



Sagesse Internationale

“I thank my God for you every time I think of you; and every time I pray for you all, I pray with joy”

Philippians 1:3-4

Dear Sisters,

In the month of June, we will be celebrating 300 years of the arrival of Mother Marie-Louise at St. Laurent-sur-Sèvre. What makes this day very special to us Daughters of Wisdom and the Montfortian Family at large? Why do we recall this event that was marked by extreme poverty and hardship where Marie-Louise struggled to establish the Mother House?

Marie-Louise in her constant search for Wisdom opened her heart and mind and let herself be guided by the Spirit. She heard Wisdom’s invitation through various persons and events and was attentive to discern where Wisdom was leading her.


At a very important stage of her life not knowing where to go and what to do but in deep faith believing the words of Montfort that one day she will be the head of an institution, Marie-Louise listened to the advice of M. Jacques Goudeau, in charge of the chapel at Montbernage, to go to St Laurent to establish the mother house. **“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”** (Jn 12:24). Is it not that she was led to the resting place of Montfort, as the grain that died to produce much fruit? Yes, the grain that was planted in this soil began to grow and spread revealing Wisdom’s love for humanity.

Looking back to the three hundred years of our journey as Daughters of Wisdom, we can see that the identity of the Daughters of Wisdom has been marked by a simple life style, suffering, death, poverty, incertitude, yet there is always a constant search to make known the Love of Christ Wisdom wherever we are present. These stories of our journey have been told and retold. For many of us, visiting the Mother-

House, has always been an experience of joy with a deep sense of rootedness in living the last will and testament of Mother Marie-Louise who asked her Daughters to never deviate from the primitive spirit of our Founder.

On this very special occasion it is with deep gratitude that we dedicate this issue of *Sagesse Internationale* to our older members of the Congregation who are the living presence of Mother Marie-Louise and who pass on the heritage they received to the coming generations.

I conclude with the words of Pope Francis¹ “There are many people who need you and await you. People in need of your friendly smile to give hope back to them; of your hands to support them on their journey; of your words to sow hope in their hearts; of your love in the style of Jesus to heal the deepest wounds caused by loneliness, rejection and exclusion. Never give in to the temptation of self-referentiality, of transforming yourself into “closed armies”. Nor take refuge in work in order to avoid the operative capacity of the charism. Instead develop creativity of charity and experience creative fidelity to your charism.”



Sr. Rani Kurian DW
Congregational Leader

¹UISG Bulletin Number 169,2019 Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to participants at the 21 plenary assembly of the international union of Superior General (UISG)

Woman of Courage



Each year, UNANIMA International awards the international “Woman of Courage” prize to a woman who has demonstrated leadership, courage, ingenuity, willpower for a better promotion of women’s rights. For 2019, the General Council chose to present the candidacy of one of our Sisters for that award through the mission entrusted to Sr. Séraphine Ratavy of the Madagascar Province, who was sent to Papua New Guinea.

One month before the Council of Congregation, we were happy to learn that the UNANIMA International Office had decided to present the award to our Sister. What a golden opportunity since Sr. Jean Quinn, Executive Directress of UNANIMA International for 3 years, was invited to the Council of Congregation in Madagascar for a half-day presentation of her work. What a beautiful celebration we had on November 21, 2019, when Sr. Séraphine received from Sr. Jean Quinn the “Woman of Courage” award represented by a blue flame.

Here are some elements of the mission entrusted to Sr. Séraphine that prompted the General Council to present her candidacy. As she arrived in PNG, the Daughters of Wisdom were opening a new mission in Nomad, the most remote place of the Kiunga diocese, only accessible by small bush planes without regular connections. Sr. Séraphine was sent there upon her arrival.

The Daughters of Wisdom, including Sr. Séraphine, having travelled thousands of kilometers and having to learn English and the local language, joined the small Gebusi tribe present in that region. Sr. Séraphine brought her talents, common sense and skills in agriculture



She taught the women sewing, farming, wholesome eating, health, hygiene, and knitting. However, due to difficulties for trips and communication, the community, composed of a teacher and a nurse was not sustainable. But, given the work undertaken and concrete improvement of the conditions brought by Séraphine's work, she could not leave the place at that time.

She continued at work, promoting the local leaders who could take charge and continue the work. The travel conditions deteriorated and Sister had to travel on foot several days in the forest to reach Nomad. At that time, the yulabi tribe built her a small house on stilts so she could sleep on the way. During her bush patrols, Sr. Séraphine lived in their bush hamlets of a dozen family houses, eating their food based mostly on kokoro bananas. Different neglected tribes in the jungle forest were curious to learn new things. They learned to grow rice, peanuts, fruits and vegetables. They also learned to take care of their health and hygiene. Since then, women have been trained and Sr. Séraphine left Nomad and PNG with the assurance that the mission continues.



Through these few elements, we can see how the mission, with its conditions, was assumed by Sr. Séraphine with much courage and commitment. We are happy to see that such commitment and courage for the mission are acknowledged. Through appreciating the involvement of our Sister to bring these peoples to take charge of their destiny, the mission of the Congregation and of all the Daughters of Wisdom with the poor and the needy of our world is acknowledged.

Our gratitude goes to Sr. Séraphine and to all the Daughters of Wisdom for their faithful and generous commitment. The Kingdom of God is revealed at the heart of the today's world through a fruitful presence which listens to the cry of the poor and Creation.

*Sr. Isabelle Retailleau
General Councilor in charge of JPIC Committee*

Doing all Things with Love



The Sisters of Wisdom Year 2019-2020 are pleased to share their feelings with you about the arrival experience at the Mother House in St. Laurent-sur-Sèvre. Having finished our language studies, we were very happy to return to the Wisdom Year community on November 21, 2019 to begin our formation with Sr. Immaculate, Formator and Sr. Berthe Léa, Assistant. This year will be a time of Wisdom spiritual renewal and an international and intercultural community experience.

The first week evolved around the theme: “Doing all things out of love”. This theme was chosen in relation with the celebration of the tercentenary of the arrival of Marie Louise at St-Laurent-sur-Sèvre. We took time for presentations in order to know each other and our different cultures. We also shared our experiences of learning a language: efforts to understand and speak, the help of the Sisters, our discoveries in terms of cultures, food and climate of the country. All this helped us to prepare for our community project.

Being on the sacred grounds where our Founders have lived, filled us with joy ! The oratories and the prayer around the tombs of the Founders had quite an impact on us. The visit of the different communities of the Mother-House gave us the pleasure of meeting the Sisters and of sharing our respective experiences. We observed how Wisdom is at work and is reflected on the faces of our Sisters. Among the wishes we heard, the following caught our attention: “I pray for your good spiritual health”.



On Sunday December 15, 2019, an opening mass was celebrated in the Chapel of the Founders. It was imbued with the joy of the presence of the Lord in our everyday life. The procession proceeded forth with our group carrying a globe, images of our Founders and flags of our countries. The ceremony was lived in true family spirit as members of the 3 Congregations of the Montfortian family were present, and all shared in a fraternal meal.

These special moments support our dynamism and urge us to be fully committed in this formation and to intensify our adherence to Christ Incarnate Wisdom.

The Sisters of the Wisdom Year 2019-2020

In the Spirit of the Synod for the Amazon



With hope and joy we organized the XX encounter of JPIC Wisdom Spirituality and the 1st Meeting of the JPIC Meeting of the Montfort family on the road to the Synod for the Amazon, July 20-21, 2019, at Our Lady of Wisdom Institute Bogota, Colombia.

Religious, Daughters of Wisdom, Montfort Missionaries, Brothers of St. Gabriel, secular consecrated women, Friends of Wisdom and other members of religious movements were present among the faithful.

The objectives of our meeting were:

- To acknowledge the key issues of JPIC and of the Synod on Amazon, to read them and interpret them from our Montfortian Wisdom spirituality.
- To promote conversion into attitudes and actions that strengthen the march toward an integral faith at the light of Wisdom Montfortian Spirituality.

The place was set up with the Virgin of the Amazon represented by Our Lady of Wisdom, the Bible, images of St. Louis Marie and the Blessed Marie Louise of Jesus with the poor, a canvas for river, a boat, some elements of indigenous culture, a map of America, a sketch made out of corn and the Amazon river covered with leaves, lemons and various flowers and fruits of the earth.

After a brief presentation of all the participants, working groups were organized. The Paipa experience (Synod of the Amazon by the Montfort Missionaries) was briefly shared, recalling what had been lived, felt, thought and done to date. Then, we asked all our questions on the Synod and JPIC. We then devoted ourselves to the study of various documents, reflections of Superior Generals on JPIC and the keys of the Synod for the Amazon, entitled *Synthesis Notes Instrumentum laboris*.

It was agreed that after the October 2019 Synod, we will meet again to receive the synodal orientations and assume our ecclesial commitment on behalf of the Amazon.

Sr. Agueda Sastoque and Sr. Gisela Huertas Torres
Colombia

Testimony of the Elders



I was born into a Christian family in Congo where the devotion to Mary had a great place. From childhood, I learned to recite the Rosary as a family. My father always had his beads in his hands. With him, very early, I had the desire to become a religious.

As a young girl, I was attracted by the mission of the “White Sisters” (The Missionaries of Africa), upon seeing their service to the poor. At that time, African nuns were not yet members of the Missionary Congregations. However, I wanted to be like those white nuns and to take part in their work. My father being a graduate nurse was sought after in the major hospitals of the country. This caused the family to often relocate.

When I arrived at Isangi, I went to the Daughters of Wisdom’s Boarding School. From there I started a new experience of religious life in an indigenous Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate, founded by Mgr. Louis Jansen, smm. The Sisters in this young Congregation were formed by the Daughters of Wisdom, yet were to become Sisters of the Immaculate. However, they ended up merging with the Daughters of Wisdom. Therefore, I made my novitiate in that Congregation and pronounced my vows in 1963.

What brought me most joy in religious life was fraternal love in community. The Sisters loved me and entrusted to me responsibilities at school for I became Principal of the girl’s school and in charge of women ministry. I initiated the Catholic movement of Christian women in the diocese of Isangi, “MAMA BOBOTO “(women of peace). They collaborate with priests in evangelization and in taking over the responsibility of the Church by the faithful. This Catholic movement with over 25 years of existence in the diocese also promotes the emancipation of women. In our context, some cultures consider women inferior to men and practice certain demoted customs that reduce women to slavery, especially when the husband dies. Women in that culture are poorer and disadvantaged. I was inspired by the love for the poor of Montfort and Marie-Louise of Jesus.

Now, at 83 years old and with 63 years of religious life, I am the dean of our Delegation. I believe that Wisdom continues to support me. I am in contact with the people of the mission in Kisangani. I visit sick people in the neighborhood, bringing them communion.

My wish for the younger Sisters of our Congregation, is that fraternal love be lived simply, as recommended by our Mother Marie-Louise, while respecting differences in community.

*Sr. Cécile Biye,
D.R. of Congo Delegation*

A Few Senior Sisters



Sr. Renée Incoul, was born in Hanèche, in the province of Namur (Belgium).

Nearly one hundred years old, she retains lucidity of mind despite her failing memory and hearing loss. So we express for her what she told us in her own way during our short interview.

I was an only child, raised in a Christian family and pampered by my parents. I was lucky to get to know the Daughters of Wisdom in Brussels, Mérimée street. It was there that I started studying to be a nursery school teacher.

Later, Wisdom called me to follow her in religious life. I have always been happy wherever I was sent. I would like to say to today's young adults, that prayer has always been my strength every day. "I find myself very spoiled by the Lord, and I love spending time next to the Good Lord. I speak to Him!"

Thank you, Sister Renée for all those years consecrated to Wisdom. She fills you with happiness! Since you received the gift of life almost 100 years ago, she has given you a long gift of love. You share that love, in your own way with the community.

Sr. Viviane Périchon. I was born January 5, 1927 in Brussels. How did I come to know Wisdom? In 1943-44, I started studying to be a nursery teacher in Brussels at the Daughters of Wisdom. I always wanted to give myself entirely to Jesus-Christ out of love, and I learned who was Wisdom and how to live for her. I found my wisdom and how I could live it. It became the path I followed all through my life.



What especially gave me great joy was the study of "The Love of Eternal Wisdom" and I was able to put in parallel to compare the words of the Bible and those of Montfort. It was an intellectual joy for me but it became an inner joy since I am at the retirement home.

What I would like to say to young people: despite the work that they have to do, they can, through prayer, always enter deeper into the love of Christ Wisdom and fellow human beings.

Homage to Sr. Rosalie Gaulker



Whoever has had the good fortune of knowing Sr Rosalie Gaulker, our Canadian 109-year-old “doyenne”, quickly gets the impression of being in the presence of one commanding deep respect. She herself shows great respect and is most gracious towards anyone who greets her. From my first meeting I was struck by her thoughtfulness and her gratitude for any attention given.

Sr. Diane Thibodeau

It is impossible to think of Sr Rosalie forgetting to show her appreciation for any little deference shown her. Through all her many years of life, and even now through the darkest of her years (for she neither sees nor hears well at all), she never fails to show her gratitude for the least kind act performed for her. Then there is also her constant concern for "the other". If she is served, she wants to be sure the others are served. And if you do anything for her or give her something, Rosalie's comment is " And what about you?"

Sr. Eleanora Baier

Sr Rosalie has always edified me in so many ways, but to me one of her outstanding virtues is her profound humility. Always placing herself last and the least, after caring for the needs and concerns of everyone else.

Sr. Helen Baier

Sister Rosalie's devotion to the students spread beyond her classroom. One day, as the students entered the school and were jostling with each other, a teen-aged boy showed his annoyance rather than chiming in. Sr. Rosalie took him aside saying, “Sometimes it’s not always easy to be cheerful, is it? “He teared up and spilled out his sorrow. A favorite aunt had passed away that morning! Sr Rosalie had sensed his need for understanding and comfort.

Now Sr Rosalie is limited to her wheelchair. When she is fully awake, she will look at her visitor with shining eyes, and smile as best she can with her missing teeth! She radiates peace and love!

Sr. Harriet Hermary

*The Sisters of the Edmonton Community
Canada*

From the Known to the Unknown



Sr. Benilda

I was born on March 31, 1937, in a deeply Catholic peasant family near Saint Rose of Osos, Colombia. My family was blessed with 10 children: 7 boys and 3 girls, including me, the youngest. My parents Martin Ruíz and Benilda Osorio loved me dearly. But the peace and joy of the family died out quickly when my mother became seriously ill and died. She was 43 years old, and I was 10. As soon as she became ill, my father brought me to my uncle in Yarumal, very far from our home, hoping to come back to pick me up once my mother was better.

It was the weak link in the chain of landslides that was just beginning. It was for me an opportunity to learn like Marie-Louise to “leave the known for the unknown”. I said goodbye to my mother whom I never saw again. At that time, communication was very slow and I had the news of her death 15 days later. With my parents, I learned to walk with the Virgin Mary.

In 1950, when I was 13, my father came to bring me back home. At 15, I heard the Lord’s call to religious life. After having witnessed the religious profession of two cousins, I asked to enter the Congregation. The answer was negative, for I was very young and needed to continue my studies. Finally, the Daughters of Wisdom accepted me. I was overwhelmed with joy! They received me for free but I was to pay the cost of the plane ticket. It was quite a challenge to leave my family, my region, and head for the unknown! I had to take the risk. I was determined. Despite their poverty, my family financially helped me. In 1953, arriving in Bogotá, I saw the Daughters of Wisdom for the first time. I was disappointed for I dreamed of wearing a veil!

In 1955, after two years of schooling, I became an aspirant. But the Superior asked me to interrupt my studies. How can I refuse? With apprehension, at her request, I left for Villavicentio College and the experience was positive. In 1956, I remained in Bogota to work in a school for poor little girls. Then, in 1957, I permanently left my family to enter the postulate and in 1958 I made my first profession. Without delay, I was sent to Wisdom Institute in Bogota with the blind children while continuing to study. Early in 1960, another mission surprised me, as I was sent to Acacias College in the East. After this separation, 22 obedience followed, calls to “leave the know for the unknown” in what remained of my 61 years of religious life. I said yes to all of them. I make special reference to two very difficult experiences that occurred later. In 1970, I was sent to a small village in a boys’ public school where, happily, I stayed 9 years. In addition to my school work, I directed the foundation of a house for the elderly and abandoned. I worked with my community, a group of young people and the Vicentine society.



A few days before inaugurating the first stage of the work, I was asked to go to Bogota to become part of the initial formation team. It was very difficult for me to leave once more what I loved and knew for the unknown. But this “yes” was a fundamental link for the future, for it opened the doors to two international experiences, thus preparing me for a more radical “Yes”. The Mother General suggested that I to Congo, collaborating to initial formation. I did it, from 1986 to 1993. I came back to Colombia and 14 years later, I was back in the Mission from 2007 to 2009. Two demanding and wonderful missionary experiences that I cannot forget.

And now, as my 83rd anniversary approaches, I collaborate with the Laura Vergara Institution. I am ready to go with the elderly Sisters to prepare myself to receive my last obedience that will lead me to the definite encounter with the Lord.

*Sr. Benilda María de la Inmaculada
Colombia*

Perpetual Vows

D.R. Congo

20/ 10/ 19

Julienne Bofoyole Lilenda

Marie-Noëlle Boendi Ligesa

Germaine Balowa Sengi

Madagascar

Viviane Mamisoa Hantandrainibe

01 /02/ 20

First Vows

Haiti

Pradeline Charelus

02/ 02/ 20

Guerline Ambroise

Nadia Alexis

D. R. Congo

Alphonsine Mandili Rafay

Gertrude Iyota Foe

Madagascar

Geneviève Sambenay

Maria-Luisa

Juleysi Zambrano (Ecuadorian)



The Word



"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn 1,1)

I don't remember when I first heard these words. Or when I eventually realized how much they would become part of who I am. Isn't it often true that first encounters may become deeply meaningful parts of our lives, our thoughts? Most recently my ever-present interest in the words "In the beginning was the Word..." caught me again, this time in the writing of Sister Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, particularly in her recent book, "Ask the Beasts", in which she presents a theology of creation, a study of the Creator's love for all that has been made and continues to evolve.

I grew up in Woodhaven, Queens, New York, in a small family. My parents, William and Emma Marie, always fostered in my brother and me a fondness for reading. They made many sacrifices so I could go to Our Lady of Wisdom Academy, Ozone Park, NY when I was ready for high school. I was accepted there and met the Daughters of Wisdom. I can't say it was "love at first sight." I had never seen a religious habit quite like theirs. But that was all exterior. As I got to know the Daughters of Wisdom, I got to know many different, individual women. One of these women was Sister Mary Antoinette. She was my teacher before she left as a missionary to Malawi and then the Congo, where she taught and became a martyr. My teacher and my martyr!

At the Academy, I was introduced to missionary Sisters coming home for timely vacations. Their stories were informative, fascinating, and sometimes hilarious. I spent four happy years with the Daughters of Wisdom. I still hold in grateful memory even the more serious moments of prayer and spiritual enrichment. Every year on December 8, even though we were off from school for the day, I would go back to make my Consecration to Mary Immaculate, discovering what true devotion to Mary means. My days at Wisdom involved many circles of experiences. Graduating, having received a good education at the hands of dedicated religious women, I was ready to face new challenges. I was ready, I thought, to enter the novitiate of the Daughters of Wisdom in Eastview, Ontario, Canada.

However, my parents had other plans: I was to go to College for at least a year before entering the novitiate, and I did. Then my life as a DW began! Later, finishing my year and a half in the novitiate at Eastview, I made my profession on February 2, 1945. As a young sister, I started my life as a teacher. From here on, my days were spent preparing for the day ahead and praying with the sisters at all the scheduled times.

After what seemed like about three thousand years, I retired and began to read freely!! I discovered new authors: Joan Chittister, Richard Rohr, J. Philip Newell, Pope Francis, and most treasured, Rabbi Rami Shapiro. Among Rabbi Shapiro's varied works, I found: The Love of Eternal Wisdom: A Revisioning of St Louis De Montford's Contemplation on Divine Wisdom – what a discovery!

"If you trust that the Holy Spirit is alive within you, you will keep on despite every setback."
Sr. Margaret 95.

*Sr. Margaret McPeak
United States*

A Corner of Paradise



My name is Sr. Nazarena dell'Immacolata. I am 90 years old, and made profession on February 2, 1958.

I currently live in the Castiglione Community near Turino, Italy and spend most of my time in the company of sick Sisters. I lead their prayers, I relate to them events of the world or of the country as well as news from our religious family.

I received my education with the Sisters of Maria Bambina in my region. But the priest who was accompanying me supported the Daughters of Wisdom and brought me to them. His motivation was the love of Mary. I came to know Jesus, Wisdom Incarnate and crucified who became my hope and joy!

The love of Jesus for the poor, the children and lonely people, led me to imitate him and to become whom I love. Jesus learned obedience to the Father by suffering on the cross. This was the light that lightened my long life, and I will never change the deep peace it gives me.

To the young Sisters that the Lord calls, I dare say, if the answer is generous, you will overcome many obstacles and the love that Jesus gives, removes all regrets. Then, you are beginning to live a bit of paradise on earth.

*Sr. Nazarena dell'Immacolata
Italy*

God at Work in my Life



I am Sr. Thérèse Razanabelo, born Oct. 28, 1943 in Madagascar. I made my first vows in the Congregation on February 2, 1965.

Love Better: Around fifteen assignments gave me the opportunity to rub shoulders with many Sisters in communities, as well as very many teachers, hundreds of students and youth.

I collaborated wholeheartedly with confidence with parents of students, Christians, Catechists, and Priests from various parishes. All these people helped me improve my life and my character. Mutual gentleness and smile shared with others strengthened our love in the image of God's love in us.

Pray Better - A gold jubilee grace on February 2, 2015: God gave me more strength to be faithful to adoration and the Eucharist each day at the parish and at the community. I take ownership of our consecration to Christ Wisdom by the hands of Mary. Yes, I love repeating and murmuring those words often during the day. The older I get, the more I hold on to the Blessed Virgin. While traveling or at rest, she accompanies me with the joyous, sorrowful, glorious and luminous mysteries to meet Jesus.

Serve Better - At the example of Wisdom, I try to listen with attention to the poor who come to ask me advice or help. I gladly give them my time. Often, I bring in my prayers all those needy people without food, shelter, clothes along with their illness, their suffering and trials.

My current specific mission is to reinforce the learning of the French language with the aspirants in our two neighboring communities. I also pass on to the best of my knowledge, the spirit of our Founders to the prenovices, in French, in order to prepare them for the international novitiate. It is a pleasure for me to take time also to relax in our little garden.

I give thanks to the General Council for giving me this opportunity to share a bit of my life. I am also grateful to the Sisters of the Province for these 55 years of consecrated life. I am united with all of you, in Mary, Jesus and our Founders.



*Sr. Thérèse Razanabelo
Madagascar*

Choosing the Path of Service

I was born March 3, 1919 at Wanroy, Holland and I grew up in a Christian family. I was the eldest of four children. We had a carefree childhood. At school, I had a teacher who taught me the love for God and for others. I was deeply touched and I really wanted to live that way.

Sr. Célestine de la Croix



After my 16th anniversary, I went to Druten “Boldershof”, an Institute for young women with mental and physical disabilities. There, I was not only seduced by the work, but I almost immediately felt at home with the Daughters of Wisdom. Their spirituality, their way of life, their commitment and relationship with the residents touched me. I gradually became aware that this was the path I wanted to follow.

I entered the Novitiate in February 1940. In May of the same year, war broke out and we had to evacuate and go to France finding refuge at the Mother-House in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre. These were uncertain and stressful times. More than a year later, we could return to the Netherlands and in February 1942, I made profession at Schimmert.

I then received my obedience for Boldershof. I lived and worked there in different circumstances during 50 years. I tried to live the charism and the spirituality of our Founders Montfort and Marie-Louise, in prayer and love. Sr. Ancilla Maria Fijen was very supportive.

“Guided by my faith in the unconditional love of God, I encounter Him in every person.” (Cfr Ps. 138) Now that I am old, I continue to experience being of service every day, and I am grateful for it.

To the young generation I express this wish: “May the passionate desire to serve challenge you to give meaning and content to your life everywhere in the world! “

*Sr. Célestine de la Croix,
Holland*

Rooted in our Heritage

I am Sr. Felix, née Monique Prodhon, à Parrancay, France. I entered at St-Loup- sur-Aujon at the convent of the Sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, making profession June 6, 1956.

I joined La Sagesse on April 3, 1966, due to the merger of our two Congregations. The convent of the Immaculate Heart with 42 Sisters was welcomed by the Congregation of Wisdom under the guardianship of Monsignor Atton, who came from Orléans to Langres. We received a warm welcome from Sr. François du Christ, then Superior General of the Congregation.

1966 with the following great upheavals

- 1) Ecclesial: Post conciliar period
- 2) Social: May 1968 turmoil in France
- 3) in the Congregation: abandonment of the original religious habit of the Daughters of Wisdom for a lighter habit in 1966 followed ten years later by the abandonment of a religious habit.

More deeply: following Vatican Council II, religious Congregations must rediscover and live their charism. It is the “Aggiornamento” asked of the religious orders. This opening induces resurgence of life in all the Congregations. At La Sagesse we had: month long spiritual retreats, marching pilgrimages as Montfort family, Priests, Brothers and Sisters in the sacred places of our Founders. For me, coming from the outside as for the Sisters, that also meant:

- To abandon the Little Office of the Holy Virgin to pray with what is still after 60 years the Liturgy of the Hours.
- To adapt to the evolution of society – contracts with the State as schools and hospitals became public.

This adaptation caused adjustments: acquisition of skills, openness to the world outside. Upheavals occurred bringing many Sisters to leave for a return to the secular state. This weakened the whole Body... yet it held and it still holds!

What I would like to recommend to the young: Always remain faithful to your first love: consecration of self to Jesus through Mary. Put your trust in Providence, against all odds for “nothing is impossible to God.” Each day Mary tells us: “Do whatever he tells you.” My wish for the young people is that they be jostled by life, for it is exhilarating! Do not fear the wind, but immerse your roots in your origin: 300 years ago Marie-Louise arrived at St-Laurent. That is where we meet. It holds! May the Holy Spirit guide and reassure you. Have a good life, with and in Jesus through Mary.



*Sr. Félix de Marie
France*

What Blessings !



The mystery of our vocation or call from God is unique. Sometimes it seems to be a direct recognition or other times by a more fortuitous route.

As regards Marie Louise she had such a deep love of the Blessed Sacrament which led to her daily Mass with her beloved sister Elizabeth. Because of trust and deep love for Elizabeth, she followed her guidance and sought in confession the priest who impressed her. Thus, was born, not only her own vocation, but the start of La Sagesse, our beloved Congregation.

My call began with a first awakening at 7 years old. I was born March 3, 1933, into a large, poor but a truly religious family. My life was one lived in a truly spiritual parish. After having been educated at La Sagesse Convent, I finally left home to join the Sisters on January 16th 1951. I was followed four years later by my sister.

I have been truly blessed since becoming a Daughter of Wisdom. The good God in His Providence gave me so many opportunities to serve Him in so many various apostolates. I finally ended back in Romsey, where I started my Religious life, after a lifetime of service. What a blessing!

My advice to anyone with a desire to serve the good God is to abandon yourself whole heartedly to whatever route the Wisdom of God directs you. Give yourself without reserve to follow the path shown you by Wisdom. Be generous, happy – smile and show the world how loving the good God and His Blessed Mother are if you respond to His call.

Sr. Ann Colette Hughes
GBI



At the Service of Mission



Since I am invited to testify of my life as Daughter of Wisdom, I must first say that as a young girl in Colombia, I was very curious regarding something in my immediate circle. A school-age girl in my neighborhood was blind and was educated by nuns. It made me try to find out who were these teachers? Therefore, I went to visit the Institution with my mother. Seeing the school, I questioned in my heart : what would it be like to be one of those who loved these girls so much ? This was my first encounter with the Daughters of Wisdom.

Later, I wanted to become a boarder at the school to help the blind girls in their daily routine. The simple, generous and joyful life of the Daughters of Wisdom resonated in me. I was invited to join in the group of aspirants, then the novitiate. I remember the printed words in the novitiate hall: “Your only Master is Jesus Christ.”

In a spirit of simplicity and love, I received the formation with all its requirements. The testimony of the Sisters, their experiences invited me to live a mission service. The enthusiasm, the life of Father de Montfort, filled me with audacity and I could see that in the future, I will be a missionary. In more difficult times, I said to myself: “What did I achieve?”

After Vatican II Council, the foundation was established on the person of Jesus Wisdom, the orientations of the Congregation, the community proposals, changes, the vision of social realities that had clarified the dreams of being with the underprivileged and opting for them. The community projects followed those lines with a deep personal desire to participate in the proclamation of the Reign of God (mission, youth, indigenous communities). I have come to recognize the goodness of God, and to enjoy Wisdom spirituality. The quest for the will of God in my daily life gives me joy and praise. I had the joy of participating in the steps of Montfort and the beatification of Mother Marie-Louise, which gave a revival to my missionary life.

After more than 50 years of commitment with Jesus, my guarantor, and in whom, with the community, I find joy, enthusiasm, pardon, fraternity, areas for research, contemplation and proximity. It helps me discover beauty in nature and in all the human realities. I give thanks to the Lord who is always at my side, following the path with Mary, our Founders and the Sisters who came before me.

Sr. Fanny Esther Macías Cubillos
María-Luís

A Missionary's Return



Sister Odile Marie de l'Eucharistie (Charbonneau), came to Madagascar from France in 1969. Her first community was situated on the east coast where she spent one year at CAP to learn the skills needed to teach girls and women. She also learned Malagasy Language from 1970-1971.

Subsequently sent to Antsiramandroso, Sr. Odile worked in diocesan pastoral work with couples from the bush to get formation in human and Christian family life. She was concerned for the development of persons at all levels, teaching:

- Human life: housekeeping, culture, breeding...
- Spiritual life: deeper faith living, catechism....

The bush tours followed up on the training given.

In 1973 : Sr. Odile was a member of the mission team with the Fathers, Brothers and Sisters at Marotsiriry. In charge of the formation of women, the Sisters went from village to village to show how to cook and transform local products. From 1976 to 1992, Sr. Odile worked at Mahazoarivo and bore several responsibilities with women and Christian movements. She went very often on bush tours on foot over long distances. She was close to the village people she loved, speaking perfectly their language to the point of forgetting her own French language.

As a true daughter of Montfort, she experienced being uprooted by leaving the Haut-Plateaux for the community of d'Ambinanindrano. Sr. Odile devoted herself to serving the poor, preparing the sacraments in the villages where she went either on foot, or at times in tractor-trailer wherever access was difficult. She had many experiences of getting bogged down and staying stuck in mud holes. At Benasandratra, she took care of the farm, of aromatic plants along with helping bush families on development issues. Her last community was at Antsirabe, where she was in charge of the farm until she had to leave Madagascar for France.

A warm thank you Sr. Odile for your love expressed in this missionary life in Madagascar. May Christ Wisdom shower you with graces and joy! Let him remember your tireless dedication and your loyalty at the service of the Malagasy people for 50 years!

*Sr. Claire du Cœur Immaculé
Madagascar*