

Pilgrims of Hope: SSND Sponsored and Co-Sponsored Ministry Boards

A Video Message for SSND Ministry Boards

by Charmaine Krohe, SSND Provincial Leader, Atlantic-Midwest Province

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Greetings to all of you! I am delighted to reconnect with you today as we draw near to the end of the board year, and before we head off into the summer break. A warm welcome to new board members. For those I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting, I am S. Charmaine Krohe, Provincial Leader of the Atlantic-Midwest Province. With gratitude I look back over this past year with the inauguration of the new Sponsor Council and all that we accomplished together. Thank you!

This past Christmas, Pope Francis proclaimed 2025 as a Holy Year, also called a year of Jubilee. According to ancient tradition, the Pope declares it every 25 years. Its purpose is for spiritual renewal of the faithful, extending forgiveness and work towards reconciliation, and expanding the works of justice and mercy. This year's Jubilee theme calls the Church to be "Pilgrims of Hope" emphasizing hope as a fulcrum around which the Church's mission extends into the future.

How might this "Jubilee of Hope" create points of intersection for the boards of SSND sponsored and co-sponsored ministries? How might you as board members embody and implement this call to be *Pilgrims of Hope*? Let me offer a few impulses to invite your reflection and conversation:

As board members, you are called to foster a '**culture of hope**' on your board. The School Sisters of Notre Dame refer to this as 'being an intercultural faith community of one mind and one heart'. What would you say makes for a hopeful board culture? In my experience practical things like showing commitment and engagement in the collaborative work of the board creates hope. I have found that trusting the goodwill in each other and welcoming questions and diverse perspectives builds community. A culture of hope on a ministry board is also visible by the board renewing itself on a continuous basis by inviting new members to serve. From your experience, what might a culture of hope look like to you?

As board members you are also '**stewards of hope**': As good stewards, you assure that the mission, vision and values of your ministry are upheld and in alignment with the SSND spirit and that the ministry reflects Gospel values. For SSND, the work of stewarding the mission requires also the willingness to do one's own inner work. The Call of the 25th General Chapter asks us to '*come before God willing to be changed, to accept our mission more*

intensely and to respond to God's continuous call to mission.' How would you say as a board, are you a steward of hope? What might it ask of you?

Lastly, as board members you are '**witnesses to hope:**' Let your light shine! Share the stories of transformation and success from your ministry through your networks and in your communities. We are inundated with tragic and difficult news, the privilege of sharing good news is yours. Share your joy over the accomplishments of your students or the women who embark on courageous journeys of healing and transformation. May your faith, hope, and charity inspire others. Let your service of being present to people at the peripheries be a witness to the hope that comes with inclusion and compassion, thus showing that service on an SSND ministry board is about structural change inspired by mission leadership. Looking back over the past year, how have you been a witness to hope?

Being *Pilgrims of Hope* requires pulling together as a board. Fostering a *culture of hope and being stewards of and witnesses to hope* is a shared endeavor. No one of us can do this alone. This is at the core of the SSND mission, that we accomplish it together, in communion.

As we move into the summer and look ahead to the new board year, may *hope* fill your hearts and inspire your call to service on your board.