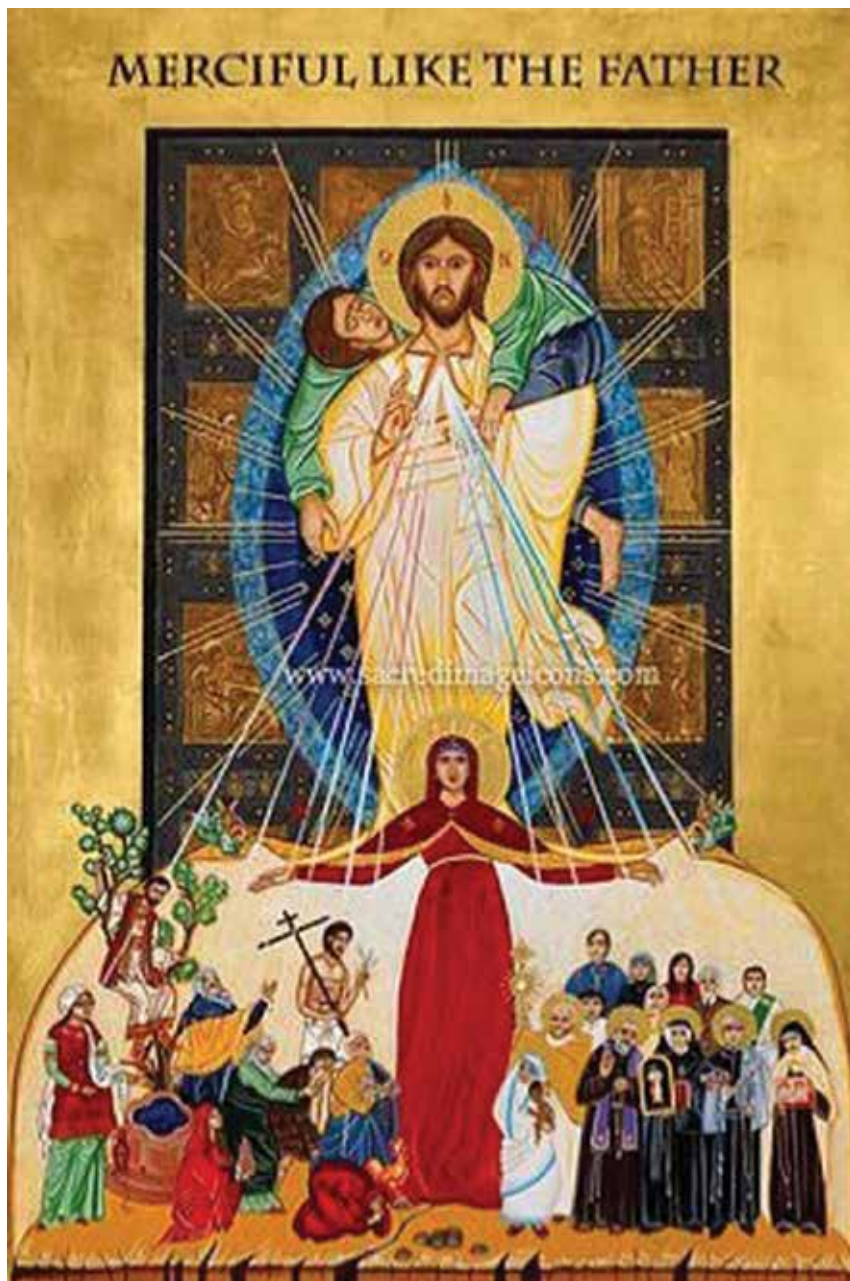


Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny
Province of USA & Canada

Connections



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Cluny Connections

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Thank you.

Floods in the Philippines, India, Louisiana and WV; earthquakes in central Italy and Myanmar; wildfires in the West; and killing heat waves in South Korea, the American northeast, central USA and India ... that just about sums up weather reports during this past summer. Not to mention unprecedented election campaigns, increased violence, racism and poverty. Are these the natural disasters Matthew's gospel predicted? Even the Olympics seemed to cast more shadows upon the earth during the 2016 Rio Games!

In spite of all this gloom, Pope Francis' Year of Mercy continues to call us to reconciliation, hope and peace! Cluny Sisters keep doing what they do best: quietly proclaiming the Good News near and far with characteristic courage and dedication. Sr. Mary's Vacation Bible School is a case in point. The usual summer break had hardly started when she and her generous volunteers swung into action with the VBS bringing hope and joy to children and parents alike. Sisters in Haiti celebrated 150 years of service by widening their circle of collaboration in Cite Soleil, the biggest slum area in Port-au-Prince while their Sisters rejoiced in their 75 years of mission Down Under, Sisters in California delighted in God's grace that allowed them to celebrate a combined 235 years of vowed life and Sisters in Hamilton Ontario experienced the fruits of their 60 + years of presence there in the outpouring of love and support manifested as they laid Sr. Maria do Céu to rest.

Perhaps there has been much to tempt us into despair in the news this summer but we seem to be experiencing yet another tug, a tug towards a deeper hope and trust that God indeed dwells among us and is doing the work of Resurrection!

Sister Regina

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I'm Gonna Let it Shine!

Vacation Bible School in San Pedro, California

Sister Mary Josephine Glynn

Seventy-five children ranging from age 4 to 11, together with a team of volunteer adults and teens gathered on June 20th, 2016 at Mary Star of the Sea, San Pedro, California. The excitement was contagious: Vacation Bible School was about to begin! The logo (a lantern encircled by the words "Let your Light shine") on the T-shirts distributed to everyone reflected the theme, Cavequest, and acted as a constant reminder to the children that we Christians are called to overcome darkness in the world by being Light for others. Although they sang "This Little Light of Mine" with gusto, "I have decided to follow Jesus ... no turning back" quickly became the favorite!

Along with the songs, Bible stories, crafts, games, and videos integrated this invitation to bring the Light of Christ into the darkness of our world. Even the snacks (grapes shaped into a glowworm, popcorn wrapped and tied to resemble a butterfly) highlighted the theme.



Moving from the darkness of the cave into the Light of Christ

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Merciful Like the Father: Contemplating the Icon

When Pope Francis announced 2016 to be an Extraordinary Jubilee Year, calling it The Year of Mercy, he made the official motto, "Merciful Like the Father." This icon was written in response to that proclamation by Vivian Imbruglia as a free gift to all.

As we approach the end of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, we offer this image for your prayer and reflection.

The icon shows Jesus the good shepherd standing in front of the Holy Door. The Holy Door is the northernmost entrance to St. Peter's Basilica. The door itself is rich in symbolism showing sixteen scenes. It is ordinarily cemented shut, only to be opened during Jubilee years.

Jesus the Good Shepherd is carrying the lost soul. From Him comes red and white Divine Mercy rays. The

rays extend down to figures, who receive and convey His mercy. On the one side are Biblical figures who received mercy, all seven who are mentioned in the official Year of Mercy Prayer including Zaccheus, the Samaritan woman, Mary Magdalen, the woman caught in adultery, Peter after his betrayal, the good thief, and Matthew the tax collector, along with the prodigal son. On the other side are great saints who shared the Father's mercy including John Paul II, Mother Theresa, Padre Pio, Faustina, Maximilian Kolbe, and Therese of Lisieux. Also with the saints are regular people who endeavor to share God's mercy to those around them. All of these figures are under the mantle of Mary the Mother of Mercy, through whom the Holy Father has asked us to turn to for intercession.



Cluny Sisters in the Province of Haiti

Collaborative Effort Launches New Form of Schooling for Disadvantaged Children in Cité Soleil, Port au Prince

Sister Regina Brunelle

Collaboration among religious communities has become the new model for ministry. In 2001 Cluny Sisters joined four other religious congregations in Rhode Island, creating the Sisters' Collaborative to found Sophia Academy, a middle school for girls-at-risk. In South Darfur, a community of sisters from several religious congregations work together training teachers, nurses, midwives, local farmers and community leaders in the youngest country in the world.

In 2014, three religious congregations celebrated their simultaneous arrival in Haiti 150 years earlier: the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and the "Pere de St. Jacques," a group of French diocesan priests who gathered into a society to serve overseas missions. To mark this occasion, the three congregations decided to sponsor an educational project in Cité Soleil, one of the largest slum areas in the capital, Port-au-Prince. Having been alerted of this, Cluny Connections has been following the evolution of this project through contact with our Sisters in Haiti and the CENA (Centre Educatif Noël des Anges) newsletter on line. A Cluny Sister works at the Centre. Reminiscent of our roots when Blessed Anne Marie adopted the Lancaster Method of education in which peer tutoring was used, students from various Cluny Schools support the project by 'adopting' a child, visiting them and working with them.

The project is being supported by the DCC (a delegation of professionals in Paris supporting cooperative projects). The group hired two teachers



Small group learning environment

from Rennes, experts in working with children too old to begin school at the grade one level. This is not a school in the traditional sense, but an educational centre that allows students of different ages and stages of development to work at their own pace, somewhat like the Montessori Method. The teacher's role is to encourage and support the students who work without books, using programmed worksheets, moving on as they master each one and helping one another along the way. Basic subjects are supplemented with experiences outside the ghetto along with music and art.

However, before getting to the point of welcoming students, the organizers had much to do to become accepted and trusted by the local population. This was important for several reasons, not the least being security!

Continued on Page 5

Cluny Sisters in the Province of Haiti (Continued)

Organizers spent months becoming familiar with the culture of the ghetto, getting to know the people. The area already has many 'schools' and that is what the population expected from CENA. It took time for them to grasp the idea that CENA's targets were children too old to begin school at the usual level. In the end, the drawing card for many of these extremely poor families, of course, was that, mindful of the Haitian proverb: "sak vid pa kampe!" ('An empty sack can't stand!') Not only is the education free, the program also provides their children with a substantial meal before the day begins!

Although 'alternative' in its methods, the Centre's goal remains to bring the children to a level of development that enables them to master the elementary school curriculum so that they can then decide whether to pursue the classical secondary program or opt for professional training.

"We know that the project will develop slowly," says Pierre Jean Bar, one of the organizers. "We tell ourselves what we say to all newcomers to Haiti: to succeed, the first condition is patience. The second condition is patience. And the third condition is ... PATIENCE! But "si bon Dyé vlé" (if God so wills!) we will succeed!"



Sister Marie Agathe with children



Time for fun and exercise, too!

Cluny School's Budding Scientist

Ben Titus, a Sixth Grader at Cluny School, is a budding scientist with a social justice bent. Moved by the homeless people he observed on the streets and in the woods, Ben showcased the fire-resistant blanket he developed during Cluny School's annual Invention Convention on Earth Day.



Philip Sherman | Staff photographer

Photo: Newport Daily News

In Memoriam

Sister Maria do Céu de Melo Mendes

Sister Regina Brunelle

“I live my life in widening circles” once wrote Rainier Maria Rilke. That Sr. Maria do Céu Melo Mendes grasped that the circles of her life were broadening into eternity became apparent as the month of May drew to a close. A challenging circuit, she undertook it courageously and ever so graciously as she surrendered to the movement that ended on July 19, 2016 when she circled at last into the arms of God.

Born a twin to her brother Fernando on April 7, 1944 in Sobreposta, Braga, Portugal, Sr. Maria cherished great memories of growing up in a family of eight children, four boys and four girls, raised above the family store. She loved returning to Portugal periodically to enjoy time with them and their families and with her elderly mother until she died in 2013. During these visits, she never failed to make a pilgrimage to Fatima, often making her retreat there.

As a young girl she was attracted to the Cluny Sisters in Nogueiro, Braga. Having entered the novitiate there, she professed her vows on September 8, 1967. Soon after, the 23 year old bravely set out for the far-flung mission of Mozambique located on the Indian Ocean between Tanzania to the north and Swaziland to the south. She would serve there 14 years, experiencing some of the consequences of the civil war that broke out soon after Mozambique gained its independence from Portugal in 1975. She never really talked about it, but the experience must have been traumatic. In 1981 Sr. Maria returned to Portugal for further studies; she never returned to her beloved Mozambique. For eight years, she studied and taught in Lisbon and then, in 1990, she was missioned to Canada where a large community of Portuguese immigrants awaited her in Hamilton, Ontario.

Here her creativity shone in the Heritage Language Program and in the religion classes she taught at St. Mary's Parish. Her organizational skills became evident as she coordinated the Portuguese information Centre and later served as parish secretary. She became administrative secretary in 2011.



Sister Maria do Céu de Melo Mendes

The parishioners soon came to appreciate her effective ministry. Among those she touched was a certain mentally ill woman whose belligerence turned people off. Sr. Maria's gentle manner managed to get across to her that she was acceptable and accepted. Her wake and funeral were ample evidence that she was indeed “the heart and soul of the parish”.

People visiting the community were touched by her wonderful gift of hospitality. Nothing was too much trouble! She loved music and often after a long day at work, she would sit in an easy chair in the community room before going to bed relaxing at the TV with “Reflections”, a program of Scripture quotations on a background of gorgeous natural panoramas accompanied by soothing music. She loved nature and found solace and renewal in long, solitary walks.

Sr. Maria was a very private person. She did not share easily the riches of her heart and soul. But in her last days, as she moved towards the fullness of surrender, that beautiful smile of hers that had warmed so many hearts never faltered, revealing the depth of her commitment to “circle into God.”

In Memoriam

Cluny Associate - Aniko Ivanyi

Sister Regina Brunelle

As Sr. Maria do Céu breathed her last on July 19th, Cluny Associate Aniko Ivanyi's funeral was being celebrated in St. Joseph's parish church, Hamilton, ON. An inspiring award-winning mathematics teacher, Aniko was also a pioneering computer programmer in Hungary and Canada. Aniko's coming to the Associates

was a special gift. The Hamilton Associates and Sisters will remember her especially for her delight in the fellowship in the group, her deep faith, the warmth of her smile, and her generous ministry as a volunteer in several ministries in the parish. May she rest in peace! Aniko, we miss you!

I'm Gonna Let it Shine! (Continued)

As we journeyed through the week we reflected on how the Israelites who lived thousands of years in the darkness of hope were rewarded with the coming of Jesus who fulfilled this HOPE.

We were with the apostles in the darkness of the night as the storm raged around us and witnessed Jesus inviting us to have COURAGE and step out and walk on the water with him.

We listened to the words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount as he instructed us to observe how God

surrounds us with the beauty of nature and gives us DIRECTION in the Lord's Prayer.

We were deeply moved as we experienced the gift of LOVE as Jesus suffered his passion and death. Awesome were the moments when we were totally caught up in the darkness of the crucifixion that gave way to the LIGHT of the resurrection. Finally, we discovered how to be LIGHT for others by trusting in the POWER of the Holy Spirit - the gift of the resurrected Jesus.

All in all, Mary Star's VBS was another huge success!



Walking on water

Photos: Mary Star of the Sea



It was a great week!



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Bringing Hope & Compassion

Congratulations, Sisters!

**Cluny Sisters Celebrate 75 Years
 in New Zealand**



L-R: Sisters Emeli Marafono, Francis Kelly, Allison Macalister, Lusiana Matai, and Luisita Tongson. The Province of New Zealand-Philippines has missions in New Zealand, Fiji Islands, Cook Islands and The Philippines.

**Celebrating Anniversaries of Profession:
 Sisters Loretto and Ena - 65 years
 Sister Mary Josephine - 55 years
 Sister Genevieve Marie - 50 years**



L-R: Sisters Mary Patrice Watson and Loretto Moynihan; retired Bishop Sartoris, Sisters Ena Maguire, Genevieve Marie Vigil and Mary Josephine Glynn.

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