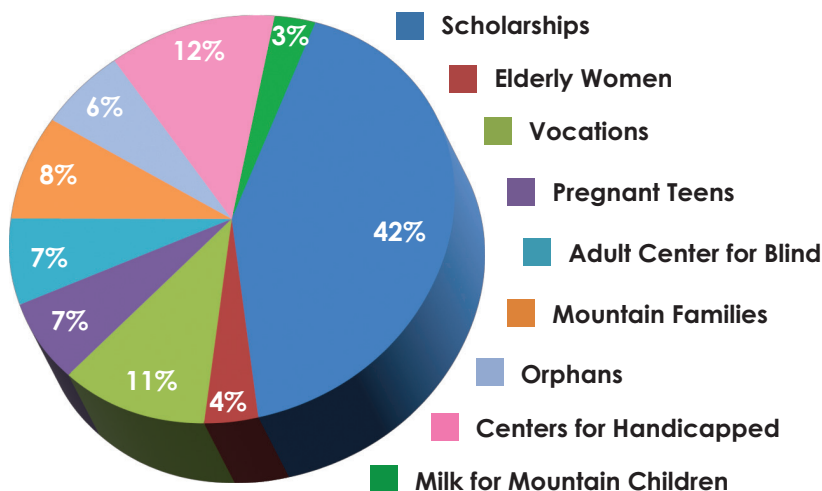
A highlight of my mission travel was the joyful celebration, organized by the Lovers of the Holy

Cross Sisters at their Mother House, to celebrate 20 years of our A Call to Vietnam ministry. Sister Kay Burton, who helped found ACtV, was especially remembered. Sister Therese Tuy, General Superior, spoke of the wonderful results of our collaborative work. Difficult lives have been eased; educational challenges surmounted. This evening touched my heart deeply.

I thank God for each of you who have helped us in this ministry! Together let us continue! I count on your generosity again in the coming year!

Sincerely, Sister Agnes Ly Thi Le, Director,
A Call to Vietnam Ministry

WHERE YOUR GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Many Gifts; Satisfying Results

Dear Friends,

Having delighted in reading about the experiences of Sister Agnes Ly Thi Le and Sister Kathleen Hilton this summer, I can only add my deep appreciation to the ACTv friends who made this trip possible. The Sisters of the Holy Names feel blessed to have such generous and caring partners in the work of supporting the

education and well-being of the most marginalized people of Vietnam. 100% of your contributions go directly to benefit the people in Vietnam. The Sisters of the Holy Names underwrite administrative expenses, such as the cost of this publication.

With deep gratitude, Sister Linda Riggers,
SNJM Community Liaison

Cam Lo Boarding School for Mountain Students

The boarding school for mountain students in Cam Lo has 45 students, consisting of 30 girls and 5 boys. The students are from mountain families who send their children to the Sisters of the Holy Cross for education and care. Children in grades one through three study at the center with the Sisters. Meanwhile, those in fourth and fifth grades attend the elementary school in Cam Lo, and older students continue their studies at the high school, also located in Cam Lo. Upon completing high school, students take an entrance exam to gain admission to the university in Hué city. Two students will enter university in Hué this year.



Cam Lo student boarders wearing necklaces made for them by Sister Agnes Le.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sisters of the Holy Cross worked hard to maintain the health and well-being of their students, thanks be to God! Some students left the boarding school during this time to live with their parents in the villages.

We are so appreciative of our benefactors and the Sisters of the Holy Names for their many years of generous support to our students. These scholarships offer our students the opportunity to complete their schooling and build a better life.

May God, through the intercession of our Blessed Mother of La Vang, grant blessings of peace and happiness to the Holy Names Sisters and our benefactors.

With our special prayers and gratitude,
Sister Marie Pham Thi The, Director



SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR OUR BENEFACTORS of A Call to Vietnam: On the first Saturday of every month, a special Mass of Thanksgiving for our benefactors is being said by a Vietnamese priest at the An Lang Mother house chapel of the Sisters, Lovers of the Holy Cross, Hué, Vietnam. And the Sisters of the Holy Names in the United States pray every day for the needs of our benefactors. Please call (206) 725-7164 or email agnesthile@gmail.com if you have a special request.

Summer English Program: Fruits and Future

Although the Lovers of the Holy Cross (LHC) chose not to organize formal English language classes this summer, our visit offered many opportunities for groups and individual Sisters to converse in English. On our second evening, Sister Agnes Le and I met with about 30 of the students who had enrolled in prior summers' courses. Over the years, several participants have earned degrees in English-speaking countries and now minister in Vietnam. Other Sisters have continued to take advantage of local opportunities.

This event provided a chance for those in the Hué area to gather. Time passed quickly as students shared how they currently used their English competencies, then they engaged in games, sang songs and enjoyed light refreshments. Sr. Agnes Le and I were pleased to have an opportunity to see familiar faces and speak to those assembled about our ongoing commitment to their efforts to develop proficiency.

One gratifying indication of the far-reaching impact of the summer English programs was working closely with two program alums during the student gathering. Scholarships from Heritage University and support by the U.S.-Ontario Province enabled Sisters My Dung and Kim Dung to earn master's degrees; they returned to Hué in 2022. Sr. Kim Dung currently uses her M.A. in English, working in the LHC administrative office and teaching English. She tutors young students and teaches adult students online. Sr. My Dung (M.A. in School Administration) is principal of a large pre-school/kindergarten where she is working to integrate English into the curriculum. Both served as translators during the meeting. The summer English conversation program, supported by generous volunteers over the years, continues to enrich the lives of past participants.



Top: Phu Cam local community of LHC.

Bottom: English students gathering



The LHC Congregational leaders have indicated that, currently, their priority is sending younger Sisters to complete advanced degrees that meet their needs for specific skill sets. I look forward to working with prospective students and to ongoing conversations with the LHC leadership as we collaboratively develop effective approaches to meet their current English language priorities. I'm excited to see what new paths this thoroughly intercultural ministry may take.

Sister Kathleen Hilton, SNJM

The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary are dedicated to the mission of education and within this mission promote justice and create community. They have heard a call to collaborate with the religious community of the Lovers of the Holy Cross, Hué in Vietnam to:

- Support ministry to handicapped children, pregnant teens, mountain people, children unable to afford an education,
- Educate young women entering Religious life, particularly in acquisition of English language skills.

Student's Thank You Letter

Dear Sisters of the Holy Names and Benefactors,

I am Ngo Minh Duc, a student who has received a scholarship from the *A Call to Vietnam* Ministry for many years starting in high school and continuing through university. During these years, my family was struggling financially, and they would not have been able to fund my education.

Experiencing your generous support, I was motivated to study hard, and I passed all my exams each year. Now, at age 24, I have graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering from Da Nang University. I was very lucky to get a job and am working at the Ajinomoto Vietnamese Company.

My family and I are so very happy with my success!

I also know that the *A Call to Vietnam* Mission is celebrating 20 years of ministry. I wish continued good growth for this program and that the Sisters of the Holy Names and benefactors of *A Call to Vietnam* will have many blessings of peace and happiness! My parents and myself thank all of you very much and appreciate all your great help.

Sincerely yours,
Ngo Minh Duc



Why They Give – Ted and Donna Delude

One Sunday 20 years ago, at Holy Family Church, in Auburn, Washington, Ted and Donna Delude heard Sister Agnes Le speak after mass about her ministry program in Vietnam. They heard the call to help children in Vietnam and made their first financial gift to the *A Call to Vietnam* Ministry. Donna shared that Sister Agnes wrote the most beautiful handwritten thank you note on rice paper. This personal touch began a beautiful friendship with the Deludes, Sister Agnes and the Sisters of the Holy Names.

For 20 years, Ted and Donna have been drawn to Sister Agnes' passion, her humility and her ability to communicate her mission with succinct, heartfelt words. They often went to the *A Call to Vietnam* dinner, sponsoring tables and purchasing Vietnamese artwork which they proudly display in their home. The shared experiences at this dinner, the hospitality and sharing of culture with like-minded people has been a joy for them.

Ted and Donna appreciate that Sister Agnes keeps them updated on the children and young women that their financial support benefits.

They are deeply connected to this program and to Sister Agnes.

During this interview, Ted walked in, and Donna said, "Do you know we have been giving to this ministry for 20 years?" Ted's response was a smile that stretched from ear to ear. That reaction says it all!

Ted and Donna, we are blessed by your generosity.
Thank you!

