



INFO-AFFILIATION

February 2016 

Already February, the month of love! Spring will soon be here (in our northern lands), the days are starting to lengthen, and how wonderful to see this brightness spreading and bringing us fresh air! Now (whatever our season), what if we tried to put a little more love into our days – for refugees, for the homeless, for solitary people, for children, for all – because one can never have too much love, since Jesus himself came to tell us of the Father’s tremendous love for us. How about it?

In this edition, you will find news from the Zoé-Blais Group. Then an affiliate from Saint-George de Beauce shares her joy over the gathering on January 10th. Another affiliate from Matane tells how a friend of hers discovered the Venerable Marie Fitzbach. Further on, you will read an article on *Sharing Lent* with Development and Peace. You will witness the renewed commitment of a group of affiliates, and learn that one of our members received an award from her diocese. News from the USA, Abitibi and Lesotho will follow. Two prayer affiliates give a testimony and an affiliate shares an idea on the celebration of Promise Renewals. Nicole Chabot gives a report on the Twinning Project. And of course you will have news from your Resource Team.

Enjoy your reading!

Happy Valentine's Day!



News from the Zoé-Blais group

On December 13, 2015, we had a *fantastic* Christmas party with the sisters of Notre-Dame de Recouvrance, Vanier (Quebec City).

Together, we had the pleasure of celebrating a Eucharist presided by Fr. Marcel Plamondon, O.M.I. We, the affiliates, offered donations to the Maison Zoé-Blais, as we do each year. Before the Offertory, we deposited our sealed envelopes at the manger of the Christ Child.



We then had our usual monthly meeting at Maison Zoé-Blais. The theme was ***Graces***.

At 11:15, we joined the sisters for a festive lunch. The community received us for the first time in this Christmas season. Each “godmother” hosted her “godchild” with joy. The sharing was warm and friendly. Some affiliates helped prepare the meal, offering wine and dessert, and each sister was given a tasty gift.

Yes, all is grace!

On January 17, 2016, we again shared a Eucharistic celebration with the sisters and with Fr. Joseph Ndong, O.M.I., a Senegalese. We renewed our promises, offering them to the Lord along with prayer intentions.

Sister Nicole Daigle, coordinator, and her companions treated us to coffee and cookies, in the company of Fr. Joseph Ndong. We were delighted to hear him talk about his vocation, his presence in Quebec as an agronomy student at Laval University, the shock of arriving last January 16th to a temperature of -26° Celsius, and about his homeland, Senegal. We will have the privilege of visiting with him again in the coming months.

After coffee, we had our meeting on ***Discerning Calls***.

We feel more and more that we are one Good Shepherd Family!

Léona Déry, Affiliate, Zoé-Blais Group
Sister Nicole Daigle, Coordinator,
Résidence Notre-Dame-de-Recouvrance, Quebec City

A much appreciated activity

What a joy it was for us to meet with the sisters on January 10, 2016 in Saint-Georges de Beauce! Starting the New Year by wishing everyone a Happy New Year 2016 made us feel good. It was a real pleasure to see the sisters who had not been with us in our town for a long time. We felt that even the sisters were happy to see one another in this festive homecoming context. The video presentation of the 150th Anniversary helped us return to the source that is the life of Marie-Josephte Fitzbach. Seeing or reviewing that video brings many emotional moments, and is so refreshing!

I experienced something very beautiful when we got together in small teams. To avoid too much displacement, we were invited just to turn our chairs around to discuss. That's when I realized there were only affiliates in my team. So I went to join a small group of sisters. I just listened to them and drank in their words; they shared their experiences, knowing what they were talking about, for they had already been through times like these. It was so interesting, I could have listened forever!

So often I have said and I repeat again today, that we must meet the sisters and listen to them; it is a matter of our history, it is the basis of our Affiliation. They have such wealth to share. They must not leave us without sharing those living treasures!

Then we were served "bread, butter and molasses": what a wonderful idea, so pleasant, friendly and symbolical!

Thank you for that wonderful meeting! I keep sweet memories of it!

Ginette Lachance
Affiliate, Saint-Georges de Beauce Group

A devout grandmother

I want to share with you, dear members of the Good Shepherd Family, an event that occurred in the life of my friend and caregiver, Ginette Talbot. She experienced the death of her beloved grandmother, aged 96, on May 23rd. Mrs. Marie-Ange Desrosiers had been a Good Shepherd affiliate since 1997.

This kindly Grandma had 16 children, 12 of whom are still alive, 40 grandchildren, 45 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren! She lived alone in her house which she kept up herself. She occupied her time mainly with prayer, especially the rosary. Several people used to ask her to pray for them and their intentions. Moreover, Mrs. Desrosiers prayed the rosary by "passing through the heart" of the Venerable Mother Fitzbach.

She passed on her ardent faith to her granddaughter Ginette and to her entire family. Ginette had great love and deep respect for her, and also appreciated the good advice Grandma Marie-Ange gave her.



Mrs. Desrosiers bequeathed to her granddaughter a small purse containing her golden rosary, a relic of Marie-Josephte Fitzbach, and a few medals. My friend thought this was a Saint Josephte she had never heard about. I explained that Mother Fitzbach was our beloved Foundress and told her briefly about the creation of her ministry and her religious community.

Very impressive, isn't it? I think that this little story turns out to be very moving!

Renée Michaud, Consecrated Affiliate
Matane Group

The Committee on Social Justice and the Promotion of Women speaks up

The Committee on Social Justice and the Promotion of Women aims to educate sisters and affiliates about issues concerning social justice and the promotion of women. It encourages both sisters and affiliates to get involved in causes such as *La Maison de Marthe* (that helps women involved in a process to leave prostitution), Development and Peace, Earth Day, Women's Day, restorative justice, etc.

With the coming of Lent, the committee, through the Development and Peace movement, encourages affiliates, sisters and their employees to do their part in *Sharing Lent*. As the information indicates: "Lent is a period of preparation for Easter. It is a moment of reflection and sharing for Catholics around the world. This is an opportunity to reflect on the actions needed to build the Kingdom of God." We are therefore invited to look for ways that promote changes in our lives, so as to preserve the planet and ensure that everyone has access to Earth's resources. "In 2016, Lent takes place during the Jubilee of Mercy, a time when Pope Francis invites us to show compassion and deepen our relationships with others." Let's use this time of the year to reflect on the bonds that unite us and become engaged in helping our sisters and brothers in need around the world.

Our good Pope Francis offers us a simple suggestion: to go back to reciting grace before meals. The Committee on Social Justice and the Promotion of Women supports this suggestion and strongly encourages us to put this tradition back on our agendas, in order to remember our dependence on God for life, to renew our sense of gratitude towards nature and those working to provide us with bread and wine, and to strengthen our solidarity with those in need. This very significant gesture reminds us to be aware of what we consume and mindful that everything is sacred in life.

Blessed are you, Lord; blessed this Earth that shelters us and feeds us.

We give thanks for all those who are working to transform its fruits for our wellbeing.

We join together with all people in hopes that everyone may one day have enough to eat. Amen.

Nancy Fournier, Affiliate
Sister Claudette Ledet, Leader
Committee on Social Justice and the Promotion of Women

A beautiful day

On February 2nd 2016, at Assumption church, the affiliates of Saint-Georges de Beauce renewed their commitment to live out the charism of love and goodness of Marie Fitzbach. Since Sister Lise Gagné couldn't attend, she had delegated me to represent her. I went with pleasure, accompanied by Quebec City affiliates Léona Déry, Jeanne d'Arc Cyr and France Boivin. We took the road on a beautiful sunny afternoon to join the group at the church. The pastor came to greet us all. The renewal was done during the Mass celebrating the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple. The priest repeatedly mentioned the Good Shepherd during the ceremony. The affiliates stood before the parish congregation to show their willingness to witness to our founding charism in their midst.

After the celebration, we gathered to share a meal and socialize. People were asked to say what had touched them most during Mass. For one, it was facing the assembly: she was comforted by being supported by her community. For another, it was the link between the Presentation of Jesus and the fact of presenting themselves to be acknowledged by Jesus the Good Shepherd as his sheep. We then exchanged about our different groups and how we operate; it was very rewarding. I gave news from the Resource Team and briefly explained my tasks as Sister Lise's Community Assistant.

When the time came to go home, we left our affiliate friends to finish their evening together. We were all very pleased with this beautiful gathering.

Nancy Fournier
Community Assistant, Affiliation, Quebec City

A tribute to a much appreciated affiliate



A word of appreciation for Josée Savard. On Sunday, January 24th 2016, she received the Medal of Merit in the parish of Saint-François-Xavier, Chicoutimi, from the hands of our Bishop André Rivest. This medal is awarded to persons who are involved as volunteers in their community or parish. Josée's candidature was submitted by the pastoral team and she was chosen to receive this year's medal for diocesan merit. In addition, on Sunday, February 7, 2016, Ms. Micheline Girard received from Mr. Jean Gagné, moderator for the Chicoutimi-Laterriere Pastoral Unit, a mandate as accompanist in Saint-François-Xavier parish. On this occasion, Josée was also mandated as a member of the local leadership team for the same parish. Moreover, she is coordinator of a group of affiliates with Sr. Carmelle Lemay. Their monthly

meetings are going very well and are very rewarding.

Mrs. Girard told us the following about Josée. “Knowing that noble person is meeting ‘a heart on two legs.’ She is always present, especially at the right time. This is a dedicated, caring, generous, helpful, loving, smiling and responsible person. To me, Josée has a remarkable personality. Having known her for a good fifteen years, I can say that this lady really deserves to be recognized as an exemplary volunteer. She has worked in the pastoral care of the sick for many years, going to the homes of the elderly, also reading at Sunday Masses, and serving as minister of communion.”

Micheline Girard
Affiliate, Chicoutimi Group

News from Southern Maine

The *Good Shepherd Affiliate Spiritual Guide* traces our roots to the Gospel. Mt 25: 35-36, 40 inspired several decisions made by the Southern Maine Affiliates over the last twelve months. First, in the spirit of “communion and cooperation” encouraged by the Congregation, we have adopted **Esther Residence** as our primary apostolic project. To concretize our commitment, we prepared food baskets for Thanksgiving, collected clothing at our monthly meetings, and toiletries for Christmas. “**I was naked and you clothed me, I was in prison, and you came to see me....**” Some of our members also volunteer at the Residence, several hours a week.

Inevitably, advanced age combined with health problems force our affiliates to change their status from “**Active Affiliates**” to that of “**Prayer Affiliates.**” The importance of the role played by this latter group was often in the forefront of our discussions and we felt the need to remain in close contact with them, though they can no longer attend our meetings. A monthly letter seemed to be the best vehicle to keep them informed and motivated to continue their prayer ministry in favor of our Good Shepherd Community and the Church. Their response has been very positive. At our last meeting, we discussed a **Peer Adoption** program, whereby each active affiliate would partner with a prayer affiliate via telephone or other form of contact. A team member is compiling the list of our prayer members and we hope to launch this project at our February gathering. “**I was lonely and you reached out to me.**”

The entire Good Shepherd Affiliation has, by now, received a letter from Donna Towle, inviting members to participate in the compilation of what, for lack of an official name, I choose to call the “**Encyclopedia of our Calling.**” We hope you all participate in that initiative which bears the seal of approval of our Major Administrations. Our **Prayer Affiliates** are also invited to share in this huge endeavor, which promises to enrich, unify and inspire all of us, but which, above all, would add to our beloved Mother Marie Fitzbach’s crown of glory. Once the contributions from the various groups of affiliates are in, our members with the skills required for such a project will assist Donna in compiling the data in book format.

Finally, **Foundation Day**, January 12th, was the high point of our activities for the year 2016. On that day, in the spirit of the Church, we celebrated the **consecrated life** of our Good Shepherd Sisters. Our Leadership Team in collaboration with Sister Marita Pelletier planned the liturgy, which was offered to their intentions. A social gathering and a delicious meal followed. At 2 p.m., the sisters were treated to a trip down history lane, destined to demonstrate how the generous “**yes**” of Mother Foundress grew

into a beautiful tree with branches extending from Canada to the United States, Lesotho, South Africa, Rwanda, Haiti, and Brazil. Our members, who traveled to Lesotho last fall, even wore the national garb of that country. The celebration concluded with the presentation of six loaves of bread baked from each country's ethnic recipe, which we found on the Internet and which we enjoyed with the traditional serving of molasses. We, the newest branch of the **Good Shepherd Tree**, joined the sisters in glorifying God and the Venerable Marie Fitzbach.

Magnificat!!!



Anita Côté, Affiliate
U.S. Southern Maine Group

News from Abitibi...

On Monday, January 18th, we had our meeting on the theme of GRACE. We had a beautiful exchange. Then there was a recreational party to celebrate Christmas. We shared small gifts. Afterwards, we played a game of finding the names of some cities from drawings. We had a lot of fun.

Happy New Year 2016!



Solange and Michel, affiliates, Abitibi Group



Mrs. Lebona's birthday



Mrs Evelyn Lebona was among the first group to join the Good Shepherd Affiliation in Lesotho, in 1990. She attends daily Mass at the Archbishop's House, Maseru. She failed to be with us at St. Rodrigue for the celebration of the Affiliation's 25th Anniversary because of ill-health and advanced age.

We, her group mates, decided to celebrate her birthday in a specific way this past year. As a sign of love, it was organised to be held at the Provincial Local House. Our request was highly appreciated and approved by the sisters. Each of the affiliates brought a special dish for the event. The sisters also contributed.

The occasion remained a secret to Mrs. Lebona; she was invited to it as "an emergency meeting for the affiliates." To her great surprise she was led to the sisters' refectory which was set up in a special way. The secret was only revealed by the master of ceremony's opening speech, as she addressed the group and gave the purpose of the gathering. Mrs. Lebona remained astounded. The meal was followed by speeches and entertainment; the Emmanuel Hostel girls joined with singing and dancing. Mrs. Lebona, full of joy and excitement, joined them and danced gracefully, supported by her walking stick. She was highly delighted as she was briefed on the success of our festival at the 25th Anniversary.

Mrs. Lebona gave a touching speech as she thanked all for their thoughtfulness towards her. She assured us that she was spiritually with us throughout the festival at St. Rodrigue. We concluded with a prayer and went on our way to our different destinations very happily.



Mr. Benedict Penane, Affiliate
Lesotho Provincial House Group

Two prayer affiliates testify

Huguette and I are old friends. She once asked me if I would be interested in volunteering at the Maison Zoé-Blais, a work of the Good Shepherd Sisters. I said yes, I always like to make myself useful. I kept the children at daycare and Huguette gave sewing lessons to their mothers, all this for several years. It was a great experience for both of us. We gave a little of our time and we felt so appreciated and loved. We wish every one of you the chance to live such moments!

How can we describe the years with the Good Shepherd affiliates? We share so many good memories. We are related to all of you in prayer. We thank you with all our heart!

Denise Morency Delisle and Huguette Simard Pouliot
Affiliates by Prayer, Zoé-Blais Group, Quebec City

A suggestion for Promises

Following a suggestion brought by Maryse to the Resource Team at a meeting at the Generalate in the spring of 2015, I hereby send you an invitation about an initiative first taken during the renewal of our commitments in Saint-Georges. Gisèle Nadeau had the idea of making bookmarks from colored cardboard (5 cm. by 14 cm.) on which we put quotes by Marie Fitzbach from the book *Mother Mary of the Sacred Heart and her collaborators*.

Gisele found 14 quotes that we wrote on those cards and signed: *Marie Fitzbach*. Three of us performed this task in one afternoon; we did everything by hand and added a small picture (flower, small animal or bird or fish or a colorful landscape) from stick labels that various foundations send to ask for donations. The little picture was pasted next to the text on the cardboard. On the back we put the contact numbers to reach us, for those interested in knowing more about us as a movement. The cards enabled us to spend an enjoyable afternoon among us, and later they were very much appreciated by the assembly.

Céline Jacques, Affiliate
Saint-Georges de Beauce Group

News from the Twinning Project

Initiated during the Resource Day held on October 31, 2015, at the Generalate in Quebec City, the draft twinning of sisters and affiliates gave amazing results. The goal is to create a special bond of prayer, sharing and meeting opportunities, depending on the availability and possibilities of each one.

By early 2016, we already had 70 matches. Beautiful personal initiatives were undertaken to strengthen those ties. During the meeting held on January 10th, orchestrated by the Committee on the Promotion of Mother Foundress and the Founding Charism, a sister told us that spontaneously, most affiliates sat next to their sponsors.

For those who do not have a sponsor yet and would like to be paired or need information, write to the Affiliation address: affiliationb@yahoo.com

Happy New Year, everyone!

Nicole Chabot, Affiliate
Member of the Resource Team

News from your Resource Team

To maintain our intercultural links and visit local communities, Sr. Lise Gagne and Sr. Agnès Dufour are visiting Brazil from February 8 to March 1, 2016. We wish them a rewarding journey in every way.

Keep monitoring your email for details on our upcoming events!

A good Lent to all!

*May the Lord Jesus the Good Shepherd be with you!
May he guide you on paths of sharing and solidarity!*



Nancy Fournier, Affiliate
Community Assistant, Affiliation Québec

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