



SAINT CHRETIENNE ANNALS

Volume 33

Sisters of St. Chretienne Marlboro, MA

2025

Hope for our Common Home: Our Care for Creation

Ten years ago this May, Pope Francis released his papal encyclical, *Laudato Si*, addressed not just to Catholics but to the people of the whole world. As Sisters of St. Chretienne, we welcomed this letter as our Rule of Life calls us “to share the joys and hopes of the world, to sympathize with and to alleviate its sufferings”.



In April, Sisters Ida Devoe, Julie Tremblay and I attended a session on *Laudato Si* offered by the Boston Archdiocesan Social Justice Office. Along with many other younger and older folks, we found the atmosphere ‘electric’ as we focused on the Holy Spirit’s work among us in these past years.

At the opening Mass, our Archbishop Richard Henning, proclaimed Jesus’ message to us : “You are the salt of the earth! You are the light of the world!” (Mt. 5:13) We were challenged in this, our time, to hear the cry of the poor and of our planet. With you, our readers, we are all too aware of the extreme weather events happening in our country with often devastating results.

We learned about many projects currently being done, like an office for the environment now in operation at St. John’s Prep, affordable housing that the Planning Office for Urban Affairs has completed. One of those is our former residence in Wrentham, now Sanctuary Place! The surprise visit of Boston Mayor, Michelle Wu, with her infant daughter Mira, highlighted the day. We were amazed to hear her glowing account about serving as co-chair at last year’s climate summit at the Vatican hosted by Pope Francis.

Mayor Wu is spearheading the planting of many young trees in barren lots in the poorer parts of the city, arranging the creation of rooftop gardens and

finding ways to minimize heat at the small bus shelters in the city. Her message to us: “*Laudato Si* is a clarion call for us to put aside our differences, no matter how you vote, no matter what you look like, no matter what language you speak or where you were born.... This is the type of work that I feel we are all called to. It’s urgent, it’s technical, it’s substantive, but most of all, it is about the joy and delight of being part of this human family and making sure that we can pass down this incredible gift to the next generations.”

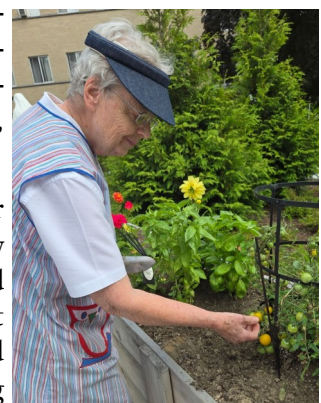
We are blessed to have our own green space here at Marie Esther, a meditation garden constructed last fall by Alliance Health and funded with a grant from the Cummings Corporation. This handicapped accessible area is



highlighted by our beautiful statue of the Virgin Mary. It has walking paths and sturdy benches, with lovely perennials such as lavender and hydrangea plants, roses and lilac bushes, dogwood and evergreen trees. There is a raised bed for planting—

now filled with flowers, tomato plants and herbs tended by our resident gardener, Sister Cecile Leclerc, PM.

As we spend time in our garden, we are serenaded by the birds, ducks, geese and frogs in our adjacent swamp, as bunnies and squirrels keep us laughing at their antics.



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(continued from page 1)



However, even as we are grateful for this little piece of our earth, we realize its fragility.

"Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another. So we cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental degrada-

tion, current models of development and the throw-away culture." (L.S. #42-43)

The document ends with a fervent prayer for our earth. *"All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with tenderness all that exists... We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love, and peace. Amen."*

Sr. Lisette Michaud, SSCh

WE MUST GIVE HOPE

A few months ago, I read an article written by a Sister of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) Sr. Annmarie Sanders, IHM. Sr. Sandra addressed this article to Sisters around the globe. I contacted her and asked if I could use her ideas, her words even to write this article. She gladly gave permission and said that she wished it could reach as many people as possible. These words struck me profoundly because it is exactly what I've been witnessing myself. As you read these few words, I am quite sure that most of you will be of like mind.



What we are witnessing in our nation today is a major breakdown of our values. Sr. Sandra listed eight values which include:

- The belief in the inherent right to life of all human beings and the dignity of each life;*
- The commitment to the Gospel demands of love, welcome and the care for all people, especially the most vulnerable;*
- The duty to welcome immigrants and provide care and aid to all in our land, while insisting on comprehensive immigration reform;*
- The responsibility to stand against violence in all forms;*
- The commitment to dismantle systemic racism;*
- The belief that care for our planet Earth requires our attention and action;*
- Respect for the journey of all persons into the wholeness of their humanness;*
- The work to alleviate poverty in all forms.*

The many protests that we have witnessed or in which we have participated lately give us hope that there are many like-minded citizens in our country. Our choices must be wise and not contribute to *hatred, fear, division, or violence*.

May we with our whole being make decisions that will bring hope and peace to our world.

Sr. Julie Tremblay, SSCh

N.B. All words in italics are directly quoted from Sr. Sandra.

IN MEMORIAM

We give thanks to God for our dear Sisters and Associates whose lives were a beautiful witness of loving devotion to God and his people. The bonds that we shared at St. Chretienne endure beyond death. We rely on their prayers, along with those of Anne and Alexis de Mejanés and so many Sisters and friends who have gone before us as we await Our Lord Jesus to welcome us all: "Come, blessed of my Father; live forever in my joy!" *(For more information please see our Website - sistersofstchretienne.org)*

Sister Gloria Cote
(Sr. Marie Lucille)
1927-2024



Sr. Gloria was a native of Mexico, ME. She loved her childhood near the Androscoggin River and was very close to her family. She was sure God called her to be a Sister of St. Chretienne despite a lifelong hearing problem. A devoted member of our congregation for 77 years, she served her Sisters as a cook in MA and RI with several years spent at the Academy in Salem.

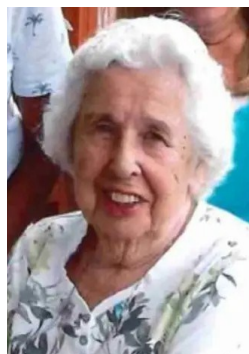
Sr. Gloria will be remembered for her quiet and loving service to others as the handmaid of the Lord. She was a woman of prayer with a special devotion to the Blessed Mother. She leaves us with the example of her constant gratefulness to God, in joy and suffering. Her prayer, "Sacred Heart of Jesus, take over my life this day!" has been fulfilled in Heaven.

Sister Jeannette Gonthier
(Sr. Marie Denis)
1926-2025



Sr. Jeannette was born in Amesbury, MA in a large family from which four children would offer their lives to God—one priest and three Sisters. She taught for 33 years in parish schools in ME, RI and at the Academy in Salem where she was the Principal from 1967 to its closing in 1971. She then taught geometry at St. Dominic High in Lewiston ME where she enjoyed intercommunity living with Sisters of different congregations.

Sr. Jeannette was a woman of deep prayer, in love with her Lord and steeped in Scripture. She was close to her sister Rachel; both Sisters were fervent members of our congregation. She leaves us the witness of her selfless dedication to God's people. Her ardent desire for God to 'come and get her' was accomplished on January 10th.



Irene DeLoura
1928-2024
Newport, RI

Associate for
34 Years



Margaret Murphy
1927-2025
Hudson, MA

Associate for
25 years



Ruth Ann Rubman
1953-2025
NY

Associate for
22 years



Pamela Braman
1944-2025
Newport, RI

Associate for
34 years



Mary Settle
1944-2025
Middletown, RI

Associate for
34 years

BEING 'PILGRIMS OF HOPE' IN A PARISH

When Pope Francis launched the Jubilee Year 2025, he chose 'Hope' as its theme, encouraging Catholics, the world over, to deepen their faith and to share the virtue of 'hope' with others. Sadly, my experience of past 'jubilee years' is that, once it is introduced, little is said about it from the pulpit. I have always found this to be unfortunate, as a jubilee year can be such a source of enrichment in the life of a parish.



Our world today is caught in the chaos of so many things that rob people of 'hope' and, through this 'jubilee year of hope', Pope Francis was seeking a way to renew this precious virtue in the lives of God's people, with the directive "hope does not disappoint" (Romans 5: 5).

In our parish of Holy Savior here in Rumford, Maine, our weekly Bible Class is entitled "Breaking Open the Bread of the Word". Its participants reflect on the Scripture readings for every Sunday so that, when parishioners come to Mass, they can understand God's Word being spoken to them and apply it to their lives.

During this Jubilee year, it was decided that 'hope' would be the focus and the underlying theme of every Scripture to be read and reflected upon. What follows are remarks coming from several of the forty-three participants.

"The meaning of 'hope' was never clear to me. Now I realize what a gift it is, especially when so much negativity saps my enthusiasm. My intention is to share my hope with those who feel like me."

"I never understood what a 'pilgrim' was. Now I want to be a 'pilgrim of hope' for others."

"I marvel at how Scripture speaks to me of having 'hope' at times when I sometimes feel down or depressed. This is something I want to share with my friends."



"I have experienced deep grief that has been beyond description. This class has helped me to 'hope' and to heal! I just love the positive 'hopeful' atmosphere in our group of like-minded parishioners."

"I love coming to class on Thursday evenings. We are family! We 'hope', we love, we pray, and we support each other."

"This class has helped me so much! I now have reason to 'hope' that God is always with me and with our world!"

"I have been going to church for more than 45 years and I never understood the expression 'Christian Community' until I started coming to this class."

These are but a few comments that were written on the evaluation given when the Bible class ended. I thought I would share them with you.

Sr. Bernadette Gautreau, SSCh

CHILDREN'S PERSONAL WORDS ON HOPE

At the beginning of June this year, we received a letter from our mission in Tanzania known as Nazareth Center. At first, this took in street kids, and in recent years has also built a home for girls. They now house 20 girls and 17 boys.

In their letter, some of the children give testimony of their time spent at the Center. I would like to share some of their sentiments with you, our readers. You certainly will notice how happy and grateful they are for the gift of being able to live at the Center.



The first words are from a 12-year-old girl named Diana Nyamwiza. Her 2 older sisters died because of lack of care. In Diana's words: *"One day by good fortune, my mother was arrested and put in prison. I, along with my two brothers, all in tears, were taken to Nazareth Center by the police and a ministry agent. The Sisters hadn't yet built the girls' dormitory so, after keeping me for a few days with them, the Sisters placed me with a foster family. A year later, I joined the other girls when the dormitory opened. It was like a dream for me to live in a place where I feel accepted even with my childhood flaws. I'm currently in the 7th grade. I am overcome with worry because I will be leaving the Center due to my age. We can no longer live with my mother. She takes us back to the streets, using us for her begging. She sells everything we give her, even our own belongings. Praise be to God for these years*

when we have lived and tasted love, peace, and security at the Nazareth Center."

The next statement is from Andrew Bahativasco. *"I was born blind, the eldest son of a young couple. My father left us first. Then before I was two years old, the woman who gave birth to me, in turn, abandoned me by locking me in the house she was renting. She quietly left without returning. Two days later, the neighbors heard my cries even though I was very weak. They realized there was not any movement in the house and were worried, so they called the police. They opened the house and found me in critical condition. I received love and help from them."*



(continued on page 6)

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

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☐ **Missions in Africa**

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and mail to: Regional Office, 720 Boston Post Road E, Marlboro, MA 01752**

(continued from page 5)

The neighbors knew my paternal grandmother and she was informed of my situation. She did not agree to take me back, but the police surprised her by sending me back with someone on a motorcycle. She was kind of in shock when she came back from work. In the end I was



Cistern was paid by USA



placed at Nazareth Center. They took me to consult with a pediatric ophthalmologist. I was operated on and began to see from far. Then I was prescribed glasses and now can also see up close. My parents have never come to see me. Today I am happy and feel loved by those around me.”

There are other testimonies to the care and love that the children experience at Nazareth Center. We are blessed that the Sisters in Ngara are willing to take on this ministry and show these children that they are loved. Thank you to all who have helped them by your prayers and financial support.

Sr. Julie Tremblay, SSCh

“Blessed are those who show compassion...” Matt. 5:7

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