

OCTOBER 2024 | N° 8

# Newsletter Good Shepherd Museum

MOTHERHOUSE OF THE CONGREGATION OF  
OUR LADY OF CHARITY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD  
ANGERS

## Editorial

The last few weeks have been devoted to welcoming a new group of English- and Spanish-speaking pilgrims of nine nationalities, following in the footsteps of the two founders. It was a powerful experience for the participants, which we invite you to discover in this new issue.

From 11<sup>th</sup> November, the site of Angers is also preparing to enter the commemorative year of the bicentenary of the foundation of the Contemplative Sisters by St. Mary Euphrasia in Tours in 1825. In this issue, we take the opportunity to present part of the collection of dolls on display in the Museum, which is always very popular with visitors, on the habit of the Sisters of St. Madeleine and then the Contemplatives. They are also honoured in the Bulletin article featured here, the story of the first profession of the Sisters of St. Madeleine in Talca, Chile, in 1904.

The end of the year will be rich in events, starting with the two-day conference dedicated to the thousand-year-old history of the Abbey of Saint-Nicholas, followed by the traditional exhibition of cribs from around the world, where we will be showing new items from a Breton collection... we will leave it to future visitors to be surprised!

Enjoy your reading!

**Sarah Elbisser**

Interim Coordinator,

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Editorial	p. 1
- One Object, One History	p. 2
- Gems from the Bulletin	p. 4
- In the News of the Mother House	p. 5
- In the News of the Congregation	p. 7



*"I don't want people to say I'm French anymore. I am Italian, English, German, Spanish, American, African, Indian, etc, I am from all the countries where there are souls to be saved."*

ST MARY EUPHRASIA



On the day of the habit ceremony

## One Object, One History

### The dolls recreating the habit of the Sisters of St. Madeleine

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Museum is a rich collection of dolls, created in the 1980s by Sister Marie Jean Vianney Sol (1904-1991) for the "Salle du souvenir" (Souvenir Room), with the aim of recreating the different habits of the congregation. To accompany the collection, she wrote a catalogue on the history and evolution of the habit.

On several dolls, the habits corresponding to the different stages in the religious life of a Sister of St. Madeleine are presented. From the very beginning, in Tours in 1825, their foundress St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier, who was very attached to the figure of St. Teresa of Avila, gave them the Carmelite habit. It remained unchanged until the 1960s.

**The costume of the postulant** consists of a simple, long black dress, a pelerine and a white bonnet. On the day of the habit ceremony, the postulant also wears a white pelerine adorned with lace.

**When the habit was taken**, the novice Sister wore the Carmelite habit. Made of coarse brown cloth, it consists of a wide dress with a sack that falls to the floor and whose sleeves must reach to the tips of the fingers, and a natural leather belt. A scapular of the same length as the robe is worn over it, and a white wimple covering the head and framing the face is worn underneath. The habit of the novice is completed with a white headband and veil and a white cord with tufts.



*The novice takes the habit*





*Habit on the day of the profession*

**On the day of her religious profession**, the Sister of St. Madeleine takes the black headband and veil and receives a silver cross to wear on the scapular, on which is engraved the name of her community. The choir cloak, made of thick black cloth and worn in the chapel, is as long as the dress in front and 24 cm longer in back. At the time of her perpetual profession, the Sister also received a crown of thorns mixed with foliage and flowers.



Costume, in the 1960s.



*Photo on glass plate*

**Contemplative sister on the day of her profession, at the Mother House, first half of the XX<sup>th</sup> century.**

**The habit was slightly altered in the 1960s**, with a shorter, looser dress.

**In the 1970s**, having become the Sisters of the Cross, the Contemplative Sisters adopted the white dress of the apostolic Sisters.



Costume, in the 1970s.



## *DATES TO REMEMBER*

**\* Exhibition of photographic portraits “Contemplative Sisters, reflections of God's love”** Cloister of the Mother House  
11<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**\* Mass celebrating the launch of the bicentenary commemorative year of the Contemplative Sisters**  
11<sup>th</sup> of November 2024, chapel of the Mother House

**\* Symposium on the Abbey of St. Nicholas**  
21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2024

**\* Exhibition of cribs of the world**  
From 30<sup>th</sup> of November to the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 & from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2025

## **Gems from the *Bulletin***

### **The profession of the first Sisters of St. Madeleine in Talca (Chile) on 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1904**

It happened that communities of Contemplative Sisters, known until 1950 as the Sisters of St. Madeleine, were founded long after the Congregation had established itself in a town. This was the case in Talca, in central Chile. The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd opened a house there in 1863, the fifth in the country since the first foundation in Santiago in 1855. A contemplative community was only founded in 1902 with the first postulants, as it took time to finance the construction work on the building of the Sisters.

The importance and solemnity of this foundation can be gauged from the account of the profession of the first contemplative novices on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1904. The text was published in the *Bimonthly bulletin from the Good Shepherd Congregation in Angers* in February 1905. The article does more than simply give an account of the ceremony. It also recounts the history of the community, which had long been eagerly awaited by the women and girls in care called to religious life.

You can download the full text of the Bulletin in three languages **by clicking here**.





## In the News of the Mother House

### Pilgrimage session “In the footsteps of our founders”, from 10<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2024



*Green door, Mother House Angers*

South Korea & Taiïwan) on a pilgrimage in the footsteps and source places of our founding saints, Saint John Eudes and Saint Mary Euphrasia.

The group spent the first few days discovering the house of Angers: times of prayer at the oratory of St Mary Euphrasia, visits to the Museum, the tomb, the Chapel, St Nicolas Abbey, meeting and sharing with the sisters of the Angers site.



*Abbey of Saint Nicholas, Angers*

### Pilgrimage to Normandy in the footsteps of Saint John Eudes

The first highlight of the day was a visit to the church in Ri, the village where Saint John Eudes was born and baptised. Then, in Cormelles-le-Royal, a visit to the Museum of Saint John Eudes and the chapel where his relics rest. The second highlight of the day was a meeting with the community of Cormelles. Four sisters from Our Lady of Charity were able to tell us about their missions and the congregation. The day ended in Caen with the visit of the house and oratory of Saint John Eudes.

*Opposite: Ri church and its stained glass windows depicting the life of Saint John Eudes*

Testimonials from participants on this unique, unforgettable and multicultural experience: :

*“I experienced a deep connection with the roots of our charisma and spirituality.”*

*“It was a dream come true [...]. When I entered the oratory, I knew that Mother Euphrasia was welcoming me with open arms and embracing me with love... Visiting Ri and Caen gave me a new understanding of Saint John Eudes and the sacred heart. The spiritual heritage of Saint John Eudes is the greatest gift I have received. I now know that I am their daughter and that I am walking in their footsteps.”*







*“In one of the corridors in Angers, I was impressed by the painted tree with its many leaves. Each leaf represents a foundation. Just as the leaves of a tree wither, in Europe the various sites of the Good Shepherd Sisters are closed. But meeting young, dynamic sisters and mission partners from Asia, Latin America and India showed me that new branches and new leaves are growing on this tree. The international experience is a great asset for the congregation. St Mary Euphrasia would probably be delighted to see her spirit and spirituality continue to grow throughout the world. The foundation, the tree that Sister Euphrasia planted, continues to live, changing but growing towards heaven. [...] Our mission has only just begun!”*



*Beginning of the Gois Passage*

The day on the island where Rose Virginia was born was another highlight of the session. The pilgrims visited the house where she was born, and we were fortunate enough to attend the service in the house's oratory. The parish priest gave us a guided tour of the church of St Philbert. Picnic on the beach where Rose Virginia used to play as a child, in sunny weather. Back to the village for a historical explanation of the castle, before leaving the island via the Gois Passage.

## **Pilgrimage to Tours, in the footsteps of the early religious life of Saint Mary Euphrasia**

After leaving Noirmoutier, St Mary Euphrasia went to the Chobelet boarding school to complete her studies. She then entered the Our Lady of Charity novitiate in Tours. Pilgrims visited Tours cathedral, where St Mary Euphrasia went to Mass every day,



*Former Chobelet boarding school*

and the first Our Lady of Charity refuge she entered, a house that now belongs to the Ursuline sisters.



*Spiritual experience of the labyrinth*

The end of the session was also full of highlights, starting with the meeting with the community of contemplative sisters, followed by the spiritual experiences of the labyrinth and the tunnel, and ending with a closing ceremony at the Green Door. Their faith grew and they left full of zeal!

**Let's live in the mission and spirit of Saint John Eudes and Saint Mary Euphrasia!**



# In the News of the Congregation

Symposium "Saint-Nicolas of Angers, a millenary abbey"  
On the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024



(C) Musées d'Angers, David Riou

## Colloque

« Saint-Nicolas d'Angers,  
une abbaye millénaire »

- 🕒 Les 21 et 22 novembre 2024, de 8h30 à 18h
- 📍 Maison-Mère des sœurs de N.D. de Charité du Bon Pasteur  
18 rue Marie-Euphrasie Pelletier - Angers
- 🗣️ Gratuit / sur inscription : [www.bonpasteur.com](http://www.bonpasteur.com)

Sous la présidence de Thierry Pécourt, Directeur du CERCOR (Centre européen de recherches sur les communautés, congrégations et ordres religieux) - Université de Saint-Etienne

As a continuation of the celebrations to mark the millennium of the Abbey of Saint-Nicolas in Angers in 2022, this symposium aims to take a comprehensive look at existing work and highlight new avenues of research, bringing together different disciplines (history, art history, archaeology).

The programme will attempt to retrace the vast history of this monument, from its foundation by Foulque Nerra for Benedictine monks to its purchase by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, via its reform by the Congregation of Saint-Maur in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

This conference will give pride of place to the research carried out since the 1950s into the history and archaeology of the site, and will highlight the archival and bibliographical sources that are still little known. It will also raise questions about the future of this site.

INSCRIPTION ET INFORMATIONS  
[www.bonpasteur.com](http://www.bonpasteur.com)  
02.41.72.12.40

The Museum is open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 5 pm.  
Groups welcomed all week on request.

Free admission for all!

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