

First Papuan Cluny Sister Makes Perpetual Vows



Photo: Courtesy of the Province of Australia-Papua New Guinea

Sister Fatima Mafu, SJC

Day of Joy, Day of Hope
Kerema, Papua New Guinea, January 26, 2019

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Province of USA & Canada

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Thank you.

We welcome the longer days with their promise of springtime. A few brave snowdrops appeared last month, and daffodil buds are getting plump. We scan for little yellow buds on the forsythia and pink on the cherry trees. The birds in our ginkgo tree chirp joyfully on the bare branches as they prepare their nests.

In this issue you will see signs of new life in Cluny corners in different parts of the world. After over forty years of ministry in Papua New Guinea, we celebrated the final vows of Sister Fatima, the first Papuan Cluny Sister. In May we'll celebrate the first vows of a group of West African novices. We promise pictures!

Sister Marie-Louise Barry sent the photos from Guinée water project at the school in Mamou. What a wonderful improvement to the life of the school there, thanks to support from Shirley Hurta, a former Cluny School parent and good friend of the sisters. We rejoice with sisters and students. May Lord bless all of you.

At the same time as we celebrate, we are also saddened by the passing of our dear Sister Pius Moore, who toiled in our province for most of her life; our West Virginia Associate, Doris Bias; and Joe Madory, our long-time friend and supporter, an Affiliate of our West Indies Province. Our condolences go out to all their loved ones and friends.

We are very grateful to all those local friends who recently supported our appeal for funding for our Aquidneck Island ministries. News will be coming in the Fall Issue of *Cluny Connections*.

Your prayers are requested for our talented editor, Sister Anne Marie, who is laid up at this time, that she may recover and be back directing *Cluny Connections* soon.

The Editorial Staff

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“I am the fruit of the seeds planted by the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny in Kerema diocese over forty-eight years of ministry among the Kamea people,” said Sister Fatima Mafu, SJC. This very powerful and deeply moving statement, on the day of her perpetual profession, on Saturday 26 January 2019, in the Holy Spirit Cathedral, Kerema, expressed the joy and thanks of Sister Fatima.

The ministry of the Cluny Sisters frequently faced seemingly insurmountable challenges down through these years. Even on this day of great joy and hope the Bema and Kanabea sisters were prevented by bad weather from making the journey to Kerema town. Sister Rachel Arputham’s welcome address described the day as a red-letter day for the Cluny Sisters. With sisters of 43 nationalities and working in 56 counties across the globe, this day Sister Fatima Mafu, the first PNG Sister to make perpetual profession, has increased that number to 44!!

Bishop Pedro Baquero SDB, Bishop of Kerema presided, as Sister Rachel, the Province Leader, received the perpetual vows of Sister Fatima, a daughter of the Church. It was an event of the utmost importance for the Church, for the Sisters, for her family and for all present at the celebration.

Our opening hymn: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5).

“I have listened deeply to God’s call to follow Jesus more closely. Surrounded by the love of my family, the Cluny Sisters’ community and many other supporting friends in prayer and in nature, I have discerned carefully, over years of formation and education and joyfully, publicly profess my vows to God, for the whole of my life,” Sister Fatima said, professing her perpetual vows.



Sister Fatima (center) with her mom and dad in traditional dress, and Sister Rachel (right)

Photo: Courtesy of the Province of Australia-Papua New Guinea

Sister Fatima proclaimed the first reading, the call of Jeremiah. As she read the words, “Lord, I am but a child, I do not know what I should say... Do not be afraid. I am with you ...” (Jer. 1:7) it was indeed very moving. Sister Fatima also sang the Responsorial Psalm that echoed the same sentiments “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you through and through. I chose you to be mine. . . I know that you are very young but I will make you strong...In the danger that you fear, you’ll find me very near. Your words my own.” All present responded to each verse of the psalm. Her beautiful, clear and true voice touched the hearts of all in the congregation.

The Gospel highlighted the radical call of Jesus to follow Him. As we listened we were reminded that the “foxes have holes ... but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” (Luke 9:58) “Do not go back to say farewell your family or to bury your parents but ‘Come follow me.’ ” (Luke 9:61)

The Province of USA and Canada wishes to congratulate our dear Sister Fatima, her family, and everyone in the Province of Australia-Papua New Guinea on this blessed and joyful occasion!

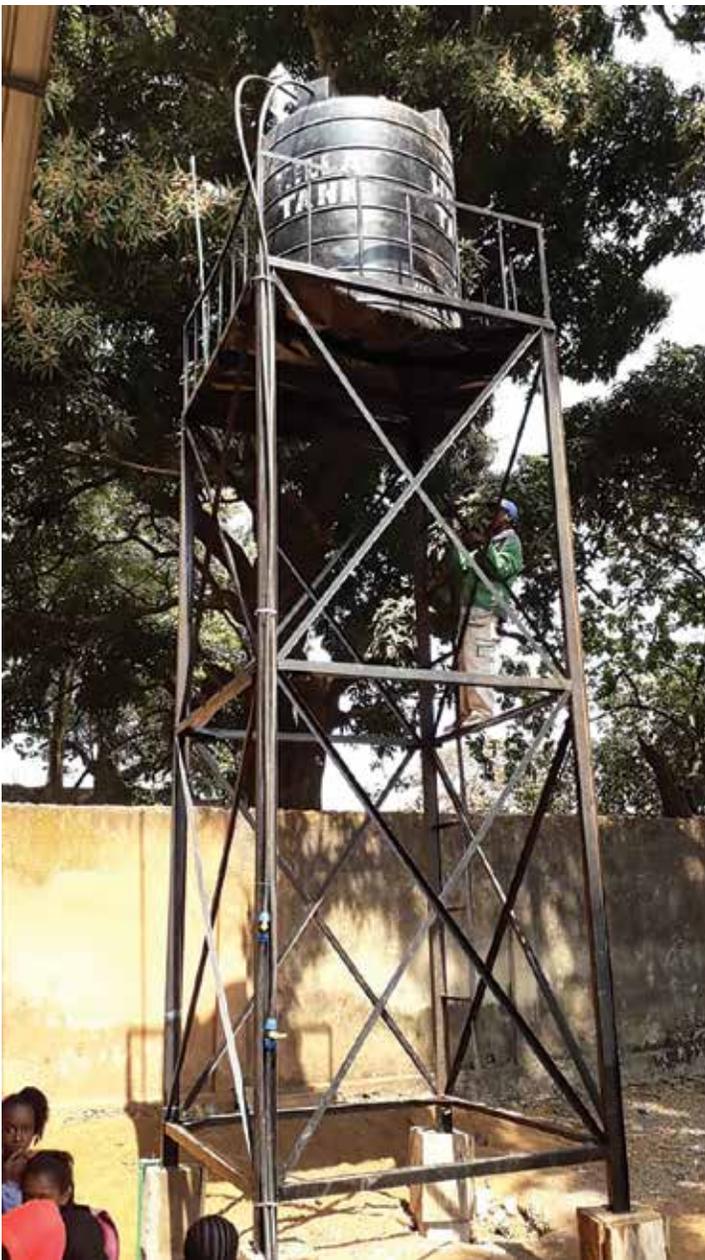
Hands Across the Sea Water Project in Guinée

Sister Marie-Louise Barry, the Regional Leader of Cluny Sisters in the Republic of Guinée, wrote to our American Affiliate, Shirley Hurta, at the completion of the water project that Shirley helped to make possible:

I write to express my gratitude for your generous gift to our Region of Guinée. Thanks to you, we were able to provide a well at our school at Mamou that went into service a few days ago. This school, which was taken over by the government fifty years ago, was returned to us in 2017 in a poor state. Since then we have worked at rehabilitating it little by little. Lack of water created enormous problems.

Thank you for the joy that you have brought to our young students and to all the teachers and others surrounding them.

May God bless you and may you have an excellent year of 2019.



Hands Across the Sea Water Project in Guinée

Cluny Connections asked Shirley, who has four children who graduated from Cluny School in Newport, RI, what sparked her interest in the project and moved her to support it financially. Here is her reply:

When I first saw images of the lengths some people in poor countries had to go through just to get water, it made me realize how much we take for granted having access to clean water. We forget how blessed we are.

Wells in developing countries impact the lives of people in many ways, especially their health. I'm glad to have been a part of this project and to work with the Cluny Sisters there.



Photos: Sister Marie Louise Barry



Cluny Sisters in Sierra Leone Part II

Sister Anne Marie Liston

As promised, here is the conclusion of our article about Sierra Leone. Cluny Sisters were in West Africa over 100 years before coming to USA and Canada. Africa was, for Blessed Anne-Marie, a special place and one that was blessed with her presence as she worked for liberation of the oppressed, education and health care. How often she was heard to say, “Oh, how I love Africa!” and “My dear Africans.”

The sisters working in Africa today, who are mostly African, have carried on this tradition and many can be found in the little hamlets of this vast continent as well as with the poor and needy of the larger cities.

Because of all the damage done to the infrastructure as a result of the “diamond wars” many of the cherished structures, schools and even Freetown University, known throughout Africa, were left in disrepair and in need of aid. Even with the terrible disruption and loss of lives and property during the war, Sierra Leone has worked hard to rebuild and renew the Church and the lives of the people. In the seventeen years since the war ended, the sisters have repaired, rebuilt and built anew in order to carry on their ministries of education, health care, community development and outreach to those in need. The re-opening of institutes of higher learning such as the University of Freetown again provides professional accreditation in different fields within the country. Of course we would be happy to welcome any Cluny Sisters who seek advanced education here in the USA. We are always happy to get to know more of our sisters from around the world.

It was unfortunate then, that the rains of August, 2017 brought so much damage to the people and

homes and caused the collapse of a hillside in Freetown. Hundreds of homes were buried under the mud, and many died. As we see what havoc and loss our own mid-western cities and farms have experienced from floods, we can well imagine what it was like in Sierra Leone. Our hearts and prayers go out to all those who suffered and lost loved ones.

Despite the difficulties and the tragedies, the missionary spirit blossoms in the lives and hearts of our dear Sierra Leonean sisters. Last year they welcomed five new postulants from Ghana, another area of the province, bringing the total to nine novices in our novitiate in Magburka, Sierra Leone. Four of the novices will profess their first vows May 1, 2019. May God continue to bless the Province of West Africa.

The next time I spin my globe, I will find some other part of the world where Clunys labor and let you know what we are up to!

P. S. The farm at the novitiate is going well, thank God. As you can see, from our photo, the new little piglets are very satisfied!



Photo: Sister Angela Bangura

In Memoriam

Sister Pius Moore

Born into this life: October 22, 1923

Religious Profession: January 4, 1954

Born into Eternity: March 16, 2019

Sister Pius (Anne) Moore was born in Clohedan, Enniscorthy, County Wexford, Ireland. Her parents were Miles and Winnifred. She graduated from Kilmuckridge Community College where she excelled in catering, needlework, and business. After professing her first vows at the Cluny Novitiate at Gallen Priory in Frebane, she set out for America for her new assignment at Stella Maris Home for Women on Washington Street in Newport. From Newport, Sister Pius went to Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Providence where she served as chef for the bishops and priests at the cathedral rectory for over 25 years and then was missioned to St. Margaret's Home. During her many years in Providence, Sister Pius also reached out to the elderly poor in the neighborhood, visiting them at home and assisting them in any way she could.

When St. Margaret's Home closed, a new opportunity arose for Sister Pius. "Well, I entered Cluny to go on the missions - am I to die without ever going to a mission?" she asked. "No, I want to go to West Virginia." In May of 1987 the Helping Hands Thrift Shop in Whitesville opened with Pius as the volunteer manager. She was thrilled to welcome the other volunteers and the customers every day and made many friends.

Perhaps the most important ministry Sister Pius accomplished was to break down barriers of anti-Catholic prejudice. First, people met her as a kind woman, next they discovered she was Catholic, and third, they finally knew her as a woman religious. In this area that is less than 1% Catholic, with generations of anti-Catholic sentiment, this could never be emphasized enough!

After many years as manager, Pius retired from that position to become a volunteer. That gave her a more flexible schedule. She also set aside time for home visits and for providing transportation for the elderly poor. When one of these women became ill, Sister Pius visited her often and accompanied her on her last journey. She received a most beautiful letter and a testimonial from her family and her minister.

Sister Pius was also a contemplative. She'd say, "Prayer is the simplest thing in the world." As Blessed Anne Marie had taught, Sister Pius was a true missionary with the inner spirit of a Carmelite.

She would have gladly spent her last days in Whitesville, but when the time came to leave she serenely,



Photo: Sister Marie Cooper

Sister Pius Moore

but tearfully left for the Javouhey House community in Newport. That was typical of her: she had always been "happy in her own skin", she knew she was deeply loved by God, and she trusted that God's love would accompany her where ever she went and whatever happened.

In 2005, Sister Pius departed for her home country and took up residence at Mt. Sackville Convent in Dublin.

Both Sister Pius and the many people with whom she had maintained a voluminous correspondence are grateful to Sister Christina Dolan, her patient, willing scribe over the past few years.

She is dearly missed by her brother Tom (Brother Angelus of the Patrician Brothers), her nephews Jason and Morgan and their families as well as all the Cluny Sisters who have known her and been loved by her.

People usually say of the dead, "May she rest in peace". However for Sister Pius, I have to say, "May she who brought joy into the lives of so many rejoice always!"

Associate Doris Bias

Doris Gay Bias, 83, of Foster, WV was born in Monclo, WV and graduated from Sharples High School. She passed away February 10, 2019. Doris was a woman of deep faith that she shared with the Cluny Associates of West Virginia, who were very fond of her and miss her dearly.

Doris is survived by her daughter, Debbie Mullins of Foster; her grandson Josh Chaffin of Madison; one brother, John Hicks of Medina, Ohio; and one sister, Becky Yeager of Quinlan, Texas.

Our condolences go out to Debbie and John and their families, friends, and the members of her Associate group.



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CLUNY AQUIDNECK ISLAND APPEAL



**Our Cluny Spirit
Is Alive!**

**Our thanks to all who
generously supported
our appeal
for
Cluny ministries
in the
greater Newport/
Aquidneck Island
area.**

If you haven't participated, there is still time to send your gift!

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