

Continuing the Good Work

1980-1990

1980s

Sr. Patricia Wren is asked to direct one of the first U.S. Permanent Diaconate programs. For over a decade she supports more than 100 deacons and their wives in the Seattle Archdiocese, and focuses the Church's awareness on lay leadership.

1981

In response to the inspiring pastoral letter from the bishops of Appalachia, Sr. Sharon Joyer joins SNDs from other Provinces in rural West Virginia. They teach children at Big Laurel School, a one-room school in the mountains with no indoor plumbing. Other California Sisters, Diane Reese, Susan Weber and Frances Ann Stubbe, soon follow to work with domestic violence victims, Head Start preschoolers and in parish ministries.



Sr. Sharon Joyer getting water at the Big Laurel School.

1984

Seeing a critical need for housing for poor women and children in Watsonville (where the Sisters have served since 1899), Sr. Marie Veronica Wagner garners community support and opens the Pajaro Valley Shelter. With help from Sr. Susan Olson and Sr. Kathy Daly, the shelter provides budgeting and parenting classes and job seeking assistance to lead to stable housing.

1980

Sr. Veronica Skillin succeeds Sr. Catharine Julie Cunningham as President of College of Notre Dame. During her 14-year tenure, enrollment increases and the



graduate division is enlarged. A sense of community grows stronger among students and faculty. The Gleason Center is built, the athletic program is expanded, the Wiegand Gallery and Madison Art Center are created, and Ralston Hall is renovated.

1982

As part of the Notre Dame ministry in Kenya (active since 1965), Sr. Ruth Ella develops a program to teach unschooled teen-aged girls in the shanty villages of Kisumu. The program, which continues to this day, focuses on life skills that enable the girls and their communities to have hope for a better future.



Sr. Ruth Ella (left) and Sr. Carolyn Buhs pose in front of one of the early program rooms made of palm leaves.