

Heartbeats

Servants of the
Holy Heart of Mary

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Sister Dorothee, Ndzie; A Missionary Disciple

What does it mean to be an SSCM Missionary-Disciple? The story of Sister Dorothee Gabrielle Ndzie's last four years in the United States, among the people of Pembroke Township and the greater Kankakee, Illinois area, offers interesting insights.

For Sister Dorothee, the "geographic and existential peripheries" to which she has journeyed, is more than the 6,500 miles from Cameroon to the United States. Sharing of cultures, an awakening response to human suffering of war, even tilling and harvesting the land have been part of Sister Dorothee's mission.

A teacher at heart, Sister Dorothee truly enjoyed the time spent at area schools, libraries and church congregations. Especially during February, Black History Month, she was called upon numerous times to engage students and adults in learning African culture. Art, dance, storytelling were part of the interactions. During the presentations Dorothee would request the audience to share examples of their culture. A true exchange ensued. Some other times of celebration were Juneteenth, celebrating the abolition of slavery and Kwanzaa, the African American celebration of life, held during the Christmas season.

Sister Dorothee at times simply was a presence in the classroom, acting as an aide at Lorenzo Smith school, spreading love

and compassion to a struggling student, her hand guiding the student's hand holding a wobbling pencil.

Other times of sharing her culture included teaching people how to cook African dishes with peanuts, red oil, dry fish,

Sister Dorothee



cassava leaves and root, banana leaves, spices and other “secret” ingredients. Burned black sauce was another intriguing dish. While they cooked, they talked and shared African values and prayed. Donuts were always a special treat.

An SSCM Missionary-Disciple, commits herself to safeguarding our common home. (General Chapter Orientation). Pembroke is a farming area and Sister Dorothee became involved in farm life. She saw needs and was able to help farm families to understand organic farming. An elderly man reluctantly allowed her to help him. Another family was happy to have her help in harvesting. A sad thing was the lack of harvesters at the blueberry farm. So much was lost! Sister tried to help but was disappointed in people’s lack of involvement, even after her requests.

It is always important to learn much about the

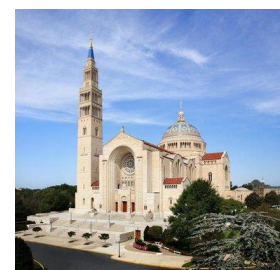
areas of one country. Cameroon has 10 states, the United States has 50. Sister Dorothee, always a historian, was able to see various parts of the country due to the generosity of the congregation and friends. She toured Pennsylvania, Maryland, D.C., Wisconsin, Mississippi and Texas during her time here.



Most recently, Dorothee traveled to Washington D.C. with Servant Companion Rama Canney. “It was wonderful!” Dorothee enthusiastically chimed. “Miss Rama planned well.” The Air and Space Museum and the Apollo flights were of great interest. And then there was the African-American Museum. “One day is not enough to see everything. The museum is huge, filled with

artifacts that tell the story as it goes on. The story of the slaves was painful to see but at the same time people were strong in faith. How creative they were, working with their hands, weaving baskets and other forms of art, singing Gospel music. There is much to see. I will always remember this trip.”

Dorothee particularly enjoyed the evening tour of the city with monuments illuminated. Rama ensured that they would be able to attend Mass daily while touring. The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, the premier church of the United States, enthralled Dorothee. She found it beautiful and would have liked more time there.



A most touching moment for Sister was her gathering at the Vietnam

War Memorial Wall with its thousands of names etched upon it. There was a very cathartic event for Dorothee when she remembered a traveling Memorial Wall she viewed in Bradley and a woman who, when viewing her son's name on that wall, sobbed and sobbed.



Dorothee was touched to the depths on experiencing the real wall, and, like many before her tears cascaded down her cheeks. Sister now prays for troops more and compassionately remembers the plight of military families.

Sister Dorothee also paid a visit to the Cameroon Embassy and met the ambassador and the first councilor who, to their great delight, knew Dorothee's village. They

were able to share about the area the councilor had visited as a youth. From D. C., Dorothee traveled to Houston, Texas to visit some friends.



During her short time there, she helped at her friend's store and attended a meeting of the parish's women's association where she was asked to lead prayer.

On another excursion, Sister ventured to the state of Mississippi where she found a deep connection with the culture. She considered the sense of family, the welcome hospitality and the climate and surmised that

Mississippi was much like Africa. She saw some trees and grasses that were like those of home as well as sugar cane fields. She was asked to pray in her dialect and dance for her hosts and enjoyed gumbo, another dish that was like a dish served in Africa. The "no rush, take-your-time attitude" touched Dorothee's heart. She spent time gazing at the wide Mississippi River as it flowed to the sea, remembering the time she studied about it as a child.

It is not difficult to see the Sister Dorothee Gabrielle Ndzie is living the orientation that asks us to "intensify our zeal as SSCM Missionary-Disciples". We thank Sister for her time with us and treasure her words,

"The mission of love has no boundaries." Godspeed, Sister, and God bless you!

Please join us for any of the farewell events for Sr. Dorothée:

Nov 24: Noon Mass @ Sacred Heart

Nov. 29: Sisters Blessing at Mass

Dec. 7: 1-3 pm Community Open House at Lorenzo Smith School

Dec. 14: Sister Returns Home