

## Christ Is Risen

Sister Mary Josephine Glynn



Christ is Risen, alleluia! These words echoed throughout the church as the congregation of Mary Star of the Sea in San Pedro joyfully welcomed eleven persons at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. They were completing their journey through the RCIA process. Dressed in brown gowns they gathered outside to witness the new fire and the lighting of the Easter candle. This new light led them through the darkness to listen to the story of salvation history in anticipation of the new life that awaited them. As each person was baptized he/she faced the congregation and alleluias in grateful praise filled the church. It was an awesome moment when all came forth dressed in white gowns to symbolize their new life. The sacrament of Confirmation gifted them with the fullness of the Holy Spirit and they joyfully received Eucharist for the first time.

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Thank you.

*H*e is risen alleluia! We see it all around us as spring finally arrives after a very hard winter for some of our readers. Hopefully, our delight in sprouting daffodils, tulips and forsythia bespeaks the joy of the Risen Christ who is with us always until the end of time!

Discover Christ among us in Sister Mary's sharing of the Easter Vigil at St. Mary Star of the Sea in San Pedro, California. As director of the RCIA and Religious Education at the parish, Sr. Mary must feel like a mother giving birth to new life at every celebration of the Vigil!

See Christ walking with us in the work of Cluny sisters in the Tea Gardens of Darjeeling that Sister Marie Edel describes. Who would have thought Darjeeling tea comes to us at such a human cost?

And Christ continues to walk with us through the outreach of our associates. Read about the interesting ministry Millicent Borgarding describes in her article on Restorative Justice.

In this issue, we are introducing a new column: Did You Know? We hope you will find the tidbits recorded there interesting and informative.

No doubt you are aware of the recent 7.8-magnitude quake that killed more than 5,000 people in Kathmandu alone. That toll will surely be much higher in the ensuing days as rescue teams begin working in the devastated villages near the quakes epicenter. Though our sisters in Kathmandu are reported to be physically safe and sound, we weep for the thousands who have lost their lives and the thousands more who live but have lost everything that made living possible. We urge you to keep them all in your prayer and to help them financially in any way you can.

Blessings on you all and thanks for your continued support of Cluny and Cluny Connections!

Sister Regina

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# The Restorative Justice Program

Millicent Borgarding  
California Cluny Associate

As Cluny Associates, like Blessed Anne Marie before us, we all want “to do a little good.” One way I do this is through a program implemented by the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office called the Neighborhood Justice Program. Here, first-time offenders, who have committed a misdemeanor, have an opportunity to avoid going through the criminal justice system. The Neighborhood Justice Program gives individual offenders an alternative by way of voluntary participation in a diversion program at the pre-filing stage of the case, which is before criminal charges are filed against that individual. This not only provides opportunities for individuals to succeed without suffering the negative consequences of having a criminal charge levied against them, like having to plead guilty or no contest, it also aims at restoring and healing the relationships harmed through the wrongdoer’s actions.

Respect is essential in this restorative justice program, where offenders are “participants” rather than “accused” or “defendants,” which are terms used in the criminal justice system. Each participant in this program is required to take part in a confidential panel session. Also present at the panel sessions are three community-based volunteer panelists, a volunteer facilitator and a City of L.A. caseworker. Each participant’s family and the victim may also be present. These sessions focus on three things: the harm that was done, the harm’s effect on others, and how the harm can be repaired.

As the panelists hear participants explain their ‘offense,’ they ask questions in a supportive and non-judgmental manner. They also explain that participants are there to move forward in a positive way. These inquiries assist everyone in reaching an agreement on how the harm is to be repaired. To that end, panelists try to assign community service in an area of interest to the participant, hoping that the participant will continue this community service after the process is completed. Participants can also be expected to write a letter of apology



Millicent Borgarding

to the person or entity harmed. When appropriate, participants are directed to attend a class on theft prevention. As long as a participant completes the process within two-months of signing a restorative agreement, they avoid both the criminal justice system and a criminal record.

As a panelist, I have found this to be a humbling experience: giving participants a second chance, seeing them understand what harm has been done to the community, and seeing how thankful participants are for the opportunity to repair that harm. Indeed, every participant I have encountered has been truly grateful for the program and the process. Each has left the panel session with the positive ‘I- am- going-to-make-this-program-work’ attitude. This ministry as a volunteer panelist has truly been a blessing – one that helps bridge the gap between our structured criminal justice system and an alternative system designed to restore good community relationships in a positive and caring manner. Through this ministry I am living my commitment “to do a little good” both as a retired 40-year employee of the Federal Court system, and as a California Cluny Associate inspired by the vision of Blessed Anne Marie.



# Cluny Sisters Province of North East India and Nepal

## Life Beyond a Cup of Tea

Sister Marie Edel Rai

Province of North India and Nepal

Member of the Cluny Global Concerns Virtual Committee

**D**arjeeling tea occupies a very important place in the hearts of many tea lovers across the globe. However, the irony behind this fact is that very few among them are aware of the life of the people without whom they could never enjoy the luxury of this exotic flavor. Yes, these Garden people have failed to have a place in the world of tea. Often the stories of their life - their struggle - remain buried under the tea bushes untold and unseen.

Tea Plantations in Darjeeling are not just economic production units, but rather social institutions that, to a great extent, control the lives of their resident work force. These workers live and work exclusively for their respective plantations without any freedom of choice in terms of work and place of living. They are completely dependent on the management for food, water, shelter, education, health and sanitation.

Tea is the only means of survival for our students. As long as the Gardens run they remain in the classroom. Tea has helped them to meet their basic necessities. But life in the Garden is not always easy. Most of the families are one-member-earning families whose small income is just enough to feed the family of five or six. So it's very hard for the parents to meet the educational expenses of their children. Yet there are hundreds who are trying to give their children a little education in the face of poverty. The ugliest consequence of poverty in the Gardens is the moral degradation found there exposing young girls and women to the evils of human trafficking.

Alcoholism is the curse of Garden life. Driven by frustration due to acute financial crises, people take refuge in alcohol. The parents of many children come to school drunk, bringing disgrace upon their child. The result is that the child performs very poorly academically, in spite of being quite intelligent.

The broken family is another frustrating fact of Tea Garden life. Poverty and lack of education have given rise to a number of other social problems such as early marriage and divorce.



Photo: Sister Marie Edel Rai

Women working in the Tea Garden.

As a result children are restless, disturbed, rebellious, emotionally unbalanced and not able to concentrate on their studies. Therefore, Garden children are also deeply lacking in self confidence. Convinced that they cannot accomplish anything, they find very little to value within themselves. The children become sluggish and shy and remain incomplete because the Tea Garden environment cannot give them even a minimum of the required basic human development needs such as security, safety, love and self-esteem.

Being rooted in the charism of Blessed Anne Marie Cluny Sisters ministering in education at St. Michael's, Province of North East India & Nepal walk with the poor and marginalized Tea Garden children, aiming to empower them to take their rightful place in society with human dignity and equality through academic excellence, character development and spiritual formation. We hope that having gone through such a process our students will become effective and efficient men and women, not only for their own progress and prosperity but also for the transformation of the society and communities they live in.



Photos: Sister Marie Edel Rai

Children in school and the sisters involved in pastoral outreach with the women workers on the weekend.

## Statistics

<b>Registered Estates</b>	400 Registered Tea Estates; 87 in the 3 hill-subdivisions of Darjeeling.
<b>Salaries/Wages</b>	The quality of the ration received by the laborers is very poor; 25% of it is humanly inconsumable.
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>	Fringe benefits such as umbrella, protective clothing and firewood given workers are also of very poor quality.
<b>Medical benefits</b>	Only on paper! Dispensaries, doctors, and qualified nurses do not exist. Medical bills are not paid on time, and if ever paid, only with a substantial deduction.

# Reaching out to Cluny Sisters in Nepal

Sister Marie Cooper  
Member of the Cluny Global Concerns Virtual Committee



Photo: Sister Marie Edel Rai

Rescue efforts immediately after the quake.



Photo: Sister Marie Edel Rai

A Cluny Sister taking in the damage to the convent wall.

As we watched reports from this country high in the Himalayas, we held our breath wondering how our six communities with 18 sisters were faring in the midst of the extensive loss of life and property. Miraculously all the sisters are safe, but needs are enormous.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, there is a lot of fear and concern about another significant earthquake as aftershocks continue in the area. The sisters, like the other residents, are sleeping outside as they respond to immediate needs and work to take up their ministries again.

The first community is Damak in East Nepal, established in the early 1980s. Our school for the very poor is in Godavari in Kathmandu. The four sisters there are involved in education and pastoral work. Also in Kathmandu, the community of three sisters in Dhobighat teach in a diocesan school and do pastoral work.

Near the China border in East Nepal there are two communities, Okhrey and Hetauda, with three sisters in each involved in healthcare and education.

Throughout Nepal the sisters are involved in pastoral works, education in Cluny schools, diocesan and Montessori schools, and healthcare.

Your assistance is needed to support our sisters and their ministries: please pray for the sisters and all those affected by this great tragedy.

Donations may be sent to:

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# Anti-Trafficking Engages Hamilton Associates

Terry Wallace  
Hamilton Associate

On April 18, 2015 Hamilton Associates attended what has become an annual human trafficking awareness conference, sponsored by the School Sisters of Notre Dame and organized by the Waterdown Stop Human Trafficking Committee.

The theme this year, “Youth @ Risk”, was chosen to focus attention on the influence of pornography and social media on the issue of human trafficking and the risks posed to our youth.

Guest Speaker Bridget Perrier, Cofounder and First Nations Educator “Sextrade 101”, herself a survivor of sexual exploitation and trafficking, shared her own story of tragedy and triumph, while highlighting the vulnerability and plight of aboriginal women and youth, drawing attention to the twelve hundred missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls across Canada.

Sex addiction therapist, Paul Lavergne of Turning Point Counseling Services, warned the audience of the prevalence of Internet pornography, its ready availability to our youth, and the negative psychological and psychosocial impacts on those who indulge in pornography.

Both Bridget Perrier and Paul Lavergne offered helpful advice for parents and teachers to help safeguard our youth from the influences of social media and pornography, including open discussion about the inherent dangers they pose, as well as the installation of filtering software on smart phones.

Toronto Police Officers, Sgt. Stephen Hicks and Constable Glenn Jones, shared some of their experiences about gang-related involvement in sex trafficking and the lures and manipulations used to prey on young women. They discussed a Toronto Police initiative, “for KICKS.ca”, a proactive program designed to encourage wholesome choices and leadership skills for youth through various sporting activities.

Earlier this year, the associates sponsored viewings of the documentary film *Nefarious*. Substantial freewill offerings received during the screenings were given to Walk with Me, an organization that reaches out to women trafficked into the sexual slave trade.

With the approach of the 2015 Pan Am Games being hosted in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, Hamilton Cluny Associates are investigating opportunities to participate and support planned activities to raise awareness of human trafficking, including a silent protest to challenge the demand for prostitution, “Buying Sex is NOT a Sport”.

The following filtering software for smart phones and computers can assist parents, grandparents and teachers in protecting our youth from easy access to pornography:

SafeEyes, BSafeOnline, NetNanny, CyberPatrol, and K9 Web Patrol.

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## Happy Birthday, Sister Joseph!

On April 18th, Sister Joseph Edwards celebrated her 99th birthday with Mass, dinner and a special cake at St. Clare Home, surrounded by Cluny Sisters.

Sister Joseph is from Lawn, New Foundland. She has been professed as a Cluny Sister for over 70 years. Sister has served in India as well as in the United States.

We look forward to celebrating her 100th next year!



Photo: Sister Luke Parker

Sister Joseph blowing out the candle on her cake.



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## Did You Know?

### Cluny Leadership Meets in Reunion

The Leadership of the Cluny Sisters met in Reunion, for the mid-chapter assembly from April 26-May 12th. This important gathering provides a progress report between Chapters and helps refocus the Sisters' efforts for the next three years. Reunion (then known as the Isle of Bourbon) was the place of our first mission. Five of the fifteen Sisters in the community set sail for the island in 1817, just ten years after the congregation's foundation on May 7, 1807. Thus began the missionary thrust of the congregation.

### Human Trafficking Update

The stats and facts of modern-day human trafficking are shocking. According to the U.S. Department of State, from 800,000 to two million people are trafficked each year, 80 percent of whom are women and girls. Human trafficking facilitates sexual exploitation, forced labor, domestic servitude; it leads to organ removal and forced marriage. It represents, says Comboni Missionary Sr. Gabriella Bottani, a new form of slavery. (Source: Global Sisters Report)

### Happy Birthday, St. Teresa

St. Teresa of Avila is one of the patrons of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny. One of only four women named a Doctor of the Church, Teresa's teachings on contemplative prayer remain essential centuries after their writing. We join with the Church and Carmelites everywhere in celebrating this gifted saint's 500th birthday year. Blessed Anne-Marie Javouhey, Cluny founder, said, "A Sr. of St. Joseph (of Cluny) must have the heart of a Carmelite."

### Students Aid Students

Sister Genevieve Marie Vigil shares about the water-tank project for Sierra Leone:

As part of their Lenten project, students of Mary Star of the Sea High School in San Pedro, California spent five weeks collecting money to aid the students of Sierra Leone. The goal: to build a water tank in one of the Cluny schools. Sacrifice and creative sales of popsicles along with the generous support of a teacher, resulted in the students raising \$5,000.00. Way to go, Mary Star of the Sea!

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Please remember the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny in your will. Thank you.