

Let's Celebrate the Small Things!

Sister Anne Marie Liston

I am sitting here at this laptop trying to think of something to write and the inspiration won't come. Nothing, nada, zilch! Why did I get into this? I look out the window again ... maybe I'll see a lovely spring scene and it will motivate me ... no luck, all I can see is a ladybug crawling along my window sill. A ladybug?? It must be Regina sent to haunt me into working: ladybugs are her special sign ... but that is another story.

That little bug going across my window sill on those tiny legs, would be like me trying to walk ten miles across the Alaskan tundra, but she doesn't stop. Each day our lives are full of little things that scarcely make a dent in our consciousness; and yet those little things, if we really paused and thought about them, might color our whole day differently.

We live in such a frenetic, hurried kind of way most days: so much to do, so little time to do it. But what am I missing? That lady in the stationery store who gave me a big smile and let me go ahead of her, she really seemed happy

about it. The old guy in B. J.s who told me I should get a ticket for driving the handicapped cart too fast; the computer angel who gets me out of whatever I have gotten into, when I am ready to drop the laptop out the third story window; the patch of sun that lands right on my cat's head and makes her look so angelic. The time spent with old friends over a cup of coffee; the smell of candle wax and flowers in the stillness of the church before Mass; the endless acts of kindness performed so graciously by others.

These and a million other tiny acts of love are part of our lives, and they are so much more important than Dow Jones, or the politics of chaos, or one-upmanship.

Help us Lord, to see the beauty of the small things and the wisdom of the imperfect as we trudge, hobble, wheel or trip along the journey. Let us remember the ladybugs and the butterflies. Their lives are only moments, but *they have enough time.*

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Thank you.

Happy Resurrection to all! This time last week I wasn't quite sure ... who would have guessed four inches of snow the day after Easter? And the weather didn't get too much better for the rest of the week...but today we have sunshine!

When I was younger I remember how I used to puzzle over Easter and Christmas. No matter how many times I had heard the "greatest of all feasts was Easter" I still had this vague doubt that really, wasn't Christmas more important? After all, the four weeks of Advent were more fun, and the decorations, and Christmas trees, and presents of course, I guess I was truly a child of the consumer generation, nuns and Catholic school notwithstanding.

I must have been about 25 when, as a young professed, I actually got "in touch" with faith. I owed rediscovery to a tiny, frail, elderly Jewish lady whose name I did not even know. One of the young sisters had a close encounter with poison ivy. While my itchy, swollen friend disappeared into the inner recesses of the ER, I settled in the waiting room. Soon the clanging of the emergency vehicle sounded, and there was a flurry of activity as an elderly man was wheeled in on a stretcher. His elderly wife took her seat as they rushed him through. I tried to comfort her, until finally she stopped me and in anger said, "You Christians, you try to make everything all right with your talk of heaven and a loving God, I cannot believe." She told me of how she and her husband had escaped the concentration camp when it was liberated. They were saved by their gift of music, immigrated to the States where they, as well as their daughter, were all concert musicians. She could not believe there was a loving God after losing so much, and if her husband died she too, she said, would join him.

I never saw or heard from her again, and yet for days I thought about her story. Eventually I realized that she had taught me more about faith than I had ever learned in theology classes. I *could believe* in the Resurrection and that faith was entirely a gratuitous gift from God, which I could never earn or deserve ... I could only be grateful for it. Jesus is Risen, indeed, Alleluia!

Sister Anne Marie

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Cluny Sisters in Senegal Celebrating 200 Years

Sister Marie Cooper



Through formal ministry in education and health care, through closeness to the people and outreach, Cluny Sisters in Senegal, Niger, Togo and Burkina Faso carry on the vision of Blessed Anne Marie and Mother Rosalie Javouhey with love and joy.

Songs, prayers and shouts of joy and laughter rang out as Cluny Sisters rejoiced in the gatherings of the bicentennial celebrations. The Province of Senegal / Niger was founded by Mother Rosalie Javouhey, sister of Blessed Anne Marie, in 1818, in the early days of the congregation. This is one of the few provinces in Africa to welcome Blessed Anne Marie, and that remains a source of motivation and missionary zeal.

As we celebrate our bicentenary, we remain a young, dynamic province, with over 50% of the sisters under the age of 50. Another characteristic of the province is its internationality and availability for mission. Our multi-cultural and international communities reflect the spirit of welcome and communion thus opening us to the universal church.

Geographically, we are present in very sensitive areas, dominated by the rise of religious fanaticism and Islamic sects. Despite this climate of insecurity and precariousness, our valiant missionaries keep the flame of hope and faith burning with the aid of our collaborators and benefactors who support us in our mission.

We continue to work in the field of the Lord through: the education of youth in schools, sewing centers for girls, health care, the empowerment of women, and outreach to the most vulnerable: children, prisoners, and disabled children.

We gratefully acknowledge the work, prayer and struggles of all the sisters who have gone before us these 200 years, to bring us to this wonderful moment in our history.

Communities of the Province
Senegal - Founded in 1818
11 Communities
44 Sisters
Niger- Founded in 1999
2 Communities
6 Sisters
Togo- Founded in 2012
1 Community
5 Sisters
Burkina Faso- Founded in 2012
1 Community
3 Sisters

Cluny Connections congratulates the sisters of the Province of Senegal-Niger. We are inspired by your witness and spirit of Blessed Anne Marie!



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Bringing Hope & Compassion

Sister Regina Brunelle Honored with Student Award Program

Loretta Hill-Finamore
Director, Youth Services Good Shepherd Services
Hamilton, Ontario

Regina's place, Regina's Place School and Jeanne Scott Centre community lost a very special person: Sister Regina.

Sister Regina was an active member of our community, at Regina's Place (formerly known as Angela's Place) and in the classroom. At Regina's Place she supported in childcare, doing the display boards, having fun events nights, being a grandma to moms and children and being a mentor to moms and staff. Sister's presence was incredible and is still deeply missed.

In the school, Sister spent an afternoon a week with the students engaging with the students and the staff in a variety of areas: guided meditation, poetry study, spiritual guidance, and helping us become activists in

our community by writing petitions to enact change, especially around the issue of human trafficking.

The Sister Regina Award was created to honor Sister, and to inspire a student to continue to live in the spirit of Sister Regina.

This year *The Sister Regina Award* will be presented to the student at Regina's Place School who exemplifies many of the same qualities of Sister Regina, in her role as a student and in her role as a mother: she displays the qualities of kindness, and compassion, and will engage in life-long learning, just as Sister did.

Please feel free to pass on to other people who knew Sister Regina and whom you think would want to know about this venture.

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