

Year of Prayer for the Canonization of Blessed Anne Marie



An artist's rendering of Blessed Anne Marie and the children of the world.

Cluny Sisters around the world began a year-long preparation for the 170th anniversary of the death of our founder, Blessed Anne Marie. The celebration of the feast on July 15th began a special year of prayer for her canonization (recognition of her sainthood) by the church. Each province is focusing on her charism, the special gift given her and also to us, to serve in the Church.

Blessed Anne Marie's life of holiness and ministry reveal an ideal model for today's world. She took to heart the mystical experience when St. Teresa presented her with children of many races. She firmly believed that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore deserve freedom, self-determination, a meaningful livelihood, education, housing, and medical and social services. As sharers in this same vision, for over 200 years, Cluny Sisters have carried on, often in places where no one else would go, doing what no one else would do, but grounded in faith that it is all part of God's great loving plan (God's Will) for all God's children.

Her canonization would make her and her vision known worldwide, providing an inspiration and a challenge for millions. Please pray with us!

Am I Racist?

Sister Anne Marie Liston

The death of George Floyd and the events which have rocked our nation have challenged us to pause and reflect on racism in our own lives and to ask, "Do I, consciously or not, harbor remnants of the racist past which we admit stains our history?"

My own prayer and reflection has brought to mind an incident in the past that I find rather telling in my own life. As a white American growing up in the aftermath of World War II, I perceived only a glancing image of what racism looks like. Social scientists and scholars give us reasons and explanations for this troubling and pervading stain that taints our history. Indeed, our history is fraught with factual evidence and blatant examples of racial prejudice. We can condemn it and deplore the violence of it, but do we own it?

Several years ago, I found myself a student at an eastern college situated in the heart of an inner city neighborhood where African American families resided. When I was getting to know my way around, the sister in charge warned me to use the main streets and to avoid the side streets for safety's sake. Unfortunately, this made my walking commute longer. Late one Friday afternoon, I made my way, laden with school books and other parcels. Aware that nightfall was fast approaching, I decided to take a short cut down a side street. As I walked along, I heard heavy footfalls approaching from behind. Suddenly, a large heavy hand landed on my shoulder. I stopped, fearing the worst. With that a voice said, "Say a prayer for me Sister, I have an exam." And the running steps continued. A young black man wanted to ask me for prayers, but I had assumed the worst.

At that moment, I was afraid, not because he stopped me, but because I was frightened to be in an African American neighborhood, my conscience told me. I am sure to this day that if that had been a white neighborhood, I would have reacted differently. Was I afraid because I assumed that he was black?

Many times since then, I have had to go back to that afternoon and ask myself: am I racist? The tiny seeds of doubt and fear grow in our hearts when we let them go unnoticed. How many times might I have judged another by color, or language or nationality without ever really acknowledging my bias. All of us have our little prejudices, our quirks, but they don't have to make up the fabric of who we are. The only way we can overcome the evil of racism in our world is to admit that we all stand in need of forgiveness.