



SAINT CHRETIENNE ANNALS

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Sisters of St. Chretienne Wrentham, MA

Fall 2008

FROM DEATH TO NEW LIFE

The numerous and enriching experiences of our Bicentennial celebrations in 2007 gave rise to a dream that gradually developed into a reality, a Memorial Garden to honor all our Sisters who served so faithfully in the United States since 1903.

We are all familiar with the saying: "I solemnly assure you, unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit". (John 12: 24) This was illustrated on our own grounds. Our stately hemlocks had to be chopped down, uprooted, and pulverized due to a disease that was spreading and endangering other trees.

With the dying and disappearance of these beautiful but sickly trees, we were left with an empty and fallow stretch of land. Suddenly, our dream came back to us. It was evidently the right time to transform this space into a beautiful flower garden, and our dream for a Memorial Garden would come to fruition.

We presented a simple design to Diane Smith of Trillium Tree and Landscape. This company has been caring for our grounds for some ten years now, and had been instrumental in the disposal of our hemlocks. Diane responded to our plan enthusiastically, adding her own thoughts and expertise. She contacted her business friends who were happy to contribute plants, bushes and various perennials. Diane gave some of her own plants. Without trying to name all the plants and flowers that make up the whole, French Lilac bushes were included to stress our roots with France as we are a French Congregation. Our Associates and faithful friends also joined in this project with generous donations that allowed us to expand the garden.

In the center of the garden, the Memorial plaque stands with the inscription:

**In loving memory of the Sisters of Saint Chretienne
who faithfully served God and God's people.
Bicentennial year 1807-2007**

On May 25, 2008 we had a special dedication ceremony and blessing of the Memorial Garden. Sr. Mariette Desrochers, our Superior General, in the country for her official visit, presided. Many Sisters from the area attended the ceremony. Diane Smith spoke of the evolution of the garden and named the plants for us.



Sr. Mariette blessing the garden

There is a bench facing the garden where the Sisters can sit and admire the magnificent display of flowers and greens. They prayerfully remember those who have generously given their lives in God's service. Our deceased Sisters remind us that the 'dyings' during their lifetime together with their final dying have produced much fruit in God's eternal garden. We are forever indebted to them for their example. May they enjoy their eternal reward and remember their Sisters here on earth as we hope to join them in God's eternal Kingdom.

Finally, it is important to note that there are other lovely flowerbeds on the grounds of our residence in Marlboro. They are tended with love and care by Sr. Gloria Cote and our friend, Mona Boule. As they plant and water, the Lord, our God of Beauty, makes the flowers bloom creating a display on which we feast our eyes. Come and see for yourselves!

Sr. Marie Therese Ebacher, SSCh.

From the Provincial's Desk

In the year since you received the last edition of our Annals, much has changed in our country. With the recent elections, we hope for solutions that will ease the distress of the economic crisis. But our hearts tell us human efforts fall far short of what is necessary to ease the pain of so many. The faith of our Church, however, stands as a beacon in these dark times as we cry out: "Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a Savior!"

In April, Pope Benedict XVI came to our land bearing Christ's message of hope. Wasn't it amazing to see our whole country moved by this experience as the power of God's love transformed us during that week? Our Holy Father told us he had come to the U.S. as a messenger of hope. He had just written an encyclical, *Spe Salvi (Saved By Hope)* in which he said that when we experience "the consolation of God's compassionate love, the star of hope rises in our hearts." (#36) Because we have been consoled, then we can offer that consolation to one another. Pope Benedict also wrote that "being with the other in his solitude, it ceases to be solitude." (#38)

As Christians, we are challenged to see Christ in each person, to welcome the other in His name, to break through

the barriers that society raises and to offer hope rather than judgment. One example of this need is our broken immigration system. As we retell the Christmas story, can we recognize the Holy Family in those people today who seek a safe place to live and a chance to have a better life? We are all the children or the descendants of immigrants. Where would we be if there had been such repressive laws when our families came to this country?

At this time of year, we do witness the "...hope that gives us the courage to place ourselves on the side of good even in seemingly hopeless situations..." (#36) I know that you will find ways to bring that hope to those around you. At St. Chretienne, in our various ministries, through works and prayers, our Sisters continue to reach out to those in need.

In the coming weeks, may we devote some quality time to ponder the Word of God. The Advent and Christmas liturgies proclaim God's love that overcomes all fear. No matter what happens in our economy, I am sure that "God, the source of hope, will fill us with joy and peace in believing so that through the power of the Holy Spirit, we may have hope in abundance." (Romans 15)

Sr. Lisette Michaud, SSCh.

IN MEMORIAM

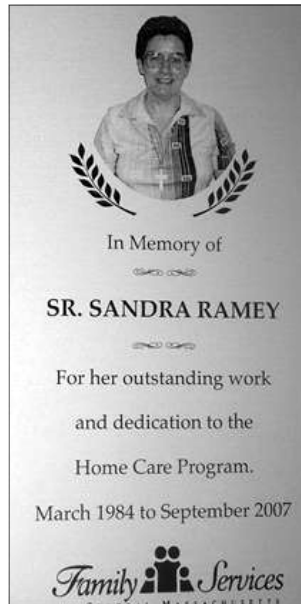
Sister Rose Pelletier



1909-2008

Sister Rose loved her vocation and wanted to live to be 100...she missed by one year. She was a teacher, a Juniorate Director and a talented singer. God's gift of music filled her soul and was her natural way of relating to life. This would sustain her to the very end and became her only way of communication. May you continue to harmonize in heaven, Sister Rose!

Sister Sandra Ramey



1940-2008

Sr. Sandra died after a brief yet brave struggle with cancer. A homemaker for 24 years at Worcester Family Services, she is fondly remembered there with a plaque noting her "outstanding work and dedication to the Home Care program". On June 10th at the monthly in-service meeting Sr. Sandra was presented as a role model to her co-workers. A true Sr. of St. Chretienne, Sandra brought her elderly clients the loving compassion of Christ in her simple, selfless service. May she rejoice forever at the heavenly banquet!

Sister Jeanne Larence



1947-2008

Sister Jeanne courageously battled brain cancer for 17 years. Young and talented, she had hoped to serve the Congregation for many years. She served through her unfaltering patience in the midst of great suffering. When diagnosed she wrote that she wished to "help others say 'yes' to the Lord no matter what happens in life." She certainly lived this! May she rest in peace.

FROM THE HEART



You may remember our last two articles concerning the street children in Africa. One spoke of Sr. Alice Fontaine's experience in Ngara, Tanzania and our new

mission, Nazareth Center. The second concerned our gratitude for your overwhelming response to the needs that were expressed by our Sisters there. With this issue, we are proud to show you what has been realized with the gifts from your heart.



people in the community" says Sr. Christiane. Sister goes on to say how she had spent time in thanksgiving for all that had been realized. "I wanted to write the names of all the people who had given of themselves or their assets for what is being lived at Nazareth Center today. Thank you to each of you and may God bless you."
Sister Julie Tremblay, SSCh.



Last July, Sr. Christiane Lapierre, the superior in Africa, went to Ngara to see the new constructions. "I was so amazed," she said. "The children look so much better. When I got to the Center, the children had put on their clean clothes. They greeted us with the

best of themselves. We visited all the new constructions. The boys were proud to have us enter the dorms which are two nice rooms with bunk beds and armoires. They also had a change of clothes folded neatly under their mattress." Sr. Christiane went on to say that everything was so clean because now they have water. There are latrines, a new kitchen and a beautiful pavilion type building. Here the boys can gather either to play, to eat or to do anything for which such a large space is suited.

"What is even more important for these children is that they are now being recognized not only by the Sisters but also by



Carol Tedstone became the Administrator for our Level IV/Rest Home in Marlboro in April 2008. She has proven to be a vital and enthusiastic presence to our Sisters, bringing with her a wealth of knowledge and experience. Carol's most recent post has been as Nurse Health Coach in Disease Management for American Health Holding. We look forward to a long and fruitful partnership with Carol.

I am interested in contributing toward the needs and ministries of the Srs. of St. Chretienne

\$100 _____ \$75 _____ \$50 _____ \$25 _____ Other _____

Your concern and interest are vital to us and any contribution will be greatly appreciated.

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and mail to: 297 Arnold Street, Wrentham, MA 02093-1798

GEORGIA - OUR NEW HOME

In the Winter 2007 edition of the Annals, Sr. Agnes Therrien had expressed the desire of our Congregation to found a new mission in Georgia, the land of St. Nino, our patron Saint. Last November, in the closing months of our Bicentennial year, the hopes of so many generations of Sisters were realized. At the invitation of Bishop Pasotto, three Sisters went to form a new community there: Marie-Noelle Lapointe and Gisele Thiel from France, and Pascaline Kavugho Kasolene from the Democratic Republic of Congo. They spent six months in the capital city, Tbilisi, learning the language and getting to know the Catholic community there.

At the time of the Russian invasion, the Sisters were in France for a month. They prayed for God's guidance as to whether to return or not. Both the Bishop and the French consul assured them they would be safe. On August 26th, they courageously returned to Tbilisi to prepare for their mission.

In September, the Sisters moved to southwest Georgia, to Akhaltsikhe, the town where the Bishop has missioned them, to encourage the small Catholic community there. This was quite a step in faith because they found the house that the Congregation had purchased had not yet been vacated. The former owner was still living there. The Sisters chose to stay in two small rooms while the Bishop sorted things out with the former owner. Amidst the difficulties, the Sisters met 'angels' who welcomed them and have supported them. Veriko, a woman who knows French, invited them to her home for dinner the night they arrived. She then introduced them to the stores and businesses in the town. The pastor, Fr. Zourab, has been very attentive to their needs, as have two young women in the parish, Maia and Lia. The Sisters will soon offer French lessons to some students, and with Veriko as translator, Sr. Marie-Noelle will lead a session on the Gospel.

We invite you to join our Sisters in this prayer to St. Nino: O Saint Nino, through your faithfulness to the Gospel, you were given the name, "the Christian". Pray God for us. Obtain for us the grace to be faithful as you were. May the Spirit of Jesus Christ impel us to be disciples of mercy and compassion to the people of this land. Amen.



Srs. Marie Noelle, Gisele, Pascaline



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