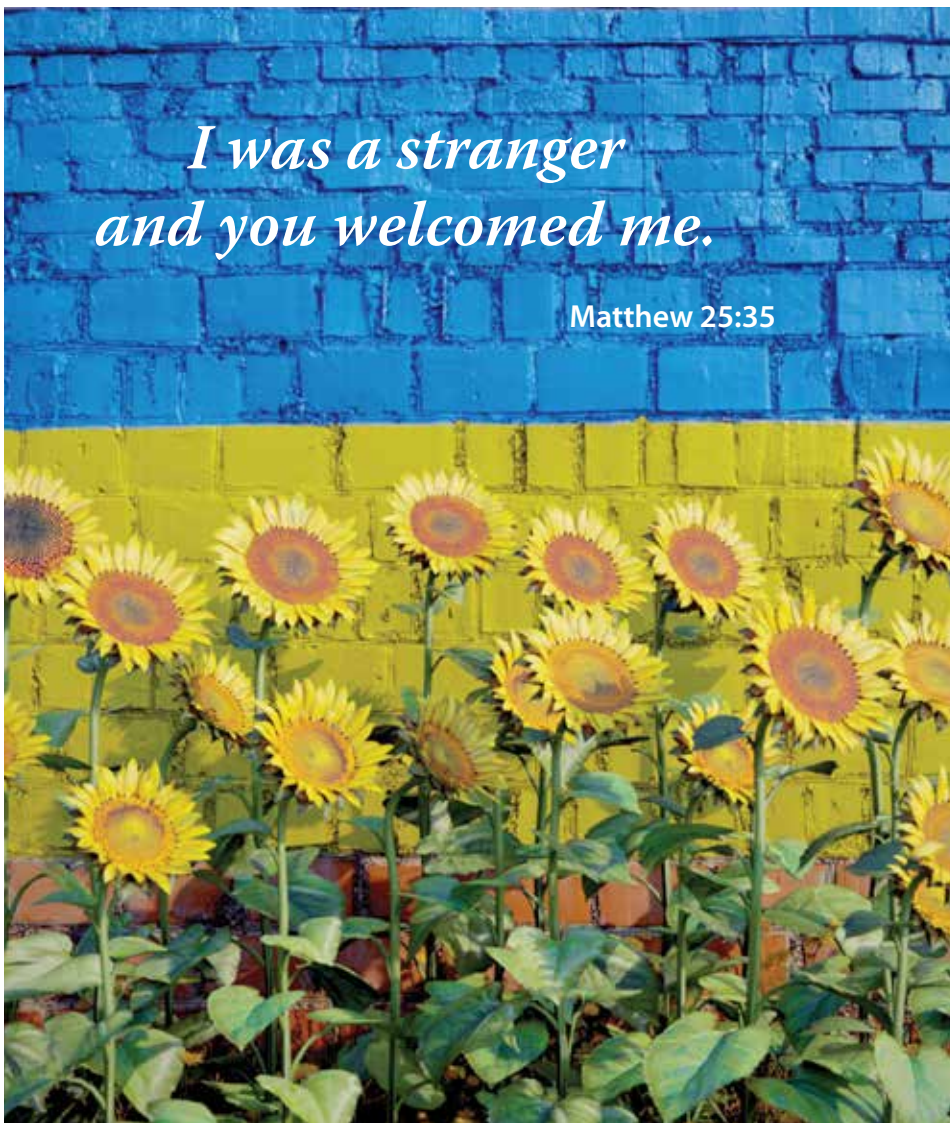


Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny
Province of USA & Canada

Connections

Solidarity with People Living on the Margins



*I was a stranger
and you welcomed me.*

Matthew 25:35

Photo: risto-kokkonen-xrgEDxTo-hY-unsplash

Cluny Sisters have joined with many partners to reach out to the people of Ukraine, praying and organizing prayer services, encouraging financial support, and welcoming refugees.

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Welcomed



From the Editor's Desk

Cluny Connections
is a publication of the
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Province of USA & Canada

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As our last newsletter went out to you, we enjoyed a rainy spring bringing out lush vegetation, encouraging spring flowers, and promising fruitful vegetable gardens. Summer, however, stressed all of creation. Rising temperatures, storms, and floods reminded us of the changing climate. Even as we endured our own discomfort, we were aware of the greater suffering of our sisters and brothers at home and around the world. This issue brings news of some of our efforts to respond to the needs of others near and far, and an encouragement to pray, study, and act in the care of our Common Home and its inhabitants along with us, especially during this Season of Creation that unites the Christian world.

In May we had the joy of welcoming Sister Ann Stevens, a medical doctor who has served in West Africa as well as in her home country before being elected to the General Council, our Cluny leadership team in Paris.

In June many friends and supporters joined us for a Mass of Thanksgiving and a great party afterward in Hamilton, Ontario.

As our world continues to change, women religious in the United States have been engaged in discerning the evolving future of religious life. Sister Genevieve and I were privileged to join 700+ other religious for a week of prayer, discussion and discernment at the Annual Assembly in August.

Our summer activities came to a close with our first post-COVID gathering of friends in Newport, and the installation of three new Cluny Affiliates.

I hope you will enjoy reading more details in the pages that follow.

As summer cedes, somewhat reluctantly, to the cooler breezes of autumn in the north, and spring evolves in the southern hemisphere, we wish you the blessings of the season wherever you are, and hold you in our hearts and in our prayer.

Sister Marie

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Pray, Study, Act

The Season of Creation is a period that brings together the entire Christian community worldwide to pray and take action for the care of the environment. It begins on September 1 with the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and ends on October 4 with the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. It was established by Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I, in 1989, when he proclaimed September 1 as the Orthodox Day of Prayer for Creation. In 2015 Pope Francis made the Season of Creation official for the Roman Catholic Church.

(<https://seasonofcreation.org/2022/07/21/climate-change-pope-francis-asked-the-un-for-the-effective-implementation-of-the-paris-agreement/>)

Fire is the symbol for the Season of Creation 2022. Today, the prevalence of unnatural fires is a sign of the devastating effects that climate change has on the most vulnerable of our planet. Creation cries out as forests crackle, animals flee, and people are forced to migrate due to the fires of injustice. Who will reach out to people who have lost their homes? Who will welcome them?

In contrast, the fire that called to Moses as he tended the flock on Mt. Horeb did not consume or destroy the bush. This flame of the Spirit revealed God's presence. This holy fire affirmed that God heard the cries of all who suffered, and promised to be with us as we followed in faith to our deliverance from injustice. This symbol of God's Spirit calls us to listen to the voice of creation.

Some Suggestions for Action:

- * Pledge to live more sustainably: make a commitment to reducing your environmental footprint as an individual, family or community.
- * Consider taking the Laudato Si Pledge or the Living the Change initiative.
- * Support efforts in your area to welcome and support those who live on the margins.
- * Raise native milkweed and flowers that attract monarch butterflies.
- * Compost food scraps or join a composting project.

We are grateful to the Laudato Sí Movement and Season of Creation for providing these resources. (https://seasonofcreation.org/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=blog&utm_id=en)



Offering Gratitude for the Gifts of Creation

These table graces, provided by Willard Metzger, invite us to thank God with integrity in a world struggling with climate change.

This food does not come to us without cost. It comes to us through human effort - and we are thankful. But even more so, this food comes to us as a gift of the earth. Creation has given itself so that our lives can be sustained - and we are thankful. In our gratitude, oh God, we acknowledge the true cost of this food. and in our worship of You, help us renew our commitment to care for the earth. Amen.

Lord, you have instructed us to be like little children. So like adoring children, help us freely express our love to You. As grateful children, help us eat this meal with deep appreciation. And as obedient children, help us live as stewards of the earth. Receive our love, accept our gratitude, and strengthen our obedience. Amen.

Oh God, Your mercy defends us and the gift of creation sustains us. In response to Your gifts of mercy and love, help us not to eat that which we will not also defend. Help us not to embrace lifestyles that cannot also be sustained by the earth. Receive our commitment of praise and our expression of gratitude. Amen.

Mass of Thanksgiving and Celebration in Hamilton

On the warm Saturday evening of June 25th Cluny Associates, former students, co-workers, and friends gathered for a Mass of Thanksgiving in the historic Church of St. Mary, in Hamilton, Ontario. Bishop Douglas Crosby, OMI presided with Father David Avila, the pastor, and Msgr. Edward Sheridan. In his homily the bishop congratulated Cluny Sisters for their presence and ministry in the Diocese of Hamilton.

Cluny Sisters began ministering in Canada when Bishop Ryan requested sisters for the Diocese of Hamilton in 1957. The following year, Sisters Angela Mannion, Josephine St. Leger, Morag Collins, and Elizabeth Butler founded St. Joseph Community in St. Joseph Parish. As the population of Hamilton increased, the presence and ministry of the sisters grew in the elementary schools of St. Joseph and Christ the King Parishes, Cathedral Girls and St. John de Brebreuf High Schools, and at Holy Rosary Parish in Guelph. The sisters became engaged in a variety of pastoral and outreach ministries.

Sister Regina Brunelle worked with the Good Shepherd Brothers' outreach ministries, first at Emmaus House that provides transitional and supportive housing for the mentally ill, and then at Regina's Place, (formerly Angela's Place) with single mothers at risk, until her death in 2016.

Sisters Maria Rocha and Maria Mendes, from Portugal, served newly arriving Portuguese families. They engaged in religious education, youth ministry, and taught in the Portuguese Cultural Heritage



L-R: Helena Medeiros-Secretary and Liason for the Catholic School Board, Sister Maria Rocha, Maria Moitiinho-Portuguese Information Center, and Liason Secretary, Youth Group.



Sisters Genevieve Marie Vigil, Mary Josephine (Conception) Glynn, Maria Rocha, and Ena Maguire



Sister Maria with members of from the first youth group formed 40 years ago.

Celebrations in Hamilton (Continued)

program. With the support of the Hamilton-Wentworth School Board, the Portuguese Information Center was established at St. Mary's Parish. For 47 years, Sister Maria Rocha has provided a continual presence of prayer and ministry with the Portuguese and Portuguese-Canadian community. Sister Maria Mendes served from her arrival in 1992 until her death in 2016. In addition to ministry in Catholic schools as teachers and principals, the sisters were involved in religious education, pastoral care, and outreach to those in need.

Following the celebration of Eucharist, over 125 guests gathered at the reception. Our guests enjoyed re-telling the stories, remembering the many ways that they had been influenced, supported and loved by Cluny Sisters. A large group, who had been in Sister Maria Rocha's first youth group 40 years ago, came with their families to thank her. Through her own immigration experience, she could truly empathize with their challenges and the tension of holding on to their culture as they integrated into a new life in Canada.

We were moved by all the heartwarming memories shared and grateful that so many of us have been privileged to minister in the Diocese of Hamilton.

Sister Genevieve thanked Bishop Crosby, and all the guests. Sister Maria thanked all who gathered and all those with whom she has worked so closely.

The 21 Cluny Sisters who have served in Hamilton are: Sisters Angela Mannion, Regina Brunelle, Elizabeth Butler, Morag Collins, Mary Glynn, Anne Grogan, Gerard Grogan, Jerome Kehoe, Yvonne Kelly, Anne Kenny, Anne Marie Liston, Mary Elizabeth McKeever, Maria Mendes, Luke Parker, Maria Rocha, Rose Roffelsen, Nora Shiel, Josephine St. Leger, Joan Van der Zyden, Genevieve Marie Vigil, and Mary Patrice Watson.

*Thank
You*

To all our donors, who continue to make it possible for us to do "A Little Bit of Good". We keep you in our prayers. May God bless you with every good gift!

LCWR Assembly 2022 (Leadership Conference of Women Religious)



Sisters Marie Cooper and Genevieve Marie Vigil

Sisters Genevieve Marie and Marie are grateful for the experience of this year's assembly, "set in the context of a series of spiritual conversations, the assembly provided input into the mystical wisdom available to us and helped us to recognize, share, and celebrate the wisdom we each carry within ourselves. Participants explored how might we deepen our access to the wisdom that surrounds us so that we may amplify it and bring it to the tables at which we sit and the many circles with which we interact. The fate of the world – with its multiple challenges – is calling for us to respond to this urgent need with these precise gifts that women religious possess." (lcwr.org)

Sister Jane Herb, IHM, LCWR president, shared the story of a fictional monk, who remained in his cell, but was attentive to those who visited, or whom he invited to provide information to create the perfect map of the world. To do so, he realized he must learn to look at problems from another perspective and abandon his normal perceptions to attain a deeper sensibility. The journey of women religious today, according to Sister Jane, "is a journey to the very limits of the way we imagine our world." Sister Jane encouraged members to journey together and to wonder "who might be invited into our "cells" as we shape the future of religious life...We need to be nimble and to risk as we look to the future. To engage in the divine dance into the future will take courage and a spirit of hope."

(For more information, please visit the website: lcwr.org)



Solidarity with People Living on the Margins

Cluny Sisters in Brazil

In the footsteps of Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey, by meeting the men and women of our time, we seek to “liberate them so that they may have life in abundance”. (John 10, 10) Our mission of small light “that awakens” develops in four educational centers located in the states of São Paulo, Paraná and Minas Gerais. We try to be the presence of God in a home for the elderly, and abandoned, and also in different parish pastoral ministries, especially in the forests of

the northeast, in the State of Piauí, where the lack of evangelizers makes itself felt in a more accentuated way. In a great challenge, “on the periphery”, we assume the responsibility of a recovery center for drug-dependent women in which we contemplate the face of Christ disfigured and suffering, which supports the gift of our life and our consecration so that others “may have life and have it abundantly”. For us, this is the Will of the Father.



Childcare centers



Care for the aged and infirm



Recovery center for drug dependent women



Nutrition, education and religious education

Photos: Province of Brazil

Solidarity with Ukraine

Cluny Sisters in France

Anne Marie Javouhey Secondary School is located in Chamblanc, France. Cluny Sisters, students and friends have supported the relief efforts of Urgence Ukraine 21, a local non-profit organization, and Catholic Relief Services (Caritas Internationalis).

Early one morning, a small convoy, made possible through the loan of two Anne Marie Javouhey School minibuses and a truck provided by a local family successfully delivered medical supplies to Poznan, Poland, a journey of over 800 miles and brought Ukrainian families displaced by the war to France. The group of 16 was composed of five families with six children under 10 years of age and one teen, and a Moroccan student. All had fled with only what they were wearing.

Upon their arrival in France, the passengers were welcomed by townspeople, Urgence Ukraine 21 and the French government. Urgence Ukraine 21 continues to raise funds and supplies to distribute in Poland and Ukraine for the relief of refugees.

Parishes Pray and Work Together in Newport, Rhode Island

On the initiative of parishioners of St. Augustin and St. Mary Parishes, a committee composed of members of both parishes worked with our pastor, Father Mark Sauriol and Sister Marie Cooper to offer the Stations of the Cross for Aquidneck Island at St. Mary's. The prayer, which linked the sufferings of the Ukrainians with each station, was based on the model published in *AMERICA Magazine*.* As Father Mark processed, a different lector read a testimony from a Ukrainian describing their suffering, linked to that of Jesus. A full church prayed in silence.

After moving testimonies by a Ukrainian officer and his wife, the assembly, composed of members from many Island churches, contributed an offering totalling \$7,000. St. Mary's teens raised another \$3,000. at a weekend bake sale.

Our members are heartened by this generosity, but as the war goes on, we are even more aware of the need to stand with those who are suffering at home and abroad because of war, famine, and natural disasters.

*Stations of the Cross: By Jim McDermott, S.J., Associate Editor at *AMERICA Magazine* (<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/03/18/station-cross-ukraine-prayer-242627>).

A Long-awaited Visit from Sister Ann Stevens

One aspect of the mission of the Superior General and of the General Council is the visitation of the various places of life of the Congregation. These visits include official visits; preparation for perpetual vows; sessions with provincial councils or groups of sisters for various reasons. Sister Clare Stanley, our General Superior sent Sister Ann Stevens, General Councilor, to us on an official visit in May, 2022.

How often have we heard, “We’re coming out of COVID”? Sister Ann Stevens’ recent visit, postponed since 2020, was a welcome post-COVID event. Sister Ann arrived in May. Sisters Genevieve Marie and Maria Rocha welcomed her in Hamilton. From Canada, Sister Anne continued to California where she visited with the sisters of the Mary Star of the Sea Community, and then traveled east. After a visit with the sisters in St. Teresa of Avila Community in Norwich, CT, she continued on to Rhode Island, visiting Javouhey House and the Provincial House. Cluny Affiliates, Associates and friends were pleased to meet Sister Ann on her journey, however briefly.

A visit from our General Councilor is always a celebration of the “one heart and one mind” of our congregation and of the broader mission of Cluny in the world. Sister Ann’s interest in our life and ministry, brought us inspiration and encouragement. We are very grateful.



Sisters Maria Rocha and Ann Stevens



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Bringing Hope & Compassion

New Cluny Affiliates Welcomed



Photo: Martina St. Leger

Left to Right: Affiliates Mary Ellen Atkins, William Durgin, Mary Durgin, Jack Grant, John Stocker and Jane O’Friel

Congratulations to long-time Cluny friends and supporters, Jane O’Friel, and William and Mary Durgin, new Cluny Affiliates!

Sister Genevieve Marie presented the new Affiliates with their certificates of Affiliation at a gathering of Cluny Sisters, Affiliates, friends, and relatives in August.