

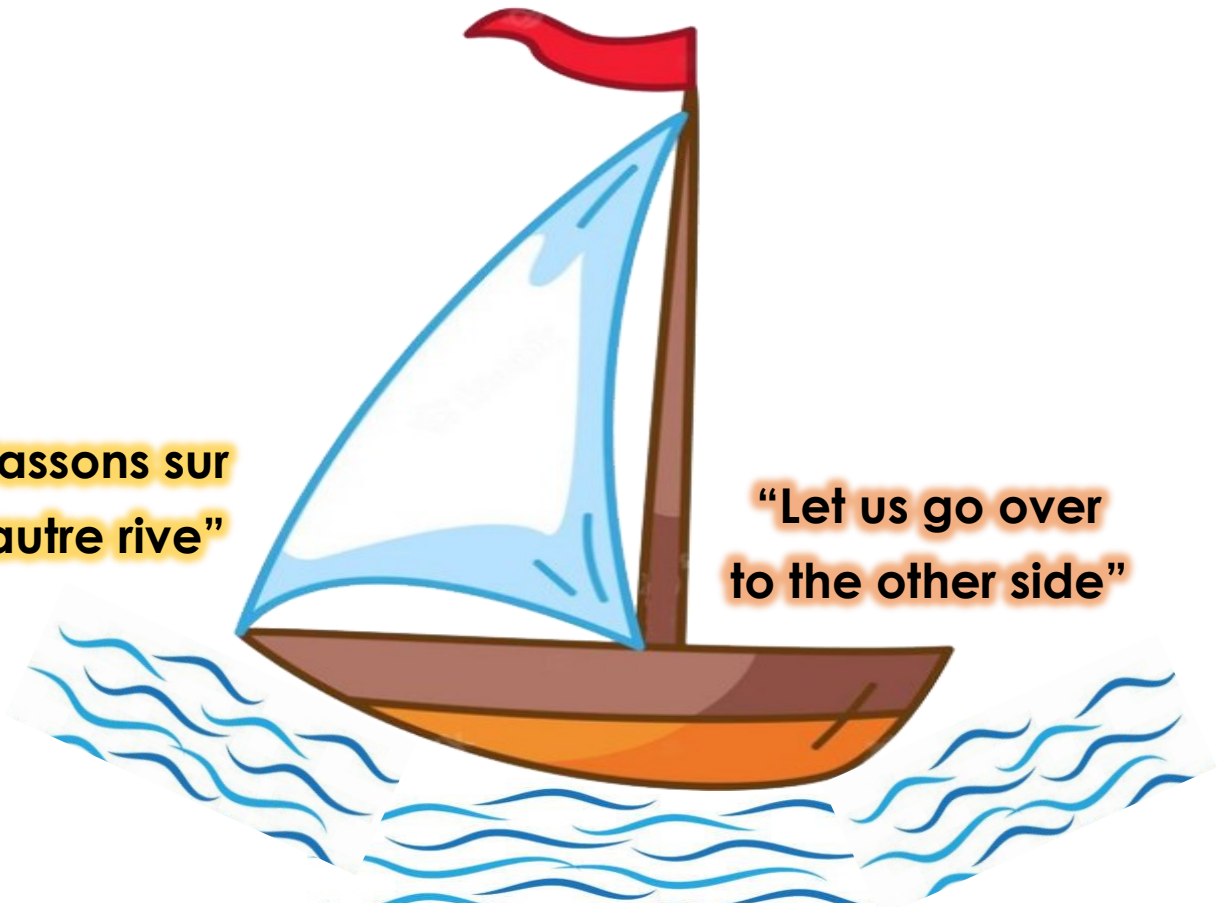


ECHOES

**"Cruceamos a la
otra orilla"**

**"Passons sur
L'autre rive"**

**"Let us go over
to the other side"**



**EUROPEAN - AMERICAN
CONTINENTAL MEETING OF LEADERSHIP TEAMS
12 - 21 JUNE 2023
MARTILLAC, FRANCE**

PARTICIPANTS

General Leadership Team:

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M.Kinga BARTOS

12TH - 21ST JUNE 2023

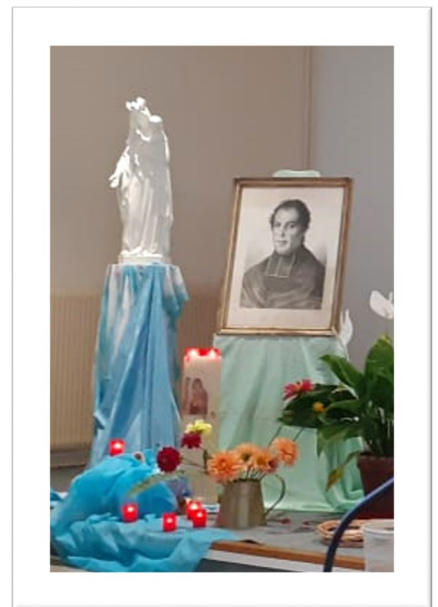
The Europe - America continental meeting was held in Martillac, France. The participants had the joy of meeting one another in person and journeying together for a common purpose. The General Leadership Team animated the whole session. The participants were from

Europe: Britain & Ireland, France & Belgium, Italy, Poland and Spain

America: Canada and Latin America (network)

DAY 1: 12/06/2023

On June 12th, the feast of **Our Lady of All Graces**, the Continental Meeting of the Leadership Teams of American and European Units was opened. First, the 31 participants, members of the 7 Councils of the 2 Continents, were introduced to each other and expressed their expectations for the meeting.



These are some of the expressions shared:

- ☞ To follow the spirit of the Chapter guidelines
- ☞ To listen to the Spirit who invites us to transformation
- ☞ To listen to the Spirit in order to take a new step
- ☞ To have an experience together in the search to walk in fidelity in today's situation
- ☞ To find the strength to live the mission together



Then, followed the Opening Prayer, led by the GLT, in which **Our Lady of All Graces** was honoured and her intercession was invoked for the meeting and for the whole Family of **Pierre Bienvenu Noailles**. During the prayer, Ana Maria Alcalde called the members of the Team from each Unit by name. The leader received a lighted candle, which she placed with the Unit Team, near the

statue of **Our Lady of All Graces** and the picture of our Founder.

Some extracts from the opening address by Ana Maria, Superior General:

"The common thread that unites us is "Let us go over to the other side". We are aware that we are here representing all the sisters of Europe and America.



The objectives of this meeting are as follows:

- * To get to know each other
- * To deepen our leadership service for transformation
- * To deepen our evaluation and make decisions for the Continents
- * To make proposals for the Institute

As stated in the Orientations of the 2021 General Chapter, we continue to be confronted with the question, *"Can we still live our purpose as we begin our 3rd century?"* The process begun must continue because "it is the capacity of each of us, as members and as a body, to engage in radical transformation that will determine the relevance of our response to today's world". (Orientations of the 20th General Chapter).

Each generation must discern and make its own choices according to the historical moment of the Institute, in order to introduce

the changes that will allow us to carry out the mission more effectively.

We cannot fall into the temptation that some call **"the syndrome of Lot's wife"**. (Gen.19, 26), that is, looking too far back and lamenting the present situation, which, at the General Chapter, we identified as a critical one. We welcome the present as it is and commit ourselves to the future.

Let us be aware that we do not walk alone, Jesus accompanies us on this journey, as he did with the **disciples of Emmaus."**

Next, each Unit presented its life, with the aim of giving an overview of the reality of each Unit on the respective Continent.

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35 Sisters, 3 communities, 85 Lay Associates, 1 Contemplative Sister, 3 Consecrated Seculars. **The main challenges are:** the continuity of two communities integrated with migrants; the continuity of the presence of the Holy Family.



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29 sisters; 9 communities. **Challenges:** to be more concrete in what we really want to transform, to form community leaders - leadership and participation, to grow as a network.



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58 sisters, 9 communities. **Challenges:** Aging personnel: maintaining the balance between the needs of the elderly sisters and engaging with the energies of the younger members; governance: 2 legal systems: Britain and Ireland; to share the dream of PBN in ways that speak to hearts today; communication; living Mission.



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57 sisters (7 sisters in Martillac). **Challenges:** to be a witness of hope in Europe and the Church in crisis; climate change; welcoming migrants. *What does God expect from us now?*



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197 sisters; 16 communities. **Priorities and Challenges:** to strengthen and support small apostolic presences in order to respond to the needs of today's world; to give meaning to our life as a mission till the end; to revitalize the sense of Family; sustainability - economic viability.



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33 sisters, 6 communities. The sisters are involved in nursery schools, parish pastoral work, social work, and refugees. One of the issues is professional support for sisters.



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26 Sisters; 4 communities **Challenges:** living the grace of the Charism; community life; seeing the positive in others and being a fellow traveller; listening to each other and to those who come close to us; openness to the challenges of the world's reality; patience in the face of our fragilities; changing mentalities; overcoming fear by trusting in God's will.



At the close of the day, all were invited to hold in prayer everything they had heard.

The prayer was led by the Team from the Unit of Britain and Ireland.

The day's work was centred on the synthesis of the "Evaluation of our Presence" carried out by all the Units.

We reflected on three topics of the synthesis:



Working in language groups, we answered the following questions:

- 01 After reflecting on the synthesis and your experience, what do you think of our community life?
- 02 After reading and reflecting on how our ministries evolve, name one area that calls for our concerns for today and tomorrow?
- 03 What are the three main challenges for the Holy Family that emerged from this synthesis?

The language groups shared their responses in the plenary.

Ana Maria asked the participants to nominate two sisters to be part of the steering committee, and nominated sisters were **Catherine Lavery** and **Ana Maria Alvarez**.



DAY 3: 14/06/2023

The prayer was led by the GLT.

This day was dedicated to looking at the financial reality of the Institute.

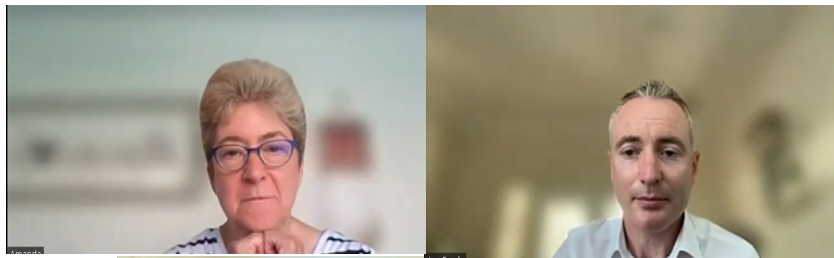
so also in the Institute, we are living a transition in terms of demography, presence, apostolic activities, available resources, etc.



Ana Maria introduced the topic, in which she highlighted the relationship between mission and economic resources. As well as at the world level,

All are responsible for ensuring that the orientation and purpose of financial resources are at the service of the Institute's mission, in accordance with our Charism, especially those who exercise the service of leadership and are responsible for ensuring that resources are not diverted from their purpose.

Veronica Rapitso, General Bursar, presented the global reality of the Institute, calling on the group to engage in a broader reflection, looking at the Institute as a whole, not just the particular Units.



The reflection was accompanied by Ian Brady and Amanda Francis, (via zoom) the two lay experts in investments and properties, who have been advising the GLT to use the best way to manage our resources for the future so that the mission is sustained.



At the end, Ana Maria emphasized that the assets held in various Units belong to the whole Institute and must serve the objectives of its mission.

DAY 4: 15/06/2023

The Latin American Unit led the prayer, during which a clay pot was passed from Sister to Sister, symbolizing that we drink from the same source.



This day, attention was focused on **the context in Europe and the America.**

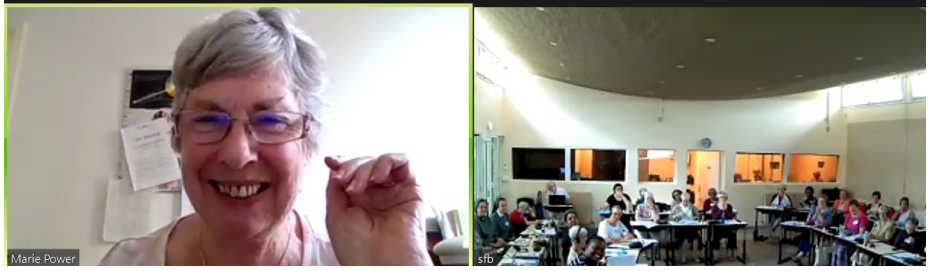
Jesmin presented the main issues expressed in the synthesis of the Evaluation, relating to the new needs of the context.

Some of the most frequently mentioned areas are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Immigrants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Presence among the people |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Spirituality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Poverty |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Climate change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ The elderly population |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Family | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Human trafficking |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Youth | |



In the framework of the needs of our time, **Marie Power** from the **Britain and Ireland Unit**, shared via zoom her knowledge and experience in



the field of human trafficking and modern slavery, working on raising awareness to face this reality and providing prevention and support to the victims.



The second part of the day was dedicated to understanding the context. The participants worked in language groups on the themes of **social, political, economic, and religious reality**, as well as **the possibilities and opportunities** that exist. Every group shared their work in the assembly.

AMERICA

Canada presented a reflection on the social and religious situation in America:

- Economic gap between rich and poor
- Religious: Church wounded by abuses
- Opportunity: the presence of organizations working for justice

Latin America presented a reflection on the economic and political reality of America: **There are two different realities**: the developed and industrialized North and the semi-developed South. There is a difference between the rich and the poor.

Opportunities:

- Networking
- Poverty leads to creativity
- Inter-congregational and inter-vocational work

EUROPE

France-Belgique presented the economic situation in Europe:

Economic slowdown due to war, energy crisis, inflation, climate catastrophe, and migration crisis. The poverty rate is around 100 million people; it will be 150 million by 2030. Europe is aging very badly.

Opportunities: social organizations

Spain presented the religious situation in Europe:

The Catholic Church is declining in numbers. There is a lack of participation and credibility because of the abuses; it's a suffering Church.

There are two poles: the traditional positions and another that wants to advance.

Britain and Ireland presented some aspects of the social-political situation

Crisis of EU (European Union); Brexit; immigration; multi-national and multi-cultural; borders control; war in Ukraine; climate change; gap between rich and poor; clerical abuse; lack of confidence; weak family values; ethical issues; sexual abuses; violence.

Opportunities: Relevance of our lives - our practical life style; networking with Congregations and Organizations; accompanying people; prayer; active involvement in action about climate change; post-covid reality.

The day's work ended with an open dialogue on questions raised that needed further information.



DAY 5: 16/06/2023

The Unit of France & Belgium led the prayer.

Christa Mariathas outlined the work of the day based on the '**7 most common misguided efforts**' of Ted Dunn text.

Personal reflection was followed by a specific process of sharing in language groups on this question: *What do we feel is too heavy to carry and not helpful for our journey towards inner and outer transformation?* In the plenary, the fruits of these reflections were shared.

The day ended with the cultural evening, during which we shared typical food from the different Countries and enjoyed the music and dance of different cultures. The sisters from Poland organized the event.



Cultural Evening

DAY 6: 17/06/2023

The prayer was led by the Polish Unit, focusing on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary.

Continuing the process, the topic for the day was **leadership**.

In small groups, participants were asked to name a leader who had inspired them and list their leadership characteristics. Some leaders were named: **Nelson Mandela, Michelle Obama, Madre Bonnat, Luis Ignacio da Silva, Pope Francis, and Pope John Paul II, etc.**

Some of the characteristics shared in the plenary were: listening, being close to all, knowing reality, taking risks, being able to manage conflicts, participative leadership (feminine leadership), Knowing how to recognize the qualities of others, positive and joyful, requires discernment, openness to the

Spirit, and listening to the inner voice.

From this list, the group was asked to select some necessary characteristics for Holy Family leaders today. Along with this list, the group highlighted the leadership characteristics proposed by the author, Ted Dunn.

After that, each Unit was asked to select a decision they had made in council and describe the process they followed to arrive at this decision. Working in Units language, this work was shared and criticized according to the characteristics previously mentioned.

The day concluded with a symbolic celebration of all that we had done. We were invited to let go of the things that are unnecessary in our leadership role.

DAY 7: 18/06/2023

The Unit of Spain led us in prayer.

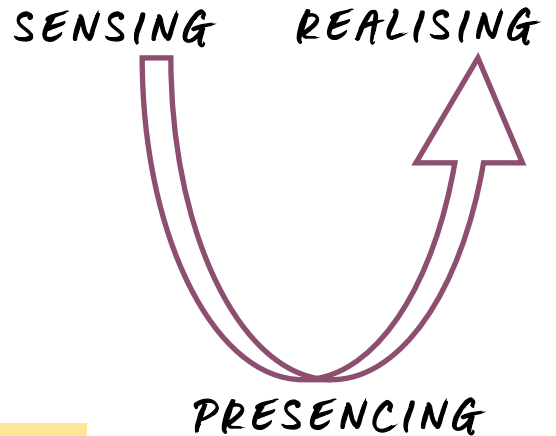
Ana Maria and Geni outline the work of the day. It was a day of silent, personal reflection on leadership. The basis of our reflection was some **biblical leaders and texts about the Founder**.

At the end of the day, the participants met in their Unit Teams to share the fruit of their reflection.



The morning prayer was led by Canada Unit and it introduced the theme of the day.

Having worked on the **Sensing and Presencing** of the **U process**, we moved to the third step - **Realising** – which allows the action to come.



Having been reminded of the four main challenges:

- ⌋ Participative leadership for transformation
- ⌋ Accompanying and caring for life in all its manifestations and stages.
- ⌋ Rediscovering the community as a place and way of living the mission
- ⌋ Balancing financial resources for the mission of the Institute.

And the new needs highlighted previously:

- Migrants: displaced people, refugees, homeless, etc.
- Care for the Common Home
- Spirituality
- Women
- Drug addiction
- Poverty
- Youth
- Human trafficking

Each Continent was asked to select the issues that we need to respond in today's context and make an action plan.

DAY 9: 20/06/2023

The morning prayer was led by the Italian Unit.

Each Continent presented the commitments in the plenary.

The European Continent has chosen three commitments and the plan for each one:

- 1) Spirituality
- 2) Care of our common home
- 3) Participative leadership

The American Continent too chosen three commitments and action plan for each one:

- 1) Community living
- 2) Migration and Immigration
- 3) Accompany and take care of Life

The last objective was about some suggestion for the whole Institute. From the reflection and dialogue, these are the suggestions:

1. Sisters expressed their commitment and support to the Contemplative Sisters in this moment.
2. Conscientize about simple lifestyle – participate in Laudato Sì platform.
3. How to take care of Martillac.
4. Update the website of the Institute.
5. Financial and mission balance – the need to have a plan for sharing human and financial resources.

DAY 10: 21/06/2023

Britain and Ireland helped the group to enter the final day prayer.

It was a day of thanksgiving and remembering the whole session...

The last part of the meeting consisted of some information, the evaluation, and Ana Maria's closing words.

"It is impossible to capture in a few paragraphs what we have experienced during these days.

It has been an experience of synodality - two different continents, different countries, languages, and realities, united in the same Spirit.

We have worked hard and deeply. You have taken on some commitments at the continental level. Each of them has the possibility of transformation. As you put them into practice, you may be in for some surprises. Remain open, because reality is more important. I do not want to relativize the decisions taken, but to relativize the letter.

There may be some dissatisfaction, but no plan is all-encompassing. We are more supportive of each other.

To move forward, it is essential to let go of what is no longer useful to make room for



what has to come. Transformation is not an easy or quick process. The temptation is to go backwards to find some lost security. For transformation to take place, good ideas are not enough, good will comes from an inner disposition, from discernment. Discernment needs accompaniment and resistance in times of crisis.

I encourage you to take bold leadership. Let us not forget that we were founded in times of crisis and social upheaval. The force that sustained them was the Spirit of God Alone. Do not be afraid, or at least, do not let yourselves be carried away by fear."

The meeting officially ended with the Eucharistic celebration.

Ana Maria sent each Leadership Team the following words:

‘In the name of Jesus, I send you out, not alone but as a team.

Have among yourselves the **same mind, the same vision, and unity of direction,** as the Founder told us.

Do not burden yourselves with unnecessary things that make your journey and your service heavier.

Give generously and freely what you have received.

Trust in God, who provides us with what we need at every moment.

And through the intercession of our Founder and of all those who have gone before us, may God give you light and wisdom in the measure of your needs. Amen."



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