

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

Connections

Cluny Sisters Prepare for a New Foundation in California

Sister Genevieve Marie Vigil

As we embrace this new and promising future we are challenged to go forth in new ways, stronger together, prophetic and bold in our missionary discipleship for a new world.

(Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny,
General Chapter 2018 Missionary Priorities)

In the summer or fall months of this year, depending on immigration status, three Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny will make a new foundation in the United States.

Sisters Agnes Marie Aroquinadan from Tamil Nadu, South India, Mavis Animah from Ghana, West Africa, and Vicenta Hurta-Iralla from Paraguay, South America will form a community in Sacred Heart Parish, Pomona, California.

This new and exciting venture is a response to the Missionary Priorities set by our 2018 General Chapter— “Go out together with joy, as credible witnesses, beyond our own frontiers.” These three women are truly missionary in the spirit of Blessed Anne-Marie Javouhey. We pray that the intercultural presence of our sisters will be a sign of unity in diversity for all those who encounter them.

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Cluny Connections
is a publication of the
Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny
Province of USA & Canada

Editor and Layout:
Marie Cooper, SJC
clunymarie@gmail.com
Javouhey House
78 Carroll Avenue
Newport, RI 02840
Phone: (908) 728-0090

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A Blessed and Joyful Easter to All!

On the first Easter Sunday, Jesus revealed himself gradually. First to Mary Magdalen, and then, seemingly simultaneously to the disciples in the upper room and to those on the road to Emmaus.

Those whose hopes were dashed at Calvary were filled with unimaginable joy at being reunited with Jesus, now Risen Christ. And even on seeing him poor Thomas who had declared himself ready to die with Jesus, couldn't believe his eyes until he experienced Jesus' compassionate invitation to verify his identity by touch. For us, seeing is not believing. We walk by faith, not by sight. But our compassionate Lord who walks with us, invites us to draw closer, that our faith might be strengthened, and we might believe the Good News and new life He holds out to us.

In this issue we bring good news of the arrival of three sisters who will begin a new Cluny community in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, of the variety of ministries of our Canadian Cluny Associates in Hamilton, Ontario, new opportunities for retreats, spiritual support at Javouhey House, our Newport convent, and a letter of appreciation and support for our sisters in South India from a priest who was once a small boy when Cluny Sisters arrived in his village and helped the residents to transform their lives.

In each article God's loving care and new life is revealed reminding us that Easter was not an isolated occasion many centuries ago, but is manifested in our own day and time, again and again, for those who are blessed with the eyes of faith.

Sister Marie

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Javouhey House Is Open for Retreats and Prayer Experiences



Javouhey House, named after Blessed Anne Marie, was founded in 2003. Over the past 20 years, it has been a home for Cluny Sisters as well as a place for friends, parishioners of St. Augustin Church, and others to find welcome in a prayerful setting.

For a time, our ministry became the care of our sisters until each one, Sisters Josephine, Rachel and Anne Marie went home to God in 2021 and 2022.

Meanwhile, we had been receiving requests from women and men for spiritual direction, days of recollection, retreats, bible study, and prayer groups. In 2019 a bible study group began, switched to Zoom in 2020, and has continued to grow.

With the re-opening after the COVID 19 confinement, requests were renewed. Now, a new ministry is evolving at our beautiful home on the corner of Carroll and Florence Avenues. Its distinctive gingko tree, a cherished Cluny symbol, was a gift of Cluny Affiliates Paul and Mary Gagne at the dedication of the convent in July of 2002. For over 20 years it has shaded and inspired many

seekers, reaching up to the sky—green in spring and summer, gold in autumn, taller and fuller every year.

During March, small groups gathered to pray and reflect on Lenten Sunday Gospels. Other similar opportunities will be offered during the Easter/Pentecost Season.

Some of the participants who met during Lent have come together to form a Centering Prayer group and hope to welcome others.



Continued on page 7

Cluny Associates in Hamilton, ON Canada

Doing "a little bit of good" wherever we are.

This is the aspect of the Cluny charism passed on by Blessed Anne Marie that has led our Cluny Associates in Hamilton to serve in a variety of ministries.

The first members began meeting with Sister Regina Brunelle in 2005. Therese Wallace says: "Becoming an associate has helped me grow spiritually. We have become a community bonded by prayer, mutual support, and ministry. During our years together, we have lost some members through death, and we have supported one another through loss of loved ones and personal crises. It was Anne Marie's spirituality and the events of her life that strongly resonated with us. Her spirituality is a lens through which we look at where God is leading us. It continues to inspire and support now and into the future." The extensive involvement of the seven current members, Erma Callender, Maureen Harper, Shirley Johnson, Jayne Kennedy, Mary Jean Marcuzzi, Linda Pandzich, and Therese Wallace touches on parish and hospital ministry as well as outreach in collaboration with local programs.

Also a member of St. Joseph Parish, **Maureen Harper** shares her musical gifts as cantor and choir member and is an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist. Maureen is a founding member of Concerned Lay Catholics Group (concernedcatholics.ca). The group focuses on the education of laity and others regarding global clerical sexual abuses and healing and support outlets available for all abuse survivors and their families. Their work includes solidarity, support, and engagement in Indigenous concerns and Truth and Reconciliation activities.

You may meet **Mary Jean Marcuzzi** at the Barton Street Jail or at a board meeting of l'Arche Hamilton. As a Spiritual Care Volunteer at St. Joseph Hospital psychiatric facility, she shares gifts singing and accompanying participants at the weekly Mass. Mary Jean brings a welcoming, gentle presence to the chapel. She also volunteers in the psychiatric hospital museum, lest we forget the tragic history of mental health care.



Terry with residents in the chapel of the Village of Wentworth Heights Retirement and Long-Term Care Home



Shirley Johnson at work

At Corpus Christi Church, **Shirley Johnson** takes delight in seeing to all the details so necessary for parish liturgical life. From creating uplifting environments for special feasts and seasons, to assuring that all that is needed is readily available, to filling in wherever she is needed, Shirley is the "go to" person. Shirley's knowledge and abilities are especially welcome during this time of transition for Corpus Christi that will soon merge with another parish.

Cluny Associates in Canada (Con't)



Maureen, Mary Jean, and Terry in the Chapel of St. Joseph's Psychiatric Hospital

Before becoming an associate, **Therese Wallace** served as Spiritual Care Volunteer at St. Joseph's Healthcare for many years. She coordinates and supports weekly Mass and visits each patient, taking Communion to those who cannot attend Mass. She is joined by **Maureen Harper** and **Mary Jean Marcuzzi**. Therese also is a Spiritual Care Volunteer at the Village of Wentworth Heights, a retirement home. She is also a prayer group leader at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, where she is a liturgical minister.

At St. Mary Parish in Hamilton, **Erma Callender** engages in a variety of volunteer activities. She also volunteers at Birthright Hamilton.



Linda Pandzich serving the Out of the Cold Program

We can find our associates out in the community in ministry, but we also find them doing "a little bit of good" that means a whole lot closer to home. **Jayne Kennedy** is a pre-eminent caregiver! After spending many years caring for her neighbor and her Aunt Marilyn, Jayne cared for her husband, Michael until his recent passing.



Linda preparing meals for the Out of the Cold Program

Linda Pandzich is the coordinator for one of the Hamilton Out of the Cold sites. Its name is a fit description for this ecumenical collaboration of local area churches that provides hot meals and assistance during the cold winter months from November to March. This is just one of her many ministries, which also include volunteering at Good Shepherd Center, and in her home parish of St. Joseph's in outreach to the sick, the home-bound, and residents of Aberdeen Gardens Retirement Home.



Cluny Sisters in Siddayapalem South India

Fr. Ramesh Chopperapu, once a young boy of Siddayapalem, now ordained a priest, writes to us from Germany:

“In 2000, when the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny came to Siddayapalem it was a great joy for Siddayapalem and all the neighboring villages. We are all touched by their simplicity of the life, goodness of heart, commitment in mission, and care for the poor and the sick. They have initiated and developed many ministries in this area. Cluny Sisters’ ministries extend to many areas of need.”

Empowerment of Women

Savings Programs/Self-help groups: The sisters teach the women to budget and save the money they earn.

Tailoring Center

The young women and the girls who drop out of school learn sewing and tailoring.



Tutoring and Assistance with School Fees

The sisters support families and help children, especially girls, to study and stay in school.

Drug Addiction and Domestic Violence Intervention

When the sisters arrived, alcoholism was a major cause of problems in the village. The women were suppressed and were physically abused by their alcoholic husbands. The sisters played a key role in changing the lives of many families.

Nutrition Program

This is an important service for the needy, the hungry, and the neglected in the villages.



“In this way the sisters are a great blessing for the people of Siddayapalem and the surrounding villages. Words are not enough to express our gratitude for the services of the Cluny Sisters. I whole heartedly thank the provincial, pioneers, and sisters who have worked and who are working in the Siddayapalem.”

The Cluny Sisters thank Fr. Ramesh for his financial support of the food program, and his constant support of the Cluny Sisters’ ministries in Siddayapalem.

Cluny Connections thanks Sister Grace for sharing Fr. Ramesh’s letter and photos.

JAVOUHEY HOUSE BY THE GINGKO TREE

A Place to BE
WELCOME . . . PEACEFUL . . . SERENE



hmet-talha-onuk-6FbdoShcviE-unsplash

Javouhey House provides peaceful settings, whether in our chapel, on the grounds, at the bay, at the ocean, or on trails nearby.

It is ideal for those who wish to pray on their own or make retreats alone or with others.

Come and visit - you are most welcome!



Forest Bathing

With the warmer weather of spring Sister Marie will lead groups in Forest Bathing. Forest Bathing, *shinrin-yoku*, comes to us from Japan. It is the practice of intentionally connecting to Nature through the use of all the senses. It allows us to absorb the ambience of a forest that reveals the love of the Creator. It helps to ease the pressures that can cause stress, and it has been proven to benefit physical and mental well being.

Testimonials from Some of our Participants

“This has been a spiritual awakening for me.”

“Living my faith is more than church attendance. I now live a more prayer-centered life.”

“The people I’ve met are so faith-centered, and a joy to be with.”

“My retreat with Sister Marie led to a whole new experience of God loving me.”

“I always loved the out of doors, but Forest Bathing is an awesome encounter with Nature. Truly, a grounding, healing experience! “

The Javouhey House dedicated website

provides more information on the ministry as well as updates on new and seasonal offerings and the opportunity to sign up or request more information.

Please pay us a visit at

sjcplacetobe.org

or

78 Carroll Avenue, Newport, RI 02840
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If you have not already done so, please consider making a contribution today, to help us respond to those in need throughout the New Year, 2023. Please refer to the details for sending gifts on Page 2. **No gift is too small.**

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