

Philadelphia Sisters' Pilgrimage Opens 2022 Season



Sisters pose outside the birthplace of Mother St. John Fontbonne in Bas-en-Basset.

From April 20-26 the Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia (USA) made their annual pilgrimage in Le Puy and Lyon, France. They were the first group to come to the International Centre after 2 years of the Covid pandemic. They spent 17 hours flying from Philadelphia to Frankfurt to Lyon and then were met by the tour bus for another 2-hour drive. However, the long trip didn't dampen their spirits or their energy. After settling in, the sisters and 3 associates came down to the dining room for a delicious chicken dinner from our new caterer, Vincent Dance. (Our old caterer, Cuisine Central no longer delivers in this area.)

On the second day, the group went into the old city of Le Puy to visit important SSJ historical sites: Église du Collège where Fr. Médaille preached and the Jesuit rectory where he stayed; the Tree of Martyrs where two sisters were guillotined during the French Revolution; and the Cathedral of Notre Dame. The group also visited the Kitchen and prayed a thanksgiving prayer to the six founding sisters, Fr. Medaille, and Bishop de Maupas, and toured the Living History Centre, which features the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The pilgrimage included a special evening at the Bilbouquet restaurant, a 20-minute walk from the Centre. The restaurant set up a giant round table for 13 complete with a salad entree, steak and rice, dessert, and wine. Madame Claude was our hostess and server while Chef Michel prepared the delicious meal that everyone enjoyed.

The group went to Bas-en-Basset to see the birthplace of Mother St. John Fontbonne, and then to Monistrol to meet sisters of the Institute of St. Joseph (France). Mother St. John was superior in Monistrol before the French Revolution. Afterward, the group went to Lyon to visit the Origin and Evolution Center of the Lyon Sisters as well as Mother St. John's grave, the hilltop basilica of Fourvière, and Old Lyon.

[Click here](#) to see more photos on the International Centre blog

New Roots & Wings Program Brings African & Indian Sisters to Le Puy



The 10-day Roots & Wings program (May 3-13) brought young sisters in formation from India, Burkina Faso, Congo, and Vietnam/Norway. Languages were in English and French while staff spoke in a combination of French, English, and Spanish. There was a lot of picture-taking as the sisters began to collect memories of their new friendships and experiences. They also attempted to speak a few words from each other's languages.

The sisters learned that Le Puy has been a center for lace-making since the 1600s, and that the founding



Sr. Judy Donovan (Lyon-Maine) and Sr. Gloria Philip (Buenos Aires) served as presenters. Sr. Simone (Institute de St. Joseph) was the French-English translator.



sisters made lace at night after ministering to the people of the city during the day. This work earned them a living, which distinguished them from the monastic nuns who relied on donations for their keep. This independence was one of the major reasons the Sisters of St. Joseph and the apostolic movement were able to emerge.

The sisters spent the day in Lyon to learn more about Mother St. John Fontbonne. They visited the Origin & Evolution Centre, the grave of Mother St. John, and the Basilica at Fourvière. Sr. Rita Bujold served as their guide and also invited the sisters to eat their bag lunches in the garden at the Congregation of Lyon's Generalate. Sisters Line Rioux, Rosa-Maria Oviedo, and Lily Thockanattu of the Lyon Leadership Team greeted them.

As part of learning each other's languages, the group settled on the French word, "d'accord", to express agreement. In one of its last acts of unity, the sisters all agreed that their 10-day program was a success. It was informational, and it had enriched their spiritual lives.

[Click here](#) for more photos.

The Roots & Wings program was designed to provide sisters with temporary or one year of perpetual vows an opportunity to meet Sisters of St. Joseph from other parts of the world in order to integrate their life and initial formation experience and to reflect on their commitment. The intensive 10-day program included re-reading the sister's life and vocational call, exploring it in the light of our origins as Sisters of St. Joseph, and moving into how to live their vowed 'yes' today within the reality of our world and the "Dear Neighbor" near and far. Time together interweaved an understanding of holistic human health with SSJ history, spirituality, mission and charism within a context of international relationships, prayer, sharing and relaxation.

Mt. St. Mary's University Students Witness the SSJ Foundations

Fifteen young women from Mt. St. Mary's University in Los Angeles visited Le Puy May 26-29 as part of their pilgrimage to SSJ Foundations. They visited the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the Kitchen, Scenography, Église de Collège (where Fr. Medaille preached) and the Tree of Martyrs (where 2 sisters were guillotined).

Each day the young women focused on a particular theme on the history and spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph. In the evening, they shared their reflections about what inspired them or connected them to the founding sisters as well as their experiences of community. They also had opportunities to eat in French restaurants, stroll through the Old City, go to outdoor cafés, visit Martine's lace shop, and local stores.

The pilgrimage program is sponsored by the MSMU Office of the President. Shannon Green, director, and Meredith Lynch, associate director of the CSJ Institute, accompanied the group as well as Alison Halpern, Associate Director of Wellness.

[Click here](#) for more photos.



Mt. St. Mary's University Faculty & Staff Visit SSJ Foundations



Faculty and staff of Mt. St. Mary's University spent June 5-8 in Le Puy as part of their annual pilgrimage to explore and be inspired by the history and spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

University President Ann McElaney-Johnson accompanied the group while Shannon Green, director of the CSJ Institute presented a history of the Sisters of St. Joseph to orient the group to the various sites they would see. The group also traveled to Bas-en-Basset to see the birthplace of Mother St. John Fontbonne. MSMU purchased the home in 2019. ([Click here](#) to see a blog entry on the opening of the home.)

[Click here](#) for more photos.

The CSJ Institute

Established in 2016, the CSJ Institute at Mount Saint Mary's University advances and upholds the mission of our Founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Rooted in a rich history that dates back to 1650 Le Puy, France, the Institute promotes the charism of the CSJs to serve all persons without distinction and respond to the needs of the times. Through a combination of programs, resources, and faculty-led research, the CSJ Institute prepares fearless visionaries for a just future while honoring the work and lives of our Founders, both past and present.

Orange Sisters Re-Start their CSJ Heritage Pilgrimage



The sisters from Orange, California, re-started their CSJ Heritage Pilgrimage since the Covid pandemic. Four sisters from Formation and their director, Sr. Kit Gray participated in the pilgrimage, which was led by Sr. Mary Beth Ingham (superior general) and Sr. Jane Delisle.

During the two-week pilgrimage, the sisters took buses and trains to visit Annecy, Bas-en-Basset, Monistrol, Carcassonne, Lyon, and Le Puy.

The sisters had special permission to visit the room of St. Francis Régis at the Église du Collège. St. Francis lived and ministered in Le Puy and influenced the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph to serve "the dear neighbor". He had started one of the first soup kitchens near the Église du Collège where he was also a teacher. Click here for a video with Sr. Jane Delisle talking to Sr. Trish about St. Francis and the Église du Collège. Fr. Medaille visited Le Puy from time to time and also preached in the Jesuit-sponsored church.

The cool evenings allowed the sisters to take walks, visit with each other—and pick cherries. The trees behind the Centre International were abundant with the fruit waiting to be picked. However, the sisters couldn't resist eating some right away.



Sr. Mary Beth, Sr. Kit, and Sr. Jane



Eating freshly-picked cherries at the Centre.



Carcassonne - walled city in the background



On the road again—this time by train to Lyon

For more photos, [click here](#) to see the sisters' story on the International Centre blog.

Many thanks for the many photos—and the video—taken by Sr. Trish.

Reflection on Bishop Henri de Maupas du Tour Who Named Us: Daughters of St. Joseph, Sisters of St. Joseph

Sr. Wendy Cotter, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada and professor emeritus at Loyola in Chicago. This reflection was delivered at the Celebration Service in Le Grange, IL (USA) on the Feast of St. Joseph 2022.

Today as we celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph, it seems so fitting to reflect in gratitude to God for the Bishop who gave us this holy Patron and Model, who would name us Daughters of St. Joseph, Sisters of St. Joseph, Bishop Henri de Maupas du Tour.

When I entered, all I knew of him was that he had authorized our congregation. In the large painting in the first parlor, depicting our first reception on October 15, 1650, Father John Pierre Medaille SJ is at the altar, indicating the Blessed Sacrament. Bishop de Maupas is in the shadows of the background, seated on his episcopal chair, in his bishop's robes, with white hair and looking pretty old. Actually, Henri was just 46 and vital.

With Vatican II's encouragement to return to our roots, it is Jesuit Father John Pierre Medaille who has come to the fore of the research—his own life, his contribution to women's active religious life, his attention to our own charism and spirit and the important foundational writings he provided for us, our maxims, our constitutions. Even more recently we have been gifted with the online sessions of Roots Alive with Sisters Pat Byrne and Marcia Allen, further opening up the significance of our earliest beginnings and Father Medaille's writings.

But what of Bishop Henri de Maupas? The more I learn about him, the more I want to learn—and with attention to our Feast today, his devotion to St. Joseph.

Henri had a strong devotion to St. Joseph from two important sources: St. Teresa of Avila, and the second great saint noted for a singular devotion to St. Joseph, St. Francis de Sales.

With regard to the influence of St. Teresa of Avila, all of France had been influenced to a new devotion to St. Joseph when St. Teresa's Sisters came to France in 1604. As we know, St. Teresa had been cured of her paralysis by St. Joseph, and she urged everyone to turn to this great saint who was such a loving protector and so ready to answer any prayer. She placed her first seven monasteries under his protection.

St. Teresa's love of St. Joseph profoundly influenced St. Francis de Sales. His writings show not so much an emphasis on his role as Protector, as his living the



Sister Wendy (right) with Sister Paula Rose, a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth, at the El Paso (Texas) Airport waiting to help Latin American refugees.

virtues which provide a model for holiness, for everyone, in everyday life.

“the hidden ordinary, everyday virtues, what he [Francis] called ‘the little virtues’ which he writes: “are the very heart and essence of true devotion: purity of mind and body, poverty, humility before God, gentleness toward neighbor, constancy, courage, perseverance, obedience to the Word of God, charity of judgement,” (Introduction to the Devout Life, Part 3, chapters 1-2)

We all know that Henri de Maupas wrote the life of St. Francis de Sales. It was published in 1657 and was written to urge Rome to begin proceedings for his canonization. But the years preparing that book and the influence of Francis on Henri had only built on the influences from an earlier work. As a young priest in 1641, when Jane Frances de Chantal died, Henri was asked to give her funeral oration, and immediately afterward he began her biography.

This mammoth work of three years and over 800 pages placed Henri in close and constant contact with the teachings and spiritual counsels of Francis de Sales, as step by step, he guided and counselled Jane Frances. The year that biography was published, 1644, Henri was consecrated Bishop of Le Puy. He was forty. Canon Blois his biographer writes.

“he was scarcely installed when he began to travel through his diocese like a true missionary, preaching for whole weeks in the most abandoned parishes, catechizing the children and remaining long hours in the confessional. The little schools of the village or hamlet,

where pious young women gathered the children during the winter months to teach them their letters or to instruct them in their Christian doctrine, were the object of his special solicitude”.

We can only imagine his delight and amazement at God’s grace, when Father John Pierre Medaille came to speak to him about a group of women from his own diocese who had come together and were hoping for his support and acceptance, as a new forming religious group of women who longed to serve the dear neighbor...a fledgling group... a congregation that wished to be accepted into Le Puy by him. For Henri, it must have been something of a fulfillment of St. Francis de Sales’ dream come true...and more... a new congregation, now and for this time, and in its own way,...these women given to their great love of God, but also to loving outreach to the dear neighbor from who they would not distinguish themselves, in humility, gentleness towards the neighbor, constancy, courage, perseverance, all obedience to whatever was the will of God, and great charity in judgement.

Bishop Henri de Maupas chose for us our Patron and our Model. He named us Daughters of St. Joseph, Sisters of St. Joseph and as researcher Sandra Miesel reports, we are the first Congregation dedicated to St. Joseph.

Let’s listen to our Constitution:

This group will be called the Congregation of St. Joseph, a cherished name which will remind the Sisters to assist and serve their dear neighbor with the same care, loving attention, charity and cordiality that the glorious Saint Joseph had in serving the Holy Virgin, his most pure spouse, and the Saviour Jesus, his foster-son.

It is no surprise that for the day of our formal reception by him, Henri chose the feast day of the canonized saint known for her own great devotion to St. Joseph—St. Teresa of Avila.



(Francis de Sales was not yet canonized with his own feast day....but Henri would be working on that!)

For the next two years, Henri de Maupas was our spiritual father, giving our retreats and talks, our prayer days, our conferences. He was a true friend to us, a loving and encouraging Bishop. I am imagining him coming to the door those many times, and all the smiles and laughter...the humble fare, the jokes and stories, the counselling, the homilies to support and encourage us.

On this feast of St Joseph, we thank God for Bishop Henri de Maupas for all he did for us, as Bishop and friend, who loved us so from the very beginning, believed in us, had confidence in us, publicly authorized us to the Bishops of France, placing us under his aegis, and who certainly endorsed and fostered Father John Pierre Medaille’s ongoing guidance and formation of our congregation. May we today recommit ourselves with so much joy to living the virtues of St. Joseph, who is not only our Patron but our Model.

St. Joseph, pray for us.