

Canadian Cluny Associates Respond to Human Trafficking

Cluny Associate Terry Wallace
Hamilton, Ontario

The centuries-old practice of human slavery has largely receded from modern memory only to become an obnoxious concept relegated to the archives of history.

In recent years, however, the trafficking of human persons around the world has emerged as a very real social issue of our own time. Men, women and children are being deceived, coerced, and transported to unknown places for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labor. Efforts to better understand the scope of this global problem are now being undertaken by governments and various other organizations. Current statistical data is available but generally incomplete due to the complexities of the overall problem. According to a 2008 Trafficking in Persons Report by the US Department of State, an estimated 800,000 people are trafficked across borders annually, the majority being women for commercial sexual exploitation; approximately 80 percent of transnational victims are women and girls and 20 percent are men and



Marnie Rawlinson, Sisters Regina Brunelle and Joan Van der Zyden, Bernadette St. James, Jayne Kennedy, Lynda Hill, Terry Wallace. (A few of the Canadian Associates taken at the bicentenary celebration in Hamilton in 2007).

boys. This does not account for the estimated millions of people trafficked within their own countries*. It is a sinister and highly lucrative criminal business with annual profits of an estimated \$31.6 billion US dollars, according to a 2005 report by the International Labor Organization (ILO)*. In Canada, a Human Trafficking Law was enacted in the criminal code in 2005; since then, only five convictions of human trafficking have been obtained, with twelve outstanding cases before the court*. Clearly, initial efforts to combat human

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From the Editor's Desk

Cluny Connections
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Thank you.

This issue brings both good news and bad. Sister Marie's article shares the good news that our Sisters in Haiti, supported both financially and spiritually by so many of you, are managing to get out from under the rubble some 18 months after the event. Another piece of 'good news' comes in the Canadian Associates' decision to focus on awakening awareness about human trafficking in the Hamilton, ON area. And a third is the hope stirred in our hearts when a young African Sister of St. Joseph of Cluny arrived to share the Good News of our West African missions during the annual mission appeals sponsored by the Propagation of the Faith. It's so good to know that the Cluny charism - that special gift given to Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey for the Church - is alive and well in the land she so loved!

The 'bad' news perhaps is not so bad after all! In this season of giving thanks for all God's good gifts, we are grateful for the gift of four lives generously lived for God.

In remembering them, we feel a twinge of sadness as well as thankful joy. Once again a "space between" has been created that we know can never be filled. On August 22, West Virginia Associate,

Terry Clay died. Most recently yet another space was created on September 5 through the sudden and unexpected death of Sister Gisèle Ménos. Her story and Terry's will appear in our next issue of *Cluny Connections*.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny will be gathering at the Mother House in Paris in the spring of 2012 for a General Chapter. By then, each Province of the Congregation will have completed its own local Chapter and sent the results to the Mother House for deliberation during the General Chapter. Delegates from around the globe representing each Province will spend several weeks electing general leadership and looking at the ways that we can continue to be faithful to our mission in this century. Needless to say, we need the help of the Holy Spirit in order to respond to the signs of our time. We count on your prayerful journeying with us as we prepare for this significant event in the life of our congregation.

May your celebration of Thanksgiving, whether in Canada on October 10 or in the USA on November 24, be blessed with an increasing awareness that Everything Is Gift!

Sister Regina Brunelle

*A ship just left for Mana
with 55 Negroes aboard.
With what joy and happiness
did they learn of their
deliverance from slavery!*

*As for me, I bless and
thank God a thousand times
for having so mercifully
chosen me for such a
wonderful service!*

Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey,
Letter 365 written from
Cayenne, French Guiana, March 15, 1836

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Update on Cluny Sisters in Haïti

Sister Marie Cooper

Haïti continues to struggle more than 18 months after the earthquake and with little of the international pledge of billions of dollars put to work to rebuild the nation. One reason for the delay has been the inability for President Michel Martelly to have his candidate for Prime Minister approved by Parliament.

It is amidst both the difficulties and the rays of hope that Cluny Sisters struggle to rebuild and to exercise their ministries. Thanks to our many very generous donors, they were able first to rebuild the home for the elderly sisters, and then to begin work on the clinics and schools.

Sister Marie-Yannick Saiëh, a Haïtian and member of our province, was missioned to Haïti two years ago. She works there with the Haïtian Project of the Diocese of Norwich, CT and lives in community with our sisters in Port au Prince. On a recent visit to the United States she gave us an update on the sisters' rebuilding efforts.

In Port-au-Prince, St. Rose Primary School, totally destroyed by the quake, is now rebuilt. Thanks to United Way from Trinidad, six new classrooms serving approximately 400 students have been built for École Mère Louise, once in down-town Port au Prince but now relocated on property belonging to the Congregation. On the same property, Anne Marie Javouhey School still awaits rebuilding. Recently, however, the sisters have been offered help through Caritas. Similarly, Rosalie Javouhey School, which is still operating out of hangars, has acquired a patron. An Irish woman, a former Cluny student, has initiated a fundraising project to rebuild. On the land where the newly built orphanage collapsed, UNICEF set up hangars to house students from Kindergarten to Grade 9. At Cayes-Jacmel, both the sisters' residence and the school are now under construction. But at Jacmel, where both residence and school were also destroyed, new property is still being sought. Suitable property is at a premium, driving prices up, and making the acquisition of land very difficult. As for the clinics, the one

at Furcy received only minimal damage and was quickly repaired. The clinic in Port-au-Prince, however, was destroyed. Since the original building and land did not belong to the congregation, the new clinic is being constructed on Cluny property near, but separate from, two of our schools. The new orphanage project is being headed by the HAIT-T Foundation, founded by Paula Henry, MD of Port of Spain, Trinidad. The next major fund raiser is scheduled for late October. Also involved in the project are the Cluny Sisters in Trinidad and Erik Freely, an artist, J. W. Douglas, an architect and other Trinidadians.

The Sisters in Haïti are most grateful to all who have reached out to them, providing for their immediate needs, the nourishment of the school children, and the rebuilding projects. Hope for the future comes from the outpouring of care and assistance that has allowed them to progress thus far. In addition to the many building projects, the sisters have been able to continue to support themselves and to provide meals for school children in need as well as for many others. Donations have also made it possible to treat the never-ending stream of patients in need by providing medication and supplies for the clinics.

At the same time as Cluny Sisters forged ahead, a variety of other projects have been put into action to build up infrastructures, notably a partnership between Catholic Relief Services (<http://crs.org>) in the US and the Université de Notre-Dame d'Haïti, the Hôpital St. François de Sales in Haïti, the University of Maryland School of Nursing, and the Institute of Human Virology, which is part of the University of Maryland School of Medicine. A group of physicians is currently in Haïti finalizing the second part of the program, when they will become trainers for future classes of Haïtian doctors and nurses.

The Pan American Health Organization recently announced a plan to immunize 90 percent of Haïtian newborns by 2015. The cost of the program is estimated at \$100 million. Haïti will be the last country in this

hemisphere to adopt a pentavalent vaccine that protects against Haemophilus influenzae type B, or Hib, and hepatitis B, as well as diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus. The plan will also include the relatively new rotavirus and pneumococcal vaccines. This plan would cut infant mortality significantly. (*NY Times*, 5/17/11, page 1.)

Another project is Reef Check, (a nonprofit organization in California that monitors reef health around the globe: www.reefcheck.org) which is hiring local people, teaching them to swim and dive, and engaging them in a project to bring back the dying coral reefs which have been a key attraction for tourism in Haïti.

Another project bringing hope is a collaboration between Xavier University in Louisiana and the Université Notre Dame d'Haïti founded in 1996 by the Haïtian bishops. The project may include exchange of students and the establishment of a school of pharmacy in Haïti. A major funding source is the government of Qatar that assisted Xavier in the aftermath of Katrina, and has earmarked \$20 million for recovery projects in Haïti. Msgr. Pierre-André Pierre, the rector of Université Notre Dame, reflected, "It would be the first Catholic university in Haïti partnering with the first university created by St. Katharine Drexel to serve the black people here. For us, it is very meaningful." (*National Catholic Reporter*, 9/16/11, page 4.)

A returning Haïtian entrepreneur has begun a project to establish an electrical power grid throughout the country. He is employing a significant number of local people in the construction effort, which also contributes to the economy in a small way.

Many more large and small projects are needed for the long and difficult road towards stability facing Haïti today.

You can help the sisters by sending your donation marked "Rebuild Haïti" to:

*Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny
PO Box 66
Newport, RI 02840. 02840*

In Memoriam



Sister Anne Grogan

Stella Maris, a residence for elderly ladies in Newport, RI, was Sister Anne Grogan's first assignment when she arrived from Ireland shortly after her Profession of Vows on January 4, 1954. The ladies loved her cheerful smile and Irish brogue! The ministry suited her well. Anne had been a homemaker before she entered and a homemaker she would be for all of her active years in religious life.

In one of her letters, Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey wrote that "a Sister of St. Joseph of Cluny should be like a bird on a branch, ready to fly at the first sound of obedience". She must have been thinking of Sister Anne! Her exemplary availability was demonstrated over and over again as she flew east and west and east again between Rhode Island and California over the course of her long and busy life.

Sister Anne was an excellent cook and delighted in putting on wonderful meals for special community gatherings, feasts and holidays. Never be it said that anyone ever came through the door without being offered a cup of properly made tea! (Even her Carrageen moss pudding wasn't so bad when you gave it half a chance!!!) She was also an expert shopper who knew how to organize and use coupons to the best advantage. Shopping with her was a learning experience for the disorganized!

After years of suffering, she underwent surgery on her hip and leg. She spent a year in the Motherhouse in Paris recuperating before returning to Newport in 1974. Five years later, she was back in Torrance, CA where she remained until 1991 when she flew east again to manage the Provincial House kitchen in Newport.

When Javouhey House in Newport, RI opened its doors in 2003, Sister Anne was among the four Sisters who formed its first community. In 2004, she celebrated her Golden Jubilee. By this time, her 50 years of service were taking their toll and her heart longed for the green shores of Ireland. One more flight, this time heading farther east, took her home again on September 25, 2005. After a long illness, on February 12, 2011, Sr. Anne heard the boarding call for the longest journey of all . . . flying straight into the welcoming arms of the God she had served so well through her service of others.



Sister Immaculata Murphy

Sister Immaculata Murphy harbored the dream of becoming a religious for a long time before she got up the courage to take the step. Once, sharing her vocation story with a group of us, she confided that she carried a letter to Jesus on her heart for ages, telling him she really wanted to be his if he would have her! She also sheepishly admitted that, as a religious, singing love songs to Jesus became one of her favorite ways to pray.

Sister Immaculata came by boat from Ireland to Philadelphia in 1947. She was one of the first four Sisters assigned to St. Joseph Home for Boys. Grown men now, some of these boys still talk about the big heart her sharp wit tried so hard to cover! They enjoyed her cheerfulness, generosity and very apparent fondness for what she once termed "the savages at St. Joseph's House" when asked at a missionary display, "And in what foreign country are you working, Sister?"

"Sister Mac" brooked no nonsense from any of them, but they knew the path to the linen room when they were in trouble or needed a listening ear. So did the in-coming Holy Spirit missionaries! And so it was that the newly appointed Bishop of Arusha, Africa arrived one morning with a pile of second hand bishop's robes that were twice his size expecting a miracle of transformation. Chiding all the way, Sr. Immaculata worked the miracle...even to the oversized miter, the rim of which she stuffed with newspaper!

In October, 1976 Sister Immaculata was assigned to St. Margaret's Home in Providence, RI. to minister to elderly ladies. In August 1979, she was transferred to the Cathedral Rectory also in Providence. True to her great spirit, Sister Immaculata arrived there ready for whatever task would be hers, faithful to her post until her retirement in Ireland in August, 2005.

Learning of her death on August 29th, two former bishops of Providence came together to celebrate Mass for her at St. Clare's Home in Newport where a former companion now lives. What a witness to how she touched all those she served! No doubt she is now happily busy chasing cobwebs, stitching robes for the choirs of angels . . . or singing love songs to Jesus!



Photo: Sr. Joan Van der Zyden

Cluny students in West Africa

Africa: The Heart of Blessed Anne Marie

Sister Gertrude Mensah

Cluny Sister of the Vice-Province of West Africa

I was privileged this year to participate in the mission appeals sponsored by the Propagation of the Faith on behalf of the West Africa Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny. I stayed in Middletown, Rhode Island at the Provincial House Community with Sr. Joan, the provincial of the Province of USA and Canada, and Sister Luke, a councilor.

The dioceses of Providence and Worcester were our host dioceses this year. Having stayed in The Gambia for two years, Sierra Leone for three years and being now in my third year of studies in Ghana I was able to speak from personal experience, sharing my knowledge of these three countries, but especially of the amazing work that the Cluny Sisters are doing in West Africa.

In 1822-1823, Anne Marie Javouhey came to The Gambia and Sierra Leone respectively. Seeing the tremendous need, she immediately set to work in the hospitals, caring for the sick, even making sheets and pillows for them to help them

rest their body on something comfortable. Later, other Sisters came from France and Ireland. Much later, local African women began to swell the ranks of the Sisters. Today, thirty-seven sisters, mostly African, work in ten different locations, continuing to help people in West Africa find the world a more comfortable place in which to live.

A small example will help you grasp the long-term effect of the Sisters' work. About ten years ago, a Day Care Centre was opened in a little village in Ghana where the people depended on their farm produce for survival. The Day Care frees the farmers to focus on their farm while we look after their children, many of them undernourished. The school fee is a stick of firewood that every child brings to school and which is used for cooking. We feed these children and educate them. Within one year of its opening, the Day Care Center reported a drastic reduction in infant mortality. The first group of children to frequent the Day Care became the first

group to attend our newly built Junior High School. This year, they graduated from high school with the highest grades in the district. Like Blessed Anne Marie before them, the Sisters continue to care for the sick and the aged, to instruct youth and to empower women. But most recently, in Sierra Leone, the focus has become the

work of reconciliation and the rehabilitation of the war wounded. Thanks to this ministry, many people are discovering that there is something more to life than what they have lost. The Sisters encourage, educate and support them so that they can help themselves to change their situation. Many, including the disabled and children who are hearing impaired, have been helped to find their place in the society in which they live today.

Having lived in the United States for two months now, preaching about our mission and visiting our Sisters here, I have become aware of the prayers and the generosity of the American people. I will never forget Sacred Heart Church in Hopedale, Massachusetts where Sr. Joan, Sr. Luke and I were called to the altar for blessing prayers. I was deeply moved when the whole congregation was asked to stretch forth their hands over us as the priest prayed for the Congregation and its Mission! I felt blessed to be the representative of our Congregation, following in the footsteps of Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey. It is an undeniable fact that the church is universal and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny "from every race and nation and tongue have but one heart and one soul and continue the work the Lord entrusted" to our founder. (*Rule of Life*)

Anne Marie Javouhey loved Africa and no obstacle could keep her from reaching that continent. As I finish my appeals and return home to the land she so loved, it is my prayer that God will bless you all for your constant prayers and generosity. May you continue to hold in your own hearts and prayer the land of Africa that swelled the heart of Anne Marie Javouhey with so much love!



Photo: Sr. Marie Cooper

Mothers bringing their children to Loretto Clinic in Makeni, Sierra Leone.



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Bringing Hope & Compassion

Human Trafficking (Continued from Page 1)

trafficking are eclipsed by the enormity and complexity of the problem. Further, what has become of the many hidden victims of this scandalous crime?

So now what do we do? How are we to become part of the solution?

These were the very questions left to linger in the minds and hearts of Cluny Associates over the summer months as we each prayed to discern God’s Will and prepare for group discussion in autumn.

Our September Associates’ meeting included a lively discussion of the problem of human trafficking, with two specific concerns percolating to the surface for further consideration: first, the cultural trend of sexualizing little girls at a very young age and second, the enslavement of young women into forced prostitution. Our next steps include planning a letter writing campaign to encourage retail stores to market wholesome, age-appropriate clothing for girls, and investigating possibilities for partnering with like-minded, local area agencies currently involved in the struggle against human trafficking.

With the prayers of Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey may we “do a little good” in the fight against human trafficking and in the service of broken-hearted victims.

*World Vision Canada – Human Trafficking Statistics: Global and Canadian

Further Resources:

- Not for Sale www.notforsale.org
 - International Justice Mission, Canada www.ijm.ca
 - World Vision www.worldvision.ca
 - Shared Hope International www.sharedhope.org
 - Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center
(Washington, DC)
 - Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres
www.casac.ca
 - Stop Trafficking Coalition cuias@cuias.org
 - Beyond Borders www.beyondborders.org
- (Google the above for a list of informative sites.)