



"I Want You to Live" Ez. 16:6

Dear Friends of St. Chretienne,

When one reflects upon the theme of the Orientation taken at our last General Chapter, one has to be struck by the optimism and the hope permeating our hearts. Small though our Congregation might be, clearly, we hear the Lord telling us, "I want you to live."

As I gaze upon the spark of light being transferred to us by God, I can't help but remember Pope Francis' letter to the Church for the New Year 2023, and there I find a parallel with our Orientation.

In his letter, Pope Francis speaks especially of Covid-19 and of the devastation the pandemic brought to our world which, along with its physical aspects, led to long periods of isolation, resulting in psychological and other harmful long-term effects.

Of all the consequences of Covid that Pope Francis speaks of, it is perhaps 'aloneness' that struck him the most, and he speaks of how, even in this era of social media, there are perhaps more people who suffer from loneliness than at any time in history.

It is certainly true that with the advent of the internet, people have seemed to have lost the healing power of the human voice and of touch. We now text one another rather than phone. We now 'Facetime' with relatives rather than visit. We now

send 'emojis' to our friends rather than physically hug or say 'I love you'. And, as artificial intelligence and robots take over the 'work of our hands', we become more and more isolated from one another.

The words, "*I want you to live*" in the heading of our Orientation come from the prophet Ezekiel, who in a vision, saw a newborn baby all bloody and abandoned, lying in a ditch. Picking up the child, saying, "I want you to live," God washes away the blood, clothes the child and cuddles the babe in his arms. All this is real "hands on" stuff!

"*I want you to live!*" Sadly, many people today feel like that newborn babe as they witness our country, our world and our planet spiraling out of control. Where is the spark that gives us hope? Where is the spark that gives us life?

I love this image of light and life being transferred from one person to another. It brings back Pope Francis' New

Year's letter: "*No one can be saved alone.*" "*We will find solidarity in our togetherness.*" "*We cannot ignore one another.*" "*We are all interconnected.*" "*Let us journey together.*"

The Orientation of the Sisters of St. Chretienne can be everyone's Orientation as, "*Together, impelled by the love of Christ, we answer the call to love and to promote life wherever we are. Let us dare to trust the future.*"

Sr. Bernadette Gautreau, SSCh.

Orientation 2022 - 2028

« I want you to live » Ez. 16:6

*Together, impelled by the love of Christ
let us hear this call to love and to promote life*

*in our communities,
ministries,
relationships
and in creation*

Let us dare to trust in the future.

« Blessed are the merciful », Mt. 5:7

General Chapter Sisters of Saint Chretienne - August 2022



MANY THANKS FROM AFRICA

Our African Sisters give us news of their mission, and they express their gratitude to all the US benefactors for what has been accomplished with your help. Here are some examples.



At Nazareth Center in Tanzania, the Sisters purchased a **generator** because they have frequent power outages. They have a freezer in which they can place some of the vegetables they cultivate and meat if they butcher a goat and sometimes chickens. The generator allows them not to lose any of this food when the power goes out. Your donations made the generator possible!

With your generosity, the Sisters were able to buy **durable fabric** and pay a tailor to make outfits for the boys, skirts for the girls and some school clothes for them.



A boy named **DEOGRATIAS** who had a very bad beginning, never knowing his parents, spending time with his grandmother who died, went to an orphanage and then spent time with an uncle. One day he went to school but never came back. No one worried about him, so he became totally separated



from his family. A stranger put him in touch with Nazareth Center where at five years old he was welcomed, lived and thrived until he went to high school. He then began a formation in agriculture and was later sent to Israel for that purpose. Upon his return, he came to Nazareth Center to express his gratitude to God and to all those who support this center for children in difficulty. He is courageous and joyful and brought gifts of school supplies to his "little brothers". It was one among many success stories!



In the eastern **Democratic Republic of the Congo** where there is interminable conflict causing many families to become refugees, your very generous donations allowed our Sisters to assist fifty refugee families with food, other material support and free medical



care for the sick. The Sisters are grateful to you for your prayers and your financial help which made all this possible.



YVES was a young boy in the Congo who had a serious heart malformation. An organization in Switzerland specialized in cardiac malformations and could do the surgery if he were sent there. Your donations made it possible for the Sisters to pay the transportation to and from to provide him with the needed surgery in Geneva. He came back



(continued on page 5)

Highlights in Our Lives at Marie Esther

It has been two years now since we have made our home at Alliance at Marie Esther here in Marlborough. We have become close friends with the Sisters from the five congregations with whom we share our life in Christ: the Sisters of St. Anne, of the Assumption, of the Presentation, and the Little Sisters of the Assumption. We also reside with several lay women. Our daily Masses have resumed since the Covid time, and are at the heart of our days. We have dedicated staff in many departments who contribute to our well-being. You, our families, Associates and friends are a great support. We hope you enjoy these glimpses of our life here.

Entertainment:

A harpist, **Giannetta Baril**, from Calgary, Canada gave us a lovely performance on her magnificent instrument. She has been taking music to many people as she travels in her van, even stopping on street corners during the pandemic, to spread God's healing love through music.



Tony Funches, formerly a member of the Platters, regaled us with beloved hits from the 50's. His performance was so engaging that, for a while, everyone 'forgot' we were in a health residence and became an animated audience singing and dancing our hearts out!



Outings in our van: to view Christmas lights, for ice cream at nearby Trombetta's, weekly shopping trips, to visit the Worcester Art Museum, and the Icon Museum in Clinton.



Retreat:

Our retreat in June on the theme *Heart Speaks to Heart* was focused on Biblical women. Our guides for the week were Sr. Nancy Sheridan, SASV and Nicole Verploegen. Their creative ap-



proach with rich symbolism and conversations between the women, reached deep into our spirits. We loved seeing Mary and Elisabeth, as they visited in their rocking chairs, sharing thoughts of their Sons in ministry. We also connected in prayer with other women who have been mentors and guides in our own lives.

(continued on page 6)

IN MEMORIAM

Sr. Rachel Gonthier
(Sr. Marie Elisabeth)

November 20, 1927 - January 21, 2023



Sr. Rachel was born in Amesbury, MA, the youngest of seven children. Three of her siblings chose religious vocations; Jeannette became a Sr. of St. Chretienne. Rachel made profession in 1949. She was a wonderful teacher, serving in Rumford ME, Pawtucket RI and at our Academy in Salem MA. From 1971-83, she taught at

St. Peter Claver, a small inner city school for African-American students in Tampa, and served as principal. From 1984-1994, Rachel led spiritual enrichment sessions at Nazareth Center, in Newport RI. She and her Sisters extended hospitality to many guests seeking a deeper relationship with God.

In 1997, she moved back to Rocky Creek Village in Tampa and witnessed Christ's compassion among the elders there. In 2005, Rachel joined the Sisters' retirement community in Marlborough MA, helping with driving and various services.

Rachel was a very prayerful woman; she loved the congregation and especially the African missions. After a long and dedicated life, she died peacefully with Jeannette by her side. She has certainly been welcomed to Christ's banquet table: "Whatever you did for the least of mine, you did for me." Mt. 25

Sr. Agnes Therrien
(Sr. Laurent)

January 12, 1940 - June 6, 2023



Sr. Agnes, from Pawtucket RI attended Our Lady of Consolation School. Inspired by her teachers' example, she made her first profession in 1959. She devoted herself as a teacher for 21 years, in Ipswich MA and at St. Chretienne Academy in Salem. At the closing of the Academy, Agnes began a new mission in Tampa FL where she taught

English at Tampa Catholic High School, and later at Bishop Feehan High in Attleboro MA.

Agnes served her Sisters in leadership positions as Assistant Provincial, Provincial, and later as General Councilor and Regional Provincial. After a sabbatical at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Agnes served as a Pastoral Associate in Waterville ME, and Beverly MA. In 2001, with a Sr. of Mercy, she did spiritual direction and offered spirituality sessions in parishes in Norwich, CT.

Agnes loved her congregation and had strong bonds with her Sisters in the US, Canada, Europe and Africa. Her deep faith fueled her concern for those who were powerless. In recent months, Sr. Agnes shared in Christ's sufferings. Her flame is vibrant as she is now with her Lord in eternal joy.

Sr. Estelle Plante
(Sr. Louise de la Croix)

July 23, 1930 - August 26, 2023



A native of Pawtucket RI, Estelle was one of 7 children of Albani and Fabiola Plante. She went to Our Lady of Consolation School, loved her teachers and later entered the novitiate in Quebec, becoming a Sister of St. Chretienne in 1947. She taught at the Academy in Salem. In 1971, Estelle went to Tampa, and was a member of the Guidance Department at Tampa Catholic High for the next 15 years.

In 1992, Estelle offered spiritual direction as part of the team at Nazareth Center in Newport RI. In 1999, she moved back to Pawtucket where she volunteered at St. Francis Chapel in Providence. In 2003, she was a driver and receptionist at our retirement community in Marlborough. Always pleasant, prayerful, with a beautiful voice, Estelle left our earth with "Thank you" constantly on her lips. Her beloved Lord must have welcomed her Home: "Come, Estelle, blessed of my Father; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from all eternity!"

Sr. Lisette Michaud, SSCh.

(continued from page 2)

Another young man, **Damiani**, wrote to the Sisters thanking them for having taken him in at Nazareth Center when he was five and very malnourished, thereby saving his life. At a young age they took him out of suffering, violence of any kind and even death, he said. Now after his high school studies, he has been accepted into a religious congregation, the Missionary Fathers of the Precious Blood of Jesus, in which he will study for the priesthood which he greatly desires. He asked for our prayers for him in his continued studies. He is now 20 years old. Your donations helped to support him when he was at Nazareth Center.

Sr. Suzanne Beaudoin, SSCh.

It is with a heart full of gratitude that I come to express our thanks to all who have sacrificed themselves to share with us, coming to the aid of the victims of these unending conflicts in eastern Congo.

Your gifts enabled us to help many families in difficulty during this period of war, especially for food and shelter. We are relying on God's Providence as we remain vigilant and persevering in prayer. We send you our heartfelt thanks for your prayers and donations for all those who benefit from your kindness. May God fill you with graces and bless you! Sister Devota and the Sisters....



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

____ Retirement needs

____ Nazareth Center in Tanzania, 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**

(continued from page 3)

Appeals:

With the cooperation of many Sisters, we gave a generous donation to the Birthright office in downtown Marlboro for diapers for their layettes. We donated school supplies for backpacks for students returning to school.

Awareness Walks:



These walks are a monthly activity to highlight issues surrounding care for God's creation and for those who suffer from injustice. As a small group, we simply walk downtown silently carrying signs.

Lobsterfest :



In thanksgiving for the prayers and support of our Sister-friends and staff leading up to the successful sale of our property on Pleasant Street, we offered a meal of

lobsters, chowder and clam cakes. This was such a great happening, complete with strawberry shortcake and entertainment for all!



Sr. Lisette Michaud, SSCh.

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