

Council of the Congregation Cluny Leadership Meets in Portugal

Sister Joan Van der Zyden

The last few days of April were filled with excitement in Torres Novas, Portugal as sisters arrived from around the world to attend the Council of the Congregation, a meeting of the congregation's General Council and Provincials. Sisters came from France, Senegal, Madagascar, Reunion, Central Africa, Guinee, Haiti, Guyane, South Pacific, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Ireland and Great Britain, West Africa, West Indies, New Zealand / Philippines, Australia / Papua New Guinea, Seychelles / Tanzania, five Provinces in India, Spain, Peru / Cuba, Paraguay / Argentina, Angola / Guinee Bissau, Mozambique, Brazil, United States and Canada and of course Portugal.

In total there were 54 sisters in attendance; 12 on the General Council, 29 Provincials, 3 observers who will soon begin their

mandate as Provincial and 10 sisters doing the work of translation and the secretariat.

Our 31 days together are best summed up in the opening address given by Sister Morag Collins, General Superior. "We will, during this month, be rooted in prayer, become more proficient in our leadership role, listen to one another's reports with great openness and compassion and finally explore the global problems which we face with all of humanity." That is exactly what we did.

Our prayer included a pilgrimage to Fatima for the candlelight procession on May 12th and the celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Fatima on May 13th. A second pilgrimage took us to the welcoming arms of our sisters in Spain and to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. The

Archbishop of Santiago celebrated the liturgy while Cluny students led the singing. A highlight of this trip was the botafumeiro at the end of Mass. The Santiago de Compostela botafumeiro is the largest thurible in the world, weighing 177 pounds and measuring 5.3 feet in height. It is normally on exhibition in the library of the cathedral, but during certain important religious high holy days it is attached to a pulley mechanism, and filled with 88 pounds of charcoal and incense. Eight red-robed tiraboleiros pull the ropes and bring it into a swinging motion almost to the roof of the transept, reaching speeds of 38 mph and dispensing thick clouds of incense. The lighting of the botafumeiro was requested by the congregation and was certainly a once in a lifetime experience! (See it at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jV8t3uqoYo>.)

Continued on Page 4

In
this
Issue

Council of the
Congregation
Cluny Leadership
Meets in Portugal

Cluny School Hires
Third Lay Principal

Sister Mary Glynn
Leaves Little Rock Diocese

Welcome to
Angela's Place!

Cluny Around the World
Cluny Sisters in Peru

Cluny Connections
Goes Electronic
in 2010!

Cluny School Hires Third Lay Principal

Sister Luke Parker

Cluny Connections

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Thank you.

We are very pleased to welcome Meredith Caswell, Ph. D. as our new Cluny School Principal.

She is a Catholic woman involved in Christ the King Parish in Kingston, Rhode Island. Married with three children, Merry is a graduate of Catholic schools and embraces the Catholic values of her family and her education. She comes to us after 34 years of teaching and administrative experience in the Pawtucket School Department. As a teacher, administrator, adjunct professor and workshop presenter, Merry is very experienced and highly recommended.

We are excited by her passion and experience. She expresses her philosophy as, "Every child is a success story waiting to be told." Her '4-C approach' of Competence,

Creativity, Commitment and Compassion fits very well with our Cluny charism and school mission.

Welcome to Cluny School, Mrs. Caswell! The educational and spiritual leadership of our school is in very good hands.

The school community is very grateful to Mr. Jack Regan for all the time and energy he put into the school building project. We are happy that he enjoyed one year in our new one-building school before deciding to retire as principal. After his decision was announced, Cluny parents, staff, board and sisters as well as representatives from the diocesan Catholic school office were involved in a principal search.

Cluny School in Newport, RI is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny.

On the Move



Sister Mary Glynn
943 Lagoon Avenue
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Sister Marie-Yannick Saïeh
139 Avenue John Brown
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HAITI

Sister Yannick will be ministering as the representative of the Bishop of Norwich, CT in the Norwich Diocesan Haitian Project. Watch for more news about her new ministry!

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Sister Mary Glynn Leaves Ministry in Little Rock Diocese

Sister Mary Patrice Watson

Way back in the late 1800's six Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny ministered for twenty years in the Diocese of Little Rock. They mainly reached out to the white Catholic population through a convent school and parish schools in Conway and Morrilton that they helped to establish. At the same time, they offered an education to black children but that was opposed by many of their white supporters. Unfortunately, a decision had to be made in 1899 to remove our sisters from Arkansas.

What a joy it was for us when, a hundred years later, Sister Mary J. Glynn reestablished a Cluny presence in the diocese. In an interview with Armando Rios, Associate Editor of the *Arkansas Catholic*, she explained

found ministry in beautiful Arkansas to be both a gift and a privilege. Unlike them, she did not limit her service to one small geographical area. During her eleven years in the diocese, the whole state was her mission and she truly knew every place. Through her ministry in the Diocesan Office of Religious Education and Christian Initiation she had the gifted experience of working with catechists, catechetical leaders, all those involved in the RCIA process, and the *Why Catholic?* coordinators.

She also had the privilege of journeying with all those who participated in the Little Rock Theology Institute, a program closely associated with St. Gregory's University in Shawnee,



Photo: Sister Jolitta, RSM

Sister Mary Josephine Glynn

farewell to Arkansas. We thank Sister Mary for the gift she has been to the people of the Diocese of Little Rock. We celebrate the fact that we were once more able to be part of its history, one that doesn't end here.

Thank you for your skills and service that have been such a big part in laying the foundation for something I pray will be here for generations to come..."

that she had been drawn to Arkansas after all the research she had done on the Cluny history in Conway and Morrilton. "Somehow...my coming to the Diocese of Little Rock has continued the mission those sisters started so many years ago."

Like those Clunys who went before her, Sister Mary

Oklahoma. Another joy for her was that of being able to live in community with the Sisters of Mercy at Mount St. Mary Convent. Without a doubt, they share Mother McAuley's gifts of welcoming and hospitality.

In July, the time came for Sister Mary to move on, so our Congregation once again said

One of the many people who will miss her, Chris Thomas said, "...Thank you for your skills and service that have been such a big part in laying the foundation for something I pray will be here for generations to come..." (Chris Thomas, Texarkana, printed in *Letters to the Editor* in the *Arkansas Catholic*)

Welcome to Angela's Place!

Sister Regina Brunelle

On May 21, the day before the official grand opening, I moved into one of the furnished units at 320 Tragina Avenue North to begin a new ministry supporting young women who have chosen to bring their pregnancies to term and keep their babies.

Angela's Place is a 15 unit apartment building refurbished by the Good Shepherd Brothers specifically for this new ministry in the Youth Services Division of Good Shepherd Ministries. Residents range in age from 16 to 22 and must agree to follow the program designed to see them through the early stages of motherhood as single parents. The program's goal is to enable these young mothers to get into sound habits that will protect the babies as well as prepare them for the difficulties that lie ahead at the end of their two-year residency.

Each resident is expected to have a job or be in school, bringing the children to a reputable day care center each morning and picking them up in the afternoon.

The evenings are devoted to a variety of programs that include resident meetings, nutrition and meal preparation; child care; women's group; men's group (for partners and other interested young fathers from the area); and regular individual meetings with staff to set goals, develop income management skills, and iron out any difficulties. The ultimate goal is to gradually move residents out to completely independent living over a two-year period.

Spacious and pleasant, the apartments are simply but adequately furnished. Bright colors and attractive wooden plaques related to childcare and motherhood adorn the walls of the hallways. A large meeting space accommodates the mothers and children during programs. The enclosed backyard, offering a garden, barbecue space, picnic tables, and comfortable garden furniture is a pleasant place to relax. There is a wonderful play space for the children, furnished with safe slides and other toys appropriate for toddlers.

In spite of this wonderful environment, it is not surprising that at this early date the ministry is still going through growing pains! We are all learning together. Please keep us in your prayer!

Read more about the opening of Angela's Place at: <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/corp/nero/nere/2009/2009-05-22-1100.cfm>

Council (Con't)

The first two weeks of the council focused on an in-service on the role of the Provincial and the Province reports. Hearing the reports filled each of us with a deep sense of gratitude for the many ways Cluny sisters are touching those in need throughout the world. From villages in Africa and India, to the islands in the Pacific, to Europe and North America Cluny Sisters are seeking to know and do the Will of God. We are reaching out to those in need wherever there is a little good to be done!

The last two weeks of the council moved us into reflection on global problems. Two members of Pax Christi were part of a two-day focus on the search for peace. We looked at the United Nations Millennium Goals and explored ways to use our voice, as an international congregation, to further the global agenda for a better world for all peoples. We spent time reflecting on our role in bringing about an environmental sensitivity that will make us better stewards of the earth, and we reflected on and discussed our changing world in light of the use of information technology.

Most fittingly, the Council of the Congregation closed on the feast of Pentecost. In all of our diversity, it was evident that the Spirit was truly with us throughout our gathering. As we left to go our separate ways we carried with us a deep sense of gratitude to the sisters in the Province of Portugal. The hospitality we received in Torres Novas, as well as in all the communities we visited, was second to none! We also carried with us a deep sense of renewal in our efforts to bring about the Kingdom of God. We thank God that the liberating charism of Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey is alive and well throughout Cluny around the world!



Cluny Sisters in Peru In their own words

Charged with reporting on the lives of our sisters in Peru, I was so touched and enlightened by the recent report of Sister Maria Virginia Siccha, the Province Leader, that I thought you would enjoy seeing this province through the eyes of our Peruvian sisters, in their own words.

Sister Marie Cooper

On July 15, 2009 the Province of Peru celebrated its 125th anniversary. Peru is a country whose people are extremely hospitable, grateful, long-suffering and capable of enduring faith and hope. In spite of what is openly said, that we have wiped out poverty and that every month more than 50,000 new jobs are created ... our people are suffering from hunger, ill-treatment, lack of work, prejudice because of color or social condition, and gender discrimination. The hopes and sorrows of our people challenge us and we feel called to build the Kingdom; we have to be transparent and honest so that we may be credible ... we have to learn to live with that insecurity which will lead us to abandon ourselves into the hands of our Father and those of our brothers and sisters whom we serve, and to put the mission which the Lord has confided to us in Peru and Cuba before our own.

In 2007 the 5th Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean took place in Aparecida, Brazil ... The document produced by this Conference expresses very clearly how we are affected by cultural and social changes. In response ... the Province organized a workshop on the Aparecida document, stressing the life and work of the disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ so that our people may have life in Him.

We committed ourselves to studying this document and putting it into practice in our local communities.

In that same year, on August 15th, an earthquake shattered the southern part of the country. It was the most costly natural disaster in the history of Peru, leaving 35,000 buildings destroyed, thousands of people dead, many more wounded, and great suffering which still brings tears to the eyes of many. The solidarity of the planet was immediately evident, as was that of the Congregation ... Our Province did not hesitate to respond to the cries for help and a group of Sisters, all the novices and postulants, and representatives of our schools went to bring help, food, hope and consolation.

Beginning on August 9, 2008, Native Indian Day, a prolonged strike in the Amazon region mobilized 65 Amazonian ethnic groups. They were demanding above all the reversal of laws promulgated in May by the government of Peru. When it seemed that all dialogue was at an end, the Conference of Religious gave its support through a statement based on the document *De Aparecida*, 530, which asks for: Accompaniment for the native Indian peoples to strengthen their identity and organizations, to protect their territory, to provide an intercultural, bilingual education for them and to defend their rights. In the light

of this statement the Province felt challenged and committed to stand up with our brothers and sisters of the *selva* who are in this situation, especially since we have a community in Amazon territory.

As well as this social upheaval we also face a serious moral and spiritual crisis that attacks the nucleus of the society – the family. As a Province we are responding to this crisis by strengthening the meaning of family through meetings, sharing and individual counselling, not only for the Sisters but also for our co-workers.

We have also worked very closely with migrants in the interior of the country and other persons who need a presence and accompaniment. A practical response already known in the country is the Anne Marie Javouhey Hostel, which welcomes sick persons and their families and provides not only shelter but also spiritual accompaniment.

On 15 October 2006, feast of St. Teresa, the two sister countries of Cuba and Peru were integrated into one Province.

On 12 February 2007 the Sisters celebrated 10 years of presence in Cuba.

Currently there are 59 Sisters: 50 with final vows, 9 with temporary vows; 7 novices, 3 postulants and 3 aspirants in 11 communities in Peru and 2 in Cuba.

The website for the Cluny Spirituality Center in Lima is: <http://www.casacluny.com/home.html> (in English & Spanish).



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