



# SAINT CHRETIENNE ANNALS

Volume 13 Number 1

Sisters of St. Chretienne Wrentham, MA

Spring 2006

## *My African Experience*

In the summer of 2004, I attended our General Chapter in Metz, France, and I was inspired to sign up for the committee on our African Missions. That was only the beginning of a great adventure. My interest in and my love for our missions grew by leaps and bounds. Coming to realize the many needs of the missions, I even volunteered to help in whatever way I could, in spite of my age. As a result, I was asked to go to Africa for four to six months to teach English to some of our Sisters, and to help prepare the opening of a new mission in Tanzania. I readily accepted this new call from God and saw it as a great life-giving experience.

In August, I left for Kigali, Rwanda via Metz where I spent six days at our Motherhouse. It was good to be there. On Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, I landed at Nairobi Airport in Kenya where I waited for five hours. Then I left for Rwanda where I got to know, love, and admire many of our Sisters laboring in our missions there. During that month, I taught conversational English to some of our native Sisters preparing to begin college in January, to others destined to go to the new foundation in Tanzania, and to any other Sisters interested in improving their oral English. It was a very interesting experience for me as well as a labor of love!

I was also privileged to visit our various missions in Rwanda and the Congo. Everywhere, I saw and experienced in some small ways the difficulties inherent to living in Africa. The people know

we saw real poverty all around us. We saw children in rags and without shoes as they were going to work in the fields instead of going to school. After a brief return to Kigali for more teaching, I rejoined Yvette and Chantal in Ngara, Tanzania, where they had moved to a rented, unfurnished house. Much work had to be done, but little by little this house became our home.



*Mother's helper and friends*

As we went about the village, we became aware of a sad reality. Here, there were many "children of the streets." Because of the poverty of their families, these children were in dirty, tattered clothing and were begging for money and food. Many of them were completely homeless and sleeping anywhere they could find a safe place, even during the rainy season. Unfortunately, just as we were becoming more involved with the people of the area through our great Pastor, Fr. Sixmund Nyabenda, I became ill and had to return to Rhode Island a bit sooner than planned. I was happy to learn that my two companions have taken on the mission of helping these abandoned children in whatever way they can, in collaboration with other missionaries and organizations, such as UNICEF. Much work needs to be done to provide a decent life for these poor and illiterate children.

All in all, my African experience was a very good one. I have been greatly enriched, getting to know a people who does not need all the material comforts that we take for granted. I also got to know many of our missionaries who edified me by their dedication to God's people. This renewed me in my own life of service. This time in Africa has been a life-giving experience for me, and I am very grateful!



*Sisters Yvette Berger, Chantal Mapera, Alice Fontaine*

they cannot count on electricity, even where it normally exists. Then when they least expect it, water is cut off. Of course, many homes don't even have running water, and the people must walk long distances to get some, causing hardships that we don't even imagine!

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, Sr. Yvette Berger, Sr. Chantal Mapera, and I left for Tanzania. At first, we were boarding in a motel-like house run by some native Sisters in Buhororo, out in the country. There,

*Sr. Alice Fontaine, SSCh*

## From the Provincial's Desk



**I**t is Lent once more, that time every year for Catholics especially, but for other Christians also, to take a look at their lives and at their relationship with God. It could be a sort of "Christian tune up." Am I really living as a disciple of Jesus? Am I following him very closely? Am I living the Gospel? Do I need to make some changes? The Church continues to suggest what Jesus mentions in Matthew 16: prayer, fasting and almsgiving as Lenten practices.

Recently in a Jesuit periodical, I was reading about how Jesus prayed: no special time or place, anywhere and at any time. Jesus turned to his Father in prayer about life events, sometimes early in the morning, late at night or in the heat of the day. He thanked him and praised him. He asked for a healing. He prayed in anguish. It all depended on what was happening in his life at the time. That sounds very human and could certainly fit right into any one of our lives.

The traditional meaning of fasting certainly has to do with food. It wouldn't do many of us Americans

any harm. However, we can also fast from other things perhaps more harmful to our spiritual life, like gossip, selfishness, negativity and whatever else would prevent us from being kind, compassionate and loving human beings.

Almsgiving is sometimes the easiest of the three for some people. We open our wallet or write a check and it's over with. We must admit that most of us do have far more materially than we really need when we think of the very poor. So giving is very important. The Sisters of St. Chretienne have opened a new mission in Ngara, Tanzania, our first English speaking mission in Africa. Two of our Sisters have begun working with the "street children" there. They have asked for our help. It has become our Lenten project and we are asking for your help for Sr. Chantal, one of our young African Sisters, and Sr. Yvette, one of our missionary Sisters. If you want to direct your almsgiving to this project this year, we would be happy to help you do that.

Lent is certainly well on its way, but it is not too late to consider more

meaningful if discipleship with Jesus is more real. You will be delighted that He is truly alive in your life...

As I finish writing this column, I realize that it is the twentieth time, twice each year for ten years. It has

**Lent could be a sort of  
"Christian tune up."**

been a pleasure and a privilege to share my thoughts and feelings with the readers of the *ST. CHRETIENNE ANNALS*. I will be moving on at the end of May, having finished two terms as Provincial. I thank all of you, our friends, relatives and former students for your support of our Province, Sisters, ministries and of our Annals during these last ten years. May the Love of Christ impel you always and may God embrace you and your families with love.

*Sr. Suzanne Beaudoin, SSCh*

**God is always available;  
no appointment is necessary.**

prayer, some sort of fasting and some almsgiving. Perhaps your Christian "tune up" is overdue, but with God, time is not an issue. God is always available; no appointment is necessary. Celebrating Easter will be more



# With Gratitude

This is the end of a term for the 2001-2006 Administration of our Province. This has certainly been a working council throughout their term. Sr. Jeanne Allard had a full-time position as Director and teacher of Our Lady Pre-School and cared for her aging parents one day on the weekend. Sr. Jeanne Fortin dutifully administered the finance office at our Retirement Residence and saw to the employees and maintenance issues. Sr. Lisette had a checkered employment looking in tenderly on our sick Sisters at Marie Esther Health Center while helping at the Preschool two days per week and discreetly doing multiple jobs here in Marlboro. Sr. Ida Devoe, our capable Provincial Treasurer, also sees to the maintenance needs of the Province and she is our "techie", always ready to help with all our computer needs.



*Srs. Jeanne Allard , Lisette Michaud, Suzanne Beaudoin, Jeanne Fortin, Ida M. Devoe*

Aided by her Council, Sr. Suzanne bore the brunt of the office quietly but courageously, to the end of her second term, a feat in itself. The first term saw the renovation of the house in Marlboro and the setting up of the Assisted Living floor where our aging Sisters enjoy their retirement in a very pleasant setting. Right along, we were kept informed of Province news on a regular basis and Sr. Suzanne's monthly letters were timely, encouraging and challenging.

To our Council go our thanks and to Sr. Suzanne our sincere gratitude and a well-earned sabbatical. Enjoy!

*Sr. Margaret Ebacher, SSCh*

---



---

**I am interested in contributing toward the retirement needs of the Srs. of St. Chretienne  
or to their new mission in Tanzania.**

\$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks to THE SISTERS OF ST. CHRETIENNE  
and mail to: 297 Arnold Street, Wrentham, MA 02093-1798**

---



---

# CELEBRATING THE CENTURIES

On April 20, 2006 a yearlong celebration will begin for the Sisters of Saint Chretienne highlighting the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of our Congregation by Anne Victoire de Méjanès on April 20, 1807 in Metz, France. During the year, activities have been organized and the Sisters in their respective countries will be asked to reflect on the mottos inscribed on their cross of profession.

A five day celebration will take place in France from April 27 to May 1, 2007.

Sisters and Associates from all Provinces, clergy, past and present students, families, friends and even townspeople will gather for specific activities on given days. Some of the highlights include:

- the placing of a commemorative plaque in the chapel where our foundress pronounced her vows
- a grandiose theatre presentation by the students of St. Chretienne of Sarreguemines, France
- a historical day including a power point presentation on the history of the Congregation and a journey to Argancy and Distroff, two significant places in the early foundation of the Congregation
- a Eucharistic Celebration at the Cathedral of Metz to which everyone will be invited and after which a wine toasting will take place.

May all who enter into this yearlong celebration deepen their knowledge and love of the spiritual treasures found within the Congregation.

*Sr. Julie Tremblay, SSCh*



Contributing Editors:  
 Sr. Suzanne Beaudoin  
 Sr. Margaret Ebacher  
 Sr. Alice Fontaine  
 Sr. Julie Tremblay  
 Layout & Printing:  
 Sr. Ida M. Devoe  
 Sr. Jeanne Fortin  
 Mailing:  
 Sr. Jeanne Fortin  
 and Sisters of Marlboro  
 PHONE: 508-384-8066  
 FAX: 508-384-3170  
 E-MAIL: [ssch@tia.net](mailto:ssch@tia.net)  
[www.sistersofstchretienne.org](http://www.sistersofstchretienne.org)

NON PROFIT ORG.  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 WRENTHAM, MA  
 Permit No. 31

SAINT CHRETIENNE ANNALS  
 297 ARNOLD STREET  
 WRENTHAM, MA 02093-1798

