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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 24, 2012

Called and Sent to Witness to Unity in a Divided World:

School Sisters of Notre Dame elect international leadership team, set future direction

ARICCIA, Italy – Sixty-five School Sisters of Notre Dame from 34 countries came together Sept. 19-Oct. 24 for their 23rd General Chapter to elect a general council and develop a directional statement to guide the way sisters live their mission for the next five years.

The theme of the chapter was “Called and Sent to Witness to Unity in a Divided World.” The School Sisters of Notre Dame hold a general chapter every five years with elected and *ex-officio* representatives from each administrative unit, who discuss and prayerfully reflect upon the future direction for the congregation.

General Council

Sister Mary Maher is the newly re-elected general superior. She will work with a team of five elected general councilors: Sister Maureen McGoey, vicar, of Canada; Sister Inês Camiran, of Brazil; Sister Carol Jean Dust, of the United States; Sister Vitória Marques, of Brazil; and Sister M. Dominica Michalke, of Germany.

The newly-elected General Council members will begin their five-year terms when they are installed on Jan. 20 at the Generalate in Rome, Italy.

Sister Mary is the 11th successor to the foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger. A native of Oceanside, N.Y., Sister Mary entered the Wilton, Conn., Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1968 and professed her first vows in 1972 in Wilton. She served as provincial leader of the Wilton Province for five years, and she was elected as the first provincial leader of the newly formed Atlantic-Midwest Province, comprised of the former provinces of Wilton, Baltimore, and Chicago. Sister Mary was first elected as the international leader of the congregation in 2007 at the General Chapter in São Leopoldo, Brazil.

Directional Statement

The directional statement, “Love Cannot Wait,” was the result of a congregation-wide consultation before the Chapter and intense dialogue and prayerful reflection during the Chapter on the theme “Called and Sent to Witness to Unity in a Divided World.”

“I am overjoyed by the results of this chapter, Sister Mary said. “Each chapter member gave herself over to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit working within her. We truly became a community of faith, hope and love, which itself is a witness to unity in a divided world. I believe great good will come from the efforts of all School Sisters and their colleagues when we live out the direction set at this General Chapter.”

The School Sisters of Notre Dame is an international congregation of more than 3,000 women religious in 34 countries. Their mission, to deepen communion with God and among all people, is lived out in ministries focused on education. They educate with a world vision believing that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons. Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger founded the congregation on Oct. 24, 1833, in Bavaria.

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