

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

Connections

Introducing Our Sisters of the New Cluny Community in Pomona, California



From left to right:

Sister Agnes Aroquianadane, from Tamil Nadu, Province of South India

Sister Vicenta Iralla Huerta, from the Region of Paraguay/Argentina

and Sister Mavis Animah from Ghana, Province of West Africa

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to our Donors

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From the Editor's Desk



Cluny Connections
is a publication of the
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This October is filled with cosmic wonders, two full moons and a spectacular lunar eclipse, the ring of fire! But if you can't experience the eclipse, don't worry, because there's another one coming up on April 8, 2024.

When I see announcements like this in the headlines, I'm reminded that we are very much a part of God's amazing Creation. Always, we are held in the palm of God's divine, loving care in a vast universe we hardly know or can understand. Photos from the Webb telescope continue to amaze us all.

October also brings those of us in the northern hemisphere riotous reds and oranges before winter winds can strip the trees and reveal their bare beauty.

Harvest is over: pumpkins, corn stalks, horns of plenty call us to give thanks for all that we receive.

But October is also springtime for those down south. Tiny green springs peeping up to remind us that the dead of winter is not final, and that life is renewed to grow and blossom into the summer sunshine.

And of course, between the hemispheres, what seems to be a perpetual summer to which the "snow birds" fly, brings rains, droughts, and the "in between" weather; sometimes welcome, sometimes treacherous.

Whether you, our reader, are anywhere from far south to the far north of our dear Planet Earth, we think of you as we give thanks throughout the year, but especially at Thanksgiving. May neither winter winds nor summer storms bring you harm. May you continue to discover new life and special blessings each day, whatever the season and whatever the weather report!

Sister Marie

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In Memoriam Cluny Affiliate

William Augustin Durgin

October 1, 1928–March 24, 2023



William "Bill" Durgin

William "Bill" Durgin was a devoted family man who enjoyed a lively debate on the issues of the day. He was a devout Catholic, and a daily communicant at St. Augustin Church in Newport where he served as a lector until shortly before he died. He was a proud graduate of St. Raphael Academy and the College of the Holy Cross.

Bill's career was wide and varied. He served his country as a combat veteran in the 1st Cavalry during the Korean War, and engaged in various occupations. He was interested in a world larger than his own, and attentive to its needs. He'll be remembered for his role in developing Blenheim in Middletown.

Throughout life, he generously assisted anyone he could, and when there were challenges, he would say, "Hold the course!" It seemed nothing could get Bill down, despite the difficulties and sorrows he experienced during his long life.

For many years, Bill was a devoted friend to Cluny Sisters in Newport, and it was a joyful occasion when the Congregation bestowed spiritual affiliation to Bill and his wife, Mary.

He was a humble man who was best known for his generosity, his smile and his upbeat outlook on life.

He is greatly missed by his wife, Mary, his family, and friends, and all the Cluny Sisters.

*Thank
You*

To all our donors, who continue to make it possible for us to respond to those who knock on our doors.
We keep you in our prayers.
May God bless you with every good gift!

If you have not already done so,
please consider making a contribution today,
to help us respond to those in need throughout 2023.

Please refer to the details for sending gifts on Page 2.
No gift is too small.

Set the World on Fire with Love and Hope

Every six years, a General Chapter of Cluny Sisters is held at the Mother House in Paris. The next General Chapter will convene in 2024.

The theme of the chapter is *Set the world on fire with love and hope*. Representatives from around the world will gather to set the direction of the congregation and to elect a General Superior and a General Council, who will lead the congregation for another six years.

The name “chapter” for meetings of religious comes down to us from St. Benedict, who directed the monks to gather at the beginning of each day for a reading of a chapter of the Rule of Life. With time, the room where they gathered was known as the “chapter room”, and then expressions such as “coming together for the chapter” referred to the meeting itself, and eventually to the body gathering for it. Monks and nuns also met in the chapter rooms to elect a leader for their monastery. Today chapters in religious communities refer to meetings of representatives of the members. They may be local, gathering members in a geographical region, or general, a gathering of representatives from a whole congregation.

In preparation for the General Chapter, Cluny Sisters around the world also gather their members regionally. Together they reflect on the past six years and how they have carried out the mission priorities of the congregation as well their local direction statements. Looking ahead, they discern the local needs, prepare resolutions for consideration at the General Chapter, and elect delegates to represent them at the General Chapter.

As you see in the photos on the following pages, the local gatherings are a time not only to work, but also to pray, rejoice and celebrate together in the larger community.

Sisters from the United States gathered in California in September. We were delighted to be joined by Sisters Agnes, Mavis, and Vicenta, who have come to form our new community in Pomona, and Sister Punam Rai from the Province of North India who is currently in the United States studying.

Cluny Sisters in the United States Gather

The sisters met in California, and for the first time, on Zoom as some sisters were not able to join them.



Working together: Sisters Mary Josephine and Mary Patrice. The laptop on the table allows Sisters Yannick and Marie to participate from across the country.



Daily Mass: Sister Vicenta receiving Communion.



A little break from the process: from left to right: Sisters Ena, Luke, Agnes and Vicenta.

Cluny Sisters in the United States (Continued)



Opening Prayer: From left to right: Sisters Genevieve Marie, Ena, Mary Patrice, Maria, Mary Josephine, Vicenta, Agnes, Luke, Mavis, and Punam



Coffee break: from left to right: Sisters Punam, Genevieve Marie, Maria, Mavis.

Closing Ceremony

Celebrating their collaboration and commitment to live out their decisions to set the world on fire with love and hope, each of the sisters blessed a sister and was blessed by another sister as they exchanged the fire of the candle. Sister Agnes is blessing Sister Vicenta.



Gathering of the Cluny Sisters in the West Indies

Opening Ceremonies



Left: After the opening Mass in the chapel, the sisters process carrying the symbols of the chapter image and flags of the countries of the Province.

Below: Sister Maureen Alexander, Provincial, formally opens the Chapter.

Right: To Sister Maureen's right is the focus center with bamboo, coal pot, and flags. A statue of Blessed Anne Marie dominates, and a poster with a thought from her letters for each day is framed below.



Above: Sisters Lucy, Annette, Natania, and Dorothy study results of a brainstorming activity.

Below, Sisters Anne, Lucy and Claire enjoy a hot lunch at Cluny Tea House, a ministry of the Port of Spain communities.



Gathering of the Cluny Sisters in the West Indies (Continued)

The Symbolic Image

The background is the universe, the gift of the Creator
Bamboo, left, is a symbol of resilience and sustainability
The Spirit dances in Creation, inflaming the world with love
The coal pot, a symbol of Caribbean history and community culture



Graphic was designed and created by Sister Vanesa Manzano.

Closing Ceremony

As a result of the contemplative discernment process, the sisters articulated their commitment to dancing with the Spirit, setting the world on fire.

Left: Sister Maureen sends forth Sister Rosemary, community leader in Tobago, handing her the scroll, which contains a copy of the commitments signed by the sisters.



From left to right—back row: Sisters Clare, Alicson, Lorraine, Rosemary, Ivy, Lucy, Marie, Rufina, Paula
Row 2: Sisters Maureen, Grace, Philip, Martha, Maria, Dorothy, Claire, Mary-Ann, Annette, Anne.
Front row: Sisters Lucia, Vertly, Marlene, Jacinta, Natania, Vanesa, Dieon, Mary Jean.

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Bringing Hope & Compassion

Gathering of the Cluny Sisters in the West Indies (Continued)



Honoring the Women on Whose Shoulders We Stand

During the opening of the gathering, the sisters created posters with photos of the deceased sisters of the province inserted into flames. They added captions describing the ways each sister had danced with the Spirit and lit the flame of love during her lifetime. Left: Sisters Rosemary, Dorothy, and Grace work on one of the posters.

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