

Amid Changes and Challenges, A Call to Vietnam Continues its Mission

Dear Friends of the A Call to Vietnam Ministry,

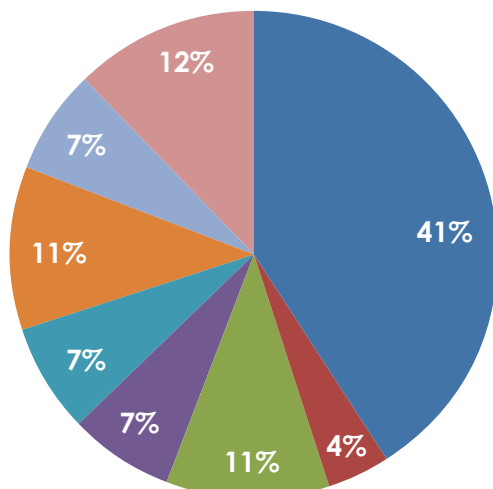
As we say goodbye to 2022 and begin a New Year, we want to update you on our A Call to Vietnam ministry.

One of the most significant events for us this year was the death of our dear friend and the co-director of ACtV, Sister Kay Burton (see article on page 3). We miss Sister Kay so much! At a Mass in May honoring her memory, one of the joys was reconnecting with so many of the people who had worked on past benefit dinners. Their commitment to continue support for the people of Vietnam is so strong!

Now that conditions in Vietnam regarding COVID are much improved, we hope to again send volunteers to Hue in the summer of 2023 for English conversation classes. The Liu Foundation has underwritten the expenses of the summer English language classes in Vietnam for many years. As the Foundation brings its work to a close, we express our deep thanks to founders David and Janne Liu for their steadfast support of education and those on the margins in the Northwest and internationally.

This past year, we sent funds to Vietnam continuing the same level of support as in previous years. While Sister Agnes Ly has missed the personal visits to the people we are helping, she has been able to follow how things are going through emails and phone visits. She wishes she could see and play with all 163 of the children in the four residences the Holy Cross Sisters operate! Through technology, we also learn about the progress of the 33 university and high school students who have received scholarship monies, and we are happy to report that every student has advanced to the next level in their studies despite the challenges of COVID.

You will see in another article in this newsletter that two LHC Sisters who came to the U.S. several years ago for university education have returned to Vietnam and are now using their education in meaningful ministries.



- Scholarships
- Elderly Women
- Vocations
- Pregnant Teens
- Blind Centers' Families
- Mountain Families and Children
- Orphans

So, you see that your efforts are like a pebble in a pond, rippling out, helping especially the children of Vietnam to grow up healthy, strong and loved. Thank you for your past support. We count on your continuing support and on your prayers.

Sincerely,

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

Sister Linda Riggers,
SNJM Community Liaison

Nguyet Bieu Center

Sister Catherine Hien Nguyen, who directs the center for handicapped children in the Nguyet Bieu region of Vietnam, wrote to share this description of the center with A Call to Vietnam supporters.

The residents at this center live in houses on property belonging to the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Hue. While the buildings are old, some improvements and additions since 2000 have helped us serve the children better. Besides the orphans and handicapped children who live here, there is a residence that houses teen-aged pregnant women who can stay during their pregnancy, receiving help with room and board, until their children are born. After birth, a woman may opt to return home with her baby. Or, if a child has special needs, or if a young woman's home doesn't have the resources to raise the child, she may choose to relinquish care of her child to the Sisters.

The 65 children who now live at the center are divided into three groups. One group of children can attend school outside the center. The Sisters and other teachers offer care and education to the other two groups of children, children who cannot attend school elsewhere due to their age or level of disability. In March 2020, activities such as field trips and other outings were halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the situation is better now and these events have started up again. The children love these trips, the chance to get in a van and see different surroundings, to splash, perhaps on the banks of a river, and to meet people who live elsewhere.

The children are good about helping each other, the older children watching and playing with the toddlers, helping to feed those who need help at a mealtime, taking their turn with clean-up chores. While rice is the most regular menu item for most meals, they receive and enjoy special treats from time to time, ice cream being one of their favorites!



We are deeply grateful for the powerful financial support that comes from the ACtV contributors, and we appreciate



the visits we have received as well. We have special photos of Sister Kay Burton and other SNJMs and volunteers; these images help us to remember you often.



May God bless each and all of you and your families. You are in our prayers. Please continue your wonderful mission with us!

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, Hue, 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.

In Memory of Sister Kay Burton, Co-Founder of A Call to Vietnam Ministry

You may already know about the death in March 2022 of Sister Kay Burton, co-founder with Sister Agnes Ly Thi Le of the *A Call to Vietnam* ministry. Sister Kay was the Provincial Leader of the Washington Province of the Sisters of the Holy Names when, in 1976, Sister Agnes Le fled Vietnam through Laos, three orphans in hand. It was Sister Kay who responded with a strong “Welcome!”

Through those early years, during which Sister Agnes Le transferred to the SNJM community, Sister Kay learned about the efforts Sister Agnes Le’s former religious community was making to help the Vietnamese people who had suffered years of war. The results of those years of war were many, including increases in birth deformities and blindness, grinding poverty, depression and despair.

After she completed her term in leadership, Sister Kay was drawn to serve in a small rural African-American community in Mississippi where residents were longing for access to better education and youth development activities. But Sister Kay’s friendship with Sister Agnes Le remained and the desire grew very strong to “give back” to the people of Vietnam and to collaborate with the Lovers of the Holy Cross Sisters. With the support of their religious community, *A Call to Vietnam* was born. Both co-directors were invited to Vietnam to consult with The LHC community leaders about what might be helpful. The Sisters spoke about the needs in their centers for handicapped children and adults where a reliable source of support for “daily bread” was needed. And they described how beneficial it would be for their young Sisters to practice English conversation with fluent English speakers and learn about teaching techniques as well.

In response, each summer Sister Kay got her summer school program in Jonestown, MS going, and then accompanied Sister Ly and volunteers to Vietnam to conduct several weeks of English language conversation immersion. She also helped Sister Ly with the administration of the ministry and the planning of the summer program.

Remembering Sister Kay’s dedication and commitment continues to inspire many of the Sisters, supporters and volunteers connected to the *A Call to Vietnam* ministry. We believe that the best way to honor her memory is to continue to creatively find ways to collaborate with the people of Vietnam in improving health and education for those on the margins, and to build bonds of friendship and understanding.



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, Hue 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.

Thank You

Vo Hong Quynh Nhu is a young woman who received a high school and university scholarship through the A Call to Vietnam Ministry.

Dear Sisters of the Holy Names and Benefactors,

My name is Vo Hong Quynh Nhu, a lucky student able to complete four years of university studies in 2021 thanks to having received your scholarship support. My study focus was Early Childhood Education.

This year, I have a good job as a teacher aide in the City of Hué. I work with children in 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades, tutoring them in math and Vietnamese. Each day, I bicycle to my parish where classrooms are available for lessons when they are not being

used for religious education classes.

With my salary, I am able to help my single mom, and also to help my younger brother continue his studies. The three of us live together and I am so happy to be able to contribute to our household expenses. I feel so lucky have this steady job which I love.

Thank you so much for your great help! May God bless all of you and please keep me in your prayers.

With my sincere thanks,

Vo Hong Quynh Nu

Sisters Return to Vietnam After Studies in the United States

Last summer, two Lovers of the Holy Cross returned to Vietnam after several years of study at Heritage University. They obtained advanced degrees and had some practical experiences in the U.S. to anchor that learning. We asked them to tell you about their return to Vietnam and what they are now doing.

I earned an M.A. in English Literature and Language from Heritage University in 2021. I returned to Vietnam on April 14 after four years of living and studying in the United States with the sponsorship and support of the Holy Names Sisters.

Arriving in Vietnam, I spent time with my family, and then I returned to Hue. I received my new ministry as a secretary, librarian and freelance English teacher. At the moment, I am working as an assistant to our Congregational General Secretary at the Mother House. Besides, I am in charge of taking care of our library, which is in the process of being renovated. In addition, I am currently teaching English to elementary and junior high boarding school students at our ministry in Phu Cam. I have focused on reinforcing what they have learned at school and helping them communicate in English. I also have two more online English classes for those in need. Even though I'm as busy as a bee, I enjoy teaching English and learning new things every day.

Sr. Kim Dung Huynh, LHC



I returned to Vietnam on June 4, spent some time with my family,

and got to Hue in late July. I earned my Masters in School Administration in 2019 and gained some helpful experience in an elementary school in Portland, OR. When the pandemic made it impossible to return home, I spent my time developing vocabulary in multiple subject areas as well as taking piano lessons. I am now assigned to be principal of a school in the Hue area. I have been re-reading all the assignments that I did during my program in the U.S to recall what I learned and am looking forward to implementing practices I have envisioned for my school. I am not sure I will be successful, but I am ready to welcome the result whether it is a failure or success because as Winston Churchill said, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal, it is the courage to continue that counts."

Sr. My Dung, LHC