



FRANCE



ÉTATS-UNIS



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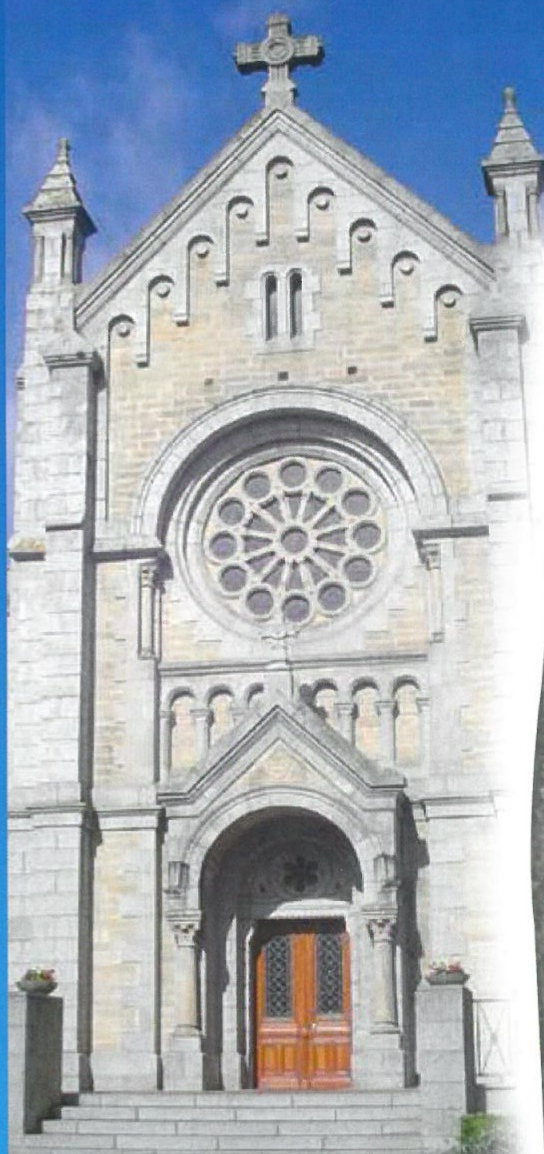


BELGIQUE



R.D. du CONGO

Info *S.M.P* Comm'



PETITES ANNALES... CHEZ NOUS

“ S.M.P. INFO COMM”

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EDITORIAL

*Expectation... Transformation...
Conversion... Life...*

We are in the season of Advent, the time of vigilance...

*Our entire **Christian existence** must be lived under the sign of **expectation, alertness and vigilance**. Keeping watch in the night, keeping watch in difficult times, keeping hope alive even when we're in the dark... holding on when everything seems to be falling apart...*

"People who walk through the long night, the day will soon dawn..."

*What are we really waiting for? **Who are we waiting for?***

*If we keep an active watch, our hearts will stay awake, we'll take the time to study **God's Word** in depth, and we'll dwell in **prayer**. We await the coming of the Lord ... but the Lord is already here, at the heart of the events we experience, the people we meet. **Make us** vigilant and attentive, Lord, to Your presence. Deliver us from the numbness, the numbness, the fears that would cause us to miss your coming.*

*The articles you will read, meditate on and pray over in this issue 69 of Info Comm' show us the Lord at work in the humble details of our lives. They are the soil in which the **seed can germinate**.*

From November 21 to 25, I took part in the CORREF (Conférence of Religious and Religious of France) meeting in Lourdes:

***Religious life on the road to transformation, "You will set my feet in a free and open space."**
Ps 31:9*

The Christians we are, and are trying to become, affirm the transformation of this world. But it's

up to us, each and every one of us, to *transform this world into a habitable* land. "Behold, I make all things new." He does not create out of nothing, but out of what exists. Nothing is excluded from God's salvation, from his future. The transformation wrought by our God precedes us. All we have to do is welcome it, embrace it and take responsibility for it. *Let's be attentive* to what's new in the depths of our stories, our communities, our poverty, our vulnerabilities, our hopes... these are our "seven loaves" Mt 15:34, which the Lord asks us to multiply.

I borrow my conclusion from Bishop Denis MOUTEL's homily on December 8, 2023: "Mary received the Word in her heart before the Word was born from her mother's body. Following in Mary's footsteps and with her, let us let the Word of God come to every corner of our home, from the cellar to the attic, including those places we don't always dare to revisit or that we keep too far away from the Lord's call."

Christmas, God with us... Let us welcome the Lord so that LIFE may spring forth.

Sister Thérèse LEMÉE

Superior General

S^r Thérèse Lemée

Centenaries...

1923 - 2023: Centenary of the Congregation in BROONS

1923 - 2023: Centenary of the “Sint Andriesziekenhuis” clinic in TIELT

On the occasion of its “Open House,” the TIELT clinic published a book called, *100 Jaar Sint Andriesziekenhuis - Tielt* based on its origins and history during this remarkably long period.



1920: Sisters from BRITTANY arrive in TIELT and purchase the school and buildings from the VAN BIERVLIET Ladies (the Congregation of the “Ladies of the Holy Family” - HELMET). The Sisters of Brittany receive elderly people for care and residents.

1923: A young doctor, Dr. COLLE, a surgeon, wished to open a clinic here and, with the help of the SMP Sisters and under the name of “Clinique Saint Andre” in reference to Mother Saint André, Marie - Anne PETITBON, Superior General for 48 years.

A history of the SMP Sisters, French and Belgian (Walloon and Flemish) Sisters who devoted their days and nights to caring for a population in need of care from a renowned surgeon.

During the 1939 - 1945 war, the clinic became a Red Cross center.

In this book, I find names and photos of the sisters I knew in my youth: Sister Célestine-Marie, Sister Paul-Marie, Sister Marie-Alphonse and Sister Madeleine KAYE, who visited her great-aunt.

1966: Laws change... Through “Caritas Catholic” and the Bishop's Office, the Sisters sell their property to the “Congregation of the Sisters of the Faith” (Zusters van jet Gelove). They also have a nursing school and clinic in WAREGEM. It's a difficult time for the Belgian Sisters.

Supported by a desire on the part of the clinic's doctors, five SMP Sisters ask to remain under the name “Sisters of Faith.”



2023 : The small community of Sisters of Faith closes its house. The chapel, the last original building, disappears.

In the farewell photo, I find Sister Bernadette STRAETEMANS, who originally joined the SMP Congregation and is a former student of MAASMECHELEM.

Zuster Sister Thérèse BERGEZ

Fraternizing so that Life may spring forth between us!

We are gathered in our beautiful hall to share the General Chapter's Vision Statement to launch our community mission statement. What do we want to live this year?

After our somewhat unsettling return from the Chapter: bacteria for Pauline, loss of our suitcases, sharing of responsibilities for Sisters Pauline and Jeannine, preparation for the visit of Sisters Thérèse and Adèle (which did not take place), health problems for Sisters Lily and Fernande who had to stay in the infirmary, preparation for the Board of Directors, we asked ourselves: **“How, in our situation, are we concretely going to make Life spring forth between us and around us?”**

In this new community environment where, for the first time, we are all gathered together, we need to **“start afresh from Christ, take root in Him, let ourselves be evangelized in depth by sharing the Word.”**

Brainstorming, we listed a number of small fraternal gestures likely to spark Life, such as: showing interest, being attentive to what the other is going through, showing solidarity in times of trial, developing gratitude for the other's gifts. Thus, every evening, we will review our day and find a positive quality in each of our Sisters.

Also, in this big house that is the Mother House of the Sisters of the Good Council, we need a good dose of flexibility to respect the rules, the prayer and meal times, and the need to memorize the security codes for elevators and stairwell doors.

Yes, we are aware that **Life can spring from suffering**, discomfort, our incapacities and this feeling of powerlessness in the face of our differences, our limitations and everyday annoyances.

It's unsettling, of course, but how grateful we are for the extended **caring environment, for the fraternity** of the Bon Conseil sisters who do what's necessary to keep us well and happy, by welcoming us to their feasts, their celebrations, their sharing and on many other occasions.

Yes, **“we receive a hundredfold”** and we won't have too many lifetimes to love and give in return.

Sister Pauline SIMARD

Rooted in Christ

One year ago as I was walking the grounds of Maryvale, I was struck by two evergreen trees which were sharing the same space of ground. They were **rooted together and growing into one tree**. When I walked from one direction I could see two trees. When I came from another direction it looked like one tree! It symbolized to me, being **rooted in Christ** through my life of prayer by utilizing:

- ⇒ Spiritual direction,
- ⇒ Attending all types of retreats - charismatic, Cursillo, directed, and
- ⇒ Many hours of personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

When I make my annual directed retreat, at the end, I make a spiritual resolution of how to live it out each year. Last year it was “Keeping God’s Graces Alive as God’s Evergreen Tree:” This year, the year of the Eucharist, I am drawn by the **Eucharistic Lord** to sit before the Lord for my daily meditation. It is a way to emphasize that I am rooted in Christ, in the Eucharist. Therefore, I am “rooted in Christ, [and] will start afresh from Christ” (General Chapter orientation) early each morning. It **empowers me** to live “radical evangelical religious life” (General Chapter orientation) as I carry out my daily ministry in our parish and nursing home.

I also just attended a weekend retreat at Maryvale, led by, Bishop John Folda, focused on our Eucharistic Lord. Bishop Folda re-affirmed the biblical foundation of the Eucharist. **Jesus gave us himself, at the last supper**, “Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it and giving it to his disciples said, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.’” This is the Eucharist, found in all of our churches and celebrated at every Mass! The Eucharistic Lord says, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28-29).

Sister Anne Germaine Picard

See my poem - “God’s Tree” and my “2022-2023” reflection.

God's Tree

It's me, Anne Germaine
seasons come and go
warmth and cold fill my soul
I know death and I know life.

God's Tree

I started as a seedling
planted with Love and Hope
I've known life and death
fear and courage.

God's Tree

I grew in stature
with grace and care
life flowed to me and for me
gracing me with beauty and grandeur
with strength from my roots.

God's Tree

My roots tell me who I am
pine, maple, oak, fruit
but it is God who feeds me
calls me by name for

I am

God's Tree

I face warm sun that
nourishes me.
I face storms that break me.

I am God's Tree

and embrace
life, fruitfulness and death
Knowing and Trusting my gardener
To be broken is painful
to endure and experience Violence
The Storms in my life
help me remember and trust my gardener
I'm God's Tree!

2022-2023

Keeping God's Graces Alive
as **God's Evergreen Tree:**
"Not I that live but Christ lives in Me"

Sunday: John 15:4
"Live on in me,
as I do in you."

Tuesday: John 15:9
"Live on in my Love...
That my joy may be
yours."

Thursday: John 15:4
"...meditates on His Law
day and night... like a tree
planted near running
water- bears fruit in due
season."

Saturday: Psalm 54:6
"I have God for my
help. The Lord
sustains my soul."



Monday: John 15:5
"I am the vine you are the
branches." Live in Him-
produce abundantly.

Wednesday: John 15:16
"I chose you to go and
bear fruit."

Friday: John 15:16
"You did not choose
me but I chose you."



"Maryvale Tree"

Each day I will use The Scripture for that day to be the **"Evergreen Tree"** of **God's presence alive in me** and around me to help keep the graces of my retreat flowing with God's grace by being **The Presence of Jesus.**

Evening Reflection: How did I abide with God today?

“I THIRST”

It is not surprising in North Dakota to have bad winter weather in March. That is exactly what happened during the March Women’s Retreat. The winter storm, icy roads and blizzard like conditions (eventually causing Interstate roads to close) did not stop **15 women** from attending the **March 17-19, 2023** retreat at Maryvale which was lead by Sister Anne Germaine and Sharon Eversvik, SMP Associate.

The same retreat was also held **July 7-9, 2023**, under much better weather conditions! It was the largest summer retreat with 40 women coming from all over North Dakota, and for a few it was their first retreat ever!

The retreat leaders focused this retreat on, **“I Thirst.”** When an individual is thirsty, the person drinks to satisfy their thirst. **God is thirsting for each and every one of us!**

Are you going to satisfy God by receiving Him? St. Teresa of Calcutta is a wonderful example of living a life of prayer and service dedicated to the Lord Our God.

The retreatants reflected upon this writing which was the source of our spiritual growth over the weekend.

Do you thirst for love?

“Come to Me all you who thirst ... ” (*John 7:37*)

I will satisfy you and fill you.

Do you thirst to be loved?

I love you more than you can imagine... ... to the point of dying on a cross for you...”

With St. Teresa, Sister Anne Germaine and Sharon stated, **‘I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God** who is sending a love letter to the world.” God’s graces were poured out upon us and all the women. “I Thirst for God.”

Amanda Kunze, SMP Associate

New Associate in the USA

October 13-14, 2023, the Sisters gathered for their annual fall meeting at Maryvale. It was an opportune time to also have an Associates' gathering, Mass with covenant signing and potluck meal.



Sisters Anne Germaine Picard, Suzanne Stahl and Elaine Lange gave a presentation on the 2023 Vision Statement written during the 2023 General Chapter, July, 2023.

Ralph Dyrness is not someone new to the Sisters. His life's work has been in Catholic Education within the Diocese of Fargo for nearly forty years and during the latter years he was principal at St. Catherine's



School in Valley City, ND before retiring. He is and has been a **living image of the charism** of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation in Catholic School Education. We are **happy to have Ralph as an Associate**, as well as his **wife, Sue Judd-Dyrness**.

L to R: Sr. Suzanne Stahl, Fr. Donald Leiphon, Ralph Dyrness, Sue Judd-Dyrness, Sr. Anne Germaine Picard and Amanda Kunze.

Amanda Kunze, Associate Co-Director

“My Flesh for the life of the world.” John 6:51

Ministries abound at Maryvale, through the Diocese of Fargo. Most weekends are filled with persons coming for some type of retreat or conference. This brings a richness to us Sisters as well. It is wonderful to see all the spiritual activities taking place.

Recently Bishop John Folda, of the Fargo Diocese, offered a retreat for women on the Eucharist. His input was valuable, leading us to reflect on the Eucharist as food for the soul, of Jesus' real presence and our responsibility to grow in appreciation of this spiritual food which Jesus gives to us daily. Love yearns to share itself with the beloved to bring about union. Besides conferences, there was daily Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, confessions and sharing. Approximately 53 persons attended. I am happy that I was one of them.

Every fall the Priests of the Diocese, with Bishop John Folda, get together for a retreat. This year it was held at Maryvale. At least 100 priests attended. It was a full house for three days. We, Sisters, having our own Oratory, living room, and living space were not disturbed and were able to carry on as usual.

An evening with Christopher West and Mike Mangione, November 16, 2023 at Sts. Anne & Joachim Catholic Church in Fargo, was attended by Sisters Debra, Suzanne and Elaine. It was called “Made for More: Visions of the Promised Land”. The focus on “Theology of the Body” by St. John Paul II was on the dignity and sacredness of the body. Also it focused on how married life relates to the life of the Trinity.

Saint John Paul II invited married couples to live with “marriage nourished by the Eucharist and the Eucharist illumined by your sacrament of marriage; the future of the world depends upon it.” In this series of reflections, Christopher West will unfold the “great mystery” of the profound interconnection between these two sacraments, what it means for us to be members of the Body of Christ, and how the Eucharist is the supreme sacrament of the redemption of the body.

However, Saint John Paul II has not forgotten women and men of the consecrated life. He wrote Vita Consecrata. This book richly shows the relationship of the consecrated life to the Trinity. Jesus' life on earth was one of chastity, poverty and obedience. Jesus lived in communion with the Father and the Son here on earth. His life was Trinitarian. Jesus invites us into this way of life. He invites us into a special relationship with the Trinity. (Vita Consecrata N0. 21)

There are many opportunities for us to grow in our faith, the seed is being planted.

Sister Sharon Houle, SMP

First steps in Douala...

Preparing for a **new foundation** in Douala was a project that the Congregation had been nurturing for several years. On **September 27, 2023**, the dream became reality. As luck would have it, it coincided with **Vincentian Week**, which was hosted by the Lazarist Priests, also known as the Priests of the Mission. It was an opportunity for the **newly-installed community** to make known the charism, the spirituality of the Congregation, and above all the mission of the new community. As Saint Vincent de Paul is the Congregation's second Patron Saint, we didn't fail to underline the close relationship we have with all those who share the Vincentian spirituality, in this case the Lazarist Fathers.

Throughout the week, we ran errands, cleaned and tidied the house. We also met the Bishop of Douala, Monsignor Samuel KLEDA, who gave us a warm welcome, as did the diocesan health coordinator. In the second week of October, we took part in the first area meeting of the diocese's apostolic workers and the parish pastoral council. It was very interesting. They asked us **to present the charism, spirituality and missions of the Congregation**. At the parish level, the Christians suggested we set up a vocations group. In addition to this, we decided as a community to create the group Youth of the World, because this parish is more populated by children than adults.



The following Sunday, we **met** up with a few girls after Mass, just to get to **know each other**. Little girls aged 3 to 6 also approached us, and one of them asked her parents for permission to visit us at our Community. She invited the other children who were listening to come and say hello. It was a great **moment of fellowship**. This little girl's father came all the way from DOUALA to support in BATOURI for Sister Félicité's funeral. He was accompanied by the parish priest, Father Jean-Pierre, and two other Lazarist priests.

On **January 10**, we'll be **welcoming** all the apostolic workers from our pastoral area. This will be an opportunity for us to raise awareness of the "Louise and Laurence" hospital and to forge links with those who will be present.

We have put prayer at the heart of our activities. Given the task ahead of us, and the demands of our new mission, we're aware that we can do nothing on our own. It's the **Lord's Vineyard**, and thanks to His Love and Faithfulness, we're making progress, little by little.

Sisters Jocelyne EBANGA and Nadine Lucie MBARGA

Visit to Mama Elisabeth

“Whatever you did for one of these least ones of mine , you did for me.” Matthew 25:40

Sister Jocelyne was not indifferent when she saw a sick or elderly person. She met Mama Élisabeth in a YAOUNDE pharmacy. Sister Jocelyne had greeted her, and the mother began to ask her a series of questions about her vocation to religious life. Sister Jocelyne, in turn, asked about her illness. In fact, she is diabetic and goes to this pharmacy every day for her injections. Before parting, they exchanged contact information.

On my arrival in YAOUNDE, Sister Jocelyne took the opportunity to invite me to accompany her on her visit to Mama Elisabeth, and also told me about her life and her illness. Once we'd reached an agreement, Sister Jocelyne fixed the day of the meeting. She informed the mother and the latter showed us the neighborhood where her house is located. She lives in the “Madagascar” district. However, her house was in the middle of dozens of other houses. It was difficult for us to find our way around. Mama Elisabeth finally sent her granddaughter to pick us up.

In a few minutes, we arrived at the house, a very beautiful house set within a fence. As soon as Mama Élisabeth saw us, she burst into tears. She was very moved by our visit. We had brought her some fruit and a drink. She asked us to sit down and, without waiting, began to tell us about her life, her joys and, above all, her many sufferings due to her illness and painful old age. In the course of our conversation, she showed us her medication. She couldn't stop complaining that, despite her many prayers, she still hadn't regained her health. She started crying again.

She lived alone in the big house. Her granddaughter and her family lived in the house next door. But the latter was already having a hard time putting up with Mama Elisabeth. She told us she was planning to leave the house. We tried to get her to change her mind and make a little more effort, especially as poor Mama was in danger of being left all alone.

After that, we stayed with Mama Elisabeth for quite a while. We listened to her most of the time. At the end of the discussion, we took our leave of her. She found it hard to let us go and couldn't stop crying.

It was a great experience, especially in a place like Yaoundé. The difference with bush communities is obvious. Poverty doesn't have the same definition. Here, people need to be listened to and supported. In rural areas, it's mostly the poor who need financial and material assistance.

Rich and poor are all part of the great family of God's least ones.

Sisters Jocelyne EBANGA and Martine KELMAN

A new mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

A new mission opens in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the NSELE community of PLAZZA.



On **August 1, 2023**, Sister Nadine SIKOTI and two aspirants, Clotilde and Marie Paul, arrived in the PLAZZA community. Two weeks later, Sister Evelyne MBO NGIBA joined them. It is indeed Divine Providence to have a community in this part of the capital city of Kinshasa.

PLAZZA is a community of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation located in the community of NSELE in KINSHASA, one of the communities on the outskirts of the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The population of NSELE is mainly made up of **people living in poverty**, whose main activities are small item trading and gardening.

The arrival of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation in this part of the capital marked a turning point in the history of our mission in the DRC and in the incarnation of the Congregation's charism. As in the early days of the Congregation, like our first Sisters who arrived in the missions, facing all kinds of challenges **but “strong in the life of this Savior God,”** this community and school began under the signs of fragility and poverty. The best thing about us is **sharing the strength of our poverty**. Sister Evelyne and I are responsible for the Laurence Lemarchand school complex, and together with the other Sisters and lay people, **we accompany this place of evangelization in faith.**

The Laurence LEMARCHAND school complex is the work of the Congregation. Very concerned about the large population and the children living in this enclave, the Sisters opened a school in PLAZZA. Although there are schools in the area, there is only one: the IMMACULEE school complex "des sœur Claretaines", which provides a quality education for the children.





When we arrived, a number of parents wanted to entrust their children to us so that they could benefit from a good education in this setting. Our school is a progressive one, with a full cycle in of preschool. In primary school, we have two levels divided into four classes: grades 1 to 4 (SIL-CE2). The kindergarten, run by Sister Evelyne, has **31 students** supervised by three educators and a governess who accompanies the children to relieve themselves or cradles them when they cry, and the primary, run by Sister Nadine SIKOTI, has **89 students** supervised by four class teachers, one for the school, an English teacher and a computer teacher. The **recruitment of**

these agents was carried out in three stages:

- **Review of applications:** we received a total of 47 applications. After reviewing these 47 applications, 31 were selected.
- **Written test:** The written test consisted of examining the applicants' level in dictation, reading comprehension and essay writing. After this test, 20 candidates were selected.
- **The practical test:** each candidate was asked to prepare and deliver a lesson.

In the end, we selected 11 people for primary and nursery schools. These 11 people spent a week in **training** on the theme:

“The teacher and his profession,” which covered the following points: Who teaches? What to teach? How to teach? What are the expected results? How to keep pedagogical documents?

The climate **at the school** is good, the spirit of our founders is there. Parents, students and visitors are welcomed and accompanied with love. The teaching team, lay people and Sisters, is close-knit. The students are happy and fulfilled. Parents and teachers are happy to have the presence and educational know-how of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation. They appreciate the training and solid education for the children. And we live out these words every day: “We have embarked on an adventure: let's walk it with courage!”

In the parish, our mission has taken on a new dimension with Sister Evelyne as a member of the Youth Commission and Sister Nadine SIKOTI, chaplain to the Catholic school education commission and a member of the Vocations Commission. Our two aspirants, Bénédicte and Victorine, take part in Basic Living Ecclesial Community every Thursday from 5:30 to 7:00 pm.

In Community, as we can't attend the Eucharist every day because of the distance, we share the Gospel every morning from 6:00 to 6:30 followed by Lauds, and every evening except Sunday, Monday and Friday (when we have Mass), we say the Rosary followed by Vespers. Sister Evelyne accompanies the aspirants.

We would like to thank all those who contribute to this mission in the DRC and who support us in this new adventure.

Sister Nadine SIKOTI KASONGO

Two Major Events!

July was an eventful month at the Mother House in BROONS. We, the Sisters of the Sainte Anne Community, were fortunate to live closely with the General Chapter capitulants, who spent 15 days working and reflecting on the future of our Congregation.

On **July 15**, we celebrated the entry into chapter with the calling of each of the capitulants. They were elected by the Sisters of the different entities, and therefore, by all of us. We felt completely involved in this call. The head of each entity came to give Sister Jacqueline JOSSE the report for her entity. This was then placed in front of the altar, where it remained for the duration of the chapter.

The following day, **July 16, a celebration of thanksgiving** for the 100th anniversary of the report of the dissolution decree. Once again, each entity had prepared a text to express its thoughts on these events. The text was accompanied by a symbol.

For the duration of the chapter, each evening we took part in the Eucharist and Vespers prepared by a region: Canada, USA, Congo, Cameroon or France/Belgium. For each of us, this was a great **grace**, but also a **responsibility to pray harder**, so that the Holy Spirit might be at work. We were able to taste the intensity of the work going on alongside us.

We also benefited from the visits we received in our rooms or informally in the corridors, all of which enabled us to get to know each other better. These encounters were marked by **joy** and **serenity**, but also by a certain anxiety about the future.



July 25, the day of **the election of the Superior General**, was an important moment for each of us, starting with the Eucharist presided over by BISHOP MOUTEL, followed by a time of waiting and prayer in the chapel during the election. The announcement by BISHOP MOUTEL of our new Superior General, Sister Thérèse LEMEE, and her welcome by each of the sisters, was also a moment of great emotion. In the days that followed, our prayer became even more intense at the time of the election of the councilors: Sister Adèle ANDELE, Sister Suzanne STAHL, Sister Madeleine LE CLAIRE.

On August 1, the chapter ended with the new general team being sent out on mission.

What an opportunity, what a joy, to be able to experience such intense moments for a religious Congregation!

We give thanks once again!



Another event marked our early autumn. On Wednesday, **October 4, 2023**, we were invited to an **event** at the EHPAD Joachim Fleury (Nursing Home). The event was organized by the Association Directors of the Establishment for the Elderly. Apolitical and independent, this Association (EHPAD) brings together 1,500 structures, both public and private, in 80 departments of France.

For years, the Association has been fighting **for ambitious reforms** and **adequate funding** to support the elderly.

Meanwhile, the difficulties are growing = recruitment of staff difficulties, the impact of inflation, soaring energy prices etc....

“Old people deserve better”

was the slogan of the demonstration. At 3pm, **around 70 of us**, residents, families, staff, volunteers, Sisters, the Board of Directors, the Mayor of BROONS ...



Madame RECOURCE, Director and Mr. Guy DARTOIS, President of the Joachim Fleury Association took the floor to reiterate the difficulties encountered and the importance of our presence.

A photo of the group was sent to the national organizers.

The radiant sunshine, despite the chill in the air, gave this gathering a **convivial air that allowed exchanges to take place**.

Let's hope the government's promises become reality in the near future. The survival of these establishments depends on it.

The Sainte Anne Community
Motherhouse
BROONS

L-R: Mr. Guy DARTOIS,
Madame RECOURCE



Diocesan Day for Pastoral Healthcare

On Thursday, **October 19, 2023**, the Diocesan Manager of Fraternal Presence invited all members of the various services and movements of Pastoral Healthcare to a day of **formation and reflection** on a major theme: **“Reconciling with death.”** Over 100 people responded to the invitation. The three of us took part in this training session, along with a number of members involved in Pastoral Healthcare in DINAN. Each of us is part of the chaplaincy at EHPAD Maurice PEIGNE (Nursing Home). Every Thursday afternoon, there is either a time for visiting the resident rooms, or a time of celebration without a priest, or a Mass once a month.



Throughout the day, led by two speakers from the Catholic Funeral Service, everyone was invited to **take stock** of their own relationship with death, and thus to reconcile themselves with their mortal condition.

Three sessions, each lasting an hour and a half, filled the day. Each of the three sessions took place in the same way:

- **viewing** a presentation by the speaker: 15 minutes
- **work in small groups** of 8: 60 minutes
 - ♦ individual work in silence to answer questions,
 - ♦ time for everyone to speak without being interrupted or questioned,
 - ♦ time for questioning, free reactions and open discussion
- large-group discussion and conclusion: 10 minutes

Sequence content:

Session 1: The denial of death and the place of rituals,

Session 2: The place of death and bereavement in my life,

Session 3: Living faith in the Resurrection.

This training day demanded a great deal of personal involvement on everyone's part, all the more so as we live in a world where death is hidden, and even rejected.

As Etty HILLESUM put it, **“By excluding death from one's life, one deprives oneself of a complete life; by welcoming it, one broadens and enriches one's life.”**

Talking about death doesn't make you die. On the contrary, thinking about it can help us to live better, to live life as it is, unpredictable, precious and fragile. You have to **live now**, to the fullest.

“The question is not whether we will live after death, but whether we will be alive before death,” says Maurice ZUNDEL.

Following in the footsteps of the disciples of Emmaus, we are invited to discover that **God is always present at our side**, whatever the circumstances of our lives. It's up to us to recognize Him!

The three Sisters of LEHON: Madeleine BIGNON, Huguette BECAN, Madeleine KAYE

An Emotional Farewell

After nine years at the diocesan Marian shrine of Notre Dame de Toute Aide (Our Lady of Help) in QUERRIEN, PRENESSAYE, as part of their mission, the Sisters said **goodbye to everyone** before returning to their Congregation.



The farewell Mass on **Friday August 25, 2023** was attended by 400 people. Sisters Yvonne, Monique and Josette, members of the Congregation of Sisters of Mary of the Presentation in BROONS, are today returning to the headquarters of their Congregation for more appropriate missions, mainly in the service of local parishes.

“It was a challenge”

Jean MABUNDI, rector, officiated at the ceremony presided over by the Bishop of SAINT BRIEUC and TREGUIER, Bishop Denis MOUTEL, in the presence of some fifteen priests and deacons, as well as the Superior General of Sisters of Mary of the Presentation.

Sister Yvonne spoke of the close **collaboration** with the Association des Amis (of Friends) of QUERRIEN and the strong commitment of the volunteers. “Our hearts are full of **emotion** because you're all here. Our collaboration has been strong, full of trust and simplicity. Tomorrow, we'll keep all this experience in our hearts. Accepting these missions at the age of 73, **risking** such an adventure nine years ago, was a challenge.”

Sister Yvonne spoke of the three rectors who have succeeded each other at the sanctuary, and the good relations with the two successive mayors, Daniel THOMAS and Isabelle COROUGE.



The Sisters were presented with a number of gifts, including beautiful Haitian glassware from LANDEVENNEC Abbey.

Geneviève, Mathieu and Jade, wearing Jeanne COURTEL's costume, also brought gifts, testifying to the general and unanimous recognition of the assembly.

Article from the newspaper “Le Courrier Indépendant” dated Thursday, August 31, 2023

Back to Pastoral Ministry and Family Ties

On **September 24, 2023**, the LAMBALLE parish kicked off its new pastoral year with a Mass attended by all the Christians of the large parish at the collegiate church of Notre Dame de Grande Puissance, **led by the “Worship Band.”** It was also during this celebration that Father Pierre Emmanuel DORE, the new priest who arrived in LAMBALLE at the beginning of September, was welcomed by Father Laurent LE MEILLEUR, the parish priest. At the **end of the celebration**, a glass of wine was offered to parishioners from LAMBALLE and the surrounding area, as a sign of **fraternity** and **welcome**.



In the afternoon, those who had accepted the parish priest's invitation to attend the parish assembly gathered at the LANDEHEN village hall for a picnic. This assembly brought together all parish members belonging to various groups, or simply parishioners wishing to get together for a time of exchange.

What is the Parish Assembly?

It's a meeting of all those involved in the life of the parish. It is a **forum for proposals**, where the people of God express their needs and wishes. It's a **place to learn** about synodality and co-responsibility, so as to take care of all parishioners, whether regular or occasional. The theme of this meeting was, **“The Colors of My Parish: Knowing, Understanding and Acting Together.”**

The parish wished to experience a time of exchange, encounter and discovery. The objectives of this assembly were above all to **create links** between parishioners, to get to **know** and **understand** each other's mission, and to build on individual talents. Many parishioners responded to this invitation.

After a picnic that gave everyone a chance to get to know each other, we were invited to sit down at tables of 10, according to the color of the five essentials of Christian life that everyone had chosen. This parish assembly was intended to be a gathering where participants were invited to **question their place in the Church** as baptized Christians. The five essentials were the guiding principle. The idea was to prepare for the future of the parish.



Some reactions to the five essentials:

Prayer: This is what constitutes our heart-to-heart with God, alone or in a group. Standing in His presence, celebrating Him, giving thanks, interceding through parish liturgies, but also through the time we spend daily with God, with His Word, in the secret of our hearts.

Fraternity: It's about loving your neighbor, welcoming and supporting one another. Fraternal life is a true sign of Christian vitality. It takes us out of ourselves, brings joy, draws us to Christ and delights the hearts of those who seek God. This fraternity fosters integration into the community.

Formation: Means growing, continuing the conversion of our hearts, developing our understanding of the faith, discerning and cultivating our talents and charisms, putting them at the service of others by immersing ourselves ever more deeply in the Mystery of God. This is the key to maturing in my Faith as an adult. This helps me to be assertive and fruitful one, so that we can pass it on to others.



Service: This means getting involved in the Christian community to help its vitality and fruitfulness, discerning charisms, encouraging as many people as possible to take on responsibility, and calling on them to get involved. The Christian community organizes itself to effectively accomplish its internal and external mission.

Evangelization: Proclaiming Jesus Christ, who died and rose for us (the kerygma), to those who don't know him, leading them to him, helping them discover the love of Jesus.

The aim was also to remind each other that the Church and the parish need each other. Everyone has something to say, something to contribute to the mission and evangelization.

After sharing, the evening ended with a **friendly drink**, and everyone was delighted with this time of **sharing** and **conviviality**.

ANOTHER EVENT: “La Cousinade à la mode de Bretagne” (Brittany Style Family Ties)

This second edition returns to the Ville Davy in QUESSOY. It was initiated by Pastorale des Familles in the wake of the COVID crisis. Today, as in the past, “La cousinade” responds to the need to maintain family ties. The large family of the Catholic Church in Côtes d'Armor is eager to reunite after the first wonderful gathering two years ago.

More than a thousand people were on hand on Saturday, October 7, 2023 for meetings, games and talks. It was an event not to be missed. It was also an opportunity to get together in all simplicity. From noon onwards, those who wished were invited to start the afternoon with a picnic. It was a time for exchanging, sharing and conviviality.

The afternoon was structured around several themes:

- Artistic creation in the service of liturgy
- “I was in prison, and you came to me.”
- Sportsmen and walkers; how the body in movement brings us closer to God
- Zélie and Louis Martin, praying as parents and as a couple
- “I was hungry and you gave me food.”
- Nature at the service of life
- Start, fail, bounce back with 60,000 bounces!
- “I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.”
- Protect, deliver, heal: the service of exorcism
- “I was sick, and you visited me.”



The afternoon also featured a number of workshops:

Let's get moving:

- How the body in motion brings us closer to God
- Inflatable structures (up to 12 years)
- Circus acrobatics (open to all, no age limit)
- Bubble Foot (from age 7)
- Climbing (from age 10)
- Solidarity Games

Opportunities to be creative:

- Floral art
- Wood workshop with La Cabane d'Amélie

Relaxation:

- Refreshment bar (open to all)
- Quizz Chrétien en Marche - KTO (open to all)
- Spoken chorus (teens, adults)
- Self-esteem and self-awareness workshop (ages 8 and up, teens, adults)
- Discovering the Saints of the Valley (open to all)
- Board games (ages 8 and up, teens, adults)

Booths were available for all, hot drinks, coffee and crêpes. It was run by volunteers who were delightful- both young and old, in exchange for a ticket: a local currency created especially for the occasion, which everyone took care to exchange with the volunteers. One ticket was equivalent to one euro.

Spiritual moments were also offered, such as Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and meditation on the Rosary. A time of worship before Mass gave everyone a chance to relax before the start of the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Bishop Denis MOUTEL and concelebrated by several priests from the diocese and a number of deacons. The day ended with a party and barbecues for the brave.

Lamballe community
Sisters Solange MATCHA, Monique BRIAN, Marie Therese LENOUVEL



More Events

It was a new experience for our community, but the arrival of Sister Huguette and a welcoming car-pooling scheme emboldened us and pushed us all the way to QUESSOY on the afternoon of October 7!

It's a day of celebration that aims to bring together the whole diocese of SAINT-BRIEUC as one family, happy to be together!

It was a beautiful day on the marvelous Ville Davy site, enhanced by the radiant sunshine! An impressive day for the scale of the gathering.

The organizers left no one out! From the youngest to the oldest, including people with disabilities, everyone was able to find something to learn, have fun, share with others, marvel at, and even a tent to pray and celebrate!

The day ended with a solemn and warm Eucharist.

All these moments of reunion, fraternity, happiness, we felt emotionally and with great satisfaction. **To go out, to participate, to be there, is already to speak of the One who dwells within us.**



Sister Madeleine BIGNON and Sister Huguette BECAN of LEHON



My trip to Lourdes

Bizarrely, I didn't imagine LOURDES to be like this! I imagined it as a place of prayer and spirituality based on faith alone.

So I decided to see LOURDES in my own way.



I arrived at the Cité Saint Pierre, and the first thing I saw was the mountains - nothing more wonderful for me! It reminded me of my travels with my parents when I was younger. **Cité Saint Pierre** is a place for me **to meditate, to look, to feel something**; I haven't felt for many years: calm and the ability to breathe without stopping. I discovered this place as my stay with the Prison team progressed. The volunteers were very kind, and to be able to eat surrounded by so many people feels really good!

I loved the **fraternal evening** which, I must admit, made me feel more at ease the very next day.

The day after we arrived, I got to see the **film about Bernadette**; for me, I didn't even know a quarter of her story. And from there, I thought, this is what I have to **discover and experience**!

I absolutely loved **following in Bernadette's footsteps**. How could I not be touched by the places where she lived, like the mill, the dungeon, the sheepfold and the grotto!

I have to admit that I really enjoyed Benoît's visit to the Cité Saint Pierre. I don't even know if he could see how **standing in front of the grotto** could have changed my face. Even if my questions were there too. But nothing could be more magnificent than the grotto with Bernadette **at the foot of the Virgin and the spring** beside her! I think that moment will stay with me for the rest of my life. Arriving to place a candle was quite something: so much light, candles and love, it was a magical place.



The **“underground” Mass** was a must-see, even if at first, I wasn't too sure about going, but seeing so many priests and so many people, I was speechless! It moved me too.

I remember the flowers at the foot of the altar. And these paintings with their indications were very pretty and fortunately Michelle helped me with her explanations, because I confess, I'm slightly curious.

The **trip to BARTRES** was very tiring for my knee, but I had the strength to go where Ricardo (the animator at Cité Saint Pierre) had to take us to the sheepfold. You could just imagine Bernadette with her sheep and all those words left by all sorts of people, it was a place to get chills! The church was so beautiful, it was hard not to remember!



The **torchlight procession** through the underground basilica (because of the rain and storm) was a **great experience**. I think the procession outside must have been even more incredible.

I want to thank you again for allowing me to **meet** my little **Sister Marie-Christel**. We both really wanted to see each other. I felt like we were two little girls, and talking to her did me a world of good! Thanks again for this moment.



Ah, **the Basilica** with Sister Michelle and Nicole after my visit with my little Sister was extraordinary: the mosaics and the fifteen chapels decorated with precious mosaics left me speechless. I remember the mosaic of **“By Mary to Jesus.”** I felt as if I were surrounded by her arms.

The Path of Peace with Ricardo (animator at Cité Saint Pierre) was a magical moment. Like Benoît, Ricardo made me cry, laugh and see the reality of life. That will always stay with me.

How could I not add to all that: **the Pic du JER!** What a magnificent view for us there. I was able to see eagles, see Lourdes from up high and feel as high up as possible - it was a dream come true, thanks to you.

The restaurant on the way back was top-notch. I felt right at home with everyone. Thanks to Jacques and Michelle for the last coffee at Arc-en-Ciel.

Isabelle, prisoner in Rennes
Accompanied by Sister Michelle VILOCET

In Memory of a Renaissance (continued)

The premises of the Mother House were left empty, apart from the infirmary for the sick Sisters, but they soon came back to life. Indeed, as soon as war was declared **on August 2, 1914, Mother Sainte Thérèse**, led by her patriotism, went to RENNES to meet General MARION, commander of the Xth Military Region, and proposed the **cooperation of nuns as nurses and aides, for the service of wounded or sick soldiers**. Mother General added that she would accept any position, but that her preference for these services would be in BROONS, at the Mother House. There the vast premises were empty, the sisters having been driven out on June 9, 1914. General MARION warmly thanked the Mother General, and immediately sent a letter of recommendation to the Director of the Regional Health Service. The return of the Sisters to BROONS, to the community, would contravene the law, a point that the Service of Housing was quick to point out. Disregarding these protests and insisting vigorously to the Prefect, General MARION and the Service of Military Health won the case, and the **complementary hospital was opened to the BROONS community**: questions relating to the Service of Housing was postponed by the Prefect, who passed all responsibility back to the Service of Military Authority.

Immediately, Mother Sainte Thérèse launched appeals to the Sister nurses, aides and other Sisters residing in GUERNESEY and BELGIUM. Without delay, **Military Hospital 42 in BROONS was organized**, with two doctors, a surgeon, pharmacists, nurses and nursing sisters. Other Sisters of Sainte Marie helped with reception, secretarial work, meal service and laundry. Thirty-four Sisters were employed at Hospital 42, which could accommodate almost five hundred wounded or sick. The people of BROONS and the surrounding area helped to prepare rooms and dormitories, and supplied blankets and clothing to supplement the blankets and linen already on site, some of which had been received from the U.S. The military hospital was ready to go!

On the night of **September 11, 1914**, the Mayor of BROONS received a dispatch announcing the **arrival of 120 wounded** at the BROONS railway station. He immediately appealed to his constituents and those of neighboring towns to help transport the wounded. Ambulances were reserved for those most in need. The people of BROONS and beyond responded generously to this appeal. At Hospital 42, doctors, nurses, nursing sisters and aides were hard at work, preparing the necessary supplies. At the sight of all these personnel, **a ray of light illuminated the faces of the wounded youngsters**. They were mostly Frenchmen suffering from the hard fighting in and around AMIENS, and Belgians scarred by the “carnage” of CHARLEROI and the bombardment of LIEGE's “Forts,” a fact which was not lost in our schools in Wallonia, due to the constant presence of demanding enemy soldiers.

In the following weeks, **300 Russians with various injuries arrive** at Hospital 42, covered in mud and ragged clothes. We tried **to understand each other by gestures**, as there was not always an interpreter on hand. All were treated with the same attention. They suffered from their injuries, but also from the lack of news from their families. Some had no means of support other than the discreet offerings of sympathetic visitors. A few people, even families, visited regularly, spoiling them with treats and fruit. **Ladies also offered to volunteer as caretakers**. Later, **frostbitten** feet, **bronchitis** sufferers and, above all, **tuberculosis** sufferers (870) arrived, many of them scarred by their long stay in the trenches. Suffering and disappointment, despite assiduous care, made them more demanding and sadder,

especially when the illness persisted. After six months in the trenches, tuberculosis sufferers are sent to a place more suited to their needs. After their departure, their area was thoroughly disinfected. Later, typhoid and nervous patients would occupy part of Hospital 42. The last months of the war brought mostly French wounded - the most numerous - and Allies from the heavy, final battles before the Armistice! How happy the wounded man was to be able to sit up on his own after an operation, ready to return to the front! During their convalescence, some of them render invaluable services to their bedridden colleagues! **While in the hospital, many soldiers took part in chapel prayers.** Some visitors accompanied the dying when the family could not be present.

Before the Supplementary Hospital 42 was closed, General MARION wished to express his deep gratitude to the nursing Sisters in particular, and to all the Sisters as a whole, for the **devoted care** they had regularly lavished on wounded and sick soldiers during the four years of the war. On **October 24, 1918**, General MARION, accompanied by Commandant DESTOUCHES, organized a ceremony to award "Epidemic Medals" to 16 nursing sisters from the BROONS community. The ceremony took place in the Cour d'Honneur, in the presence of the Institute's Superiors, local dignitaries, wounded soldiers and a large crowd of people who had come to express their deep gratitude to all the Sisters. Sister Pacifique FERCOP, a nurse in the tuberculosis ward who died in 1917, was honored posthumously. General MARION's thanks were joined by those of the Director of the Health Service, Doctor DUMONT: his letter was **full of praise for the nurses and the Congregation.**

When the Armistice was signed, there were still soldiers at the 42 Supplementary Hospital. Lastly, the hospital was used to treat malaria sufferers from the Allied Forces at the THESSALONIQUE base. It was not until **August 19, 1919**, that the doors of Hospital 42 were closed, where **9674 soldiers had been received and cared for.** The Estates Department and the Registration Inspector had already asked the Military Service to be removed from the community buildings. The response was swift: the Director of Military Health replied: "That it was not his place to use an odious and anti-French measure against people who had well deserved the fatherland and humanity."

A place from this period is honored in BROONS: the military plot of **soldiers who died at Hospital 42** and are buried in BROONS. This square is under the protection of the French Historic Service civic community of Broons.

Sisters of Saint Mary of the Presentation at the service of other military hospitals

As early as **September 1914**, 9 Sisters of the Congregation presented themselves to the Prefecture of SAINT-BRIEUC, **offering themselves as nurses to meet the needs of the war.** A section of the Prefecture building was transformed into a temporary hospital, with 2 doctors, a surgeon, nursing Sisters and ladies to assist the military nurses. By the end of September, around thirty wounded were arriving, some of them seriously injured: fractures, and typhoid fever. When the Préfecture hospital closed, other hospitalization sites were entrusted to our nursing Sisters: the Complementary Hospital 100 in Sainte Anne de ROBIEN, the HC17and18 in PLANCOËT, and the HC La Victoire in DINAN, where nursing sisters from our Congregation were present for several months.

Outside Brittany, some military hospitals had also benefited from the help of nurses from our Congregation, especially in places already known to the Sisters, for example: HC4 in AMIENS, HC7 in REIMS, and other hospitals such as PARNY and BINSON. **With the same charity, the Sisters cared for** all wounded soldiers, whether friend or foe.

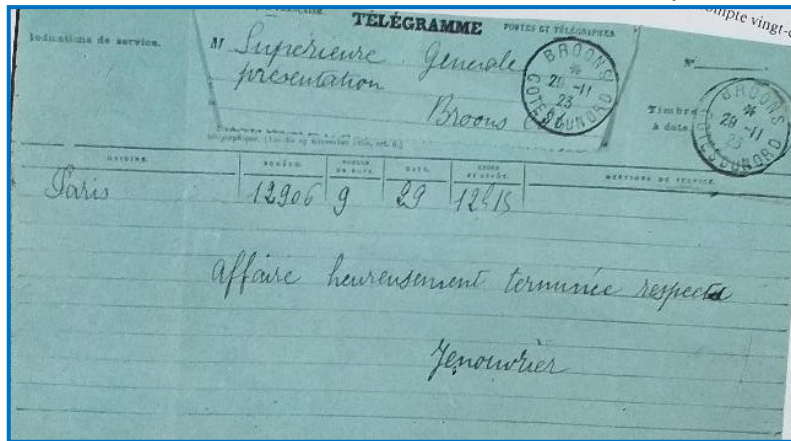
Report on the Decree of Dissolution of 1914 and the rebirth of the Congregation

With the Armistice signed and Hospital 42 closed at the end of May 1920, the memory of the excellent services rendered by the Sisters during the war remained, as did the community's uncomfortable situation given the Institute's official status quo. The winds of persecution were not without shaking some wills. Should we lock ourselves into an attitude of resigned passivity? No! the encouragement of Father ALLO, the fact that 10 young people have entered the novitiate, the commitment of 16 novices, and the development of works in the UNITED STATES where some one hundred Sisters of Saint Mary are active. In QUEBEC, a community had just opened, and in BELGIUM, after the troubles of the war, communities and schools were being revived and developed. Aren't these revivals a sign of things to come? But we'd have to return to the way things used to be, and above all, in terms of safety! However, it seems that the solution advocated by certain politicians contacted, with a view to restoring the Congregation to its former glory, could be summed up as follows in a single request for official recognition, but this solution would not entail the recovery of the previous assets. On the advice of Monseigneur DUBOURG, Mother Générale contacted Monsieur JENOUVRIER, Vice-President of the French Senate. Mother Sainte Thérèse's plea touched the eminent Senator deeply, and the task would be a difficult one. A certain leaven of sectarianism was still fermenting in the administrations. Monsieur JENOUVRIER addressed his first petition to Monsieur MAUNOURY, Minister of the Interior. His courteous reply was dismissive. However, Mr. MAUNOURY assures us: "I remain fully prepared to submit to Parliament a bill reauthorizing the Congregation's status prior to the liquidation of its assets, while highlighting the services rendered by the Sisters during the 14-18 war." It was on June 16, 1922, that Mr. JENOUVRIER deemed it appropriate to make the supreme assault. He suggested providing a very detailed report on everything the Sisters had done during the war at Hospital 42 and in the various hospitals in the department, or in military hospitals elsewhere in FRANCE. Given the number of establishments run by the Congregation in various parts of France, the government asked the Prefecture for details. Under pressure from our defender Mr. JENOUVRIER and the Minister of the Interior, the various official bodies provide documents and supporting evidence. The opinion of the BROONS Municipal Council is sought. All but one council member signed in favor of the Congregation. The Prefecture gave a favorable review of the service provided by the BROONS Sisters. On November 24, 1922, the Sub-Prefect of DINAN summoned the Superiors of the Congregation to inform them that their case was nearing completion. The year 1923 began auspiciously. But we had to wait! Monsieur JENOUVRIER maintains confidence! Postulants and novices return from GUERNESEY. The expected news is confirmed: on November 29, 1923, by a letter from the Director of the Cabinet of the President of the Republic to Senator JENOUVRIER, who immediately sends a telegram to BROONS with the following message: "the case is happily won." The decree report was signed by the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Finance, and sent to the President of the Republic. The text was published in the Journal Officiel on December 8, 1923. The President of the French Republic, on the report of the Minister of the Interior, decrees: Art. 1: The decree of January 31, 1914 pronouncing the dissolution of the Congregation of Sisters of Mary of the Presentation of BROONS is hereby rescinded insofar as it rescinds the ordinance of March 30, 1839 which authorized it in BROONS. Done in Paris, November 29, 1923. To Millerand:

"After years of mourning, the Congregation has regained its independence and its rights. At the Mother House, at the announcement of this news, people explode with joy! By telephone or telegram, the communities and friends of the Congregation were informed. In an outpouring of generosity, a triduum of thanksgiving was organized. Once the news had spread, from near and far, there was an

outpouring of sympathy and congratulations for persevering in the fight. **What good news! It's finally here!"**

On **December 9 1923**, Monsieur SALIOU, mayor of BROONS, sent his congratulations along with the text sent to him by the Under Prefect.



The decree stipulates that the Congregation will confine itself to its hospital function, as limited by the clause of July 21, 1913. On **December 13, 1923**, the Direction of the Enregistrement informed Mother Général that all the necessary steps had been taken to prepare **"the account to be rendered to the Congregation."** Matters would drag on, but the Land Registry would be the first to pay

tribute to the conciliatory spirit and patience of those in charge of our Institute. As quickly as possible, the interior of the Mother House was refurbished: workers and Sisters competed with each other in their ardor and skill of the restoration work. The damage to the Mother House is nothing compared to that suffered by certain branch houses, "which you can't see without a twinge of sadness, happy to find ruins." We're content with restitution! The "return of furniture" from GUERNESEY to SAINT MALO is gradually taking place. Some areas of the Mother House are gradually being returned to their former glory, while others are being completely restored. This external rejuvenation is just one aspect of its renewed vitality. Soon, plans were afoot to **reopen the hospice. A Final Vow ceremony for 23 young Sisters** is a great comfort to the religious family. A number of communities included: a nursing home, a Children's Welfare Home, and a home for the elderly. The restoration of these services has been slow in coming, and the Estates Department will be the first to pay tribute to the patience of those in charge of the Institute. In fact, the handover of the remaining buildings to the Congregation was not completed until June 1926.

Sister Marie-Louise LEZIART

Associates' Meeting

The General Chapter of the Congregation took place in BROONS from July 15 to August 1, 2023, bringing together Sister delegates by their French, American, Canadian and Cameroonian communities.

A clear and precise Vision Statement was drawn up for a six-year period. The Sisters have honored us by inviting us to **read** and **discuss it**, as we are Associated with their spirituality and mission.



On the morning of **November 8, 2023**, after a warm welcome and Mass, we gathered as a working group. We were 12 lay people and three Sisters. We read the Vision Statement and discussed it together.



After a convivial lunch where we were delighted to meet up with the other Sisters, we got back to work in small groups to **share** our views on this statement. We had the joy of discovering just how much this orientation means to us, and how much it can give **meaning and direction to our lives**. We share the same charisms.

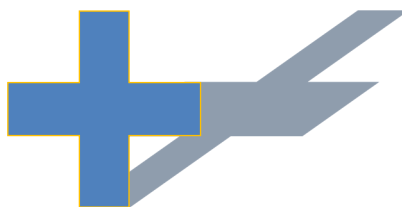
Here are the **fundamental points** that unite us:

- ◆ Letting ourselves be enveloped by **God's love**.
- ◆ Nurturing our **faith** through personal and community prayer and sacramental life.
- ◆ Letting ourselves be guided and enlightened by the **Holy Spirit**: reaching out to others, dialoguing, communicating honestly and truthfully.
- ◆ Accepting differences, seeing the richness in others.
- ◆ Preserving our equilibrium, **by being accompanied** by competent people on a physical, psychological and spiritual level.
- ◆ Being faithful to our **baptism**, discovering our personal **mission** little by little as we go through life, with our talents and limitations.
- ◆ Following in **Jesus'** footsteps, trying to make Him known to those around you, not by proselytizing, but "by attraction" as Pope Francis tells us.
- ◆ Living the joy of the **Gospel**.
- ◆ Following in the footsteps of Saint Vincent de Paul, being **attentive** to the suffering of the little ones, the poor, and "serve first those who suffer most," as Abbé Pierre says.
- ◆ Remaining **open** to the world's problems.

After this work, we returned to the chapel to sing Vespers. We prayed for many intentions. As we sang the Magnificat, we turned to **Mary**. She shows **us the way** to her Son Jesus, putting us in a dynamism of trust and hope.

It was a day full of encounters and exchanges. The Holy Spirit was there with us, filling us with joy, peace and serenity. We are part of a long chain of Christians, enlightened by past generations, proposing changes to pass on to future generations: this is the communion of saints. "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10

Annick MOISAN, Associate



Our Prayer Intentions

UNITED STATES:

June 2023 - Mr. Keith HOULE, brother of Sister Sharon HOULE

FRANCE:

July 2023 - Mr. Francis MORIN, brother of Sister Marie MORIN
 September 2023 - Mr. Victor HARDY, brother-in-law of Sister Simone PINCEPOCHE
 October 2023 - Mrs. Marie BOIVANT, Associate
 November 2023 - Mr. Marcel LAOT, brother of Sister Marie-Claire LAOT
 - Mrs. GALICHET, mother of Gilles GALICHET, Associate
 - Mr. Raymond AUBRY, brother of Sister Geneviève AUBRY
 December 2023 - Mrs. Jeannette FILY, sister-in-law of Sisters Monique and Marie-Thérèse FILY
 - Mr. Jean-Claude PELHÂTE, brother of Sister Marie-Thérèse PELHÂTE

CONGO:

July 2023 - Mr. Alfred NTAMBWE MASHINDA, brother-in-law of Sister Nadine SIKOTI

CAMEROON:

August 2023 - Mr. Yves PENGÉ, brother-in-law of Sister Marguerite LAPWEBE
 - Mr. Gabriel BOUBA BONAÏ, father of Sister Natalie PRATANG
 November 2023 - Mrs. Lucie MASOKA, sister of Sister Brigitte MASOKA

CANADA:

August 2023 - Mrs. Gisèle FORTIN, sister-in-law of Sister Thérèse CLAVEAU
 - Mrs. Marguerite HARVEY, sister of Sister Fernande HARVEY

TO THE FATHERS HOUSE

Sister Hélène Marguerite (Marie BOUGAULT) 1927 - 2023



“The greatness of a man or a woman is not measured from head to toe, but from head to heart,” this quote was often repeated by Sister Hélène. And yes, her heart, her kindness and her love for the little ones was great.

Sister Hélène Marguerite was born on August 5, 1927 in PLUMAUGAT into a family of 7 children.

She entered the postulancy on August 14, 1944 and the novitiate on August 30 the following year.

Her religious profession took place on August 31, 1946. She studied for a year before stopping due to illness.

On July 3, 1948, she began her professional life as secretary and bursar at the Clinique Sainte Thérèse in SAINT BRIEUC, where she remained until 1974. During these years, she exercised many responsibilities and was greatly appreciated by the doctors and staff, who still have fond memories of her. Sister Hélène Marguerite welcomed many young Sisters into her community, many of whom were new to religious life. With finesse, she knew how to accompany them in this important stage of their religious and professional life.

From 1974 to 1985, she was Provincial Councilor and Secretary, first at LAMBALLE and then at the provincial house in BROONS. She remained technical secretary until 2000, while still being part of the provincial community.

From 2000 to 2013, Sister Hélène served the senior Sisters at the Notre Dame community, where she witnessed major changes. She acted as secretary to Monsieur TARTIVEL, director of the retirement home. With a team, she took part in the elaboration of our magazine “Info Comm’.” She gave her all to help the Sisters live this stage of their lives as serenely as possible.

Very close to the little ones, she founded “Les Amis de Notre Dame (The Friends of Our Lady).” Together with Sister Simone PINCEPOCHE, she was very active. They organized meetings for reflection and prayer, as well as social gatherings for isolated or handicapped people.

Becoming more tired, Sister Hélène joined the PERROS GUIREC community in August 2013, where she took rest after a busy life. Reading the newspaper and sharing what she learned were her occupation.

In need of more help, Sister Hélène Marguerite entered EHPAD in BROONS in June 2018. Her mission continued with prayer, reading, visiting the Sisters and great fidelity to community life.

During these long years, Sister Hélène marked us all with her sense of humor, her excellent memory and the way she so happily recounted the many stories in her repertoire, adding a little extra detail each time.

Faithfully visiting her regularly, both in PERROS GUIREC and in BROONS, her brother Raymond came with his 2 daughters on August 5 for her birthday. There was a great complicity between them. It was a great joy for her, even if she was getting tired.

As her strength waned, Sister Hélène Marguerite had to be hospitalized on Sunday, September 3, following a stroke. On Monday 4th, she returned to the EHPAD to spend her last days with the Sisters.

While we were in QUERRIEN, September 10, we celebrated the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. At that time Sister Hélène joined her Lord whom she had served throughout her life.

Goodbye, Sister Hélène. We know you won't forget your Congregation, your family or your friends. We too will keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

TO THE FATHERS HOUSE

Sister Gisèle PELHATE

1933 – 2023



Sister Gisèle was born on April 1, 1933 in BOISTRUDAN, Ille and Vilaine. Her parents, farmers, gave birth to 8 children, 3 boys and 5 girls. Four of them consecrated their lives to the Lord.

On November 12, 1951, she entered the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation in BROONS, where she already had two aunts. She took the habit on August 25, 1952, and made her religious profession August 30, 1953.

September of 1953, Sister Gisèle taught at the Collège Notre Dame d'Espérance in BROONS. At the end of 6 years of teaching, very tired, she had to take a rest and left for GUERNESEY, where she was welcomed by the community.

After this period of rest, Sister Gisèle resumed teaching at the primary school in PLEDELIAC. In 1964, she taught at the SAINT NICOLAS DU PELEM secondary school, followed in 1969 by the BROONS secondary school, where she remained headmistress until 1976.

Sister Gisèle loved teaching and young people, and regularly organized outings and camps for them during the school vacations.

After these years of teaching and a spell in the Institut Lemonnier community in CAEN, in 1978, Sister Gisèle requested and obtained a leave of absence to live on her own in JUGON LES LACS. There, she cleaned houses and visited elderly people and those in difficulty. She was also involved in catechetics at the parish level. For a time, she was part of the community of the Centre Sainte Marie and worked as a receptionist at the Mother House. In 1981, Sister Gisèle joined the MEGRIT community and worked part-time at Notre Dame in BROONS.

At her request, she lived at the JUGON LES LACS retirement home.

As her health became more precarious, she decided to move to the Mother House. On April 16, 2007, Sister Gisèle was admitted to the EHPAD Joachim Fleury in BROONS.

She was a member of the Sainte Anne community. Bedridden or in her wheelchair, it was difficult for her to be present at all community activities, but whenever possible, the Sisters took her to the solarium, where she prayed the rosary in community with the Lourdes pilgrims. In February, she was able to experience the sacrament of the sick with the other residents in the chapel. On birthdays, Sister Gisèle took part in the festivities in her own way, and was sometimes present.

For several months, her health had been deteriorating, and on several occasions, we thought she was going to leave us. On Saturday morning, October 21, she joined the Lord whom she had served all her life. Her sister, Solange, visited her regularly, as did a number of nephews and nieces.

Goodbye Sister Gisèle. We know you won't forget your Congregation or your family. We too will keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

Testimonials from Sister Gisèle's nieces and nephews

Aunt Gisèle,

You were a ray of sunshine in my childhood and youth at BOISTRUDAN. You were cheerful, caring and kind. The lessons in conjugation and spelling, the trips to the LA GUERCHE market with Mum, in your Diane and sometimes with Auntie Madeleine in her 2 CV, your sonorous laugh, your birthday postcards... the happy memories are many...

Today, my thoughts also turn to NOTRE DAME DU LAUS, this little Marian sanctuary nestled in the Hautes Alpes where you found a wonderful place to recharge your batteries for many years. You used to go there on summer pilgrimages, even helping out in the sanctuary's guesthouse during your first stays.

Your enthusiasm was such that you took me and a friend on board. It was one of my first summer jobs away from home. Ah, you're Sister Gisèle's niece!" I heard others say over and over again. Your reputation greatly facilitated my integration into the team of permanent and seasonal staff, as well as among the faithful pilgrims. Everyone liked you. I have to admit, at first I felt a bit pressured.

To everyone, you were simple, straightforward, down-to-earth and always kind. For us young people, the shepherdess of LAUS, Benoite RENCUREL and her message of reconciliation could not have had a better ambassador.

Dear Aunt Gisèle,

You've left us after a long and respectful journey of the cross. In your last months of suffering, I remember 2 special moments:

- That moment when, not knowing if you could still feel our presence, I asked you to shake my hand if you could hear us, and then I felt your fingers squeeze my hand. What emotions! We could talk to you, play you music, you were still present with us!

-And then that afternoon in July, when we took you out in a wheelchair with Aunt Solange to walk in the park and enjoy the beauty of the flowers, you who loved nature so much. We could feel your serenity. It was a touching, timeless moment.

Dear Aunt Gisèle,

I'll always remember your joy of life, your sparkling eyes, your mischievous, laughing spirit and your infectious enthusiasm.

You were always there for each of your nieces and nephews, through the good times and the hard times, always available, always ready to help. Sharing and family had a deep meaning for you.

You told me on several occasions that every time you walked or drove past a Calvary, you would find yourself reciting or singing an "Our Father", and that it made you happy. From now on, I'll make this habit my own, in your memory.

What you have sown in others will flourish!...

Thank you for having existed, Aunt Gisèle.

Thank you for having been what you were, before illness froze you. Thank you for having been joyful, generous, attentive, supportive and caring to us, your nephews and nieces. These words come to mind when we think of you.

Some remember, for example, your helping hands as an English teacher on trips to England. Others will always remember your presence at major family events.

You were a good, wonderful aunt who combined generosity with cheerfulness.

We all enjoyed meeting you. It was always an event when you visited our families. Everyone had the right to a little word, often tinged with the singular humor that characterized you. You had a way with words. Your blue eyes sparkled. Good words waltzed. The retorts flowed...

You were available to us, despite your own worries and questions. You had them, of course.

But you forgot all about them when you returned to your native BOISTRUDAN to see your dear parents. That's where you used to recharge your batteries, first with your sister Madeleine, then on your own. You loved walking in the countryside to soothe the inner turmoil that drove you, but also probably undermined you.

You were an original, almost atypical nun. Exemplary, without a doubt. And you were the smiling face of the Church.

Your final years of suffering and immobility should not make us forget the Aunt Gisèle of our childhood and adolescence. You helped us grow in your own way. Nor can we forget your welcome - many years later - at the traditional family picnic at your home in Jugon-les-Lacs and at the company where you worked. You were so happy to welcome us all and show us around your workplace.

We mourn you today. We also express our deepest gratitude. You will remain forever in our hearts. We will carry your memory with us.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the community of Sisters in Broons who took such good care of you. We knew you were in good hands. And we were able to verify this during our visits when we were warmly welcomed.

Yes, thank you, Aunt Gisèle, for having existed. Thank you very much indeed. Rest in peace.

TO THE FATHERS HOUSE

Sister Félicité MUSUBAO KASOKI

1980-2023



Daughter of the late MUSUBAO SAKOMBI EVARISTE and KYAKIMWA PASCALINE, Sister Félicité MUSUBAO KASOKI was born on October 09, 1980 in Béni KITABAMBA (Democratic Republic of Congo near Kinshasa).

The eldest of a family of 8 children, including 3 girls and 5 boys, Félicité received her primary and secondary education in North Kivu and Kinshasa respectively, where she obtained a state diploma, graduating from high school in 1999.

That same year, she was admitted to the postulancy of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation, arriving in BATOURI in October to begin her formation on December 27, 1999.

She entered the novitiate on October 21, 2000, made her first religious profession on December 29, 2002 and her perpetual vows on December 27, 2009.

From 2002 to 2006, she taught at the Saint Martin de BATOURI pre-school.

From 2006 to 2009, she studied at the Institute of Theology and Pastoral Care for Religious.

From 2009 to 2010: She studied liturgy at the Saint-Cyprien School of Theology in NGOYA.

Back in BATOURI, she was in charge of the Foyer (home for young women) between 2010 and 2017, Regional Councilor from 2015 to 2017, then Interim Novice Mistress from 2017 to 2018.

Sister Félicité fell ill May 2018 and was sent to YAOUNDE and then to DOUALA for her care. She was snatched from life in YAOUNDE on the evening of November 18, 2023.

Sister Félicité: we knew you to be always smiling, fun-loving, dynamic, very alert and enduring in service. You were full of life and good will. As we mourn you, we thank you so much for what you were to us all and for all your service to the Congregation. Thanks also to your family, who agreed to let you join our religious family, and to your mother, Mama KYAKIMWA PASCALINE, who remained in CONGO with your brothers for health reasons.

May the Lord open to you the gates of his Kingdom of eternal life!

A JESUS PAR MARIE



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