Let us celebrate the gift of God

1860 • 2010

Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary
Together, let us celebrate!

Dear Friends,

In this springtime of 2010, we have prepared a special edition of our INFORMATION BULLETIN, “Committed to Fullness of Life”, which commemorates the 150th anniversary of the founding of our Congregation - the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary.

Our 150th anniversary logo is featured on the cover page. In the center is the Fiat Madonna by Virginia Broderick of the United States. The Fiat Madonna is a modern version of the Holy Heart of Mary. The continuous gradation of our Congregational insignia symbolizes our theme of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. The watermark of the map of the world illustrates the international character of our Congregation. Within the oval is the theme of our year of celebration, our title and the years 1860-2010.

With one another and with our people, we celebrate the wealth of our history and of our lives as consecrated women over the past 150 years, with our eyes turned to the future in hope!

But what exactly is this gift of God that we celebrate?

Yesterday

• our beginning, deeply rooted in French soil
• the life of our founder, François Jean-Baptiste Delaplace
• the life of our foundress, Jeanne-Marie Moisan
• our Congregation - the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary
• our SSCM charism
• devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary
• the expansion of the Congregation: to the United States (1889), to Canada (1892), to Cuba (1950), to Cameroon (1953), to Argentina (1963), to Chile (1997)
• the opening of Novitiates in all of these countries
• the courage and the suffering that formed the foundation of change and adaptation. Looking back we see that these were moments of grace that gave life to our Congregation.

Our’s is a beautiful story!!!

Today

One hundred and fifty years later we are 515 Sisters living our internationality and striving to respond to the human and spiritual needs of today’s world.

You will find in this newsletter a number of articles that illustrate varied aspects of our SSCM charism as it is lived in our different milieux. Inspired by our Founders and deeply rooted in Christ we continue to share the gift we have received – in the service of life. We remain close to our people, sharing our family spirit with them. Whatever our ministry - evangelization, education, health-care, gospel justice or service to our sisters - it is vital. It flows from our heart; it is inspired by the Word of God that we share together in our faith communities. Our presence among the young announces Jesus Christ to them, helps them discover their contribution to the building of a new world, perhaps challenges them to consider a vocation to consecrated life.

With one heart, we celebrate what the « little work » has become!
Tomorrow

The gift of God for tomorrow is:

- our hope rooted in a spirit of surrender and trust
- the new vocations to our Congregation, with their dreams for the future
- the arrival of two young Cameroonian sisters in France
- the International Session for newer members that will take place in Cameroon next July
- our Affiliates
- SSCM Consecrated Laity and Servant Companions, new branches on our Congregational tree
- the ever-present zeal and capacity to adapt to new realities
- the constant search for God’s will lived in a spirit of discernment
- our heritage – perpetuated for future generations
- the depth of our faith in Divine Providence which opens the future before us – as it did for our sisters over the past 150 years!

How great is the Lord!
He has done wonders for us.
With one heart let us raise our voices to God.
He looked down upon the poverty and the simplicity of his servants.
By the might of his arm,
He guided us through times of darkness and trial.

With Him the shadows are transformed into light.
Let us bless him for his love of us that extended over the past 150 years.

Happy are we from the time of our beginnings and for all ages to come.

Let the joy of the celebration burst forth!
Thank you for being there to give thanks with us!

Louise Payeur, S.S.C.M.
Superior general
The Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary was born of the missionary spirit of the Founder, Father François Jean-Baptiste Delaplace, Spiritan (1825-1911).

He was the Director of the Society of the Holy Family, founded in Paris for the evangelization of impoverished families left to fend for themselves during the period of economic liberalism of the XIX century. Father Delaplace was struck by the sad state of these families so affected by unemployment and misery of all sorts. The religious ignorance of the children deeply disturbed him, so much so that he decided to begin a project to provide them with religious education. He called upon Jeanne-Marie Moisan (1824-1892), a courageous Breton woman with unwavering faith and a generous heart, to help him in the realization of his plan. To his request, she immediately responded "YES". She in turn called on other courageous women to join her. The project became a reality on March 19, 1860. The little plan that began as a charitable work soon evolved into a new religious Congregation, when, several years after its foundation, these women expressed the desire to consecrate their entire life to God. In 1865 a Rule of Life was established and in 1867 Jeanne-Marie Moisan, Foundress, made her public consecration to God and became Mother Marie of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Congregation was granted official recognition by the Church on July 8, 1902. Final approval for the Constitutions came on May 6, 1932.

It is good for us to remember the heroic beginnings of the lives of our first sisters. Having lived closely with our Founder they received their formation directly from him. This gives the Province of France a unique responsibility as custodian of the oral and written tradition of our Congregation.

The origins of the Province of France are interwoven with the beginnings of the Congregation due to the presence and leadership of our Founders during those early years. Responding to requests they received, they sent sisters first to the United States (1889) and then to Canada (1892). In 1953 the French Province accepted the invitation to open a mission in Cameroon.

The Apostolic Region of France was governed by the Superior General and her Council until 1948 at which time it was canonically erected as a province and given the name Holy Family Province of France.
Having seen firsthand the dedication of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary at St. Michael’s College in Paris, Brother Saulin, before leaving France in 1887, spoke with Mother Marie of the Blessed Sacrament about the possibility of having sisters for the United States. Upon his arrival in the United States, he shared his plans with Father Cyrille Fournier, Provincial Superior of the Viatorians in the United States. Father Fournier then wrote to Mother Foundress in February, 1889 to ask her for sisters. Father Moïse-Joseph Marsile, C.S.V., Superior of the Viatorian College in Bourbonnais, received a positive response to this request. Mother Mathilde of the Sacred Heart, along with Sisters St. Luc, Emerentia and Lucilla were foundresses of the Congregation in America. They arrived at the College in Bourbonnais, Illinois on October 10, 1889 where they took on the responsibilities of the infirmary, kitchen and laundry.

Sisters Thérésa, Marie de Liguori and Marie-Eustelle joined them in 1892. In 1895 they founded Holy Family Academy in Beaverville in the Peoria Diocese, where, the following year, they opened a Novitiate to receive three American postulants. On July 26, 1898 Sisters Mary of Jesus, Mary Anthony and St. Francis of Assisi made their first profession.

In 1897, in the Diocese of Chicago, the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary were asked to accept the direction of the Catholic hospital in Kankakee, founded by the parish priest.

The works of the Congregation prospered and many new foundations were opened in several different locations.

Upon being informed of the need for sisters to teach the boys and girls of Saint-Éphrem de Tring in Canada, Bishop Louis-Nazaire Bégin, Auxiliary Bishop of Quebec, talked with Father Joseph-Esdras Laberge, a Canadian priest who taught at Bourbonnais College in the United States. Father Laberge advised him to tell the parish priest, Fr. Léon-Maxime Morisset, to contact Mother Marie of the Blessed Sacrament in France. Her response was positive. The first four Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary to arrive in Saint-Éphrem de Tring on October 12, 1892 were Mother Ste-Euphrasie-du-Sacré-Coeur, Superior, Sisters Saint-Gabriel, Sainte-Geneviève and Isabelle-de-Jésus. They were given a new convent which had not as yet been furnished. On October 24th classes began for both day students and resident students. Sisters Saint-Édouard and Yves-du-Sacré-Cœur of the Sacred Heart arrived in November of that year.

On November 21, 1895, the Novitiate opened its doors to receive three Canadian postulants. On April 25, 1898 Sisters Saint Lucy, St. Francis Xavier and Saint Celine made first profession.

In 1899, at the request of Bishop Bégin, the Congregation accepted two schools in Quebec, one in Limoilou and the other in Stadacona. The following year they opened houses in Portneuf, Beauce and later in other regions of Quebec.
At the request of the Society for Foreign Missions of Canada, Mother Saint-Laurent (Céline Drolet), Provincial Superior, and the members of her Council agreed to send sisters to Cuba.

On March 7, 1950 His Eminence Cardinal Manuel Arteaga, Archbishop of Havana, signed the decree authorizing the Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary to open a house and take responsibility for the Parish School of Caraballo, both located in the diocese of Havana.

May 12, 1950 saw the arrival of the first four Canadian foundresses: Mother Ange-Marie (Candide Labonté), Superior, Sisters Saint-Michel (Éva Béland), Marie-Marthe (Lucienne Caron) and Marie-de-la-Salette (Marguerite-Marie Hébert). Father Émile Morin, P.M.E., Principal of the school in Caraballo, entrusted the sisters with several ministries: teaching in the parish school and in the kindergarten, teaching Catechism and preparing catechists.

That September, at the request of Fr. Siméon Larochelle, P.M.E., one of the sisters was sent to teach the children of San Antonio and the following year another sister was sent to teach pre-school. In 1951, Sisters Paul-Émile (Lydia Bérubé) and Charles-Eugène (Marie-Thérèse Fontaine) arrived in Cuba and the following year Sisters Joseph-du-Sacre-Cœur (Marie-Rose Paradis), Marie-de-Fatima (Thérèse Tardif), and Sainte-Thérèse-de-la-Sainte-Face (Marie-Paule Vachon) joined them there. The construction of the school in San Antonio was completed in 1952. The SSCMs were asked to be the principals in both San Antonio and in La Sierra. Sr. Saint-Léopold (Évangéline Saindon) joined the team in 1953.

In 1961, the Government nationalized the three schools in Caraballo, San Antonio and La Sierra. Only six sisters remained in the country to continue in service to the Cuban Church.

The Cuban Novitiate was opened in May 1969.

At the request of Bishop René Graffin, C.S.Sp., of Yaoundé, Mother Marie-Dominique, Provincial Superior in France, sent four sisters to Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Mbalmayo, Cameroon: Mother Jean-Gabriel (Hélène Néré), Superior, Sisters Marie-Blandine (Marie-Louise Jonchère), Marie-Estelle (Lucie Villeret) and Marie-André (Jeanne Vaillant).

These French foundresses arrived in Mbalmayo on November 21, 1953. They were entrusted with the direction of the elementary schools, teacher training, the dispensary, the formation of the young Cameroonian women, Sixa (marriage preparation), as well as with the kindergartens of the parish and the city.

In 1955, Mother Sainte-Eugénie, Superior General, responded positively to the request from Bishop Marcel Lefebvre, C.S.Sp., Apostolic Delegate for the missions of French Africa, to send sisters for the Diocese of Yaoundé. The first group of sisters left Quebec on August 19, 1955: Mother Sainte-Marcelle (Suzanne Denis), Sisters Élisabeth-de-la-Trinité (Cécile Morin) and Marie-des-Apôtres (Anne-Marie Drouin). They arrived at the Cathedral in Yaoundé on October 17, 1955. In the spring of 1957 they were joined by Sister François-de-l’Alverne (Marguerite Ferland). On October 27 of the same year the community took up residence in the school in Mvog-Ada. Besides being in charge of the school in Mvog-Ada the sisters were responsible for the supervision of the schools of the surrounding areas. Little by little their contacts with the women led to the beginnings of the home economics classes for the women of Cameroon.

As time went by the sisters opened new missions in other dioceses.

The Novitiate was opened in September 1964.
When the Cuban Revolution broke out and the sisters had to leave the country, Mother Sainte-Agathe, Superior General at the time, promised to send sisters to other parts of Latin America if the six sisters who remained in Cuba were unharmed. In 1961, in her desire to remain faithful to her promise and in response to the urgent plea from Pope John XXIII asking Congregations to give priority to Latin America, she sought the consent of her Council to open a new mission in the Diocese of Temuco in Chili. She sought the advice of Father Gilles Ouellet, Superior General of the Mission Society of Canada.

During his visit to Chile and Argentina he was asked by Bishop José Augustín Marozzi, Bishop of Resistencia in Argentina, if a Canadian Congregation of women would be available for the parish schools in his diocese. Upon his return to Canada, Father Ouellet then advised the sisters to go to Resistencia, a location in need of educators.

Mother Sainte-Agathe contacted the Bishop of Resistencia and on December 13, 1962 Bishop Marozzi signed the Decree authorizing the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary to open a residence in his diocese for the Christian education of children and youth.

The four Canadian foundresses, all of whom had been missionaries in Cuba, set foot on Argentinian soil on January 26, 1963: Sisters Sainte-Thérèse-de-la-Sainte-Face (Marie-Paule Vachon), Superior, Marie-Victorin (Mari-Thérèse De Roy), Paul-de-la-Croix (Laura Fortier) and Marie-Marcel (Madeleine Lessard). They accepted responsibility for San José Obrero Parish School in the Province of Chaco. Sister Paul-Émile (Lydia Bérubé) joined them that December.

As the years passed, while continuing their work of education the sisters branched out into other works: pastoral ministry, formation of catechists, management of a retirement home for abandoned elderly, social work and evangelization.

The Novitiate opened in 1978.

On November 28, 1996 Sister Fernande Dionne, Superior General, authorized Sister Madeleine Lessard, Regional Superior in Argentina, to open a house in Chile. This new residence would allow the sisters in formation to attend the formation courses offered there.

Cardinal Carlos Oviedo Cavada accepted to receive the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary into his diocese. The four foundresses arrived in Santiago, Chile, on March 5, 1997. The community was composed of two Canadians, Sisters Cécile Doyon, Superior, and Marie-Thérèse De Roy with two young Argentinians, Sisters Nilda Argüello and Margarita Esquivel.

The sisters live in a poor area of the city where they serve in works of pastoral ministry and evangelization.
Marie Moisan Residence Today

The Marie Moisan Residence, located at 41 rue Lhomond, Paris, provides housing for 26 women between the ages of 18 and 30 for anywhere between three months to two years or longer. Strong bonds are created between the members of the community and these young residents. These young women have left their family home and are living on their own for the first time. They need temporary lodging and the Residence provides them a safe environment, time for psychological and human development, and, for some, a time to heal the wounds inflicted upon them by their family or in the workplace.

Students find the environment conducive to their studies. Avenilde, a resident from Mexico, invited the residents and staff to attend the defence of her doctoral thesis in Mathematics, following her five years of intense university research!

The values of respect and kindness are experienced on a daily basis. Internationality is another characteristic of the Residence. It is not unusual to have as many as fifteen different countries represented at one time, from places such as Afghanistan, Mexico, the United States and Algérie. The blend of cultures and religions is a source of mutual enrichment that results in an openness to the other and a breadth of spirit. Wonderful friendships are forged and vacation time provides opportunities to experience life in another country.

Very often former residents return to introduce their husbands and their first baby. This is like a pilgrimage for them: to return to the place where they spent many happy years.

Marie Anna Marceau, S.S.C.M.

Villeneuve-Triage, a place of many faces

“Humble chimes and heavenly murmurs», « Flores Dei, Fructus Dei » are the words we sang for our Congregational 100th anniversary celebration.

We are a community living among the inhabitants of the small town of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. We are a quiet presence, sowing the seeds that bear modest fruit - much like the chimes that are barely perceptible over the din of the noise of our world.

Our ministries of hospitality, catechesis, home visits to the sick, participation in neighborhood organizations, services to the impoverished, participation in “Secours Catholique” and “ATD-quart-monde” and being part of a Marian prayer group, give us the opportunity to cross paths with people from many different places and cultures. In the footsteps of our Founders, we are sowing good seed.

Marie Fulcon, S.S.C.M.
Community in Créteil
« Go find my brothers and sisters and share the Word with them »

It is important that we reach out to both youth and young adults where they are in their discovery of Jesus Christ, to listen to them the way Jesus listened in Emmaus, to sit with them and then to disappear so they can get up and go out to their brothers and sisters.

Being involved in the Catechumenate for both adults and adolescents, we in turn are met by the Christ who invites us to share the Word.

Our community has chosen to live the diocesan « Orientations ». Both Sr. Françoise and Sr. Yvette have many years of experience and are passionate about their ministry! To journey with those in the catechumenate is to accept to be challenged in our own faith journey.

The community in Créteil

Sr. Yvette Le Goasduff with young students of the catechumenate
Sr. Françoise Prochasson with young students of the catechumenate

Sainte-Marie Community, Montgeron

Today we live a graced moment in the history of our Congregation. The service of God that is asked of us calls for creative fidelity in the face of an ever-changing society.

It is true: the life of our community continues the SSCM reality through prayer, hospitality, parish ministry, participation with various associations and charitable organizations.

With Mary, true witness of Hope … may we continue to MOVE FORWARD… in the footsteps of our Founders.

Martine Dumant, S.S.C.M.
Women in Mission

In June, 2008, Holy Family Province, USA gathered together to discuss the present and future of our province. From our sharings arose an identity statement that has been the impetus for our life together as we move into the future:

We are Women of the Annunciation.
We hear Gabriel’s greeting, “Do not be afraid.”
And we, like Mary, honestly question our life, our times and our future.
We are discerning women, pregnant with promise, who face the unknown with a spirit of innovation.
We believe that in true dialogue with the world, the Church and each other, we will experience the fulfillment of the promise:
“Behold, I make all things new!”

This spirit of innovation and hope has permeated the history and works of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary in the United States since its inception in 1889 when four young French Sisters arrived on American soil to care for infirmed students and to perform domestic work at St. Viator College, Bourbonnais, Illinois. In less than ten short years, the Sisters opened a boarding school and emergency hospital in the nearby vicinity.

Today, the Sisters continue in the education field teaching and ministering at parochial schools, parishes and diocesan institutions. Through the sponsorship of Provena Health, along with two other religious congregations, Sisters participate in the healing ministry of the Church in governance, pastoral care, acute and long-term healthcare settings.

Faithful to reading the signs of the times and the promptings of the Spirit, the Sisters have responded through new ministries to meet the needs of the people of God. Today SSCMs serve as parish life coordinators, counselors, prison ministers, and spiritual directors. In their “spare-time” the Sisters volunteer to teach English as a second language, serve at social services organization, catechize adults and children in their faith, participate in civic and humanitarian organizations, advocate for justice issues as well as assist where they are needed in our sponsored ministries.
This past year, several initiatives have been realized. We have opened One Heart, One Soul Spirituality Center in the Kankakee, Illinois area. Along with Nazareth Retreat House in Batavia, we are able to offer individuals and groups beautiful environments for spiritual growth.

We also were able to obtain a bus through the generosity of our partners in ministry. This bus is used by our Sisters in Hopkins Park, IL to help transport those in need to doctor’s appointments, dialysis, and grocery shopping. The bus bears the words “Women in Mission” and that is truly an apt description of the SSCM ministry in this impoverished area.

In collaboration with the laity, the charism of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary continues to spread into new areas. The SSCM affiliates share and live the charism and spirituality of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary. This year we welcomed our first Servant Companion. A Servant Companion is a woman who desires to live in prayer, in community and in service with the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary. She makes a promise to live in the spirit of poverty, chastity and obedience annually, for as long as five years.

Linda Hatton, S.S.C.M.

Rooted in the spiritual and cultural heritage of this province, the pioneering and enterprising spirit of the past continues. Embued and energized by this spirit, the Servant of the Holy Heart of Mary in the United States looks confidently to the future. She is called to live the Paschal Mystery and to serve the people of God in a nation that honors the values of liberty and justice, a nation consecrated to Mary Immaculate.

Complementary Code Holy Family Province, USA
Like him

Two years ago I wholeheartedly accepted to be at the service of my elderly sisters, with all my strengths and limitations. I saw this as a means of expressing my faith in the dignity of each person no matter what her age or state of health. Everyday I am called to put my personal Credo into action:

“I believe the person speaks first and foremost by who she is deep within herself.
I believe the elderly person has had more time to allow herself to be transformed by the wisdom and the goodness of God.
I believe that the sick develop another language that comes from deep within and which challenges our sense of efficiency.
I believe that in the most painful situations, you are there, Lord, guiding the work of your hands.”

In this service, I am often reminded of the words of our Founder when he spoke of the sick as being the lightning rods of our religious family. I take these words seriously: “Wherever one of us is, all of us are.” (SSCM Pastoral Letter, p. 12)

I join with all of those who work with our elderly and/or sick sisters to say to you who minister in other areas: Thank you for being there with us!

I want to add that I am happy to be where I am, with all of you, to be able “to be at the service of Life” and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, the Servant.

Ghislaine Roseberry, S.S.C.M.

Hope for the future!

As director of the affiliate program in Saint Joseph Province I want to emphasize the commitment with which the affiliates live their Christian and baptismal life. They come because they are searching for something that is missing in society: a spiritual dimension. Once they discover it, they commit themselves to be at the service of life in their respective milieu. In a way, they live the charism in places where the sisters are no longer able to go.

What great joy and pride to see how the Word of God is rooted in their hearts and in their daily lives!

Réjeanne Bolduc, S.S.C.M.

“I will lead her into the desert and speak to her heart”

The Retreat Center at 37 des Cascades, in Beauport, is a place where the words of Jesus are realized: “Come away to a deserted place and rest a while.” (Mk 6, 31)

Sisters, affiliates, young adults come from our various apostolic regions to participate in organized retreats or to have time for personal solitude and/or spiritual direction.

A team of sisters provides the opportunity for others to follow “A Journey into the Heart of Our Spirituality”. This retreat is the fruit of living our spiritual heritage during the past 150 years as a religious Congregation.

The following comments witness the experience of those who come to the Retreat Center:

“I experienced a spiritual and Marian renewal.”
“Time here allowed me to rediscover peace and joy in silence and in the loving presence of Mary.”
“it was wonderful to journey with Mary as my model, to contemplate the mysteries of Jesus with her eyes and to enter into communion with these mysteries with her heart.”

Henriette Bolduc, S.S.C.M.
Director of the Retreat and Resource Center
37, avenue des Cascades, Quebec

Opening our doors…

In Saint-Ubalde, Portneuf, we have approximately forty boys and girls between 6 and 12 years of age who follow the catechetical classes which are offered. For the first two levels, trained catechists work with the parents who in turn are responsible for teaching their children at home.

Levels three, four, five and six, which include Sacramental preparation, remain the responsibility of the catechists. Parents are invited to assist. The program is definitely a challenge for our community as well as for the families that are involved.

We also offer a Biblical program for adults called The Thresholds of Faith. This year we have eight adults in level 3 (Jesus) and level 4 (Church).

The work of evangelization is demanding but I am very happy to make my small contribution.

“Doors open for the many hearts in search of God. May they discover Him deep within themselves and all around them!
May they find that Someone walks at their side on their journey …
And may they know that they are loved!” - Robert Lebel

Raymonde Duquette, S.S.C.M.
Today, in this year 2010, my mission is to receive the young sisters of yesteryear who are tired because of their many years of service in Quebec and in other countries. I am enriched by their wisdom. Here in this Home, those who are in need receive compassionate care, recognition, comfort in their suffering. In the words of Nietzsche: “Wherever there is suffering, there is found holy ground” and I feel I am privileged to be in this service.

There are some who come, ready to board the train for their final journey. In those instances, I try to be attentive to those who continue to wait, supporting them as they surrender their companion to eternity.

This house is also home for those sisters who, in the spirit of obedience, help their sisters in their need or who work in varied services in collaboration with more than one-hundred employees - they keep me young and active. The Retreat Center, the Missionary Service (for those serving abroad) and the Central Archives also have their home here.

My door is always open to those who want to come here. If there is a special event to be organized I know that I will have the joy of being the hostess! Throughout our 150th year of celebration, I will be happy to share with you our wonderful SSCM story and to give thanks with you to our Provident God.

The Family Home
by Fleurette Auger, S.S.C.M.
Today
Holy Heart of Mary Province • Canada {30, avenue des Cascades, Québec (Québec), G1E 2J8}

Women rediscover their dignity

Our Founders, François Delaplace and Jeanne-Marie Moisan, desired that the Congregation always respond to the needs of the times. In their time, the need was for an orphanage for abandoned girls. Today, the communities of the Province are committed to being a pastoral presence to women who are convalescing or who are looking for a quiet place to rest. In an atmosphere of trust and warmth, each one is welcomed with joy, compassion and love.

Some women are searching for well-being, in a desire to live life better. They are offered workshops adapted to their human and physical needs. In a spirit of joy and mutual sharing, basic human and social values are transmitted to them. They are offered classes to help them improve their French as well as to learn other skills. Through these means, the various groups experience a true family spirit.

One of our communities has chosen to focus on the dignity of women and children. In order to do this they participate in various organizations that enable them to come in contact with women who are in need. They open their doors to welcome individuals and groups and organize activities that help the women feel they are not alone. This type of sharing allows the sisters to bond with the women and to discover the values that motivate them. The sisters are aware that they are achieving “one little step at a time”, much as did Father Delaplace.

Together, we are conscious that we are helping to build a society where all women will be able to live with dignity and with respect for their differences. Everyone has the right to feel at ease and respected in her human and Christian life within the family. We believe it is possible for these women to enjoy a better quality of life and to assume responsibility for their future.

Our desire, as “servants with compassionate hearts”, is to free life in our respective areas.

Jeannine Lefebvre, S.S.C.M.

Shining lights

On January 27, 1908, Father François Delaplace, wrote: “A prayerful and fervent community is like a shining light in a parish.”

The wish of Father Delaplace has become a reality over the years. Several communities were established in a number of parishes where the sisters work in the areas of education and Christian instruction of the children in our boarding schools, in other public and private schools, in the care of those physically or morally diminished, with visits to the elderly and shut-ins, to mention just a few ministries.

Today, how are we implementing Father Delaplace’s desire in a world marked by secularism, globalization, multiculturalism and the insatiable search for happiness in all of its forms?

The world for which and in which we were born continues to call us to greater apostolic zeal and creativity in order to discover new forms of presence, particularly in those areas we refer to as “the little places”, that is to say those areas far from the large urban centers and in parishes where there is no resident priest or other religious presence.

That is how we came to be present in Beauce, the Eastern Townships, Quebec, La Pocatière, the North Shore, even as far as the island of Anticosti. There, we provide faith education in many forms:
Holy Heart of Mary Province has five houses in which we work with young adults: in Sherbrooke, La Pocatière, Montreal and in Quebec: Ste-Foy and Charlesbourg.

These houses provide students and young workers with a welcoming community, a place of sharing with others, a place where they can receive spiritual direction, a place for discernment. The “Come and See House” in Ste-Foy is specifically for those women who are discerning a possible vocation to consecrated life.

In the footsteps of Jesus and of Mary, all of the sisters, no matter their age or where they live, find a place in the great mission field of the Church and the world today. We all take special care to accompany the laity so as to enable them to assume responsibilities within the Church and in the world.

To be "a shining light" – there, where we are - means to be "attentive to the signs of the Spirit" at the heart of the world.

Thérèse Bourque, S.S.C.M.

A breath of hope

Christian initiation, “P’tite Pasto”, “Brebis de Jésus”, pastoral animation in schools, parishes and at the diocesan level. Other of our sisters work in the areas of health-care and social services, by being a presence in nursing homes, by visiting the sick and those who are alone. There are those who work closely with grassroots and autonomous groups to improve the plight of the impoverished in Quebec. Certain communities open their doors to welcome young people who come in search of the meaning of life and for guidance to know what God wants of them. Others welcome women and children in difficulty.

Human and spiritual growth, along with a strong component of mentoring, are the main goals pursued in each of these houses.

The commitment to work with youth takes many different forms. It is as different as being present to the Community Colleges in Quebec City and La Pocatière, to the Collège François-Delaplace in the Eastern Townships, to helping young immigrants settle into their new country. Our commitment to youth is expressed in activities such as Youth Rallies, group meetings, sharing the Word of God, affiliates, participation in the movement of the “Brebis de Jésus” and the “Bergères”, etc.

This year, at our house in Charlesbourg, a young woman has joined us to share in our community and prayer life. Her presence provides the opportunity to build community. This is a call for us to share the richness of our consecrated life and to work for the “fullness of life”.

This Orientation of the last General Chapter inviting us to live “our mission as women bearers of life” is alive and well in our region.

Anne-Marie Richard, S.S.C.M.
Today

Marie Moisan District • Cuba
{ Calzada de Bejucal 2317, e/Wood bury y Franklin, Arroyo Apolo, Habana, zona postal 10900 }

The regional house: Vocation of hospitality

At the present time there are five sisters living at the Regional House which is located in a working class neighborhood on the outskirts of Havana. Our mission is one of presence, hospitality, hope and support. With the priests and laity, particularly with the affiliates, we are active in pastoral ministry to the Christian community. The support and formation of the laity is our main priority. We are involved in the faith-education and human development of the children and youth through catechetics and the organization of workshops. We work closely with the intercongregational group of young religious and with the Presidency of the Conference of Religious (CONCUR), which provide us with opportunities for openness and communion.

Florida Community - locations where we live the fullness of life

SSCM’s are present in the following locations: Florida, Ibarra and Agramonte, Céspedes, Piedr ectas.

Our community is located in the poor neighborhood of Ibarra at a good distance from the local parish church. We live our dedication to the “fullness of life” by our leadership in the community “Corazón de María”, by our relationships with our neighbors and by the hospitality we extend to those who come to our door. We work closely with the thirty affiliates in our desire to transmit our charism to the group. We do our best to facilitate a personal encounter with Jesus for those people who suffer from discouragement, from despair, from the absence of a hopeful future.

Teaching catechetics to children, accompanying and supporting the catechists, and working with youth groups are all places where I live my “servant being” and where I can promote the fullness of life with my people.

Yaneisy (Yana) O’Farrill, S.S.C.M.

I work with adults: prepare for Confirmation, do health-care ministry, accompany individuals and work with couples. It is my hope that I can release some of their tension, teach them how to care for themselves and how to find strength, courage, fidelity and rest for their hearts in Jesus and in his Word.

Jeannine Paquin, S.S.C.M

The faith-education of children, adolescents, youth and catechists of the parish provides me with the opportunity to work with God’s grace. This ministry is a source of thanksgiving and of a peaceful and creative search for God’s will for myself and for others.

Yanet López, S.S.C.M

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Patricia Arsenault, S.S.C.M
Marie Moisan District • Cuba

Marie Moisan District • Cuba

Today

Friends of our spirituality

COMMITTED TO FULLNESS OF LIFE!

Spring 2010 • 17

Marie Moisan District • Cuba

Santiago de Cuba

I give courses in Human Development to 117 students (four groups) at the Christian Brothers Cultural Center. Every week I also give classes to 77 youth and adults in our Parish of Vista Alegre (three classes). These courses are directed to personal growth, spiritual openness and the improvement of relationships with family and with others around them. This is my way of promoting “the fullness of life”.

Tania Linares, S.S.C.M.

Course in Human Development

At Santa Teresita Formation Center, I teach English and computer students to live the values that will help them to enjoy better and fuller lives. For the past three years, I have accompanied a group of university students who are residents in Santiago de Cuba. Although helping them to grow in their human and Christian life is definitely a challenge that calls for creativity, perseverance and trust, it is at the same time a source of great joy.

Maria del Carmen Balmaseda, S.S.C.M.

At the Chapel of “Cuabitas”, I lead the Saturday evening celebration, I visit the sick and the elderly, and with the help of the diocesan Caritas organization, I distribute soap and food to those most in need. I also share the Word of God with a group of eight persons at the Prayer Center in Pastorita. The priest comes twice a year to celebrate Eucharist with us in this family house. I feel that my presence is important in this beautiful mission and I am very happy here.

Colette Rodrigue, S.S.C.M.

Santíssima Trindade Region: Awakening the hope

The Novitiate has been in Santa Cruz del Norte since 1998. We live in communion with the people by offering them simple yet essential services in the hope of helping to make their life a bit easier. We work to awaken hope and promote fullness of life by:

• providing pastoral ministry to the small Christian communities and neighboring villages
• providing workshops on human and Christian development for children and youth
• journeying with youth and families
• welcoming groups of young people for retreats or weekend “camps”
• supporting the vocation ministry of the diocese.

Sisters Ginette St-Cyr and Lucille Rocheleau visiting the sick

Photocopying documents and the loan of crutches is an invaluable aid for our people. We welcome, we listen – and the people are grateful.

The Marie Moisan workshops provide an occasion for the boys and girls in the catechetics class and in the neighborhood to come together to play, create, learn and grow in their living of human and Christian values. The workshops also are a way for us to collaborate with the laity and to transmit our charism.

Six young people who collaborate with us meet together every month at our house for faith-sharing and to reflect on their Christian commitment founded on our spirituality.

Sr. Yanisleidis, Marie Moisan workshop

COMMITTED TO FULLNESS OF LIFE!

Spring 2010 • 17
Today

Mary Queen of Apostles District • Cameroon {B.P. 1822, Yaoundé}

The SSCM mission in Cameroon

Our hearts are filled with gratitude in this year when we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of our Congregation.

Over these years, how many countless acts of love have contributed so much life to so many, acts which embodied the desire to remain faithful to the inspiration of our Founders and of those who have gone before us, who in a constant search for the will of God, wished to assuage the misery of their times. Our Founder said: “When I see all of this misery, I would want to be able to take in hundreds of children … and have the personnel required to do every possible good for these little ones”. (Slave of the Divine Majesty, p. 85)

We are the recipients of this life! The beautiful heritage that is our charism and spirituality continues to be transmitted in our formation houses. It lives on through our daily ministries and apostolic works. Today, we are present in five dioceses (Mbalmayo, Yaoundé, Obala, Yokadouma, Kumbo), where we continue to live our apostolic zeal and to dedicate ourselves to works of education, health-care, parish ministry in the diocese, in the villages and in the prisons. In all of our ministries we are particularly vigilant to give special care to the impoverished. Our constant concern is to provide education that brings fullness of life to every dimension of the person.

May the Holy Heart of Mary obtain an abundance of grace for us in this jubilee year so that we may enter into deeper communion with Jesus Christ, the humble Servant of the Father, and continue to live His mission at the heart of our Church.

Paule-Marie Ndjom, S.S.C.M.

COP’Justice, building our future

In a world where the fundamental values at the service of life are threatened by self-centeredness, hatred and violence, we, the team leaders of “Cop’Monde” in Mvom-Nam, make ours’ the motto of the COP’Justice Group, “let us work for reconciliation and peace”. We pursue this objective: to inculcate into the children the meaning of sharing, of forgiveness and of community.

We use images, play-acting, and testimonials representing concrete situations and the children are invited to take a stance on the issues presented.

Is this not a way for us to be in the service of life, following the example of our Founders and the sisters who have gone before us?

Nadine Amani, S.S.C.M.
150 years in the service of life
How is it happening in Cameroon today?

**Life in our Kindergartens in Yaoundé and Yokadouma**

- Tilling the soil
- Kindergarten: ironing
- Becoming a team player: football

**Formation adapted to our time**

- Students at the C.E.T.I. in Mvog-Ada
- Kindergarten students: coloring
- Altar servers

**Special attention to women and children**

- Students from Jean Tabi School learning to care for nature
- Sr. Eugénie Nga Ebolo with newborn twins at the Mbalmayo Health Center
- Giving pre-natal classes at the Mvom-Nnam Health Center
In our desire to live the General Chapter Orientation in our Region, efforts have been multiplied to promote the cause of women through workshops, gatherings and seminars. This is Sr. Lise Bédard, from our community in Chile, working on fabric painting.

Promoting Women’s Dignity

Sr. Teresita Argüello of our community in Chile is involved with the rehabilitation of those who suffer from addiction to drugs and alcohol. Although the team — of which Sister Teresita is a member — faces huge challenges they work with faith and hope.

Accompanying persons going through rehabilitation

At the sewing workshop in our community of Presidencia de La Plaza, Sr. Marie-Thérèse Côté is working with a group of women from the local area.

Living Fullness of Life with Women

Sr. Monique Boulanger is close to the little and the humble ones in the rural community where she works.

Presence in the Midst of the Little Ones

At Nazareth Senior Residence we care for each person. Sr. María Beatriz Gómez is committed to her mission with the elderly.

Taking care of life
Sr. Marcela García works with the children of “Faith and Joy” School. Her love helps them to grow in a spirit of joy.

At “Heart of Mary” Residence in Presidencia de La Plaza, young women develop the skills and values they will need to live life with dignity. Sr. Thérèse Gauvreau is a faithful servant in this project.

Year after year, the “Heart of Mary” youth missionary group prepare themselves to share their faith with families living in the distant areas of the country. Sr. Maria Beatriz Gómez and Sr. Marcela García accompany the group.

The young people in this group from Presidencia de la Plaza Parish prepare for Confirmation by participating in a workshop on the youth reality today under the leadership of Sr. Thérèse Gauvreau.
### Testimonies

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Canada</td>
<td>At the time of my first profession, I truly felt our family spirit in the many marks of affection from the sisters in all of our countries. What a beautiful witness to today's world, profoundly marked by individualism and anonymity!</td>
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<td><strong>Ossana Fis Rosen</strong></td>
<td>S.S.C.M., Cuba</td>
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<td><strong>Annie Salomé Ekassi</strong></td>
<td>S.S.C.M., France</td>
<td>My dream for 2060 I dreamed that we will be sisters witnessing – with joyful hearts - to the Primacy of the love of God – in the Church. We will live our SSCM heritage and will reveal it to the world.</td>
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<td>Our dream is that our Congregation will grow in both numbers and vitality, if it be God’s will, so that we can continue to be the life, the love and the mission of Jesus in our world. We also hope that we discern together, in prayer and reflection, God’s mission for us, and that we continue to live our call as Servants.</td>
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<td><strong>Adeline Kwetinyuy Ndze</strong></td>
<td>S.S.C.M.</td>
<td>It is the warm hospitality that attracted me to the SSCM Congregation. I am happy because we are a group of women who are constantly seeking the will of God and women who love one another. My dream of internationality becomes more and more of a reality with each passing day.</td>
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Commitment of the laity

**Affiliation**

- Holy Family Province – France
- Holy Family Province, United States
- Holy Heart of Mary Province, Canada
- Marie Moisan District - Cuba
- Divine Providence District, Argentina
- Divine Providence District – Chile
- St. Joseph Province – Canada
- Mary Queen of Apostles District, Cameroon

**Servant Companion**

- Holy Family Province, United States

**SSCM Consecrated Laity**

- Holy Heart of Mary Province – Canada
Extension of the Charism

SSCM Charism

Sisters

Affiliates

Families

Parishes

Consecrated Laity

Servant companions

Collaborators

Youth

Extension of the Charism