

20th Anniversary Celebration a Memorable Success



The 20th anniversary of the International Centre was highly successful. Everyone enjoyed themselves and many recalled the memories of the planning and opening of the Centre. Many thanks to all those who have made the Centre possible!!!

[Click here](#) to see our 20th anniversary video

[Click here](#) for the anniversary prayer service

[Click here](#) for the special anniversary newsletter

[Click here](#) for photos on the blog

Institute Sisters of Saint Joseph Holds Retreat at the Centre

August 4-18



We were taken aback when Sr. Marie Heckman of the Institute Sisters of St. Joseph called us to reserve two weeks in August for young African and French sisters who were preparing for their final vows. They would also bring their own cook! How could we refuse such an offer!

The sisters came from France, Ivory Coast, and Senegal. Fr. Aristide Jules-Dossou, a Jesuit priest from Benin, accompanied the sisters as well as Sr. Marie Therese Vallete and Sr. Dijondo Toussainte also provided presentations and readings during meal times. The two weeks included a week-long retreat with visits to SSJ historical sites. Everyone was very serious about this visit and faith-filled.



The Community Room was transformed into a chapel where the sisters celebrated the Mass and prayed the breviary.



Sr. Marie Heckman (left) coordinated the experience with the help of Sr. Mariane Diouf of the Ivory Coast. Sr. Evelyn Coly was the cook of some delicious West African dishes.

The Centre usually has cleaners come after a group ends its program. During the summer months, however, this service is not available. The sisters didn't flinch when Sr. Marie asked them to pitch in and clean the Centre. She divided up the spaces and took volunteers to clean them on the day before the group left. They swept, vacuumed and scrubbed the floors, sinks, bathrooms, and community rooms. They also aired out their rooms by opening all the windows. We as staff very much appreciated their efforts.

[Click here](#) for more photos of this incredible two weeks.

Chambéry Sisters Make a Pilgrimage to Le Puy – August 26-29

Sisters in Formation in the Chambéry Congregation came to Le Puy for four days to make a pilgrimage to the founding city of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Their prayers at meal times demonstrated interculturality through language as well as through the world-wide reach of the Sisters of St. Joseph in English, French, Hindi, Portuguese, Swahili, and Telugu.

Sr. Dominga Zolet (left) organized and directed the group with Sr. Helena dos Passos (center), both of Brazil.



The Lace Is Not Yet Finished – September 8-14



“The Lace Is Not Yet Finished” program) attracted a diversity of sisters and lay people from different countries (Denmark, India, Japan, USA). Here they are at Notre Dame de Fourvière for part of their day-long visit to Lyon. They also visited historical sites in Le Puy, sometimes climbing the hill to the old city two or three times a day. They certainly were a hearty group!

One afternoon Sr. Simone Saugues of the Institute St. Joseph came to the Centre. She spoke to the group about the history of the sisters in Le Puy and captivated the participants for three hours! They much appreciated her stories, insights, and explanations as well as her wit. They knew they were in the presence of a legend. Sr. Simone has worked with the Centre as a translator and guide since the Centre’s beginning.

Sr. Jane Delisle, CSJ (center), director of “The Lace” since 2010, is from Orange, California (USA). For several years she has also come to Le Puy to conduct pilgrimages for sisters and Family of Joseph members of the Orange Congregation as well as staff from the Providence St. Joseph Health Systems (associated with Orange).

[Click here](#) for more photos.

St. Augustine (Florida) Pilgrimage – September 16-20



Twenty pilgrims from the St. Augustine Congregation in Florida (USA) spent several days in Le Puy, the last leg of their pilgrimage in France. They also visited Lourdes, Lisieux, Paris, and Lyon. The group was led by Sr. Rita Baum, who was previously a staff member at the Centre for three years. Most of the members of the group were associates of the Congregation.

The group visited the Sisters' Chapel near the Kitchen where they also had Mass. The chapel was especially meaningful to the group because the sisters who went to Florida from Le Puy to educate the newly-freed American slaves took their vows in this chapel. They were also sent on mission from this chapel. It was a meaningful and touching moment of history for them. [Click here](#) for more photos of the pilgrimage.



Mary Ann painted these scenes of Le Puy 13 years ago. They hang on the second floor of the Centre. She was delighted to see them when she came back for the pilgrimage.

Mission Alive! – September 28 – October 5

Canadians and Americans participated in this year's Mission Alive! program. This program usually attracts several Brazilians, but they were unable to attend because of the terrible May floods in the Rio Grande do Sul area (southern Brazil). This very serious group of leaders in health care ministries sought to understand and process the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph in order to continue the Sisters' legacy in their organizations. They will undoubtedly succeed!

Sr. Dolores Clerico, director of the program is a Philadelphia Sister of Saint Joseph (USA) with ministry experience in the academic, parish, diocesan, and congregational arenas. She is a frequent speaker, workshop presenter, and retreat facilitator for sisters, associates, and partners in mission throughout the United States. She was the first program director at the Centre, which she has done since 2007.



Short Visits



Sister Maria Lai, CSJ Orange, accompanied a group of pilgrims from Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles, CA) in August visiting sites that pertained to the founders of the University's three religious orders: St. Ignatius of Loyola in Spain; the Sisters of St. Joseph in Le Puy and Carcassonne; the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary in Béziers, France.

Sister Maria is known as an “under-cover nun” who has lived among students at LMU for ten years. With degrees in theology, family studies and learning technology, she serves as a graduate minister and spiritual director at LMU, director of religious education at Saint Bridget Chinese Catholic Church, and a facilitator at Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF), Dayton University. Lai enjoys leading pilgrimages, and she has a passion for working with survivors of human trafficking.



Doug Christie and Jennifer Abe are professors at Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles, CA) who were in France in August, but were unable to join the pilgrimage. They spent a few days in Le Puy and stopped by the Centre for a stimulating talk about the SSJ spirituality and history. We also took them to the Kitchen, which they much appreciated. Doug is a theologian and Jennifer is in psychological science.

[Click here](#) for more info about the university.



Karen Wiswell and Sara Donovan spent a few days in August at the Centre in order to visit Le Puy. They are both from Maine and had worked at Mt. St. Joseph with the Sisters of St. Joseph (Winslow) in a rehabilitation and nursing facility for the elderly in Waterville. The sisters sold the Mount St. Joseph facility to Trinity Health.

Karen, worked at Mount St. Joseph for 26 years starting as a teenage volunteer and then professionally as a nutrition director, community coordinator, and the admissions director of the nursing home.

Sara worked at Mount St. Joseph for 18 years in nursing, infection control, and education.

Kathleen M. Eiser from the Office of Student Development at Norwood Fontbonne Academy was traveling in France with her husband, James, and their daughter, Madeline. Kathleen has been working for the Sisters of Saint Joseph for over 30 years as a teacher in Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia (USA). Madeline, has also attended the sponsored schools of the SSJs for 15 years.



A Counsel of Indian sisters from the Chambéry Congregation spent the day in Le Puy on September 15 after spending time in Lourdes and before attending a two-week leadership meeting in Rome. Besides visiting the Kitchen and SSJ historical sites, they went to Mass at the Cathedral. They also visited Sr. Marie-Paule Rascle, one of the Institute sisters who lives near the Kitchen. She served them a delicious and dramatic “lava cake” where liquid chocolate flowed out of the center when it was cut.

Another group of Chambéry sisters visited Le Puy for the day on October 3. They, too, had participated in congregational meetings in Rome. They visited Chambéry and Le Puy before heading home for India. The group is seated on the Healing Stone in the Cathedral.



Rose-Marie Valade spent much of September on the Camino of St. James walking through Spain and France. She stopped in at the Centre September 25-28 to spend a few days of rest and to see the Kitchen before she headed to Turkey, Ecuador, and a wedding in New York City. She is from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario (Canada).



New principals for the Institute St. Joseph sisters' schools spent the day at the sisters' chapel, Kitchen, and other historical sites in Le Puy on September 24. They were undergoing instruction into the history and spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Sr. Mathilde Isaac, general superior, (first one on the left) helped to lead the group.

Community managers for the Institute's nursing homes and retirement centers also spent the day on October 22 for instruction. Unfortunately, we do not have a photo of this group of 16 women who are likewise dedicated to carrying on the legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph in their ministries. Members of the Generalate were the group's presenters including Sr. Mathilde Isaac, Sr. Martine Goury, Sr. Béatrice Leveque, and Sr. Marie-Christine Passelaigue.



Artie and Margaret Minson from Brooklyn, NY (USA) visited the Kitchen on September 27. They were spending time in Lyon and were close enough to Le Puy to come for a visit. Margaret works for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood as a consultant for their schools. She has been involved with the sisters for many years serving as President of Bishop Kearney High School. She now works at Fontbonne Hall Academy, an all-girls private Roman Catholic high school in Brooklyn. Artie is also involved at the Academy as a member of their legacy team. The couple has three sons who were all educated by the Jesuits.



The Global Coordinating Group (GCG) met with Bishop Yves Baumgarten of Le Puy who was unable to attend the 20th anniversary celebration. The bishop attended the sisters' meeting and was introduced to each of the members. He then had lunch with the sisters. The GCG is comprised of superiors and members of congregational leadership teams or federations. It meets every other year at the Centre and during the intervening years on zoom.



Sr. Catherine Kugler (Brentwood, USA) and CSJ Associate Maryanne Majeski were traveling in France during October and stopped in Le Puy for a brief visit on the 24th. Sr. Cathi is the Coordinator of Local Community at Maria Regina, a nursing home serving the Brentwood sisters. Maryanne has been associated with the nursing home for the past three decades. Music has always played a big role in Sr. Cathi's life. [Click here to listen to her sing in the Kitchen.](#) We thank Maryanne for this recording.



A group of Marymount College alumni and their spouses unexpectedly stopped by the Centre on Sunday, September 22 for the first leg of their pilgrimage to France. We were not home when they arrived and found the group on our patio upon our return. They had been waiting for 30 minutes to see Le Puy and had only 30 minutes left to visit the Centre before their bus would take them to Lourdes. We invited them in and talked about the Centre and its mission and activities. Although we didn't have much time together, the warm feelings among us provided just another illustration of the depth of community among people associated with the Sisters of St. Joseph. The group hails from Concordia, Kansas (USA).

Prayer of the process for the beatification of martyrs of the French Revolution (1793 -1794)

God our Father, in you is the source of all peace.

In the power of your Spirit, twenty-four martyrs of the Terror of our diocese have manifested their fidelity to Christ.

Among other Christians of that time, they bore witness to you by shedding their blood.

Following them, give us the strength to live our faith and the courage to bear witness to it, in all circumstances;

Teach us to keep faith in you and to remain ardent artisans of your Kingdom of justice and reconciliation.

Through Jesus, the Christ, our Lord.

Amen

Diocese of Le Puy-en-Velay - France
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