

THE  
**HALLMARKS**

---

of a Notre Dame de Namur Learning Community



## COMMITMENT PRAYER FOR THE HALLMARKS

May the good God,  
the source of all blessings,  
guide us in a commitment  
to promote and practice our  
Notre Dame de Namur Hallmarks.

May God's Holy Spirit inspire us  
to focus on what truly matters  
for faith, for community,  
for justice and peace, care of creation  
and education that benefits life-long learning.

May the good God give us wisdom  
to make decisions that ground us in  
the Notre Dame values and legacy.

Amen.

# THE HALLMARKS OF A NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR LEARNING COMMUNITY

 THE HALLMARKS OF A NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR Learning Community are rooted in the Gospel and describe the essential characteristics, values and activities of Notre Dame schools and other ministries. The Hallmarks emerged in the early 2000s through a collaborative process between Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and their colleagues in response to the question, “What makes our school a Notre Dame school?” The Hallmarks, now embraced by all our ministries, were refreshed in 2024 to reflect the current priorities articulated in the SNDdeN Chapter Calls, the publication of *Laudato Si’* and *Laudate Deum*, and insights shared by Notre Dame de Namur educators and partners in mission.

The Hallmarks express the distinctive identity of a Notre Dame de Namur learning community in terms both practical and aspirational. Just as St. Julie responded to the needs of her time, the renewed Hallmarks call our attention to the realities of inequality, injustice and pain that need a faith and values-oriented response today.

The Hallmarks are a practical guide for setting goals and policies according to each learning community’s particular context and needs. They give values-based direction for decisions and activities so that the learning community continues to express the spirituality and mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. While each Notre Dame de Namur school and ministry is unique, the Hallmarks connect us. Through them, we engage current and future generations in the Notre Dame de Namur mission and charism of making known God’s goodness in the world.

*Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur*  
2024

*We must not regard study  
simply as useful and necessary for  
effective teaching.  
We must regard it as justice.*

*St. Julie Billiart, Themes*

*We are called to continue to till  
the ground of the liberating mission  
of education in all its forms.*

*SNDdeN Chapter Calls*

# HALLMARK 1

**We proclaim by our lives  
even more than by our words  
that God is good.**

- a. We believe, even in the midst of today's reality, that God is good, and we stand firm in our commitment to honor the goodness in ourselves, in others, and our world.
- b. We value life as an ongoing spiritual journey of deepening relationships with God, self, others and all creation.
- c. We make relevant to the life of our Notre Dame learning communities the history of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the spirituality of St. Julie Billiart, and we allow these to influence our actions in today's world.
- d. We make decisions respecting and informed by Gospel values and Catholic social teaching and tradition.
- e. We create policies sensitive to those to whom and with whom we minister, reflecting the mission and values of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.

*Now is our moment, day,  
era to be the place where  
God dwells in mystery, in  
order to make Goodness  
known in the world.*

*Sister Teresita Weind, SNDdeN*

*Together we can make a  
difference bringing peace,  
joy, caring, love to our world  
that is losing sight of our  
guiding star – the goodness  
of the real God.*

*Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN  
Environmental Martyr*

*We are invited to “see  
nature as a magnificent  
book in which God speaks to  
us and grants us a glimpse  
of his infinite beauty and  
goodness.”*

*Laudato Si' 12*

*Let us pray that unity,  
the soul of a community,  
may never be destroyed!*

*St. Julie Billiart, L 450*

*You won't be driven beyond  
your strength;  
there will be someone to show you  
what you don't know,  
so you will have support.*

*Françoise Blin de Bourdon, L 154*

## HALLMARK 2

### **We honor the dignity and sacredness of each person.**

- a. We believe each person is created in the image and likeness of God; therefore, we develop and appreciate relationships that respect individual differences.
- b. We create environments that encourage the development of the whole person.
- c. We dedicate time, space and personnel in support of the individual's spiritual and personal journey.

*We can't talk about the poor. We must be poor with the poor and then there is no doubt how to act.*

*Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN  
Environmental Martyr*

*We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family.*

*Laudato Si' 52*

*The destruction of the human environment is extremely serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to us men and women, but because human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement.*

*Laudato Si' 5*

*In a community like ours,  
several nations must necessarily  
be gathered together, but charity takes  
no account of differences because  
we are all one nation in Jesus Christ.*

*St. Julie Billiart, Themes*

*In our planning, we seek to embody the values of*  
*- respect for the dignity of each person,*  
*- solidarity with the poor,*  
*- sensitivity to different cultures,*  
*faiths and values.*

*SNDdeN Constitutions*

## HALLMARK 3

### **We educate for and act on behalf of justice, peace, and care for all creation.**

- a. We educate for justice and take socially responsible actions against injustice and discrimination in all its forms.
- b. We make decisions by being aware of the effect they will have on the lives of vulnerable persons.
- c. We ground our actions for justice in the spiritual practice of reflection-action-reflection.
- d. We live and act with reverence for the earth, putting into practice the principles of Laudato Si' and Laudate Deum.
- e. We foster responsible global citizenship and commit ourselves to the practice of dialogue, nonviolence, restorative justice and peace-making.
- f. We strive to be flexible, risk-taking communities that respond to the signs and needs of the times.

*Only a profound change in our way of living, our values and attitudes, can bring new life to our world.*

*Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN  
Environmental Martyr*

*Environmental education... needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care.*

*Laudato Si' 210*

*The notion of the common good also extends to future generations. . . Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us.*

*Laudato Si' 210*

*Our charity must not be limited  
by the love we have for one another.  
It must make our hearts  
as wide as the universe.*

*St. Julie Billiart, Themes*

*We work with others to transform  
unjust structures and systems as we  
participate in creating new ways of relating,  
which enable all to experience more fully  
the goodness of God.*

*SNDdeN Constitutions*

## HALLMARK 4

### **We commit ourselves to community service.**

- a. We integrate community-based learning experiences into academic curriculum and co-curricular activities, grounding them in the spiritual practice of reflection-action-reflection.
- b. We strive to respond to the pressing needs of those made poor by unjust systems.
- c. We create mutually beneficial partnerships with community agencies as we engage in community service.

*We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.*

*Laudato Si' 49*

*We must turn toward the poor, gather them in and nurture them with the greatest care.*

*Françoise Blin de Bourdon,  
L 60*

*You know that desires  
are not enough; action is needed.*

*St. Julie Billiart, L 194*

*Gratefully aware of the goodness of God's  
creation, we reverence the resources of the  
earth. We are careful to use them in a spirit  
of stewardship to foster the life of all people.*

*SNDdeN Constitutions*

*We are called to respond within  
our local and global realities to those who  
suffer and to pray and work for the  
transformation of the attitudes,  
structures and systems  
that cause profound suffering.*

*SNDdeN Chapter Calls*

# HALLMARK 5

## We embrace the gift of diversity.

- a. We welcome to our community people of diverse cultures, ethnicities, races, socio-economic circumstances, genders, ages, sexual orientations and faith traditions.
- b. We develop inclusive educational programs that expand our knowledge and understanding as we honor and celebrate the diversity in our world.
- c. We initiate strategies and support services that respect individual learning styles while building each person's self-esteem.
- d. We work to reform unjust structures that perpetuate systemic racism and inequality.

*This sin of racism must be recognized, addressed and ended in all corners of our local and global society. We stand with those who work for justice.*

*Statement from the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur*

*The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development.*

*Laudato Si' 13*

*We are called to sow across the world new seeds of hope and unity, of inclusion and belonging, of invitation, welcome and dialogue, of collaboration for mission.*

*SNDdeN Chapter Calls*

*Speak with respect if you want others  
to respect you and love you.*

*I ask this earnestly of you;  
otherwise, no good can be done.*

*St. Julie Billiart, L 336*

*We recognize the call of God  
in a growing consciousness  
throughout the world of the dignity and value  
of each person, race and nation, and of the way  
in which society, in its values, structures,  
and systems, denies this dignity.*

*SNDdeN Constitutions*

## HALLMARK 6

### **We create community among those with whom we work and with those we serve.**

- a. We foster a spirit of friendship and belonging, modeled by St. Julie Billiart and Françoise Blin de Bourdon, the co-foundresses of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, as foundational to our learning communities.
- b. We value and implement community-building activities, both social and spiritual, to strengthen relationships between and among all members of our communities.
- c. We design and foster collaborative processes wherever possible, grounding decision-making in active participation and the principle of subsidiarity.
- d. We commit ourselves to creating just systems and right relationships within our communities.
- e. We create an atmosphere of trust and collegiality in our communities with open and direct communication in which we hear, see and value all people.

*We work with others to transform unjust structures and systems as we participate in creating new ways of relating, which enable all to experience more fully the goodness of God.*

*SNDdeN Constitutions*

*We are called to tend the gardens of diverse ministries and inter-cultural communities and nurture an ecclesial life that holds the hope of producing a harvest of communion and synodality.*

*SNDdeN Chapter Calls*

*Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds... The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.*

*Laudato Si' 219*

*We could go on until tomorrow  
and still not say everything about  
the infinite goodness of God.*

*St. Julie Billiart, L 434*

*We see ourselves situated within  
God's continuing action in history.  
Our common aim is to express in our time,  
as St. Julie did in hers, that God is good.*

*SNDdeN Constitutions*

# HALLMARK 7

## **We develop holistic learning communities that educate for life.**

- a. We actively support the education and formation of the whole person, including lifelong intellectual, emotional, spiritual, faith, psychological and social development.
- b. We design and implement academically excellent educational experiences.
- c. We create a student-centered learning environment that promotes critical thinking, intellectual engagement, and understanding of cross-cultural perspectives, using current resources and technologies.
- d. We develop self-directed leaders capable of responding to life situations with courage and compassion in a globally and technologically connected world.

*Because of our awareness that unjust structures deny people their dignity, we study the relatedness of global issues. We also join others in an effort to build peace and to search for an end to social evils, particularly war and the preparation for war, world poverty, racism, and discrimination against women.*

*SNDdeN Constitutions*

*Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature.*

*Laudato Si' 211*

*Education, aimed at creating an "ecological citizenship," is at times limited to providing information and fails to instill good habits.*

*Laudato Si' 211*



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