

Many Changes Made at the International Centre



International Centre Board (left to right) Sr. Vianney Thanniath (Annecy Congregation), Carol Umana (Canadian Federation), Sr. Maryellen Kane (USA Federation), Sr. Judy Donovan (Lyon Congregation), Sr. Barbara Bozak (facilitator), Sr. Celine Kalathoor (Chambéry Congregation), Sr. Simone Saugues (French-English translator), Sr. Lucia Gallo (Italian Federation), Sr. Odile Gaillard (French Federation).

Many new things are happening at the International Centre this year with many more planned. First, the October meeting of the Board was the first time the entire membership had been present since before Covid. A new face also appeared as the newly-elected superior for the Lyon Congregation, Sr. Judy Donovan. She replaced veteran Board member and Centre pioneer Sr. Catherine Barange, who completed her second term as general superior.

A new program for young adults (sisters and lay people) aged 21-49 will be offered in June 2024 titled "Charism in Motion". Meanwhile, "Roots and Wings", a program offered over the past two years for newly-professed sisters, will take place every other year starting in 2025.

Videos have been added to the Centre's communications program. They provide a more enhanced format to the stories we tell of the people who come to the Centre and their interactions with each other and with the Le Puy historical sites.

And finally, October 17, 2024 is the day chosen for the Centre's celebration of its 20th anniversary. Plans are in the works to involve as many people as possible in as many different ways as possible. Details coming soon.

As this very busy year draws to a close, the prospects for next year and beyond are exciting indeed!

Institute of St Joseph Holds Big Event with Sisters and Lay Ministers



The Institute of St. Joseph of France gathered more than 100 of its sisters and lay ministers in Saint Péray (near Valance) on July 1 to celebrate their life, work, and dedication to the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph. A history of the early foundations of the Sisters of St. Joseph was presented and several small workshops were held to illustrate the many ways the charism is expressed. The afternoon included a prayer service with beautiful music and a sumptuous French feast. Centre staff members Sr. Eluiza de Andrade and Olga Bonfiglio were invited to participate in the day's activities, and they were pleased to witness the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment of all of the people of this event.

*Spirit of light, Spirit Creator
Restore in us the joy, the fire, the Hope.
Affirm our souls, revive our hearts,
to witness our love immensely.*

2024 International Centre Programs

Stepping into the Past, Living in the Present, Journeying toward the Future – May 27-June 3

Sr. Mary Rowell, presenter

Charism in Motion – June 6-13

Sr. Michelle Leshner and Kristen Whitney Daniels, presenters

The Lace Is Not Yet Finished – September 8-14

Sr. Jane DeLisle, presenter

Mission Alive! – September 28-October 5

Sr. Dolores Clerico, presenter

More information to come in the December newsletter.

Mission Alive! - September 2-9



Sixteen participants took part in this year's Mission Alive! program at the International Centre. The participants came from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Uruguay, and the USA. The program was directed by Sr. Dolores Clerico (Philadelphia) and translated by Sr. Gloria Cruz (Brentwood--Puerto Rico) and Joana Mendes (Rochester--Brazil). The participants were administrators and practitioners in SSJ institutions who were enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the history and spirituality of the Sisters of St Joseph. The group is pictured here in front of the Jesuit rectory where Fr. Medaille stayed when he visited Le Puy.

[Click here](#) to see more photos and videos on the blog.

The Lace Is Not Yet Finished - September 16-22



The participants who attended "The Lace Is Not Yet Finished" program posed on the patio of the International Centre with new silk scarves that the Indian sisters brought to everyone as gifts. Everyone's colorful outfits contrasted with the dramatic setting of Le Puy with the statue of the Blessed Virgin on the left and St. Michel on the right. Participants included five Indian sisters, two Argentinian sisters, one American sister and one American associate. Sr. Jane DeLisle (Orange--USA) served as presenter and Sr. Gloria Cruz (Brentwood--Puerto Rico) was the Spanish-English translator.

[Click here](#) to see more photos and videos on the blog.

Two Trinities and Our Wounded World - Sept 29-Oct 5



Sisters from Brazil and Denmark participated in the Two Trinities program directed by Sr. Linda Buck (Orange-USA). Although the sisters had decades of experience in community, they deepened their understanding of the new movements of the Spirit for today's wounded world. Sr. Joana Mendes (Rochester--Brazil) served as the Portuguese-English translator. While in Lyon, the sisters enjoyed a wonderful picnic under the plane (*platane*) tree behind the Lyon Congregation generalate. Many thanks to Sr. Judy Donovan, superior general, who hosted the group.

[Click here](#) to see more photos and videos on the blog.

Congregation of St. Joseph Annual Pilgrimage - Oct 9-15



The 15 pilgrims of the Congregation of St. Joseph "hit the streets" of Le Puy to walk in the footsteps of the six founding sisters. They took a break on the Twisted Bridge that spans the Borne River for their group photo. One of the buildings they saw was the original orphans' home of the six founding sisters (below left), which is located next to St. Clair Chapel. Today it serves as the library for the town of Aiguilhe. Near this building is the Sator Square (below).

[Click here](#) to see more photos and videos on the blog.



The early Christians were a persecuted lot, so they recognized each other by code to protect themselves. One of their codes was the Sator Square, a five-word Latin palindrome (a word, phrase, verse, or sentence that reads the same backward or forward). The words refer to The Lord's Prayer. The earliest squares were found at Roman-era sites dating from the sixth century. Le Puy has a Sator Square located near St. Clair Chapel, which once served as a pagan temple to Diana, the moon goddess, and was later transformed into a Christian Chapel.

Short Visits



The sisters from the Institute of St. Joseph retreat center in Vanosc took a couple days in mid-August from their ministry to refresh themselves with different surroundings, to visit their sister-friends, and to partake in the delicious meals and hospitality offered through the International Centre.



Several sisters and two agrégés from the Istituto Suore di San Giuseppe visited Le Puy on September 29. The sisters were from Italy and Africa. These photos show them in the Sisters' Chapel, which is near the Kitchen. The chapel was recently renovated and opened in time to display paintings and tableaux that were once a part of the Scenography.



Over 50 faculty and staff from the Institution of Saint-Joseph of Tassin la Demi Lune (near Lyon) spent the day in Le Puy on August 31 to celebrate their 200th anniversary since the Lyon Congregation founded it. Centre staff members Sr. Eluiza de Andrade and Olga Bonfiglio were later invited to participate in the main event on the school's campus on November 25. They were pleased to witness the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment of all of the people involved in this event.

For many years the school has been run by lay people, however, thanks to the organization in France that provides an intense level of Catholic education. The Institution of Saint-Joseph is part of 24 other schools in the St. Joseph Network. Thus, the Charism is now being preserved, incorporated, lived, and taught as part of the mission of the school.

The current director is Pierre Oudin.



Reflections on Le Puy from “Julie’s Pilgrim’s Dispatch”

Day 5 – Our Founders

Our pilgrim’s journey took place toward the end of Eastertide, and we were in Le Puy on Ascension Thursday. We attended Mass, a beautiful service holding the universal connections of liturgy and worship on a special day. The focus on this day was the first six women who became the Daughters of Joseph. Part of the day included exploring the city and streets where these formidable but humble women ministered. We were also introduced to lace making, a significant art and trade of the city. It is difficult to conceptualize the time in which the women served and the hardships and needs they faced. France in the 17th century was volatile and filled with military and religious conflict. There were extremes in wealth and poverty with a strong ruling class that was rigid and oppressive. Sanitation was limited, and disease was rampant. At the same time, it was one of the most intellectually and artistically creative periods in European history. These women, enacting the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, caring for the dear neighbor without distinction with steadfast zeal, must have been incredibly selfless and brave.

That evening, our tired community of pilgrims reflected on the women. We also spent some time reflecting on self-emptying through an examen attributed to Joan L. Roccasalvo, CSJ, and explored the State of the Heart.

How does one make room for God as well as the dear neighbor? Impediments are varied and unique to each of us. Is it about perfection or trying the best we can to move toward God’s desire for us as ambassadors of his in the world?” “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.” (Jean-Pierre Medaille, S.J. *Maxim* 73)

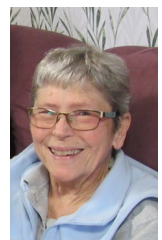
Day 6 – The Kitchen

What a perfect day to return to our pilgrimage in Le Puy. Today is the feast of St. James, and how fitting to visit one of the starting points of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. For day six of our pilgrimage, our travelling community traversed the city through cobblestone byways. The spiritual focus of the day was on humility and the six founders. Going through my journal notes, I ran across a question, “What does it mean to be humble?” The response: dynamic generosity, the call to self-empty, to give of self in response to need and without distinction.

The day was jam packed and filled with the prospect of visiting a sacred site of the Sisters of St. Joseph’s founding, the Le Puy kitchen. When our tribe arrived and made our way into the kitchen, a consistent exclamation, “I can’t believe I’m actually here,” arose in chorus. As people who had ministered alongside the sisters at St. Joseph Center, some for decades, we had seen photos of the blessed kitchen many times. It was a joy and amazing to be present to the place where it all began. One could almost hear the voices from the past sharing with each other about their day ministering, or maybe identifying the needs of the neighborhood and planning for the upcoming day. Sprinkled among the conversation, per-chance a bit of laughter or tears mingled with the evening prayer. Perhaps they whispered, “welcome, there’s more to do.”

Beyond the day’s experience, and following a fortifying meal, a group of us decided to pilgrim to the Notre Dame du Puy Cathedral. It is an ancient pilgrimage site and the church where folks receive a blessing before beginning the Camino. A beautiful and very large statue of Our Lady holding the baby Jesus (Note-Dame de France) sits atop the highest of the volcanic peaks. We climbed to the top, taking our time to visit with Mary and the gorgeous vistas the elevation provided. Some folks climbed up the statue, a large edifice made from cannons used during the Crimean War. Although tired, we were elated. What an eventful day.

Julie Mussche serves as a partner in ministry with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange. She volunteers at the Center for Spiritual Development in various ways as a spiritual director and supervisor, a presenter for the Art of Spiritual Direction program, and a participant in the Family of Joseph movement.



Videos!

The International Centre now has the ability to produce videos of the various groups that come to Le Puy. The videos aim to capture the spirit of the group through action-oriented audio-visuals and music. To see the various videos, click on the links below.

Mission Alive!

Singing the “[Canadian National Anthem](#)” and the “[Brazilian National Anthem](#)” proved to be unique and spontaneous icebreakers for the program. “[The Last Supper](#)” illustrates the spirit of the group before they headed home the next day. The Brazilians then provided a snappy way of saying “[Good-bye](#)” after the week-long program ended.

The Lace Is Not Yet Finished

Sr. Jane DeLisle provided short commentaries on various pilgrimage sites including “[Mother St. John Fontbonne’s Birthplace](#)”, “[The Sisters’ Chapel](#)”, “[A Visit to Monistrol](#)”, “[Prayers for the Founders](#)” in the Kitchen, and “[Martine’s Lace Shop](#)”.

Two Trinities and Our Wounded World

“[Inside St. Michel](#)” provides an eerie but spiritual presence of the Archangel who protects the world from evil. Sr. Joana Mendes videotaped the interior of the 9th-11th century-old St. Michel Chapel with a Gregorian chant prayer to St. Michael accompanying it.

CSJ Pilgrimage

Walking turned out to be a major theme for the CSJ’s pilgrimage in Le Puy. After studying a map of Le Puy with its major historical stops, the pilgrims started out their journey with “[A Walk to the Mount](#)”, which features some of the aesthetics and obstacles of Le Puy. “[Walk Like an Egyptian](#)” takes place at the top of the hill overlooking the International Centre, a place few pilgrims have an opportunity to see. The dramatic overlook of the city inspired the group to dance. Little did they know that a couple public works workers would witness their effort.

Roots & Wings

Sisters who recently took vows participated in the week-long program titled Roots and Wings. Here are two videos of their social hour “[Dancing 2023](#)” and “[Dancing 2022](#)”.

Founders Day 2023

The Centre produced a “[Founders Day](#)” video this year, which was featured on the U.S. Federation Facebook page. Centre staff also participated in the Founders Day video produced by the Federation.

