

Congratulations, Sister Genevieve-Marie on your Golden Jubilee!

Sister Genevieve Marie Vigil

On that hot humid day of August 17, 1966, I began a journey of place and of heart. I wanted to go to a foreign mission when I professed my vows, convinced that I could thus change the world and solve all the challenges of the poor.

What a grace it has been that the world and the Presence of Jesus have changed me! My journey of place led me to Rhode Island, Trinidad and Tobago, Canada and California and in that time my understanding of mission deepened.

My journey of heart led me to work in both traditional and non-traditional elementary and high school education. Each brought blessings and memories of students and parents and co-workers who deepened and stretched my understanding of what it means to be in mission.

Education with and for Portuguese immigrant children in Canada; then working in Los Angeles Unified School District–Adult Division with new adult immigrants from China, Mexico, El Salvador, Korea, Thailand, and so many other countries was an education in itself. As I listened to the challenges and struggles of immigrants and refugees in the Los Angeles area, their courage and graciousness blessed



Photo: Sister Mary Josephine Glynn

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me with a new understanding of what it means to be a stranger in a foreign land.

Working with at-risk students in areas of economic poverty certainly challenged my perceptions and biases about “those people”. In the lives of so many young people, I witnessed and shared in the pain of different types of violence. It was humbling to listen to stories of forgiveness that challenged my own understanding of what forgiveness, loyalty, and love look like. I continue to work in education and each day brings laughter and the challenge of encouraging young people in their search for who they are.

In my Cluny Community I have been privileged to meet so many women who carry the light of faith and hope in total availability to the Reign of God through their lives lived for justice, peace and love. Through their witness I have learned that mission is wherever God leads me. The One who called me fifty years ago continues to surprise me on the journey. For that, I am truly grateful!

Thoughts on the Jubilee of Mercy (Continued)

We have had presidents who were less than polished and cultured. Andrew Jackson’s friends nearly demolished the interior of the White House with their rowdy celebration of his election; Ulysses Grant was a fine general but not often sober; and certainly there were moral inadequacies all along the way. We do not elect saints but humans like ourselves and we trust that in their heart of hearts they love this country as we do, and will put the common good of all before everything else.

In this year dedicated by our Holy Father to compassion and mercy we pray for greater understanding and

acceptance of each other and greater kindness to all. Let not the apparent contradiction of our everyday life with its TV projections and newspaper headlines let us forget the really important things. Let us pray, and reflect, and discuss, and discern as we select another leader for our country; but let us do so in the light of grace and wisdom from the Spirit.

May our next leader, male or female, of whatever race or political persuasion, or economic class or religion realize that they are instruments OF THE PEOPLE AND FOR THE PEOPLE and may they “do right, love goodness, and walk humbly with their God.” (Micah 6:8)