

CENTRE INTERNATIONAL ST. JOSEPH LE PUY- EN - VELAY

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Summer Program

The air in Aiguilhe was buzzing, July 11 - 18, as 24 CSSJ women from around the world gathered for the first-ever global program at Centre International St. Joseph. Representing 11 countries (Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, England, France, India, Italy, Ivory Coast, Mexico and the USA) participants, presenters, translators and helpers quickly formed a vibrant community as all reached out loving hands to cross the barriers of language and culture by sharing the language of the heart. At times it sounded like the tower of Babel as one heard English, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, along with the murmur of translation and the laughter that transcended all linguistic barriers.

Based on the special Le Puy Jubilee theme, "From Darkness to Light," sisters shared their experiences of darkness and light in our foundations, our history, our own lives and our world today. Hearing the stories of darkness in each culture, and sharing the light our Sisters are bringing around the world was a very powerful experience. The bond of our shared charism, our unity, spirituality and mission became palpable. The use of ritual, music, dances of universal peace, and art helped participants to move beyond words, and to express their experiences from the depths within.

Below are just a few of participants' comments:

"The differences of culture and of language have been enrichment for me. I felt that, beyond the difficulties of translation, there was a language that united us, the language of love. (Chiara Angelica Massa Trucat, Italy)

"It was a moment of grace of being together to live our internationality.... The spiritual journey made to the old kitchen, archives, Lyon, Ministrol and Bas-en-Basset impressed me much and increased the love for my Congregation. It challenges me to live my life as a true Sister of St. Joseph with an ardent desire to witness to the charism of our Congregation." (Regina Mary Sandanam, India)

"The sharing of the darkness in the world, in society and in the cultures in which we live particularly touched me.... Our spirituality is more than ever a challenge for today. I leave convinced of the importance and the urgency of the call that we have received to witness humbly to the Great Love of God, to reconcile people among themselves, and with God." (Marie Therese Chapuis, Ivory Coast)

"This week has been a great experience of God, an experience of community, which has awakened in me a desire to be ever more profoundly in love with Christ, in order to be, like Him, light, a loving, compassionate presence, full of tenderness, solidarity and justice" (Ivani Maria Gandini, Brazil)

"I believe that we are being urged to continue deepening this union among us so that it can shine out upon the world in a way that is effective, though small..." (Mabel Dri Gladis, Argentina)

"Being with Sisters from around the world gives me energy and encouragement. Our mission is alive and well in the world." (Pat Madden, USA)

"A maxim that speaks to me especially after this week begins with 'Embrace, at least in desire, the conversion and sanctification of the whole world in imitation of apostolic persons, and do so with generous courage....' I have met Sisters who are involved in ministry from around the world and I will now be able to be more united in bonds of affection with those Sisters I know who are living in these places. I can appreciate the generous courage it takes for some of them, considering the circumstances under which they live." (Anne Karges, Canada)

The Centre Welcomes Many from around the Globe

Many visitors and pilgrims continue to visit. During this first year of operation, we have welcomed at least 300 Sisters, Associates, former members, and friends from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Egypt, England, France, India, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mexico, Scotland, USA, and Wales. Some of the groups included;

- Associates of the Chambéry Congregation for their weekend meeting;
- Janet Gagnon and the new leadership team of the Lyon Congregation for their team-building and planning meetings.
- Two large groups of pilgrims, one from the USA and one from Canada.
- We have welcomed two Sisters and one lay woman for private, directed retreats, and have several similar requests for the coming months.
- A group of Golden Jubilarians from the Lyon Congregation spent a day in Le Puy sharing their celebration with us.
- Young members from the Chambéry Congregation on their way to World Youth Congress in Germany stopped to visit.
- We had our first sabbatical presence as Sister Catherine Leary, of Springfield, USA, stayed at the Centre while learning lace-making in Le Puy.



Summer program participants

It has been a pleasure and a grace to meet and share with so many from around the world. We truly are one, and a little time together engraves that truth in the depths of our hearts.

Looking to the Future:

- ✓ Many groups and individuals have already booked pilgrimages, retreats and visits in 2006. Each member of the Staff will be spending some time in her home country this fall for Congregational and Federation gatherings, as well as a visit home.
- ✓ The new year will find Sheila and Josette taking an Intensive language course in Lyon to further their fluency in French.
- ✓ We are in the process of designing and setting up a Web Site with the help of Sisters Baya Clare of St. Paul and Sandra Yost of Baden who volunteered following the request in the last Newsletter.
- ✓ We are in conversation with Monica Hartnett about a program, May 21-27, 2006, focused on the Earth Charter and our Charism.
- ✓ We finished our first year of operation in the black! But we need an endowment fund to assure the long-term operation of the Centre. The Board will be addressing this soon.

Would you like to plan a gathering of CSSJ's to be hosted at the Centre? Archivists, Justice personnel, leadership groups, Boards of Sponsored ministries -- touch our roots and experience the life flowing strongly to embrace the world.