

CENTRE INTERNATIONAL ST. JOSEPH LE PUY- EN - VELAY

Volume 1, no. 2

May 2005

The Mission Continues to Unfold

The Centre has grown in its awareness of being “international” through Sisters’ visits, e-mails, and requests for hospitality, sabbaticals, reflection times. Since the Centre opened, Sisters have come from as far away as Australia, India, Egypt, Lebanon, Canada, Mexico, United States, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and as close as England, Ireland, Paris, Chambéry, Rome, St. Peray and Le Puy. There are requests to visit from sisters and associates as well as people ministering with Sisters of St. Joseph. Congregations and friends have sent donations to show their support of the Centre.



Lyon’s General Chapter prompted a busload of sisters from this international congregation to “come and see” just before the Chapter began. After the event, the Centre was filled for a week with a group of their temporary professed sisters, along with presenters, translators and cook who kept the staff “hopping” with languages from Spanish to French to Arabic to Indian to English with some nuances of these depending on the country of origin. The evening before departing, these guests blessed all with a celebration of music, dance and drama from their respective countries.

Global Impact

One of the unique gifts of these global interactions is that we are impacted, face to face, with so many justice issues, showing the need for right relationship among peoples. Long before the crisis in Lebanon, the visiting sisters from there expressed their anxiety and concern about the presence of Syria in their homeland. Some of the ills of India’s caste system were explained. And we heard about Indian Sisters’ experiences of the tsunami. It is not possible, said one sister from India for the novices in Pakistan to share their novitiate with Indians because of visa restrictions between these two countries. To learn of such realities first-hand is to begin to share the pain of people around the world.

Challenge of Communication

The ongoing challenge of our international status is communication. We search for ways to communicate with every sister and associate throughout this planet. To do this effectively, we must translate the news and happenings of the Centre into at least four languages at the outset. Individual congregations must then translate these texts into languages spoken or understood by all their sisters. We are learning slowly how extensive this process is, how long it takes and how subtle are the distinctions of each country’s language. We are deeply grateful to the Sisters from various Congregations who have given generously of their time and knowledge to provide us with translations into French, Spanish, Italian and English. Any program that we plan must also take into consideration these realities. The announcement of our first program, this summer in July, is going through these steps.

On the Local Scene

Our integration into the life of the local area continues to evolve in several ways. In January, at the invitation of the Mayor, we attended the annual gathering of the commune of Aiguilhe. The Maire introduced us as new residents and asked us to give a brief summary of our mission. A reporter who was present later called to do an interview with us about the Centre. This young woman wrote a comprehensive article for the newspaper. Since then, the *ponotes* (the name for people of Le Puy) have greeted us knowingly on the streets, in the stores, and in Churches. This welcoming continues the spirit of our neighbors at our Open House in December.

The overgrown grass in our yard is a cause of concern for us. The cost of doing anything about it is prohibitive. However, through the kindness of the mayor, gardeners of the commune have trimmed back the bushes. One neighbor has pruned and hoed around our rose bushes. Another good neighbor, who calls himself our "St. Joseph," is aware of the problem with our steeply terraced back yard, so he found a young couple who needed pastureland for some of their animals. Voila! Soon, there appeared 11 sheep. The tall grass is disappearing quickly. Many of our neighbors have sheep, horses, chickens and other animals in their yards; our animals give us another means of connection with them. This environmental solution to our grass problem offers us an awareness of the shepherds' care for their sheep. Their daily attentiveness reveals to us and our guests a deeper sense of the tenderness of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

On International Women's Day, we attended a dinner presentation sponsored by the local women's association which was celebrating an 80-year history of working for women's issues here in France. Almost 100 people, women and men, participated in the event. They were all delighted to have two Sisters in attendance and invited us to future meetings.

When Good Friday and the feast of the Annunciation occur on the same day, Le Puy celebrates a special Jubilee year. Thousands of people from around the world will make a pilgrimage to the Cathedral here between March 24 and August 15. (If you want to know more about this, see <http://jubiledupuy.ccf.fr>) Drawn by the activities and spirit of this religious festival, we are making its theme, "From Darkness into Light," also the theme of our first International program, to be held here at the Centre, July 11 – 18.

"State Of The House"

We continue to spend our time balancing the various aspects of our mission: tending the daily needs of the house in cleaning, shopping, cooking, decorating, doing finances, repairs and general upkeep of the Centre. In addition, we respond to the many requests which come for accommodations and information related to visiting Le Puy. Then, there is the daily e-mail correspondence with guests, sisters and associates from around the world who respond to our newsletter. We meet regularly to touch into the "state of our hearts" as well as the "state of the house." These meetings also include attending to the events at hand as well as long-range planning for programs.

Wish List

- *a web site.* One of us may take a course locally to set one up (a challenge in a second language). But if any Sister or Associate has this expertise, why not consider coming to do a little volunteer work?
- *a logo for the Centre.* If you have suggestions, send them along.
- *a list of resource persons.* Sisters and Associates – who could provide input on topics of interest for future programs here. We hope these persons would represent the various countries where there is C/SSJ presence.
- *prayer and music resources* from all countries, in all languages.
- *additional translators* who could assist us either in translating our communications or to be present as a translator for one of our programs here.
- *Donations are always welcome.* Some have suggested "adopting a room". The approximate cost of refurbishing, including painting, plaster repair, mattress, bedding, furniture, curtains, etc. is estimated to be about 2,000€.

"In whatever part of this world we may be, we are never exiled, never far from the eyes of our Heavenly Father. In Europe, as well as in America, God is everywhere witness of our works and struggles."

Mother Saint-Jean Fontbonne