

Voice of the Sanctuary of Rigaud

Two months already... just to let you know

Dear pilgrims and friends of the Shrine, despite my absence in this 152nd season, allow me to thank you and the entire team for your support and solidarity so that Our-Dame-de-Lourdes does not forget me during this three-month recovery period following my heart surgery, which resulted in five bypass surgeries on April 28 at the Montreal Heart Institute. As they say, I was in good hands and I thank the Lord for it, especially since nothing had been planned in advance!

But the hand of the Lord was manifested through the course of events!



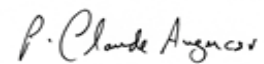
It is a grace that has been granted to me to be able to avoid the worst at the same time as a dream opportunity, at 64 years old, to try to find its deeper meaning and make salutary adjustments! To find yourself in such a state, overnight, it invites you to great humility, real confidence, and a "letting go"! Oh yes, I forgot, patience and resilience were also very much in demand because my hospitalization and especially my surgery delayed four times lasted nearly 20 days!

To those of you who experience loneliness, sadness, abandonment, physical or psychological suffering, mourning that never ends... be certain that despite the distance that separates us, rich in this experience of real suffering that is mine, I carry you in my prayers through the Rosary and the Eucharist that it is given to me to live with my older religious brothers in Joliette because I am certain that the Virgin Mary hears again and again each of our prayers! Let us give thanks for the nursing staff, the attendants and the volunteers whose presence rejoices our hearts! May Our Lady of Lourdes fill you with her tenderness and blessings!

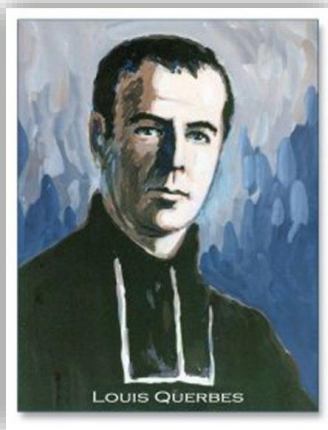
Let us thank the entire animation and maintenance team who, since the departure of our late Peter and at this important turning point that the Sanctuary is experiencing, offers you these celebrations and moments of prayer in this bucolic site that is the Sanctuary on the side of the mountain of Rigaud!

Looking forward to welcoming you there and joining our prayers!

P. Claude Auger csv
Rector, on the mend



God is good



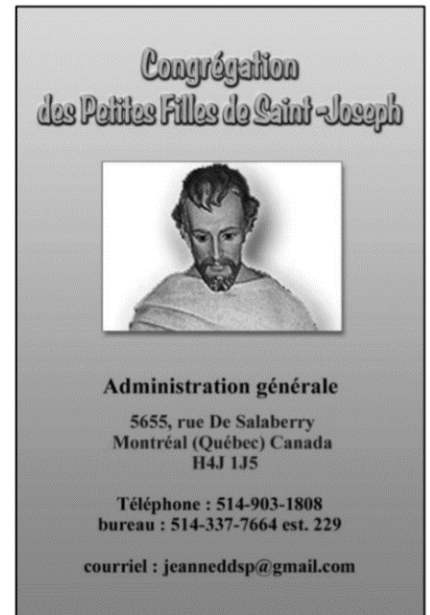
Our founder, Father Louis Querbes, loved to repeat in times of trial: **"God will provide."** And for us who believe, this word proves true so often. We know well that our Sanctuary can only live thanks to the generosity of people who come from everywhere, sometimes even from those we have never met.

But there are also gifts that come from hearts close to us, from familiar faces. As you can read in *La Voix du Sanctuaire*, the **Little Sisters of Saint Joseph** have accompanied us faithfully

for many years. This year again, their kindness has reached us—simple, radiant, like a quiet sign of Providence.

On behalf of the entire Sanctuary team, I want to offer them a **deep and sincere thank-you**. Thank you for their fidelity, for their gentleness, for the discreet way they support our mission. We carry them in our prayer with affection and gratitude.

May Our Lady of Lourdes return in abundance all that they offer with such generous hearts.



*Congrégation
des Petites Filles
de Saint-Joseph*

Nos Hommages
aux
Clercs de Saint-Viateur

de la part
de la Congrégation
des Petites Filles
de Saint-Joseph

Another gift



On June 1st, when I arrived at the Sanctuary, I had a nice surprise: the potholes were gone. The asphalt trucks, the small steamroller and several workers were busy making final touches.

It's another gift from Ville de Rigaud, after that of the chemical toilets. A concrete, simple, but so much appreciated gesture.



I would like to thank Ville de Rigaud for these actions, which increased this year. To my knowledge, this is the first time that we received so much care for our road, and this despite the flood of visitors who pass through the Sanctuary to pray or to walk on the trails of the Rigaud mountain.

I will continue to let you know about these beautiful gestures whenever they happen. They are for us gestures of support, collaboration and respect towards this place that welcomes so many souls in search of peace.

Pilgrims from FAITH AND LIGHT

On June 13, around 10:30 a.m., our Sanctuary had the joy of welcoming on pilgrimage **nearly 100 members of the Faith and Light movement**, coming from Eastern Canada — indeed, from all across Québec. Their arrival brought with it an atmosphere of prayer, simplicity, fraternity, and light, in perfect harmony with the spirit of their movement.



Faith and Light was born from the desire to help those with intellectual disabilities and their families find their rightful place in society and in the Church. This was the essential purpose of the pilgrimage organized in Lourdes for the Easter celebrations of 1971.

1968. At that time, it was commonly believed that persons with intellectual disabilities did not belong on pilgrimages. It was thought they were unable to live such an experience, or that their presence might disturb other pilgrims. In response to the plea of the parents of Thaddée and Loïc, two children with intellectual disabilities, Jean Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu helped them organize a pilgrimage to Lourdes. It took three years of preparation, marked by reactions ranging from great enthusiasm to strong hesitation.



1971. At Easter, 12,000 pilgrims from 15 countries — including 4,000 persons with intellectual disabilities accompanied by their parents and friends, especially many young people — gathered once again. Moved by this grace-filled moment, they wished to continue the adventure. The founders encouraged them: *“Continue meeting in small communities; do whatever the Holy Spirit inspires you to do.”* Thus, on that Easter Monday in Lourdes, Faith and Light was born.

Today, this movement, which now shines across the world, offered us a moment of pure grace. How good it was to see all these volunteers surrounding the persons they accompanied with such tenderness and care. Their love of service could be read in every gesture. No one was left alone: each person found a hand, a smile, a presence.

One could also sense all the preparation that had taken place beforehand: the colorful signs bearing the names of their regions, proudly lifted high, spoke of joyful and thoughtful organization. And what can be said of the Mass presided over by their chaplain! The songs chosen came from the heart, the simple and genuine animation — everything touched deeply those who took part.

We hope that their visit to our Sanctuary offered them what they came seeking: peace of heart, strength for the journey, and the desire to live fully.



We will be here next year, happy to welcome them again. May Mary accompany them on their way.



An Altar at the Belvedere of the Grotto

When we dream of someone we love, something within us begins to vibrate more deeply: the heart remembers, the soul turns, tenderness awakens. For me, Mary has always been that gentle, faithful presence — almost like a breath. She dwells in my thoughts like a light that never goes out. And as you know, it is this shared affection that gave birth to the Belvedere before the grotto, that place where Mary does not contemplate only Bernadette, but each of her children who pass by, leaving a prayer, a flower, a silence that speaks more than words.



One day, while speaking with Linda, I whispered that a small altar might find its place in that blessed corner — a simple altar, allowing a priest, surrounded by a small group, to celebrate the Eucharist there. A thought offered the way one releases an idea into the wind. But that wind carried it far. The following Sunday, while preparing with the team for the nine-o'clock Mass, Linda let the

idea slip... and immediately their hearts opened and the idea became a reality. As if Momma Mary herself had touched their loving hearts, they offered to provide the necessary funds.

Thanks to the two men from the Sainte-Marthe community where I celebrate Mass — the



project will be able to take shape: solidly, humbly, and at a good cost. All that remains is to wait for the return of good weather, for the earth to open, and for the stone to yield to the hands that will shape it, so that this dream may become a place of grace.

How could we not recognize the hand of Our Lady of Lourdes? She knows how to place in the hearts of her friends ideas that are a little bold, yet always fruitful. She loves to inspire dreams that exceed our strength, so that others may come to carry them with us.

What other dreams will Our Lady awaken in us? May we be attentive enough to hear them, confident enough to welcome them, and united enough to accomplish them together.



The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

After long months of waiting, June 24 rose like dawn. Since winter, we knew that no weekday Mass would be celebrated before the feast of Saint John the Baptist. And yet, deep within our hearts, the Eucharist kept beating like a breath held in suspense. That morning, at last, **the breath returned.**



To mark this new beginning, the liturgy committee — Linda, Jean-Marc, and myself — gathered with the simple and profound desire to make this feast **a threshold, a passage, an impulse forward.** Bethsaidi Boursiquot, our voice of light, had answered the call, as had James Armstrong, whose hands on the organ know how to open the doors of heaven. Linda had brought Peter's splendid icon of Saint John the Baptist: placed before the high altar, it seemed to watch over us, like the Precursor himself, as we took our first step.

In this **cathedral in the nature**, delicately decorated, more than a hundred pilgrims let themselves be enveloped by the chants, the sacred harmonies, and by the homily that sought to awaken in each one the voice of the desert: *"Prepare the way of the Lord."* Father Jean-Marc Provost, concelebrating, added to the celebration a gentle gravity — the kind that belongs to days that truly matter.

And because a new beginning deserves to be sealed in grace, an **individual blessing** was offered at the end of Mass. Almost everyone came forward, some even asking for the blessing of both priests, as if to receive a double measure of peace. How could we not see in this a sign that faith, far from fading, **still burns in hearts like a faithful ember.**

To you who read these lines: Why not come celebrate with us? Our Lady of Lourdes awaits you, arms open, ready to place in your life a little of that light that never goes out.

P. Gaëtan Labadie c.s.v.

Layout design by Linda Rose