

Editorial

A short reflection on commitment (l'engagement) in the Hôpitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes and the meaning of this particular form of voluntary service :

To be a voluntary helper in the Hôpitalité is *"a gift, a service", "a commitment", in response to "a call", a mission "anchored in faith" and "in the service of sick, disabled and able bodied pilgrims"*.

If serving in the Hôpitalité is a lesson in giving freely, working for the glory of God does not mean that it is forbidden to express recognition where it is due.

Perhaps we don't do enough of this; however, thanking, congratulating, recognising the value of work done have nothing to do with pandering to pride. All of this is good, if one respects those who favour discretion and if one is careful not to let honour given to some people outweigh the community as a whole. In this newsletter we would like to remedy this very natural shortfall in recognition that does not happen often enough, whereas criticisms all too easily find a way of being communicated.

In any organisation, including one such as ours which is completely reliant on voluntary work and where commitment is freely given, recognition helps to motivate people.

Knowing how to say thank you is also a way of cultivating a "sense of pride" in how Hospitaliers and Hospitalières put their commitment into practice, above all if the team is animated by a true "spirit of mission" and is not perceived to be "just minding the shop".



Strictly speaking, we do not make a career out of voluntary service and it is far from being a trivial fact that many voluntary helpers gain satisfaction from a simple "thank you".

The Second Vatican Council states : *"The apostleship of the laity is participation in the Church's very mission of salvation. All are destined to be part of this apostleship through the Lord himself, by virtue of their baptism and confirmation."* *"Pastors... must recognise and promote the dignity and responsibilities of lay people in the Church ;*

willingly turning to them for their sound advice, entrusting them with duties in the service of the Church, giving them freedom and scope for action and also encouraging them to initiate their own activities". (Lumen gentium, nos. 33 et 37).

In the same way, in the name of those whom we serve, we would like everyone to know through this newsletter how much the Hôpitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes appreciates all those who serve the mission and the specific charisms of Lourdes.

2017 will undoubtedly be seen as a pivotal year in the life of the Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes.

The combination of new events, the trends in visitor numbers, the economic background, the increasingly important requirements that frame our activities constitute an environment that makes us return to the essential and fundamental values of our Hospitalité, to the meaning of our commitment and to the way we respond to the mission given to us more than 130 years ago by the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes.

The hospitalier service and spirit



At the fourth International Meeting of Lourdes Hospitaliers, Father Horatio Brito – now our Chaplain General – reminded us that :

"In serving sick and disabled persons we put into practice two principles of the social teaching of the Church :

- ✓ *Service in promoting the dignity of the human being, starting with the weakest and most impoverished,*
- ✓ *The value of caring and accompanying in all its forms"*

To which Pope Benedict XVI had added, summing up in a single sentence the richness and obligations of our commitments :

"I would like to say to all Hospitaliers and Hospitalières how precious their service is : they are the arms of the servant Church."

In these two statements, we have a precise definition of the mission we accepted when we made our "engagement" and the human, spiritual, ethical and practical values that it entails.

We must note, however, that given our times and customs, and the way that religious practice and Christian education has changed, it has become necessary to re-position clearly in spirit and action the specific nature of our mission and the life of the "Hospitalier Spirit".

La formation

It is a particularly important mission of formation to respond to this situation and to prepare new hospitaliers who are imbued with the Hospitalier Spirit.

On the initiative of the Management and the "Bureau" (executive committee), in the course of two years rich in fruitful discussion and concrete actions, with the impetus and support given by our Chaplain General, the St. Bernadette Service has re-organised the formation it provides.

The resulting programme bears witness both to the quality of the work undertaken and also the need to take account of the real shortcomings of our times when it comes to religious belief and practice.

Now that this new arrangement of modules has been implemented, we can validate, going forward, how relevant this development will prove to be.

If it is necessary – and it is – to reform teaching methods and adapt content according to expectations and pre-existing levels of knowledge, it is also, and above all, necessary to give formation all the content it needs to express and explain what the "Hospitalier Spirit" is, at the same time reminding us of its meaning and what it entails :

- ✓ To be a Hospitalier is to respond to a call, a call to holiness,
- ✓ A characteristic of holiness is Love for one's neighbour, and one of the most obvious expressions of this love is service,
- ✓ To be a Hospitalier is also to live fully with our heart, mind and arms, and in a way that is inextricably linked to our spiritual relationship with God and our brothers and sisters. If in effect the love of God comes first in the order of precept, love of one's neighbour is first in the order of practice. In this we find a beautiful definition of what it means to be a Hospitalier.

The formation modules that have been developed will allow future Hospitaliers to follow a course in their years of formation that will lead them step by step to discover :

- ✓ An understanding of our life as a Christian,
 - ✓ The sources of Christian spirituality : the Word of God, the sacraments, prayer,
 - ✓ The presence of the Church in the world and our missionary commitment through bearing witness to the mystical dimension of commitment by means of our human and ethical behaviour.
- This new development in formation is meeting with real support from the stagiaires receiving it.

Of course it is also relevant to experienced hospitaliers, including those with most experience, who can find there the source of a real renewal in their understanding of their "engagement"... which was sometimes made a very long time ago. A big thank you to our Chaplain General who has been the true driving force in this and to the St. Bernadette Service team who have taken charge of this essential mission.



Saint-Jean-Baptiste Service

The baths - The sign of water

The Saint Jean Baptiste Service is a wonderful service, but demanding at the same time. It enables all pilgrims, sick, disabled and healthy, to come and make an act of faith at the baths.



Here also we need to reflect on a couple of points, the urgency of which is heightened by the conditions in which the service has had to work these last few months: in the middle of a building site, welcoming people in conditions severely degraded by an environment that is disrupted by the work going on and the almost daily change, at certain periods, in access routes – as well as the information provided clearly falling well short of the expectations of the Hospitaliers and Hospitalières on duty.

The first point to reflect on concerns a renewal in the pedagogy of the sign of water: the profound meaning of this sign, the meaning of the passage through the baths and other approaches which enable us to live fully our response to Our Lady's invitation.

The Virgin Mary's invitation to Bernadette was "Go drink at the spring and wash there", which is what she asked Bernadette Soubirous to do on the 25th of February 1858.

We must remember that this water from the spring is a sign, not an object of fetish. It is also a sign of another water: that of Baptism. Bernadette Soubirous herself said: "People drink the water like medicine... one must have faith and pray: this water would be worthless without faith!"

We need to remind pilgrims of the meaning of Mary's invitation: go drink and wash. There are other ways of responding to this invitation that the Sanctuary has placed at the disposal of pilgrims, such as the new taps. These are not just simple taps; they enable people truly to drink

and wash, as Bernadette did at the back of the Grotto, with simple and informal gestures.

The second point to think about concerns the ways that each one of us can put into practice of welcoming sick, disabled or able bodied pilgrims under the best possible conditions when they pass through the Baths, which is often the most important moment in their pilgrimage.

There is a collective concern about this point which involves the service itself, the Sanctuary, the Hospitalité Note Dame de Lourdes as a whole and those in charge of pilgrimages.

This point has to do with :

✓ The way the service is organised in terms of the alignment of people's stages as closely as possible to actual needs,

✓ Hospitaliers and Hospitalières looking in a new way at their habitual patterns of attendance on stage, possibly turning them on their head a bit so as to have fewer periods in the year when we are low on numbers (start of the season, Easter, June, last fortnight of October, for example...)

✓ Or bearing in mind that, conversely, there is a surplus of Hospitaliers and Hospitalières at certain times of the year, very often supplemented by hospitaliers or hospitalières released by their pilgrimages, which is often the case in the months of May and September.

This consideration needs to mobilise the service as a whole, which is aware of it and which itself has thought through the implications of changing habitual patterns of attendance so as to be capable of responding to our own commitment to serve

"there where the need makes itself felt".

This is in effect the meaning of Maryse Auboin's message, who concludes by saying:

"A big thank you to all those people that are free from work or family commitments who have re-considered their service requests.

May the Hospitalier Spirit that inspires us help us to be willing to change our ways and kindle in us an unceasing desire to welcome our pilgrims in the best way possible.

Thank you to everyone, it is because of you the Saint Jean Baptiste Service operates the whole year round with all our rich diversity."

A thank you which we echo even more now that we have seen to what extent the working conditions this year have brought our hospitalières and hospitaliers to the point of exhaustion.

A thank you which we extend to the "Winter Service", who provide a continuous welcome out of season and who often provide reinforcements for periods of high demand during the season.

This necessary work of reflection will naturally involve the Sanctuary services, in particular the Information Forum, to give pilgrims useful information about how the opening hours of the Baths work, and how they may be subject to constraints according to the movement of pilgrimages and pilgrims.



Welcome - Board - Lodging

Un anticipated building work with serious consequences

On 31 March the President of the Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes received a registered letter from the Operations Director of the Sanctuary, dated 29 March, informing him that an exercise to designate the Sanctuary as a “unique site” as regards fire and security risks would also apply to premises used by the Hospitalité for the accommodation of hospitaliers and hospitalières.

According to the Sanctuary management, this exercise would have exposed a number of non-compliances with regulations and the President was asked to put right the anomalies that had been noted “on receipt of this letter”. More specifically, this meant to have completed as from April 1 all actions to achieve compliance across all our places of accommodation (Sainte Bernadette, Benoit Labre, Saint Michel, the “Homes”, the Villas etc.).

Moreover, this exercise, initiated by the Sanctuary, did not take account of the improvements that the Hospitalité itself had undertaken, aware of the need to adapt to new requirements, and in which it had invested a not inconsiderable amount of money.

Notwithstanding the bizarre side of this requirement, we are left with nothing less than the issue of having to make several of our premises compliant with regulations as a matter of urgent necessity and the Hospitalité management having to undertake a new programme of work and investment, completely overturning the plans that existed previously.

We are talking about a work programme whose significance in terms of financial impact, our ability to welcome people and the availability of accommodation will not have escaped you. It will entail a re-ordering of our priorities and the un-

dertakings planned to support and develop our future activities.

This analysis is underway.

But as things stand at the moment, so as to avoid the risk of heavy penalties if an incident occurred, we have no choice but to proceed with the progressive closure of certain of our accommodation centres, starting as a matter of urgency with Benoit Labre.

We will of course keep you posted on how this substantial programme of work is progressing.

However, in view of these unanticipated constraints, we would ask for your understanding and acceptance of the fact that when you come on stage we may not always be in a position to allocate you the accommodation you asked for and that we will often be obliged to provide you with accommodation that is different from what you usually have.

Saint-Michel self service restaurant

As you know, a lot of effort goes into ensuring a consistent quality of service, a big welcome and a range of good quality meals available to you.

On this point we must thank the whole Saint Michel Self Service team who have responded to our requests for improvement and changed their working methods so as to be more cost effective as well as reinforcing standards of safety and hygiene.

We have made arrangements with the Saint Michel service to go on providing the very much appreciated breakfast service which relies on volunteer helpers and hospitaliers. Thank you to all those who have agreed to keep this service going throughout the season.

Solidarity Sale of accessory products

Like the rest of the population, our hospitaliers and hospitalières are naturally affected by the economic situation.



More and more frequently we come across Hospitalité members with personal problems whose desire to carry out their service is thwarted by financial difficulties. Three years ago we set up a small “solidarity fund” (to which many of you contribute, for example, by donating your unused meal tickets when you leave Lourdes). But today this fund is clearly proving to be insufficient and the Hospitalité’s budget – even more under a cloud given what was discussed above about heavy expenses to come – cannot address this issue by itself.

We have therefore looked into ways of providing finance to address this new situation and support our hospitaliers’ commitment to continued service.

A number of avenues are being explored and will be the subject of proposals to come.

There is an easy measure that can be implemented quickly and launched from the end of the summer onwards: the sale of Hospitalité accessories which the law permits charitable associations to do, provided that such products support their objectives.

We will also keep you informed about this in the very near future. We hope that you will have the heart to look on these products favourably and generously. They will enable us to provide relief to our Hospitalier and Hospitalière friends from the financial constraints that could prevent them from giving service as they would wish to.

Welcoming - Accompanying Saint-Joseph service

By its nature, the Saint Joseph Service is very attuned to the life of the Sanctuary.

Assisting with the ceremonies, providing a welcome at the Grotto, maintaining relations with pilgrimages and groups from the moment they arrive until they leave, providing transport for sick pilgrims to the Accueils etc...



Thanks to particularly close relationships with the Sanctuary teams, specifically the planning and ceremonies teams and the chaplains, the service is in a position to respond equally to requests from both the Sanctuary and pilgrimages.

Moreover, leading the way in this area, the Saint Joseph Service has successfully opened itself to operating flexibly through exchanges with the other Hospitalité services.

Nevertheless - and for the same reasons as the Saint Jean Baptiste Service - we are making the same appeal to all hospitaliers to coordinate their stage periods so as to provide the best welcome they can to pilgrims: reinforcing periods of short supply and at other times not coming in excessive numbers,

which is detrimental both to the efficiency of the service and to the sense of value of one's commitment to serve.

As a very natural partner in formation, the Saint Joseph Service makes sure that the more spiritual formation provided by the Ste. Bernadette Service is supplemented by practical training in welcoming and accompanying pilgrims and sick.

In this respect we can note that the splendid working practices of our venerable elders may sometimes have missed the point. Training in teams enables emphasis to be placed once more on simple things like individual contact with the sick person, the habit of being courteous to all members of the public, be they pilgrims, individuals or groups, prac-

tical rules for handling sick and disabled pilgrims to preserve their dignity and privacy as well as their comfort... and often helping people to pray, which is also part of the Hospitalité Spirit!

Another strand of hospitalier formation concerns general changes in people's behaviour in recent times: tackling, always with courtesy, the scourge of the mobile phone (look at the number of devices brandished during the Consecration!) or even inviting people to wear appropriate dress in the confines of the Sanctuary - a labour of Hercules in the summer, but one where firmness, sometimes tempered with humour, can help settle potential differences.

Secretariat

Among the list of persons who make a very effective contribution to welcoming all of us we would not wish to forget the very dedicated and efficient team that make up the Hospitalité Secretariat.



Martine



Marie-Paule



Claire

Throughout the year we receive a lot of feedback about how welcoming they are and about how well they deal with a whole range of different matters even unexpected ones. And in everything they bear witness by their example to the remark that Bernadette made when asked about her mee-

tings with the Virgin: "She talked to me as one person talks to another".

It is indeed this simple, human approach which dispels any trace of impersonality and which helps build a true family spirit between all hospitaliers and with the Hospitalité.



In particular, we would like to extend our thank you to our friend Alain Marchio, who stood down as Treasurer at the last Annual General Meeting.

We all know his unceasing devotion to the Hospitalité, the rigour with which he managed our economic and financial affairs and the quality and depth of his attachment to the Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes which he embodied in his sense of service, his availability and, above all, his unswerving attachment to its values.

But over and above his interactions in the course of the unstinting exercise of his commitments, we retain a yet more vivid memory of the real, personal and profoundly friendly relationships that he made, which helped forge a united and fully functioning Bureau and management team.



Family notes

Births

Lorenzo, son of Valentina Barcellini, grandson of Giovanni Barcellini and Franca Gambaro (from Borgomanero – Italy),	Notre Dame and Saint Joseph Services
Thaïs, granddaughter of Michel and Marie Héléne Chatagnon (from Saint Chamond) –	Notre Dame and Saint Joseph Services
Maria, daughter of Sara Faus Lopez and Antonio Martinez Perez (from Murcia – Spain)	Saint Jean Baptiste and Saint Joseph Services
Lucas, grandson of Francesco Xaxier Gambus Freixa and Eugenia Millet Abad (from Barcelona – Spain)	Saint Joseph and Notre Dame Services
Lucas, great grandson of Michel Garraud (from Mont Saint Aignan)	Saint Joseph Service
Anne, daughter of Ingrid and Alexandre Giampiccolo (from Cheffois)	Saint Jean Baptiste Service and Councillor of the Saint Joseph Service
Candice, granddaughter of Pierrick and Nicole Giraud (from Villeneuve sur Lot)	Saint Joseph and Marie Saint Frai Services
Andrea, granddaughter of Jean Claude Gury (from Fleville)	Saint Michel Service
Lucia, granddaughter of Renzo Vecchi (from Gropello Cairoli – Italy)	Saint Joseph Service
The granddaughter of Jean Marc and Daniele Scotto Le Massese (from Marly Le Roi)	Saint Joseph Service
Luigi, daughter of Valentina Vitiello (from Pompei – Italy)	Saint Jean Baptiste Service
Hector Leo, grandson of Susan Williams (from Kingston – United Kingdom)	Saint Jean Baptiste Service

Weddings

Rémi, son of Philippe and Catherine Beligné (from La Truchère) to Colombe Espieux
Saint Joseph and Notre Dame Services

Anne-Marie Debril, daughter of Damien and Marie Claire to Daniel Merlin
Notre Dame and Saint Michel Services

Massimo Lotti (from Florence – Italy) son of Fosco Lotti and Franca Bartolozzi (from Florence – Italy)
to Ilaria Signori daughter of Maurizio Signori and Silvia Manetti
Saint Joseph and Notre Dame Services

Andrea, son of Carla Campari (from Vistarino – Italy) to Francesca Farina
Saint Jean Baptiste Service.

Wedding Anniversaries

Paolo Adamo and Cetta Garofalo (from Catania - Italy) celebrated 63 years of marriage

Anna and Filippo Borromeo (from Milan – Italy) celebrated 50 years of marriage and 50 years of service in Lourdes



Family notes

Those who have left us

Rita ALLOCCA
(from Cave de Tirreni – Italy)
Saint Jean Baptiste Service

Renato AMBROSINI
(from Rho – Italy),
father of Barbara
Saint Joseph and
Saint Jean Baptiste Services

Jacques BROUARD
(from Saran)
Saint Joseph Service

Antonio CONTINOLO
(from Bari – Italy)
Saint Joseph Service

Albert DONADIEU
(from Saint Etienne)
Saint Michel Service

Blanca FERNANDEZ DE LA
VERDURA
(from Leon – Spain)
Notre Dame Service

Anne GOLLOT JEANSON
(from Saint Avertin)
Notre Dame Service

Eleonora GRAVINA
(from Naples – Italy)
Notre Dame Service

Helmut GRUNDMANN
(from Ubach – Germany)
Saint Joseph Service

Rémi JOANNO
(from Les Mureaux)
Saint Michel Service

Hermine de LABRIFFE
(from Paris)
Marie Saint Frai Service

Eraclio NATERI
(from Quartucciu – Italy)
Saint Joseph Service

Pierrenato PERNICI
(from Bergamo – Italy)
Saint Joseph Service

André PEYRINT (from Brunoy)
former Treasurer,
father of Pierre
Saint Joseph Service

Pierre ROY (from Sompt)
Saint Joseph Service

John RYAN
(from Pinner – United Kingdom)
Saint Joseph Service

François SAUVETRE
(from Begrolles en Mauges)
Saint Michel Service

Giovanni TRESOLDI
(from Lissone – Italy)
Saint Joseph Service

Jean Pierre VERSPIEREN
(from Limoges)
Saint Joseph Service

The father of Giacomo BARONE
(from Bolzano – Italy) councillor
of the Saint Joseph Service

The father
of Pascale CLERC RENAUD,
brother-in-law of Bertrand
(from Lyon)

The mother of Bernadette
de CLERMONT TONNERRE
(from Juigne sur Sarthe)
Marie Saint Frai Service

The father of Bernard DANIEL
(from Marseille)
Saint Joseph Service

Jeanine MASSY
(from Octeville sur Mer)
Marie Saint Frai Service

The father
of Teresa MUNOZ GARCIA
(from Talavera de la Reina –
Spain)
councillor of the
Notre Dame Service

Mariuccia PESCKETTO
FERRARIO (from Genova – Italy)
Notre Dame Service

Geneviève POUILLARD
(from Crotenay)
Marie Saint Frai Service

The mother of
Salvador TORRENT GALLART
(from Calella – Spain)
Saint Joseph Service