

Hamilton Associate Shares about Associate Membership

Bill Medeiros

Bill Medeiros has been a member of the Hamilton Associates' Group since Sister Maria Rocha gathered members of the Portuguese parish community into the Friends of Cluny in 1998. He is still very enthusiastic about being part of the Portuguese-speaking Cluny Associates in Hamilton. He shares his enthusiasm with us in this article. (Editor)

From the beginning, I have been very much interested in the life and achievements of Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey. At the time, I believed I was a good Catholic but learning about her showed me that I was a bit too comfortable with what I was doing for the Portuguese parish community. Anne Marie's spirituality and enthusiasm awakened in me a desire to 'do a little good' and live the gospel values with more enthusiasm.

Anne Marie Javouhey followed the call to respond to the needs of her time especially through the education of children. Her response led to the founding of a congregation that numbered a thousand members when she died in 1851. What drew these women to her?

She had the spirit of an adventurer. When it came to doing the Will of God, she never hesitated to take the necessary risks in spite of the difficulties

involved. Her love for God blossomed in a hope that helped her overcome every hesitation or fear. Anne Marie was a woman of faith who always trusted in the power of God to do the work she saw as God's, not hers. The example of her faith, her devotion to the Sacred Heart and to Mary as well as to the saints whom she admired as models have helped to deepen my faith.

It was the desire to do the Holy Will of God that guided her in her great work of liberating African slaves. Reflecting on her role has aroused my awareness of the slaveries of my own time and calls me to action in the struggle to work to preserve human rights and to free those whose rights are being violated.

Through my membership in the Cluny Associates, I am inspired by the example of Blessed Anne Marie to do what I can to spread the Good News.

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In Memoriam

Sister Carmel was born in
Roscommon, Ireland in 1920 and made
vows in the congregation in 1944.
When word of Sister Carmel Keogh's
passing in Mt. Sackville Convent,
Dublin reached us here in the
province, we paused and remembered
with love this petite woman who lived
among us most of her life.

Sister Carmel arrived in
Wilmington, California in 1951. She
often told us that she was only sent
to the United States because another
sister failed the health test, but she saw
this as part of God's plan for her.

Although she missed her beloved
students in Stafford, England, she gave
herself fully to her new ministry. A
skilled educator, she served in Saints
Peter and Paul and St. Catherine
Laboure in California and Cluny
School in Rhode Island. She brought
creativity and kindness to her students.
She didn't let them get away with
much, but secretly enjoyed their little
pranks. The eighth grade boys who
towered over her enjoyed teasing her
by hooking her keys on the map and
rolling it up so that she could not
reach them. As they good-humoredly
took them down in response to her
scolding, they couldn't have missed the
twinkle in her eye.



Sister Carmel Keogh

Sister Carmel was meticulous
about her work, and kept everything
in perfect order, whether it was her
classroom, her office or the community
books.

Carmel was always ready for a
chat, eager to keep up on all the news,
interested in each person and in all
the family members. She would visit
the sick, and attended the wakes
and funerals of those she had known
through her ministries. She kept up
relationships long-distance as well,
writing long letters, filling the margins
and using every inch of the paper.

During her years in our province,
Sister Carmel also generously served as
a school principal and as a community
coordinator. We loved her and we miss
her, but we rejoice that she is now
united with the one Love of her life
forever.

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Congratulations to our Jubilarians



Sister Eugenia Brady

Diamond Jubilee

On August 13th, 1953 I began my professed life as a Sister of St. Joseph of Cluny. 2013 finds me alive and well, working to promote the new Evangelization through the Retreat and Spiritual Direction ministry to which I have been called in more recent years. The different ministries in which God and my Congregation have called me to serve have been a source of joy, growth and development.

Faith is a gift handed on by my beloved parents, James and Kathleen. Their lived faith developed in me the will and desire to follow in their footsteps on the road to the Kingdom.

The many friends and mentors who have crossed my path have nurtured and challenged me, empowering me to continue the journey either on the mountaintop or in the valley. The advantage of participating in art forms deepens my love of nature and enlarges my heart to receive all that God and the giftedness of others offer.

As I celebrate not only sixty years of vowed religious life, but eighty years of human life (my Indian friend calls this year "The year of one thousand moons"), I say with Dag Hammarsjold, "For all that has been, thanks. To all that will be, Yes."



Sister Anne Marie Liston

Golden Jubilee

Fifty years? It's hard to believe that I lasted that long! Gratitude undoubtedly fills my heart as these years flash by in my memory. Amazement does, too! Above all, my gratitude and amazement are for the Lord of Life who has brought me to this moment. Given the fact that, because of my health I had been told many times how unlikely it would be for me to be a religious (never mind a missionary!) and that I have had a few close calls that might have short-circuited this time, I have to say, God does do amazing things with our lives. Indeed, "How Great Thou Art!" For this great God, for parents whose faith fostered my vocation and whose generosity and sacrifice allowed me to pursue my own path; for the Congregation that enabled me to do so much more in my life than I could ever have achieved on my own and for the many Sisters with whom I have journeyed who have revealed to me the broadness and vision of our founder, Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey, I am truly grateful.



Sister Yannick Saiëh

Silver Jubilee

Magnificat! As I celebrate 25 years of religious life, my heart is filled with gratitude. September 12, 1988, the day I pronounced my first vows, was one of the happiest days of my life. I had finally answered God's call and my heart was full of joy and gratitude toward God who had called me and kept me faithful, and to my family, especially my parents and all the sisters who had helped me on my journey. I am very grateful to the congregation for all that I have received and for all I will continue to receive. May my life be a witness of your love, God!



The Portuguese Support Services for Quality Living



Sister Regina Brunelle

On a rainy, drab March Monday morning, I stepped into an amazingly bright and beautiful world: the new Portuguese Support Services for Quality Living (PSSQL) center located at 760 Barton St. E. in Hamilton, ON. Sitting at round tables covered by cheerful tablecloths, clients were enjoying a lunch break. Jacinta Ribeiro, the Executive Director, welcomed me warmly and, as she showed me around all the way to the rooftop patio/garden space, enthusiastically launched into the story of the center.

A surprising number of special needs adults live in Hamilton. No longer in the school system, they, as well as their families, need support services for quality living. That's where PSSQL comes in. Each day, a day program called ECHO welcomes some 40 clients. They participate in life skills training, basic literacy and numeracy, physical and recreational activities, and community integration experiences. The goal of the program is to bring each client to his or her maximum capacity for independence. Once a week, the Bridges of Roots Program welcomes seniors who share their experience, knowledge, values and customs with the special needs participants.

As I interacted with the clients, I sensed that they were happy to be there, and even those with no or poor verbal skills expressed their sense of security by their smiles and obvious comfort even with a stranger. Jacinta radiated pride in the building, of course, but also in the clients and especially in staff who have achieved so much in their service of these special needs persons since the program's initial stages at a much less impressive site down the street.

Recently, the center won a grant from the Trillium Foundation. The grant will make it possible to construct a Snoezelen therapy room. Often used with autistic or developmentally challenged persons these rooms are specially designed to stimulate various senses and to provide either a soothing or stimulating environment. (Google Snoezelen for more information.)

Cluny is proud to count PSSQL in its Circle of Love!

Ministry to the Portuguese Immigrants in Hamilton, Ontario

Sister Regina Brunelle

Although the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny began ministering in Hamilton in 1958, until 1975, this ministry mostly consisted in teaching, administration and chaplaincy in the Catholic School system. Without minimizing the great impact of this ministry, in keeping with this issue's theme, this article will focus on our ministry to the Portuguese immigrants.

Over the years, the face of the population in the Catholic schools changed with the wave of Portuguese immigrants that began arriving from the Azores following the impact of the political situation in Portugal and its colonies. Cluny is an international Congregation. Sr. Mary (Conception) Glynn, principal at Christ the King School, reasoned that a Portuguese Cluny Sister would be a precious aid in reaching out to and empowering this population to integrate into the Canadian way of life. Initial negotiations with the congregation's general administration went nowhere until Sr. Maria Rocha, home from Angola for further study and a holiday, discovered she could not return there because of the revolution.

Granted a visit to family in Canada and with the encouragement of the Superior General, she stayed, and ministry to the Portuguese community became a vital part of Cluny ministry in Hamilton. Sr. Maria collaborated with principals and teachers in the Catholic schools that had a large Portuguese enrollment. In 1977, the board encouraged the initiation of Language Heritage classes and in 1979 hired her as liaison, linking families with the schools. In 1985 a new project, the Portuguese Information Center, began helping the continuing flow of new arrivals adjust to life in Hamilton. Since Government funded only 40% of this project, the rest had to come from grants and fund-raising events.

St. Mary Church became the gathering place of the Portuguese community. Children needed to be catechized and lay ministries developed. Drawing from the Portuguese parishioners, Sr. Maria organized teams of catechists, lectors and Eucharistic ministers.

In 1990, a second Portuguese Sister arrived. Sr. Maria do Ceu Mendes taught in the Portuguese Language classes and in 1992 became director of the Information Center. In 1999, as the need for the center diminished, she began working at the parish full time, where she remains today supporting the pastor in a variety of roles.

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Cluny Associate Goes on Mission to Guinea-Bissau

Sister Regina Brunelle



Martha with a little girl

Photos courtesy of the Province of Guinea Bissau.

Martha Faustino, pharmacist and Cluny Associate from Alcobaca, Portugal, recently spent several weeks at the Mission hospital in Cumura on the outskirts of the city of Bissau where four Cluny Sisters minister. She is the first pharmacist among many medical volunteers who have come to the hospital to share their skills. During her stay, she re-organized the pharmacy; trained two pharmacist technicians who serve the hospital as well as two outlying clinics; and collaborated in developing materials providing information to patients with HIV/Aids, TB and Hansen's Disease.

Originally built to shelter lepers, the hospital once welcomed patients from surrounding countries like Senegal and Guinea-Conakry as well. Services today have diversified to include those offered in most general hospitals. Nevertheless, there is still an

important stress on the communicable diseases mentioned above. Thanks to modern medicine, Hansen's Disease, once requiring total isolation from the community, can now be treated on an out-patient basis.

Martha was especially struck by the joy, solidarity and hope so strong in the people in spite of the dire poverty of the region. While jobs at the hospital help to raise the economic standards of the area, most of the people are engaged in subsistence farming and fishing. Fifty percent of Guinea-Bissau's population lives beneath the international poverty line. More than forty percent is illiterate. The area is difficult to serve since the population includes 20 different ethnic groups, each with its own dialect (Creole is the common language), cultures and religions. Animists and Muslims dominate the religious scene. Though in the minority, Catholic Christians are very fervent, coming early to church on a Sunday morning for on-going faith formation and to avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the lengthy celebration of Eucharist.

Martha reports that she was especially moved by the children suffering from Hansen's disease. Utana who lives in the village is able to go to school thanks to the support of the Sisters. Edgar will go as soon as he is well enough.

For Martha, the exposure to unimaginable poverty, different cultures, and the generosity of the volunteers, two of whom have been on mission at the hospital for ten years and have taken out citizenship, has been a transformative experience. She stays connected with the experience by providing financial assistance through the Sisters to a little girl she met at the hospital. This makes it possible for the child to go to school and live a healthier life.

If you would like to share in the harvest of this mission or feel called to support future missionaries address your donation to:

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Hamilton, ON L8R 2X5
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Please designate the donation for the work of Cluny Sisters in Guinea-Bissau.

(Cluny Associate membership does not necessarily lead to a mission experience. The decision regarding serving outside one's own country is taken after a lengthy discernment between the associate and the Province leader. Ed.)



A new mother with her baby



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Bringing Hope & Compassion

Cluny in Hamilton (Continued)

The young parents and children who were the initial focus of the ministry have grown older as have the ministers who supported them. While Sr. Maria do Ceu focuses on the parish ministry, Sr. Maria serves as Eucharistic minister at St. Joseph Hospital and continues to accompany the Portuguese community, especially the women, through the Seniors' Group, for many never really learned English. Thus the journey continues into the golden years of both minister and immigrants.

Preview : Cluny around the World



Martha Faustino, pharmacist and Cluny Associate from Alcobaca, Portugal, recently spent several weeks at the Mission hospital in Cumura on the outskirts of the city of Bissau where four Cluny Sisters minister. Story on Page 5.

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