



Volume 7, Issue 1, February 2014

An Puy

Celebrate!

**A CELEBRATION OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE ST. JOSEPH, LE PUY, FRANCE
2004-2014**



At the festivities of the 350th Anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of St Joseph in Le Puy, France, in 2000, a dream emerged for a space for welcoming and providing hospitality for all C/SSJ's of the world. An International Centre would offer multiple possibilities and opportunities for Sisters to meet, share and build relationships around the globe. We realized the dream.....opening the Centre on October 15, 2004! Since that day literally hundreds of Sisters, Associates and Collaborators have gathered 'at the table!' This was our first project together that connected us all, Members of the Joseph Family.'

Sister Janet (Congregation Lyon, Maine Province) and Soeur Jean François (Institut des Soeurs de St. Joseph, Le Puy) taken at the Opening of the Center on October 15, 2004



Reflections on the Eucharistic Letter (Part 2)

For come, it will, without fail. Hab 2:2-3

This mystical-prophetic document is pure gift of the Spirit for our NOW time. It belongs in our evolving story in the 21st century. Can we declare that this is 'the time' for the Little Design vision to be fulfilled as Habakkuk proclaims?

Let us nourish our hopes from the counsel given us by Fr. Adrien Demoustier, S.J. who spoke at the Le Puy Assembly (Oct. 12, 2000) during the week of celebrations for the 350th Anniversary. In his theme presentation entitled: **A Congregation without a Congregation**, he reflected on his own thoughts since he wrote his first commentary on *The Eucharistic Letter* in 1968. Seeing the reality unfold from a 32-year perspective, he is bold and daring in forthrightly calling us ... to **prepare for the birth of the future!**



"Essentially and primarily religious life is associative and not hierarchical. The model of union and fusion, the only one experienced so far, has proved fruitful and vitalizing; however it is not the only solution possible. In the long run, it does not solve the problem since it maintains the "old model" of the Congregation with a Superior General. With the trend in decreasing numbers becoming permanent, this could lead to a grouping of all kinds of 'originalities' into one congregation".

Father Demoustier challenges us to be courageous and mature enough to face this Paschal hour in our history and prepare for a 'congregation without a congregation'. This must be embraced from within a powerlessness and a self-emptying that is willingly accepted . . . at least by a small number of members. *"The central portion of the Eucharistic Letter takes on a precise meaning. It is a question of actively facing the 'death forms', their mutation/disappearance, to make way for a new birth."*

Realizing that this is our "perhaps in time" moment, we invite you to return to the Source and revisit *The Eucharistic Letter* at your kitchen tables all around the globe. Who knows what the Spirit may create? What resonates? What is birthing within you...within the circle of spiritual seekers around you? *"To be able to accept 'these new ways' requires detachment from the priority given to those we had inherited from the past, and which were a blessing". Adrien Demoustier, SJ*

This wonderful 'coming together' of history and vision is further celebrated in the conclusion of Sr. Marguerite Vacher's book Nuns without Cloister (English 2010). It's an open invitation to revisit our understanding of The Little Design as compared to the founder's original inspiration:

In the time since Vatican II, it has become possible to rediscover and reconstitute the complete heritage of Father Medaille. Over the centuries, external conditions, especially in psycho-social and juridical realms, limited the full realizations of his insight. Changes now experienced on multiple levels – not the least in historical understanding – have put all the cards back in our hands. For Sisters of St. Joseph, this provides the prospect of discovering through the life lived by women of their own time, genuine forms of fidelity to their vocation. (Nuns Without Cloister, p. 319, English, 2010)

Could this all be in the plan of God, in the Divine Design, that this text would be prophetic and meant to be realized in some future time? Yes, long decades after a flourishing religious life of the Sisters of St. Joseph

all across the continents of the Earth, we are revisiting this original document with new eyes and new hearts. Is this the time for the '*something new*' to be born beside or with the '*something old*' that we have known and carefully nurtured for some 360 years?

The Sisters of St. Joseph have carefully treasured this *Eucharistic Letter* as part of our rich heritage. A marvel to some of us, is that we are being used 'as instruments' in its rebirth in this Millennium ... because here we are ... in this now moment, eager to share "*the lavish grace*" with as many great lovers of God as possible. In this larger Christ-consciousness, we see, everything belongs! In a oneness paradigm we all share the Beams of Love. Let us stand up and claim ... this is our "perhaps in time" moment! We acknowledge that some Sisters of St. Joseph along with many spiritually mature women and men scattered around the globe, are feeling a call, a strong Spirit-nudge, to explore "the Little Design" way of life with other spiritual seekers in their respective neighbourhoods. These 'animators' are helping bring to birth as many small pockets of Little Design Communities as the Spirit might wish to establish ... yes "throughout the whole church". (E.L.)

Rosemary O'Toole, CSJ (Sister of St. Joseph in Canada, Peterborough neighbourhood.)

Kathleen Robbins offers her computer expertise to Centre International



The Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (London Neighbourhood) has responded to a request for communication assistance from the International Centre staff since there is only one full-time staff member at present. Kathleen Robbins, Corporate Website Administrator, has graciously agreed to share her computer expertise with us to update our website and to format the Newsletter. This arrangement allows staff time to attend to other important aspects of disseminating and gathering information regarding programs, visitors, and queries in general. Kathleen's expertise you can very well observe yourself with this *Au Puy* you are presently reading. Thank you Kathleen for your important contribution to the Centre International St. Joseph.

Heartfelt Gratitude to Gracy Thomas

At the end of November, 2013, Sr. Gracy Thomas bid 'adieu' to Centre International St. Joseph where she had lived and worked as a staff member for 3 years. Gracy was known for her gracious hospitality and her gardening skills. Previously she had been at the welcome house of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Lyon for several years. During that time she accompanied many pilgrims to the historical sites of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Thank you Gracy ... for your faithful service and may your return to India bring you many blessings.



Renovations at the Centre

Since early January the Centre has been undergoing renovations (security upgrades). Some of what's happening: Doors are being replaced by fire doors in every bedroom. The stairway is being enclosed, and a handrail has been put in on the right hand side. A fire door is being installed on third floor at the end of the hallway, which will exit to an enclosed metal fire escape. New exit signs have been put in. New regulations state that we need a Handicap Accessible room, so it is being constructed in what was the car garage. A few pictures highlight some of the goings on!



Richness of the August 2013 program *Expanding the Global Heart*

A highlight in our programming of 2013 was the program facilitated by Janet Gagnon, CSJ (Lyon, Winslow) and Gloria Philip, CSJ (Argentina) *Expanding our Global Heart*. Mid-week Carol Zinn, CSJ (Pennsylvania) also offered a Skype session. Gathered together were 17 Sisters representing 12 countries. They came from Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Haiti, Madagascar, New Zealand, North India, Senegal, Tanzania, United States, and Wales. What blessing as each one shared their story and their Congregation stories. From the first evening a lively spirit of sisterhood was felt. Let's hear from several participants:



Graciela (Argentina) and Rita (Brazil) shared:

"...there was a deep feeling of unity, of family...we felt close to each other, we loved, and appreciated the different places where we were coming from. We believe, that is 'being global, inclusive,' even reaching out to some of us who are in far away places and with less economic resources.

It was a rich experience, that went deep into our hearts, helped us to have other ways of seeing, even beyond our own Congregations and be able to see the more...

The objective was met. Our hearts grew "bigger". We thank you for seeing a value in us who are sisters from Latin

America. The experiences we all shared were very unique and different, yet there is a beat in our hearts, our global hearts that started with our founder and our first six Sisters in Le Puy."

Mariette (Madagascar) wrote:

"Blessed are the Sisters of St. Joseph if they are contemplatives in action, for all their life will be a sign of the Father's love. Blessed are they if they have a deep understanding of their contemporaries, for they will discover in them the presence of the Lord."

(Beatitudes for the Sisters of St. Joseph, Argentina)

The international gathering of the Sisters of St. Joseph went very well. This gathering took place in Le Puy-en-Velay, at the Centre International St. Joseph, from August 3 to 12, 2013. The session was given in English and simultaneously translated in Spanish and French. All participants lived an unforgettable and rich experience; for it wasn't just a gathering of different cultures and histories, but mostly the experience of living together our Trinitarian spirituality as Sisters of St. Joseph. Thanks to the sharing and to the presentations by sisters Janet, Gloria and Carol Zinn, everyone was invited to enter into the great dance of inclusive love of the two Trinities (created and uncreated). The Sisters of St. Joseph have the same mission to love the world as the Trinity does. This is why we are invited to expand our heart, to have a heart open to the world and a heart that embraces the world with passion in order to make it better. This demands that we empty ourselves in order to be filled with the Trinity and the dear neighbor.



During this gathering, it was impressive to observe each one's availability to share and live communion. Even if we didn't speak the same language, the exchange between one another was very enriching; we communicated with gestures, if we couldn't find words. However each one learned a bit of another language and at the end we managed to retain some of the words. It was also astonishing to see participants taking pictures together from the very first day of the session. All this shows that the charism and spirituality unites us and pushes us to enter into relationship with others.

To end, we thank our Lord for having given us His grace and inclusive Love at every moment. We are very grateful to all the organizers of this session and to the staff of the Centre International.

Very Cordially, Mariette



Did you notice our "Newsletter" title?

The new title, Au Puy featured on the masthead of the Centre International St. Joseph newsletter has been chosen for several reasons: The title:

- Uses the name of our founding place;
- Recalls the meaning of the city's name: puy = volcanic mountain;
- Highlights the significance of the area (see text below);
- Has colloquial meaning in the local area.



LE PUY-EN-VELAY, often shortened to Le Puy, is one of the most remarkable towns in the whole of France, with a landscape and architecture that are totally theatrical. Slung between the higher mountains to east and west, the countryside erupts in a chaos of volcanic acne: everywhere is a confusion of abrupt conical hills, scarred with dark outcrops of rock and top knotted with woods. Even in the centre of the town, these volcanic thrusts burst through. (Yahoo Travel) *Au Puy* will be used for all translations.

Lyon Jubilarians come for an overnight in September



Sisters Marguerite, Elizabeth, Lucie, Bernadette, Rita and Marcelle

Charism Alive: Mission Effectiveness



L-R: Gracy, Dolores (back row) Meg, Lynn, Suzanne, Vincent, Paula, Moira (front) Mary Kay, Bridget, Mary Ellen

The **Charism Alive: Mission Effectiveness** program in early October, facilitated by Sr. Dolores Clerico, SSJ (PA), offered once again a rich experience for our co-partners in Mission and Associates.

Participants shared how the program was “steeped in the spirituality and grounded in history” and that experiencing the places of our heritage, standing and walking where those who had gone before us had, was so powerful. *“It clarifies and inspires us to carry out the CSJ mission.”*

Check the listing of programs at the end of this newsletter for details on this October's upcoming program.

Sister Odile Nouvet, Remembered . . .

We dearly remember Sister Odile who passed into the loving arms of God on February 3, 2014 after a brief illness. We recall with great gratitude and joy the gifts of life and service that she brought to the Centre International.

As part of the generous support of the Institute for the Centre International, Sr. Marie Paul Rasclé, then Superior General of the Institute, offered the expertise and skills of three sisters to the Centre, one of whom was Sr. Odile Nouvet. From 2004 to 2011, Sr. Odile shared in the housekeeping tasks as well as sharing life with each one of the team and the visitors who may have been there on a Thursday afternoon.

Some reflections from team members: All agreed that “Sister Odile was the fastest, quietest, and most thorough cleaner we have ever known.” Carol C. shared “Sister Odile contributed so much to life at the Centre.” “Odile was always supportive and she loved the fruits and vegetables of our garden, especially our giant zucchinis.” (Gracy T.) “When we ...celebrated her birthday with a special treat, she was utterly surprised and delighted,” shared Mary D. Sheila H. added “Odile’s quiet depth and profound faith were always tangible, along with her sense of humor.” Sr. Janet G. stated “Odile was a gift to the realization of the dream.”

The relationship that we forged with Odile will continue to inspire us and to fill us with gratitude. She was a living example of Maxim 73: *Live out your life with one desire only: to be always what God wants you to be, in nature, grace, and glory, for time and eternity.*” Sheila Holly, SSJ (Philadelphia, PA. USA)



“During this anniversary year, we continue to celebrate Your unconditional love for us all, members of the Joseph Family of the World. We ask for Wisdom to continue to grow the ‘vision and mission of the International Centre.’

May this ‘little design of the 21st century’ enable us to keep the fire of your love alive in our hearts as we continue to respond to the needs of the ‘dear neighbor.’”

Excerpt from Prayer for the 10th Anniversary of the Opening of the International Centre 2004-2014.

Join us at the Centre International for one of the following 2014 Programs and be forever changed . . .

Directed Retreat in the heart of our CSJ Foundation.

Wednesday, June 4, 6:00 p.m. through Thursday, June 12, 11:00 a.m.

Come to Le Puy, the heart of our heritage as Sisters of St. Joseph and walk, reflect on the paths which our first sisters themselves walked and prayed. In a directed retreat an individual spends time in silence, with God, nature, and has a daily 30 to 45 minute meeting with a Director. Guided by the Spiritual Exercises, Scripture and our Maxims you will discover your own heart's desire and call for living the mission today. You will go forth to live fully the "more" of being part of God's Congregation of great love. Mass is offered locally at various times.

Directors: Line Rioux, CSJ (Lyon, USA Province), presently on staff at Centre International St. Joseph and Marie-Jean Pougheon, CSJ, Institut des Soeur de St. Joseph, resident of St. Etienne. Other CSJ guest directors, as needed.

Suggested contribution for this retreat: 350-500 Euros at your discretion; and 4 euros annual membership fee. Register by May 12, 2014.



"In the Footsteps of Our Hidden Founder"

Pilgrimage to the original places of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Monday, June 23, 6:00 p.m. through Monday, June 30, 2014 after breakfast.

The program will bring participants on a pilgrimage to discover the places where Fr. Médaille and the first Sisters of St. Joseph took their first steps in history.

Our pilgrimage will take us from St Flour to Le Puy where Fr. Médaille founded the Sisters of St. Joseph, to Monistrol where Mother St Jean Fontbonne gave heroic and non-violent resistance in face of the French revolutionaries, to St Etienne where the congregation once again began to come to life, thanks to Mother Fontbonne and the twelve "Black Daughters". Finally, to Lyon, participants will have the opportunity to visit the "Heritage" rooms dedicated to Mother St Jean Fontbonne in the original Mother House of the CSJ Lyon Congregation.

A pilgrimage is not only an outward journey visiting the places dearest to the Sisters of St. Joseph, but above all an inner journey to taste the inexhaustible richness of the sources of our charism, through a process of group sharing and time for reflection and personal prayer.

Presenter: Maria Christina Gavazzi, a Sister of St. Joseph of Chambéry, presently serves on the leadership team of the Italian Province. She is a theologian having graduated in Fundamental Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. She also serves as a Spiritual Director and an Ignatian Retreat guide, offering recollection days, retreats, and formation programs for the Italian CSJ Federation.

Register by June 2nd, 2014



Contemplative Painting Retreat: Awaken a New Moment in Time

Sunday, July 27, 6:00pm through Monday, August 4, following breakfast.

Breathe new life into our CSSJ heritage stories! Join us for a Contemplative Retreat incorporating the experience of painting to connect with future through the transformative power of the arts. The creative process is a spiritual path leading into unfolding mystery. Art experience is not required. There will be opportunities for personal reflection, painting, and visits to significant historical sites in Le Puy and Lyon, and bring them into the art. Also...be sure to bring your camera!

Presenter: Patricia St. Louis, CSJ, from Windsor, Ontario, Canada, is a multi-media artist. Her interest is in using the arts to express through abstract art aspects of the new Universe Story and the evolving self.

Register by July 1st, 2014.



"The World Inside Out and Upside Down"

The Evangelical Counsels for the CSJ Mission in the world today.

Monday, August 11, 6:00 p.m. till after breakfast on Sunday, August 17, 2014

The program will present some simple observations regarding the vows, based on the Primitive Texts given to us by our founder, Jean-Pierre Médaille, with particular reference to the Eucharistic Letter. How can the vows we made be a source of life and dynamism to sustain us in our mission? How can we Sisters of Saint Joseph be signs of hope in our world?



Our vows are a public commitment to remain open to the God of surprises who overturns all of our plans for the future and who asks us to do things we have never imagined. It is true that the vows are not the be all and end all of our religious life, but it is often in relationship to them that delicate problems arise which we must confront together. The vows are in fundamental contradiction to the values of the consumerist society that is rapidly becoming the dominant culture of our planet. If we accept them simply as a useful means towards a certain goal, like a "necessary inconvenience" in our consecrated life, they can appear to be a price not worth paying. However, if we experience the vows as a way of participating in the life of God, then we can believe that this renunciation can be fruitful, and that the dying we experience can open the way to resurrection.

Come and grow in your living of the evangelical counsels through input, personal reflection and sharing. Come to the "source", Le Puy and Lyon, and let the sites we hold dear enrich our understanding for the life of the world today.

Presenter: Maria Christina Gavazzi, a Sister of St. Joseph of Chambéry, presently serves on the leadership team of the Italian Province. She is a theologian having graduated in Fundamental Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. She also serves as a Spiritual Director and an Ignatian Retreat guide, offering recollection days, retreats, and formation programs for the Italian CSJ Federation.

Register by July 18, 2014

Little Design Communities Rebirthing

Sunday, August 24, 6:00 p.m. through Wednesday, September 3, after breakfast

If you are feeling called to live more deeply the way of life described in *The Eucharistic Letter*, plan to join us in Le Puy for a 10-day contemplative experience. Rosemary will guide us through a new commentary (100 pp.) on the prophetic-mystical text of *The Eucharistic Letter* (J.P. Médaille, 1660) Through deepening our shared vision, our hope is that animators will go forth and witness to the emergence of Little Design communities manifesting a new vitality for our church/world.



The rhythm of each day flows with a creativity of Spirit movement. Each morning we gather for contemplative prayer and interactive teachings on *The Eucharistic Letter*. Our afternoons invite more flexibility and movement outward as we 'circle the city with Love'. Some may choose the guided walking excursions around Le Puy: *the first kitchen, refurbished archives, Mount St. Michel, Notre Dame Cathedral, Eglise du College, St. Joseph shrine, lace shops, market square etc.* Others may seek out solitude spaces for journaling, painting, or other creative expressions of Little Design. There is a one day trip planned to Lyon to visit the archives and Heritage Room.

Presenter: Rosemary O'Toole, CSJ (Ottawa, Canada)

Note for this retreat there is an extra 30 Euros fee to assist with the cost of a Binder particular to this program. Register by July 28, 2014.

"Deepening Our Global Hearts"

Begins Sunday, September 14, 6:00 p.m. till after breakfast Tuesday, September 23, 2014

One way of celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the International Centre is offering this program for Sisters around the world. The program invites participants to deepen their grasp and understanding of the charism and spirituality of Sisters of St Joseph at a time of great conflicts and questioning of institutional structures in business, governments, church and society.

We are in a time of great evolution and change demanding an openness and commitment to informing and forming ourselves to do the work that needs doing in God's world in the 21st century. Our hope in presenting, "Deepening Our Global Hearts", is that each participant will become more aware and engaged in learning the developments in science and theology that will help us grasp the profound meaning and challenges before us, as Sisters of St Joseph of the world. Bringing SSJ's from the many countries, in which our Sisters serve, is a means of the 'stretching and enlarging and deepening' our hearts, to be for 'ALL' of God's creatures and creation.

"Having a global heart is not an option for Sisters of St Joseph. It is who we are." (Carol Zinn, SSJ Philadelphia)

We will be searching, pondering, questioning and sharing what it means to have a 'global heart' in the 21st century. Trinitarian life offers us a model for being in relationship with and in God, the dear neighbor and ourselves. WE begin the program dwelling in the heart of the Trinity and focusing on our spirituality that calls us to live in relationship with ALL.....not something to learn, for we are already 'in God's heart, but certainly to deepen.' We want to feed the 'desire' to live our lives within the heart of God. Living with a 'global heart' is the our way into deepening Trinitarian life.

Another element of the program will be the participants, preparing beforehand an 'image' (icon) of her 'foundress' of the Congregation/province/ region. Each participant is expected to present a 10-15 minute exposure of the foundress. These icons will create a panorama of 'Joseph women' who have seeded the family story!

There will also be time for sharing stories, songs, dances of one's culture, during evening gatherings. We will build on these reflections and sharings through opportunities during the program for personal and group prayer, liturgy, journaling, doing pilgrimage to our founding spaces, bio-dancing that will help us give expression to our experiences.

The ten days will pass very quickly! **Come join in the 'dance of the Trinity' as Sisters of St Joseph!**

Presenters: Janet Gagnon, CSJ (Lyon, USA Province) & Gloria Phillip, CSJ (Argentina), both past general superiors, will offer a global perspective from the north and the south.

Register by August 18, 2014



Mission Effectiveness: The Charism Alive in CSSJ Ministries

Wednesday, October 1st, 6:00 p.m. through Wednesday, October 8, after breakfast

This program offers a pilgrimage for lay partners in mission, providing an immersion experience in the original spirit and global dimension of our CSSJ charism. If you are associated with one of the works founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph as an administrator, staff person or board member, this program will deepen your learning, nourish your imagination and strengthen your conviction in moving the mission into the future. The week-long experience offers a rhythm of in-put sessions, interactive participation, prayer and visits to historic sites in Le Puy. A day trip to Lyon is also included.

Presenter: Dolores Clerico, Sister of St. Joseph, PA (USA) regularly provides opportunities for deepening an awareness of the C/SSJ charism and spirituality among Sisters of St. Joseph, associates and lay partners in the United States.

Register by September 8, 2014



Suggested contribution for Programs

650 Euros — includes room, meals, and materials. 4 Euros — annual membership dues.

Refer to www.centreinternationalssj.org for more information
and a downloadable PDF registration form.

Welcome to Le Puy for . . .

We also welcome you for Pilgrimages, Visits, Retreats, Sabbaticals. These can be individually arranged throughout the year.

- Guided pilgrimages and visits for individuals or groups offered in various languages.
- Private retreats and spiritual direction by staff spiritual directors.
- Personalized reflective days and sabbaticals near the cradle of the Congregation.

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