



# LETTRE de L'HOSPITALITÉ

## Notre-Dame de Lourdes



For further information about the Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes,  
please visit our website <http://en.lourdes-france.org/hndl>

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Letter created by Dominican Nuns of Lourdes  
<http://moplourdes.com>  
Dedicated exclusively to the hospitaliers of Lourdes

### Editorial

When you receive this letter we will be coming to the end of our «season» of pilgrimages in 2014. Although it is too soon to draw any conclusions (something we will certainly do at the Annual General Meeting), we can already pick out a number of broad themes which we would like to share with you.

These are not only statistics or technical points but, on the contrary, real topics to think about. We naturally invite you to comment on them or give us your suggestions for improvement and, indeed, any criticisms you may have.

The various articles in this newsletter are therefore also work themes for those in charge of the Hospitalité and its services, and for all those in Lourdes who are labourers in the vineyard of the Lord: the Sanctuary and its services with whom we enjoy a fruitful, fraternal and active collaboration, those in charge of international, national and diocesan pilgrimages (hospitalité presidents and pilgrimage directors), the chaplains whose spiritual contribution is so important, carers, those accompanying the sick, volunteers, Sanctuary guides .... in short, all those who Bishop Brouwet in his «**Orientation for the Sanctuary of Lourdes**» calls to «serve the joy of the guests».

The theme for 2014 invited us to work with that beautiful concept of the «Joy of Conversion», which reflected the very spirit of Bernadette's meetings with «the Beautiful Lady», meetings of joy and laughter, of shared friendship and of exchanges both simple and profound.

«The Grotto is my heaven» Bernadette would say. By talking about this rock she illustrated the extent to which true joy is concrete, solid and based in reality.

The theme that the Sanctuary is putting forward for 2015 is a logical progression from this appreciation of the reality of the joy that illuminates faith.

### **«Lourdes, the joy of mission »**

The presentation accompanying this theme refers to the apostolic letter «*Evangelii Gaudium*» written by Pope Francis:

*«I dream of a "missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world.»*

A strong theme in these times when every day brings injuries, sometimes fatal, to the idea of Joy.

*In the joy of mission ...*

How can we fail to think of our Christian brothers and sisters in the Middle East, particularly Iraq, where the critical situation and the violence it provokes cannot help but make us indignant?

*In the joy of mission ...*

How can we fail to be angry at the spinelessness of this world in the face of this barbaric resurgence from former times of wars that use religion as their pretext? The Christians of the Near East have their own rites... but it seems they do not press the right «buttons», those that raise waves of emotion or indignation...

*In the joy of mission ...*

In our culture of liberty and respect for the dignity of mankind, how can we fail to feel betrayed when we see in our Western countries that the word «Christian» is seen as offensive in the eyes of secularism? Secularism, a word whose meaning has become distorted.... And what is secularism worth in the face of the blind violence that kills, rapes and tortures bodies and minds in the most hateful and barbaric ways?

It was a fortunate decision of the Sanctuary to look to the *Evangelii Gaudium* for its inspiration for 2015.

In this apostolic letter, Pope Francis expressly asks Christians to «go out»: go out, he says, from our own comfort zone and have the courage to go wherever the light of the Gospel is needed.

2015 will also be a year of commemoration: **the 130th anniversary of the foundation of the Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes.**

We cannot fail to take this invitation to the «joy of mission» into account as we relive 130 years of service, fulfilling time and again our vocation to proclaim the Gospel in the way that *Evangelii Gaudium* (Ch. 2-23) invites us: «to everyone, in all places, on all occasions, without hesitation or reluctance or fear».

A 19th Century Breton bard and poet, speaking about our church steeples, wrote that they were «like fingers of stone, pointing towards heaven to show us the way to paradise».

May we find ourselves in the joy of mission, and help all people to find in all places and on all occasions the path to God in our churches.



## The Hospitalier Spirit

### True greatness

An extract from St. Matthew's Gospel (20-21) reveals to us what true greatness consists of.

Jesus and his disciples went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. On the way, James and John, showing how they had not yet understood Christ's message, sent their mother to ask on their behalf: «say who will be seated at your right and left hand in your Kingdom».

As a good teacher, Jesus goes on to use these human traits of ambition to put them straight about the true meaning of greatness.

«Whoever wishes to be great among you must become a servant...»

Translated from the Greek, the word «servant» describes someone who «strives with zeal and perseverance to perform a service for other people».

Let us remember the people who accompanied Jesus: all sorts of persons, men, women and children, rich and poor, people of all conditions such as notorious sinners... all, however, finding themselves at ease in His company.

**«I no longer call you servants but friends» (Jn 15, 15)**

And in His company they heard his teaching. Indeed, in Christ's teachings can be found the best definition of the Hospitalier spirit: «I do not call you servants any longer, because servants do not know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you everything I heard from my Father. You did not choose me; I chose you [...] This, then, is what I command you: love one another. (Jn 15, 15-16). Love, friendship, these are the true gifts of God!

Undoubtedly - and we are reminded of this at every «Engagement» ceremony at the Wednesday Mass - the Hospitalier spirit requires human virtues:

\* Competence and willingness to serve at all times: fruits of a service freely given for which the years of formation prepare the Hospitalier,

\* Humility: if to serve is at the very heart of our lives, let us remember that in washing the feet of the Apostles Jesus himself took his place among the lowest ranks of society: «whoever wishes to be first must be your slave ...»,

\* The capacity to listen and respect for the other person: sometimes a difficult task faced with situations or behaviour that we do not understand. We are critical of whatever we find disturbing, in the face of whatever challenges our own certainties and habits ...



But the teaching of Christ, which hospitaliers are called to live, is that Christ does not ask us to be «best of class» but rather pilgrims in Lourdes, responding to Mary's invitation.

## Hospitalier and Pilgrim

To live the hospitalier spirit is to share in the life of the beatitudes through the model of friendship.

Through our involvement in the Hospitalité of Lourdes, we are also forcefully reminded that we are pilgrims, volunteers on a spiritual journey that is indissociable from the commitment to service; a spiritual engagement without which our acceptance of service would simply be a humanitarian act (albeit of value in its own right), because it is the hospitalier spirit that makes it a «divine» act.

As **Hospitalier-Pilgrim** we experience a detachment from our everyday lives through a spiritual and material development that rejuvenates us in our faith, in our life in the Church and in our lives as brothers and sisters.

As **Hospitalier-Pilgrim** we take part in a process of personal and collective conversion: a time of prayer and penance.



## DICTIONARY OF THE HOSPITALITÉ NOTRE DAME DE LOURDES



### - CHRIST'S FAITHFUL :

The Hospitalité Notre Dame de Lourdes is an Association of Christ's Faithful.  
What does an "Association of Christ's Faithful" really mean?

Article 298 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law says this:

*In the Church, there exist certain associations, distinct from institutes of consecrated life and apostolic societies, in which the Faithful, clergy or laity, or clergy and laity together, strive in a common endeavour to foster a more perfect life to promote public worship or Christian doctrine, or to exercise other works of the apostolate, such as initiatives of evangelization, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with a Christian spirit.*

Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation "*Christi Fideles*" explains, in a striking summary, what the "YES" means to the Hospitalier or Hospitalière making their "Engagement" when they proclaim it in response to the questions posed by the Hospitalité that is receiving them:

Speaking of lay faithful, the Council declares:

***"For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit - indeed even the hardships of life if patiently borne - all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (cf. 1 P 2, 5); and in the Eucharistic celebration these offerings are joined with the oblation of the Lord's Body to be offered in all holiness to the Father. In this way, lay people consecrate the world itself to God, rendering everywhere to God an adoring worship through the sanctity of their lives."*** (*Christi Fideles* – Chapter 1 - 14, 5th paragraph)

This summary states very clearly the value of this commitment, which is lived as a spiritual offering and, above all in Lourdes, as a response to Mary's call – she who said "Yes" – and as an act of witness to our baptismal promises.

## Hospitalité Life and News

### *News about the services*



#### **Service at the Grotto**

*The Franciscan community of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception, which in Lourdes consists of three priests from Romania, has been entrusted with the task of looking after the liturgy for the Masses at the Grotto. One of them, Brother Cristian Roca, explains: "We are present at each Mass and serve at the altar. It is important, in fact, to try and maintain liturgical unity in spite of the diversity of priests who come to celebrate Mass here. Their culture is sometimes very different and they can also be very moved to be celebrating Mass at the Grotto. Our task is therefore to accompany them.*

*At the Grotto, there are also nuns who perform the duty of sacristans. These are the Franciscan Sisters of the Cross of Lebanon. They also have a house of welcome for Christians from the East, on the outskirts of the Sanctuary. The spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi is therefore present at the heart of Lourdes.*

#### **(Extract from the Sanctuary of Lourdes Internet site)**

The Grotto is the heart of the Sanctuary of Lourdes.



In our Hospitalité, the Hospitaliers of the Saint Joseph Service perform the function of helping people to pray. This they do in conjunction, naturally, with the chaplains and priests in charge of leading the liturgy, but also taking account of the expectations and needs of the pilgrimages and pilgrims who gather here in silence and meditation.

They contribute also to the respect for, and dignity of the place.

Our summer has been fine (occasionally), hot (often) and sunny, notably in July and August.

We have therefore been able to put to the test the issue of appropriate dress at the Grotto, in accordance with Bishop Brouwet's wishes (See the Lettre de l'Hospitalité No 34 pages 6/7) by making wraps available at the entrance to the Grotto area.

We are happy to note, at the end of the season, that this development has met with almost universal approval and we have received very positive feedback on this visible sign of

respect for the heart of the Sanctuary and for She who welcomes us there.



#### **Accompanying the ceremonies**

From the very beginning, the mission entrusted to Hospitaliers notably involved taking part in the welcoming of pilgrims, putting in place the means to facilitate pilgrimages and "by their service, enabling the principal celebrations of the Sanctuaries to take place".

Naturally, this mission is closely linked to those of the Chaplains of Lourdes entrusted with the different tasks of catechesis, organisation of the celebrations, welcoming of people and celebration of the Sacraments.

From the time of the first Hospitaliers until now these functions have certainly evolved. If you remember – sometimes with nostalgia, sometimes with a touch of irony but always with some feeling – the "Leather Bretelles", we recall above all the symbolic meaning which these visible emblems of service represented: our service to the sick, physically carried and spiritually accompanied on their way to the Grotto and the Baths, in the places of celebration.

Naturally this mission has evolved, but only in respect of the modernisation that has taken place in the means of transporting sick people, in methods of communication, and in the tools and technology available to support the activity of prayer. However,



what remains the same is the true meaning of this act of accompanying: the gesture of welcome and regard that is written in the beautiful extract from Bernadette's testimony: "She looked at me as one person looks at another".

Nurtured in this service, hospitaliers come to Lourdes as volunteers, sometimes several times a year, to offer in all humility (and with their imperfections) their strength, their love of neighbour, their knowledge and their experience in the service of pilgrims and of the sick.

Among the pilgrims in Lourdes – and hospitaliers are also pilgrims – there exists all the diversity of the humanity that comes to "drink at the spring" and to "soak up" the values of the Gospel.

The service of accompaniment at the Ceremonies has seen plenty of changes. There will be some thinking to do, in conjunction with the chaplains responsible for this beautiful function, in order to respond to the questions asked of us, to redefine how we carry out our "engagement" today, a commitment made before God and before our brothers and sisters in response to the mission entrusted to us by the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, and in order to provide a framework for the duties required of us that will enable us to develop and train our Hospitaliers from all language groups and backgrounds.

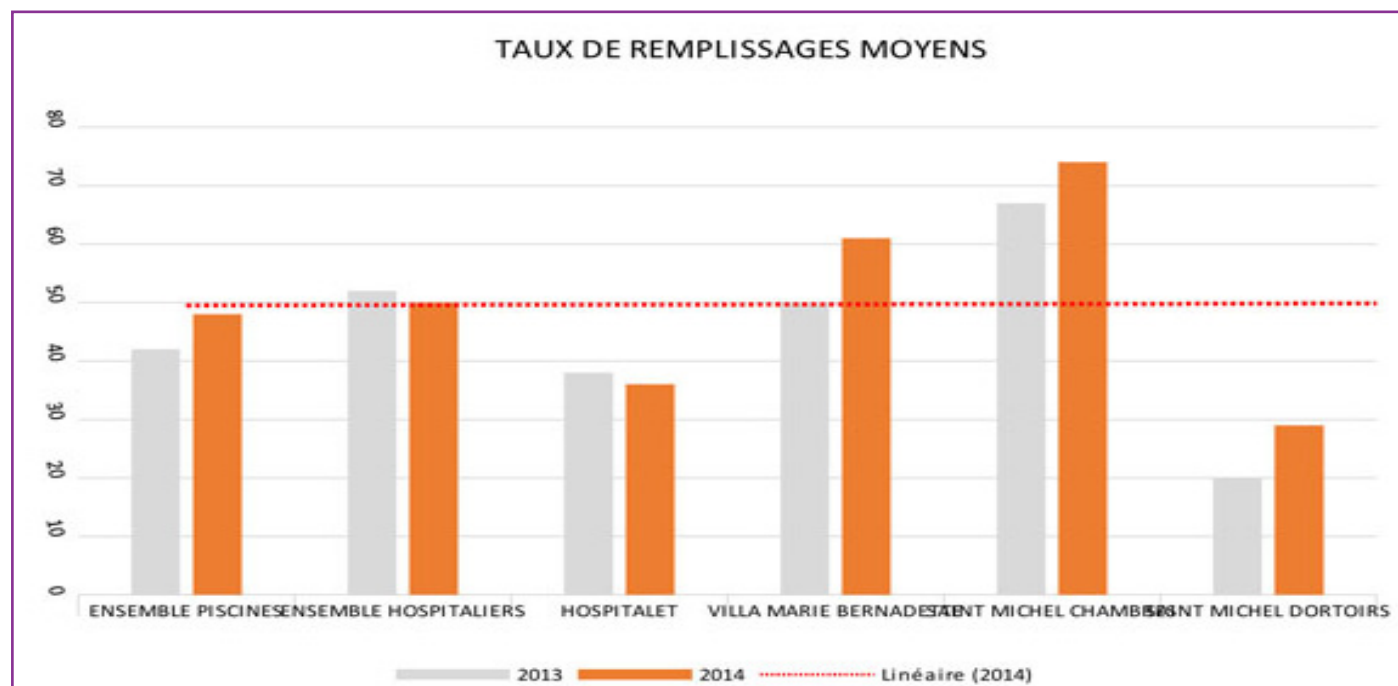


## Welcome : accommodation

As part of our ongoing review of the resources available to Hospitaliers, the Hospitalité management is looking at the utilisation of the different premises that it runs.

An analysis of the occupancy levels of the various accommodation centres, comparing 2014 with 2013, reveals both a cause for concern and some opportunities.

### A significant cause for concern



The chart below shows that the average annual occupancy level across the totality of our accommodation centres is about 43% in 2014, compared with 42% in 2013 – but 2013 masks the significant reduction in occupancy levels as a result of the floods.

Unfortunately, it must be noted that this occupancy trend closely reflects the Sanctuary's own observations as regards pilgrims: a steady reduction in both numbers and the average length of stay.

For us, this opens up a second train of thought: the analysis of opportunities for the future, with everybody's support.

	2013	2014
ENSEMBLE PISCINES	42,0	48,0
ENSEMBLE HOSPITALIERS	52,0	50,0
HOSPITALET	38,0	36,0
VILLA MARIE BERNADETTE	50,0	61,0
SAINT MICHEL CHAMBRES	67,0	74,0
SAINT MICHEL DORTOIRS	20,0	29,0



### Opportunities

The occupancy levels of our premises that we are seeing will allow us to undertake perceptible improvements to the conditions in which we welcome people. From 2015 onwards, therefore, we propose only to open premises individually as and when demand dictates.

This policy will have a double advantage: a reduction in operating costs (there is no point opening an empty building, heating it, providing water and drainage services, and assigning personnel to staff the reception desk) and the opportunity in some premises to carry out some of the improvements that Hospitaliers would like to see:

- \* Wifi access,
- \* Damp treatment in certain buildings,
- \* Improvements in lighting and security,
- \* Access for disabled persons,
- \* Etc.

Furthermore, an overall occupancy level of less than 50% must lead us to consider how we use some of our premises.

For example, we could look at how we might convert some of our accommodation for use by families with children, or as a recreation centre, with information areas, for pilgrims passing through, etc.

At the same time, we must be aware of all the implications of the changes that these ideas – which are only at an early stage – might bring. We must also bear in mind the expectations and needs of hospitaliers and hospitalières that have been expressed on so many occasions, as well as being better able to welcome new, young, hospitaliers “en famille”.

All these points are avenues to investigate further: with everyone's cooperation, we will help rekindle a desire to come to Lourdes, with Mary.



### Welcome : living together

#### Improvements on the “Saint Michel site”

As we have pointed out to you in previous newsletters, the works carried out after the floods have given us the opportunity to carry out certain improvements in our accommodation.

As planned – and, indeed, as required by work legislation – we have created a “rest area” for the St. Michel staff.

At the same time, two new studio apartments have been created to receive families, one of which is adapted for a couple with children.

These arrangements are a first step towards implementing the Hospitalité's desire to make it easier for Hospitaliers and Hospitalières to come to Lourdes with their families.



## Among us !

### Ordination

Nicolas Jean-Luc was ordained deacon by Mgr Michel Mouisse Bishop of Périgueux and Sarlat – on 1 June – Saint Joseph Service



### Wedding Anniversary

Canio Di Lucchio and Maria Giuseppa Quinto (from Riovera in Vulture.- Italy) celebrated 50 years of marriage

### Wedding

Vincent Grimaldi de Puget and Marie des Neiges Ruffo de Calabre – Saint Joseph Service

Births		
Guglielmo Antonio	son of Edmondo Battista and Daniela Ruggiero (from Nocera Inferiore – Italy), grandson of Guglielmo Battista	Saint Joseph and Notre Dame Services
Pietro Maria Ignazio	son of Davide Buffi and Enrica Ceresola (from Genova – Italy)	Saint Joseph and Notre Dame Services
Amaury	grandson of André and Martine Cousine (from Belves de Castillon)	Saint Joseph and Sainte Bernadette Services
Alessandro Cesare	grandson of Marlisa Donisi (from Moena - Italy)	Saint Jean Baptiste Service
Rory	grandson of Carmel Gormley (from Ferns Ireland)	Notre Dame Service
Côme	son of Marc and Blandine Jean-Luc (from Vouvray)	Saint Joseph and Saint Jean Baptiste Services
Pierre	10th grandchild of Alain de Tonquedec,	Secretary General

### The friends who have left us

Elena Balestri (from Rome – Italy) – Saint Jean Baptiste Service	Maurice Henry (from Paris) – Saint Joseph Service
Denise Boussant (from Marcigny ) – Marie Saint Frai Service	Auguste Lardeux (from Segre) – Saint Joseph Service
Antonio Buttafava (from Milan – Italy) – Saint Joseph Service	Alfonso Lopez Hita (from Murcia – Spain) – Saint Joseph Service
Etienne Chevallier (from Saint Cyr sur Loire) – Saint Joseph Service	Annie Martin (from Dromore – Ireland) – Notre Dame Service
Colette Deciron (from Paris) – Notre Dame Service	Maria Teresa Moratal Morant, wife of Jose Miro Moreno (from Valencia – Spain) – Saint Notre Dame and Saint Joseph Services
Anne-Marie Dusfour (from Prades) – Saint Jean Baptiste Service	Giuseppe Pappalardo (from Montoro Inferiore – Italy) – Saint Joseph Service
Aniello Farace, husband of Maria Esposito (from Capri – Italy) – Saint Joseph and Saint Jean Baptiste Services	Claudia Pellegrini (from Ancona – Italy) – Saint Jean Baptiste Service
Franco Guerriero (from Genova – Italy) – Saint Joseph Service	Olivier Puymoyen (from Angoulême) – Saint Joseph Service
Mathilde Guillaume (from Meaux) – Marie Saint Frai Service	Giuliana Ravizza (from Milano – Italy) – Notre Dame Service

The friends who have left us	
Paul Rochas (from Toulon) – Saint Joseph Service	The father of Bernard Gladin (from Rodez) – Head of the Saint Joseph Service
Giangiaccomo Rosa (from Balzola – Italy) – Saint Joseph Service	The son of Jeannine Guittet (from Le Mans) – Saint Jean Baptiste Service
Tanguy de Rochebouët, husband of Marie-Thérèse (from Quintin) – Sainte Bernadette and Saint Jean Baptiste Services	The husband of Anna Lucarelli (from Galdo Tadino – Italy) – Saint Jean Baptiste Service
Joseph Sanson (from Ambes) – Saint Joseph Service	The father of Olimpia Lupoli (from Rome – Italy) – Saint Joseph Service
Michel Savarit (from Les Sables d'Olonne) – Saint Joseph Service	The mother of Marco Martinengo (from Albenga – Italy) Saint Joseph Service
Vincent Van Engelen (from Odyk – Netherlands) – Saint Joseph Service	The mother of Bernadette Mastrosimone (from Rome Italy) – Sainte Bernadette Service
Guy Videau (from Audenge) – Saint Michel Service	The father of Joan Maria Mateu Salvado (from Vila Seca – Spain) – Saint Joseph Service
The son of Concetta Adamo (from Grenchen Switzerland) – Saint Jean Baptiste Service	The father of Maria Cristina Mazzola (from Genova Italy) – Sainte Bernadette Service
The mother of Michael Baeur (from London – UK) – Saint Joseph Service	The mother of Marcelo Ndong Obono (from Murcia Spain) – Saint Joseph Service
The mother of Josef Blotz (from Adendorf – Germany) – Saint Joseph Service	The mother of Maddalena Rosignoli Caltagirone (from Milan) – Councillor of the Marie Saint Frai Service
The wife of Aimé Brun (from Roanne) – Saint Joseph Service	

Current events, particularly in the Middle East, are marked by violence and conflicts in which, unfortunately, religious affiliation serves as the pretext for barbaric behaviour from a former time.

Since at Lourdes Our Lady invites us to pray, let us beseech her - she who remained unwavering in her trust, even at the foot of the cross - that the peace to which all men of good will aspire may at last spread throughout the world.

*«Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Peace,  
you came to us  
to bring us the peace of God, Jesus your child.*

*Along with all those who have called upon you  
in times of trial and distress,  
we approach you with confidence  
because you are our mother.*

*At the foot of the Cross  
you receive the forgiveness and peace that He has  
obtained for us.  
Lead us to the spring of living water of His Heart.*

*Pray for us, pray with us, Holy Mother of God,  
that we may be artisans of reconciliation  
and servants of peace.*

*Amen.»*

