

WORDS FOR LIFE:

A SPIRITUALITY STUDY INSPIRED BY JEAN-PIERRE MÉDAILLE, S.J., HIS WRITINGS AND EXPERIENCES



The journey from *Writings of Jean-Pierre Médaille, S.J., 1610-1669* to *Words for Life* has been a wonderful exploration. The inspiration to write this four-volume series on the spirituality of this Jesuit missionary priest of 17th Century France ‘just arrived’ last year as the culmination of years of reflection, research and living each day the essence of his teachings. I believe another *kairos* moment has arrived!

My story begins some four decades ago. On Holy Saturday 1981, I had an important discernment visit with Sister Cecilia, my General-Superior in Peterborough. That September I would be leaving my thirteen years of teaching ministry and entering the solitude of Lebh Shomea House of Prayer, a contemplative-eremital community in Texas for a lengthy stay. During our visit, she gave me the newly published *Writings of Jean-Pierre Médaille, S.J.* book (Toronto) and encouraged me to take it with me. During those three years of solitude, prayer and study, Father Médaille’s writings came alive for me; my soul resonated especially with the *Maxims of Perfection* and *The Eucharistic Letter*. Today I realize how that graced action of one woman and one book may have changed the course of my life and my vocation.

The writings of Jean-Pierre Médaille have grounded me in a spirituality that steadied me in times of growth and challenge as the contemplative dimension of my life evolved into a permanent lifestyle at The Upper Room Home of Prayer in Ottawa. Over the past thirty five years, it has been my privilege and joy to study and share this spirituality series using the writings of Jean-Pierre Médaille. It began as a popular ten month Correspondence Course that soon evolved into a ten week teaching series at various local parishes and eventually climaxed in a fifty-two week Médaille Online Course (2008-2009). Now, ten years later, in this moment of grace, and with the assistance of a generous local publisher, I invite readers to embrace anew the inspiration and wisdom found in Father Médaille’s writings.

My present congregational leader, Margo Ritchie, CSJ, writes in her message of gratitude and hope for these *Words for Life* as they go forth now into the world:

Although the spirituality she writes about rose up in the 17th century, Rosemary has known over many years of research and reflection that this spirituality carries a wisdom and sustenance that cuts across centuries, across world crises and diverse cultures. There is a deepening hunger in our day which usually surfaces in the throes of chaos and disruption. She explores the energy of Love as what can carry us personally and collectively in this 21st century. She incorporates the insights of psychology to talk about the True Self as a continual releasing the grip of ego and a moving toward wholeness. Into the 400-year-old original writings, she lets the spirit of evolutionary consciousness

shine new light. She has brought forth a gift which will sustain seekers and contribute to the unfolding wisdom of these inspired writings of the 17th century.

For over 360 years this Médaillan spirituality has nurtured the lives and ministries of countless Sisters of St. Joseph and lay associates around the world. My sincere hope is that these four volumes will become an integral part of our spiritual legacy benefitting many persons who long for “the more” in their lives. Médaille’s writings have proved to be timeless.



ROSEMARY O'TOOLE is a Sister of St. Joseph in Canada. For the past thirty-five years she has been co-director with Evelyn McGovern, CSJ at The Upper Room Home of Prayer in Ottawa, Canada, offering spiritual direction, contemplative retreats and programs in spirituality. She authored eight mini books on core spiritual themes in a Future Full of Hope series. The creation of *Words for Life* over the past year has been a labour of love, supported by poets and artists, researchers and reviewers. To place an order, email upperroom@sympatico.ca