



SAINT CHRETIENNE ANNALS

Volume 34

Sisters of St. Chretienne Marlboro, MA

2026

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...Galatians 5:22

In the wake of constant news items about wars with air strikes causing death and destruction, people dying of hunger and disease, and our own government's engagements, closing programs that our people depend on, we Sisters of St. Chretienne lift our voices and hearts in prayer.

Our foundress, Anne de Mejanès, from the beginning of our Congregation in 1807, set down as our foundation that "Love shall be the first rule of the house." In 2022, at our General Chapter, our delegates were led by the Holy Spirit to state that we are called "to offer a welcoming presence to everyone; to show care and tenderness through simple gestures, especially toward vulnerable and suffering people."

We believe that you, our readers, many of whom attended our Academy or are our Associates, relatives and friends, join us in this mission of peace and merciful living. Our special Beatitude, on the cross that we wear, is "Blessed are the merciful".

Here at Marie Esther, many of our staff—nursing, housekeeping, kitchen—have come from other countries seeking a better life in the United States. They are hardworking and compassionate individuals, helping us navigate the increasingly difficult aspects of our aging process.



Two years ago, Elisabeth (our kitchen aide) and her husband Victor came from Lima, Peru to Marlborough on a humanitarian visa with their 13 year old daughter Luana who was suffering from autism.

Last October, they were in the process of filing for their green cards, with everything in their lawyer's hands. One day Victor was downtown on the way to the first of his two jobs when ICE agents stopped his car, disregarded his up-to-date paperwork and arrested him. Elisabeth was here at work and was devastated by his disappearance. In the course of two months, he was sent to several detention centers, first in Buffalo, then to, Texas and finally to Louisiana.

Everyone here at our residence was appalled, praying to the Lord for a merciful ending to this travesty of justice. We were told that the government had simply ended the process for green cards—no reason given!

During two months, we did what we could to support Elisabeth who came to work each day despite fear for herself and Luana, who loved being at Marlborough High and was thriving in the drama club with her new friends. Administrators and Sisters here started a fund to help with groceries. Sr. Jeanne Allard and I did the shopping each Friday so Elisabeth could be in less danger. We collectively arranged to purchase plane tickets as it looked increasingly more certain that Victor would not be allowed to remain in the country. He finally agreed to sign a self-deportation order and was flown back to Lima in December. Elisabeth insisted on working one more month in our kitchen, but finally on February 4th, we tearfully bid farewell to her and Luana.

Since their return to Lima, Victor was rehired to his former position in the General Prosecutor's office, but Elisabeth has not yet found a job. Luana attends a small Christian school, but pines for her life in Marlborough. That may only remain a dream because, under present immigration laws, after self-deportation, one can only re-apply in ten years to return to the U.S.

With Pope Leo's recent visit to the Canary Islands

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(continued from page 1)

where so many people have died in the attempt to reach Europe, trying to escape harsh conditions in their homelands, he has unequivocally stated: "The Church cannot ignore these waters or any place where hunger, thirst, violence, fear or exile continue to wound human dignity. Jesus' disciples cannot dismiss the cries of those who call out in the night." (June 12, 2026)

A final note: Our Sisters in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are in the areas experiencing the outbreak of the Ebola virus in the North and South Kivu provinces. As we go to press, they are safe, but the lack of resources to fight the disease and the presence of rebel troops in Goma, Bukavu and Buturande is make life very precarious for them and their people.

May we all continue our fervent prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and reach out, in whatever way we can, to be bearers of His love to those He places on our path.

Sr. Lisette Michaud, SSCh

Appreciating our longtime activities friend.
Neal Coley



*The wreath/circle, a symbol
of
everlasting love.*

Thank you to our readers.

*You will always be
remembered in our prayers.*



Rock painting
for our garden.



Sr. Therese Bedard enjoying picnic day.



Jubilarians 2026
Srs. Jacqueline Ouellet & Jacqueline Dickey

IN MEMORIAM



*Sr. Jeanne Girardin
(Sr. Marie Victoria)
1931-2026*

Born in Rumford, ME, Jeanne attended St. John parish school with our Sisters. She followed her sister Gertrude as a Sister of St. Chretienne, pronouncing her vows in 1950. In 1961, she was missioned to serve the Cree people in northern Alberta, again joining Gertrude there. Jeanne was very devoted to teaching the children, and later doing pastoral work with adults.

In 1976, Sr. Jeanne became a chaplain in Manchester, NH at the Catholic Medical Center, also giving spirituality sessions at Joseph House.

In her retirement years in Marlborough, Jeanne volunteered at the Addiction Referral Center as a gentle affirming presence.

Jeanne was deeply spiritual, her days wrapped in prayer, simplicity and care for the Lord's suffering people. Now she is held in God's tender embrace forever.



*Sister Arlene Legere
(Sr. Marie Marguerite)
1933-2026*

Born in Mexico ME, Arlene had a happy childhood, and attended the parish school, St. Therese, with our Sisters. She went through the Juniorate program at St. Chretienne Academy and, having felt God's call, went to the Novitiate, and pronounced her first vows on August 15, 1952.

Arlene had a 50 year teaching ministry in parish schools in Salem, MA, Pawtucket, RI and at the Academy. In 1972, she went to Lewiston, ME where for 32 years, she taught at St. Dominic Regional High and Holy Cross Junior High. She was greatly appreciated by her students.

In 2004, Arlene moved to our retirement community in Marlborough, but she still volunteered at the local Catholic school where she made long-lasting friendships. In these last five years, at Alliance Health at Marie Esther, Arlene spent her time praying, reading and living a quiet life. Following a brief illness, she offered her life to God who brought her to heaven on February 28th.



*Associate
Kathleen (Callahan) Levy
1937-2026*

Kathleen was born and raised in Salem, a graduate of St. Chretienne Academy. Despite cerebral palsy, she lived a full life. She married her beloved husband Paul, living happily for 17 years. She had a long career at the Salem Registry of Deeds.

Her deep faith led her to teach in her parish RCIA program.

She was our faithful Associate for many years, hosting the North Shore group at her home.

Despite her illness, Kathleen never complained and spent herself caring for others. She is now fully alive in her heavenly Home.



*Associate
Gloria (Pelletier) Theophetakes
1938-2026*

Born in Salem, MA, Gloria graduated from St. Chretienne Academy, joining our Congregation. In 1976, she felt called to secular life, marrying Arthur in 1981. She served as Director of Religious Education in various parishes, especially at Our Lady of the Mountains in Conway, NH. Gloria kept in touch with the Sisters, becoming an Associate after her husband's death. Suffering from a serious medical condition, she came to Marie Esther in Marlborough. Happy to be with the Sisters, she offered her life to the Lord and was called Home on March 5, 2026.

"GOOD SAMARITAN SOUP KITCHEN" IN MEXICO, MAINE

Like so many little 'paper mill towns' in Maine, Rumford and Mexico have felt the decline of its economic base, as the mill has gone from over 3000 employees in its 'heyday' to less than 500 employees today, causing many businesses and families to leave the area in search of greener pastures. Over the years, Rumford and Mexico have come to be seen as two 'retirement communities', with many empty tenement buildings and deserted homes dotting the streets.

In 1974, in many States, Maine being one, the federal government initiated a welfare system known as 'Section 8' destined to help low-income individuals, seniors and people with disabilities find housing and sustenance. Tenants use 'SNAP' vouchers to purchase food while the government pays the landlord directly for rent. Other than the meager hand-outs offered by this welfare system, little income is enjoyed by the recipients of 'Section 8'.

Over the years, because of the downturn in the economy, government social workers in larger towns and cities have strongly encouraged those in need to come to Rumford and Mexico and take advantage of the many vacant homes and apartments. This has made for an influx of families coming from everywhere in the United States, most of whom have little or no employment. All this to explain how our two once prosperous towns have taken on the aura of depression and economic decline and why a meal site program is now part of the ministry at Holy Savior parish in Rumford with its distribution center in Mexico.



Sr. Bernadette Gautreau, SSCh. and Michelle Williams



On December 18, 2023, the town of Mexico was hit by a devastating flood that caused the evacuation of many families living in the confines of the lower town. Along came a lady, a stranger to many, who set up a temporary shelter in the basement of the town hall where she served soup and sandwiches daily to whoever came through the door. This is where, on a rainy day in December, I went to check out the place and met Michelle Williams, the good Samaritan, who I learned came from New York. We chatted as I sampled her delicious soup and biscuits and she shared her life journey and how she came to be living in Mexico. She told me of her dream of having a place of her own where she could do more to help the marginalized and those in need.

Next door to my house is a spacious building, once owned by the Knights of Columbus. This building had been vacant for several months when, in January 2026, Michelle applied for and was granted occupancy, on condition that she form a non-profit organization.

After volunteers spent three months cleaning out the old building, renovating and applying many coats of paint to the walls, 'The Good Samaritan Soup Kitchen' officially opened its doors on May 6, 2026, at which I was honored to 'bless this sacred space'.

Since that time, the soup kitchen is now opened three days a week: Monday, Thursday and Friday, feeding 40 to 50 people each day in its new venue. In addition to its on-site location, 'Good Samaritan Meals on Wheels' is carried by volunteers to 25 indi-

(continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4)

viduals who are either elderly or homebound. Many who frequent the soup kitchen are not destitute but come to enjoy the social and community aspect the meal site provides. It is a wonderful place for an old nun to go and listen to peoples' stories and hold their hand.

This soup kitchen runs mainly on fund raisers that Michelle and her team organize, as well as grants and donations solicited. I am pleased to say that the Sisters of St. Chretienne have given substantial donations to help in this worthy cause.

Let us thank the Lord for people like Michelle Williams, and other good Samaritans, who give of themselves for others, feeding their bodies while uplifting their spirits.



Sr. Bernadette Gautreau, SSCh.

Catholic Archives at Boston College

Not long ago, I was asked to write this little piece just to give a final update on the transfer of our archives. We wrote about and had photos of the process to move our archival material to a newly organized repository at Boston College. What I would like to share with you would be the good news that sometime this summer the new Catholic Religious Archive building will be opening. It is near the Theology and Ministry Library building at Boston College. All of you who are History buffs or interested in different religious congregations might be interested in spending some time there. For now you can visit their website at: <https://catholicarchives.bc.edu>. Who knows maybe we may meet each other there someday.



Sr. Julie Tremblay, SSCh

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

☐ **Retirement needs**

☐ **Missions in Africa**

\$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: SISTERS OF ST. CHRETIENNE
and mail to: Regional Office, 720 Boston Post Road E, Marlboro, MA 01752**

ANNALS – LAST EDITION

In 1994, at the request of Sr. Jacqueline Dickey, Provincial Superior, it was with great joy and hope for the future, that Sr. Jacqueline Ouellet and Sr. Jeannette Gonthier initiated the **SAINT CHRETIENNE ANNALS**, expecting them to go on forever. Over the years, we attempted to keep the articles at high interest with a considerable variety of topics. Having begun with finances and editorial experience at a minimum, we attended seminars, learned techniques and were even commended for our success. Today, thirty-two years later, is the “forever” date! So, it is with mixed emotions that I announce to you that this is the **last issue** of the **SAINT CHRETIENNE ANNALS**.

As we sign off, we address our deep gratitude to Sr. M. Ida Devoe, who deserves credit for thirty-two years of technical support and complicated layouts. We are grateful to the Sisters who wrote articles, and to the many other Sisters who spent hours folding the **ANNALS** and otherwise helping Colleen Devoe and Marie Kent, who assisted us with the bulk mail ordeal. We are most grateful to you, our Readers, for your long-lasting interest and support, both literary and financial. Please keep us in your prayers. Feel free to contact us. Know that we will continue to pray for your intentions. May God ever bless you, your families, and all your loved ones.

Sr. Jacqueline Ouellet, SSCh.

SAINT CHRETIENNE ANNALS

You will find our current information on our **WEBSITE**: www.sistersofstchretienne.org

Editors:
Sr. Bernadette Gauthreau
Sr. Lisette Michaud
Sr. Julie Tremblay
Layout & Printing:
Sr. M. Ida Devoe
Mailing:
Colleen Devoe
Marie Kent
Sisters at Marie Esther
FAX: 508-507-3634
E-MAIL: ssch@tjac.net
WEBSITE:
www.sistersofstchretienne.org

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