

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

Connections



This year we mark the “Jubilee Year”. The name jubilee comes from the ram’s horn, the yobel, used to proclaim the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

In the book of Leviticus (Leviticus 25:8-13) a jubilee year was to be marked every 50 years. It was intended to be marked as a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation, and it involved the forgiveness of debts, the return of misappropriated land, and a fallow period for the fields.

Jesus’ mission inaugurated the great Jubilee foretold by the prophets. In the Fourth Chapter of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus’ mission is described as a fulfillment of the prophesy of the Prophet Isaiah (61:1-2) “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” After reading this passage, Jesus announces, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21)

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Thank You to Our Donors



A New Year of Grace has dawned!

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Last December during our celebration of Advent and Christmas, the Sunday readings from the prophets spoke of great jubilees. Both Isaiah and Baruch described the return of the captives from bondage in Babylon when mountains would be brought low and valleys filled. A great feast would await them, and the tears would be wiped from their eyes. John the Baptist quoted the prophecies as a foretelling of the coming of the Messiah.

During this Jubilee Year 2025, we are called to go forth as Pilgrims of Hope to re-establish right relationships with ourselves, with others, and with God. As Cluny Sisters, Pilgrims of Hope, we enter the Jubilee 2025 and beyond guided by our new Missionary Orientations and led by our new Congregational leadership team, to ignite the world with love and hope.

There are mountains of debt to be redeemed, rough ways to be made smooth, tears to be wiped away. This issue invites you to reflect on some of the jubilee themes. We also provide the Jubilee Prayer Pope Francis has given us and the Jubilee Calendar—celebrations for people in all walks of life, all ministries. We are all included!

Sister Mavis shares her experience of the National Religious Vocation Conference. She reminds us that *God's Call Is Everywhere*, and that living our own personal call involves reaching out, accompanying, and assisting seekers to listen to the Spirit to discern and respond to God's call in their lives.

During this special New Year, may the celebration and the work of the Jubilee Year strengthen us all as *Pilgrims of Hope* to renew and deepen our relationship with self, God, others, and Creation.

Sister Marie

Scripture Passages to Explore

Isaiah
Baruch
Luke

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2024 CLUNY GENERAL CHAPTER LIGHTS THE WAY

Sister Marie Cooper



Sister Clare Stanley

Cluny Missionary Orientations 2024-2030

Together
moving forward
in missionary availability

Together
igniting our communities
with love and hope

Together
letting ourselves be transformed
to better serve our world

The Missionary Orientations provide direction and challenge as we gather locally to receive the orientations and to listen, share, and articulate how we will faithfully engage on the path of missionary service in our provinces and regions to ignite the world with love and hope.

Photos of the Chapter events are available here:
https://sj-cluny.org/-News-Events-?lang=fr&debut_ue=10#pagination_ue

During the summer of 2024, Cluny leaders and delegates from around the world met in Paris at our Mother House in General Chapter to pray and reflect on who we are, where we have been, and who we are called to be in the world. Participating in a synodal process, the leaders and delegates listened, shared, and articulated a path of missionary service, following Christ in the spirit of our founder, Blessed Anne Marie, for the next six years.

They also elected congregational leadership:

Sister Clare Stanley - General Superior
Sister Agnès Thévenin - 1st Assistant
Sister Maria Nieves Cremades Caparrós
- 2nd Assistant
Sister Maria da Conceição Adelina
Sister Shirley Ann Stevens
Sister Christiane Gervais
Sister Edel Rai
Sister Luciana D'Rozario
Sister Marie Fatima Faye

JUBILEE THEMES

A Year Acceptable to the Lord: Freedom



And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. (Leviticus 25:10)

Over 200 years ago, our founder, Blessed Anne Marie Javouhey, gathered other women in founding our congregation. Together they labored to free others from the bondage of illness, illiteracy, and slavery. She personally created and conducted a program for the liberation of 500 African refugees in South America. Time passes, things change, but in our own time refugees continue to journey in hope of freedom.

In Canada, the *Journey to Freedom Day Act* is an Act recognizing April 30 of every year as a national day of commemoration of the exodus of Vietnamese refugees and their acceptance in Canada after the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975. (<https://sencanada.ca/en/sencaplus/opinion/honouring-vietnamese-canadians-journey-to-freedom/>)

Nujeen Mustafa was sixteen years old when she fled Syria. She traveled an arduous 3,500 miles in a wheelchair, being pushed, pulled, and carried by her sister along the way. Nujeen's journey, while emblematic

of the hardship many Syrian refugees faced, was also uniquely shaped by her multifaceted identity as a Kurdish woman with cerebral palsy.

In 2017, Nujeen Mustafa published *The Girl from Aleppo: Nujeen's Escape from War to Freedom*. The book is a memoir about Nujeen's life and her journey fleeing Syria. Her aim in writing the memoir was to shift people's outlook on the different aspects of her identity and to break stigmas around what others generally end up fearing about the "unknown". While it captures the suffering of armed conflict, it is also full of hope, humor, and individuality, and it effectively emphasizes Nujeen's personhood beyond the war.

As *Pilgrims of Hope* during this 2025 Jubilee, we are called to welcome the stranger into a new life and a place in our hearts and lives.

(Read more about Nujeen here: <https://humanrightsclinic.law.harvard.edu/from-war-to-freedom-in-a-wheelchair-a-syrian-refugees-story-of-survival/>)

JUBILEE THEMES

A Year Acceptable to the Lord: Redemption



Even if someone is not redeemed in any of these ways, they and their children are to be released in the Year of Jubilee, for the Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 25:54)

After Jesus' teaching in the synagogue of Nazareth, crowds flock to listen to him. They are held bound by illness, or poverty, or an undeserved reputation, or fear, or hopelessness. Jesus' mission is one of redemption. Perhaps the most striking are the cures of those with leprosy who were completely cast out of society. In restoring their health Jesus restores them to their rightful place. They can go home again. (Luke 5:12-16).

When Jesus cures the crippled woman in the synagogue, she stands up straight for the first time in years to hear him publicly proclaim her identity, "A daughter of Abraham". (Luke 13:10-17)

During the holidays we watch heartwarming movies such as *A Christmas Carol* and *It's a*

Wonderful Life. These stories depict different aspects of redemption.

Ebineezer Scrouge once bound by his miserliness is both forgiven and freed.

George Baily despaired because he was bound by the old dreams he couldn't fulfill. The moment of his redemption comes when, standing on the bridge, he decides, "I want to live again." George could now go home again free of broken dreams to delight in all the wonderfulness of his life.

Walking as *Pilgrims of Hope* in this Jubilee Year, we too can be redeemed and contribute to the redemption of others through prayers and outreach in loving mercy and forgiveness.



Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven,
 may the faith you have given us
 in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
 and the flame of charity enkindled
 in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
 reawaken in us the blessed hope
 for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
 into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the
 Gospel.

May those seeds transform from within
 both humanity and the whole cosmos
 in the sure expectation
 of a new heaven and a new earth,
 when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
 your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
 reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
 a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
 May that same grace spread
 the joy and peace of our Redeemer
 throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,
 be glory and praise for ever.

Amen

(www.iubilaeum2025.va)

Jubilee Calendar

December

24 - Opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's in Rome

January

24-26 Jubilee of the World of Communications

February

8-9 Jubilee of Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel

15-19 Jubilee of Artists

21-23 Jubilee of Deacons

March

8-9 Jubilee of the World of Volunteering

28-30 Jubilee of the Missionaries of Mercy

April

5-6 Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers

25-27 Jubilee of Teenagers

May

1-4 Jubilee of Workers

10-11 Jubilee of Marching Bands

16-18 Jubilee of the Eastern Churches

June

7-8 Jubilee of Families, Children, Grandparents and the Elderly

9 Jubilee of the Holy See

14-15 Jubilee of Sport

20-22 Jubilee of Governments

23-27 Jubilees of Seminarians, Bishops and Priests

July

28 July - 3 August Jubilee of Youth

October

4-5 Jubilees of the Missions and Migrants

8-9 Jubilee of Consecrated Life

11-12 Jubilee of Marian Spirituality

November

31 October - 2 November Jubilee of the World of Education

16 Jubilee of the Poor

22-23 Jubilee of Choirs

December

14 Jubilee of Prisoners

WALKING HUMBLY TOGETHER

The 2024 National Religious Vocation Conference Experience

Sister Mavis Anima - Blessed Anne Marie Community, Pomona, CA



Sister Mavis Anima, second from left, with sisters at the conference.

I was privileged to participate in the 2024 NRVC (National Religious Vocation Conference) Convocation in Minneapolis, MN from October 31st to November 4th. I am truly grateful for such an enriching experience as I joined members of many religious communities. The experience was spiritually uplifting and an opportunity for personal growth. The weather became cold after a day of rain, but I was delighted to see snow for the first time in my life!

The theme of the conference, *Walking Humbly Together* was appropriate as more than 200 men and women religious, priests and lay faithful who are committed to promoting vocations to religious life and the priesthood gathered. In our four days of praying, sharing, and listening, we truly were Walking Humbly Together to promote vocations to the consecrated life and priesthood.

Our liturgies and other communal prayer times were edifying and life giving and enabled us to open our minds and hearts to the Spirit as we participated in the various workshops.

The keynote presenters and workshops were excellent. The topics challenged us to walk humbly together, remembering that *God's Call is Everywhere*, and that we must engage in *Community Life and the Tough Conversations* to be true communities of love and hope.

Young people today are calling on us to reach out to them. As vocation promoters, we were inspired to be a leaven of hope as we face the realities of racism in the world with many young men and women. We were encouraged to believe that religious life is still the hope of the world. We are called to *walk on the waters* courageously with strong faith and hope. Together we listened, shared, and learned. It was an experience of walking together in hope into the future.

Our vocation as consecrated religious is worth living and worth promoting. Promoting vocations is promoting life. I would like to ask all our sisters, affiliates, associates, friends, and benefactors to join hands together in praying for an increase in vocations to religious life, especially into our dear Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny.



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**SHARING
 THE JOY!**

2024 Annual Appeal

Joy is contagious!

If you have not already done so, please consider making a contribution today to share your joy and to help us continue to respond to those in need throughout the New Year, 2025.

Please refer to the details for sending gifts on Page 2.

No gift is too small.

Thank you, dear friends!

As you share your joy with us, together we are making a difference in the lives of many, bringing compassion, joy and hope to those in need.

You are specially remembered in our prayer, and Mass is offered for you and for your intentions.

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