



NEWSLETTER CANADA GENERAL VISITATION 2024



Sister Monica Joseph visited the Province of Canada from May 1st to June 3, 2024 accompanied by Sister Encarna Viarnès, general councilor and link with this province. Sister Núria Cuadras, general econome, arrived on May 25 in Lévis, Quebec.

About 40 million people live in Canada, a relatively small population for the second largest country in the world. Canada is a diverse, tolerant, peaceful and welcoming nation, known for its nature and stunning natural

beauty. Modern and progressive, open-minded with citizens proud of their ethnic diversity and origins.

Canada is made up of a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. It has 10 provinces and 3 territories. The capital is Ottawa.

JM in Quebec and New Brunswick

JM's presence is in two civil provinces: Quebec and New Brunswick. There has been a period of remarkable transformation over



the past few decades and we have experienced a 180-degree shift towards a vibrant and inclusive urban space, while retaining its deep cultural roots. This transformation was made possible thanks to Quebec's ability to reinvent itself while embracing diversity and promoting innovation.

Historically, the Catholic Church played a central role in all aspects of life, exerting strong moral and political influence. However, with the Quiet Revolution in the late 1960s, the influence of the Church began to decline, marking the beginning of a secular society where religion was increasingly less important. This transition has paved the way for a more inclusive and diverse vision of society, further promoting respect for the rights of minorities and the promotion of equality. The Church has embarked on a journey of healing and reconciliation that culminated with the historic visit of Pope Francis in July 2022. It was a moment of forgiveness and reconciliation for indigenous peoples and the Church.

Communities

In the province, there are currently **7 communities**: Infirmary (Sillery), Sillery, Lévis, St. Michel, Beauceville, Lamèque, St. Roch. In Trois-Pistoles they is a summer house.

Currently there are 77 sisters with an average age of 85 years. There is a postulant in the community of St. Roch and a young woman who is on a community experience.

S. Anne-Marie Paquet is part of the Province of Africa. Sisters Anita Chiasson and Michelle Pelletier belong to the Vice-Province of the Andinas.



Leadership Team

On July 1 · 2021, a new provincial government team began. The members are:

Provincial Superior	Sr. Françoise Barras
Councilor	S. Josée Therrien
Councilor and economer	S. Céline Latulippe (substitute provincial superior)
Councilor	S. Lourdes Varguez
Councilor	S. Véronique Lacroix

Apostolic Mission

The Province of Canada has a great mission in education, sponsorship and reception of refugees, youth and vocational ministry, training for international volunteering, promotion through development projects, social volunteering among the poor and involvement in parish life.

Educational centers belonging to the Congregation and managed by JM: 2

- Collège Jésus-Marie de Bellechasse (St. Michel): mixed secondary school.
- Jésus-Marie Music School (Lévis)

Total number of students in the centers: 716

Educational centers that have experienced the “Institutional Succession”: 2

- Collège Jésus-Marie de Sillery (in 2011)
- École Jésus-Marie de Beauceville (in 2023-2024)

Total number of students: 1721

*As Schools are **Corporations**, they have a Board of Directors. In Quebec, the board of directors in a private school plays a crucial role in the management and development of the institution. In their functions, they ensure financial management, strategic orientations, management supervision and compliance with standards.*

By engaging in these different functions, the board of directors contributes to the development of educational work, ensures the sustainability of the school and promotes a quality educational environment.



*An “**Institutional Succession**” is the process by which a religious congregation transfers its educational heritage and often also its built heritage to a secular corporation. It is a complex transition process that includes: transfer of ownership and management, training and support, preservation of mission and values.*

We enjoyed the **meetings with the management teams, school staff and collaborators** . They shared with us their projects and their concerns, their challenges and their hopes in the mission they lead. It was a time of reflection and dialogue on our roots in JM, the expansion of the Congregation and the missionary spirit since the beginning of the Congregation.

The leadership teams emphasize the need to *return to the sources of the charism* and deepen in the meaning of forgiveness and reconciliation today and the meaning of life as an inner process that helps every human being.

We also had a **meeting with groups of older students** in the schools, in an atmosphere of joy and with great depth. We appreciate these moments which allowed us to learn a little more about the desires and concerns of young people based on the reality they experience and their vision of the future.

Other missions and various implications:

- **Dina Bélanger Center:** since 2021, a lay director has been employed for the Center, Mr. Louis-Martin Lanthier . The objective is to “*Make Blessed Dina Bélanger known and loved*” by welcoming groups, training and promoting the Center. We shared with him the challenges and achievements of this great initiative to make Dina known throughout the world. Several activities were developed on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the birth of Dina Bélanger (1897)



- **Sponsorship and reception of refugees :** Ms. Delphine Umubiyeyi takes on this mission. Its role is above all to be in communication with people who want to sponsor one or more refugees, often members of their family and with the refugees themselves before their arrival and to have them complete the necessary forms, in communication with Immigration Quebec and Immigration Canada.

- **St. Roch Mission :** the community's mission is characteristic of an community of integration. The sisters are very involved in the parish and in various local organizations, especially the *Café Rencontre* which is a place where people, especially the poor, can eat at a minimal cost. A network of lay people continues to live its mission through various activities and involvements, especially through the animation of Sunday Mass and any activity that brings together young people and families. We met them during our sharing of the Congregation. Also, when the need arises, they welcome women who temporarily need a safe place to live. Currently a Burundian girl lives in community with the sisters.



- **Children's Home :** Neighborhood children come with all kinds of needs. Since 2021 JM handed over this mission to lay people, but the ownership remains with the Sisters. The Superior of St. Roch participates in the Annual General Assembly each year and the



sisters as well as lay people who stay in the community continue to provide their support and provide services, including help with homework and Saturday activities and occasionally help out for special outings.

- **Youth and Vocational Ministry** . The Youth and Vocational Ministry (PJV) program is carried out through meeting spaces and activities. Sr. Lourdes Varguez is responsible.
 - WYD International
 - MEJ and the Pope's Prayer Network
 - Pastoral JM network with other countries
 - JM sans Frontières JM sF
 - Inter-vocational crossroads
 - Vocational ministry in Quebec: meeting spaces with young people and Spiritual Exercises in Lévis
 - Liturgical animation
 - Spiritual accompaniment to young people and people of various ages



- **Volunteering:** the province is very committed to the training of missionary groups for humanitarian projects . In different environments there are groups of young people and adults who are preparing and living humanitarian and missionary experiences: Argentina, Uruguay, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico. Lay people and sisters accompany these groups.
- Through several Foundations, S. Diane Fortier is responsible for launching **promotion and development projects** in several Latin American countries, with other lay collaborators. Likewise, S. Jacqueline Poulin is the link with the organization Appel du Pauvre for international projects.

The sisters of the Province of Canada have developed a *strong missionary spirit* over the years.

Lay people are very involved in positions of responsibility in different works and communities. It is a sign and an assurance that the charism continues and is alive. An example of this was that a group of 11 lay people participated in the Shared Mission meeting in Mexico last July.

Meetings, Commissions and international organizations : Sr. Françoise is part of the Commission for the Regulation of the Provincial Chapter, Sr. Josée was part of the Reconfiguration Commission and Sr. Lourdes is part of the International Youth Commission. They also participate in various organizations in the country for the JPIC Committee. Several sisters provide support as **translators** for congregational letters

and various meetings called by the General Government. This is a service that we greatly appreciate.

UNANIMA : As a representative for the congregation, since 2016 Sr. Josée Therrien has participated in the two annual meetings in New York (September and February) and virtual meetings as needed. In 2022, S. Lourdes Varguez was named liaison person, a responsibility she currently continues. She was also elected to the executive committee.

Commitment for several years to the Angélique de Lyon Project , a community in which Sr. Claudette Lemyre developed her mission until recently. Thank you for everything she gave!

FORMATION

There is currently 1 postulant at St. Roch, Geneviève Petitclerc , whose training includes different aspects provided for in the JM Book of Formation.

S.Priyanka Vasava is a junior from Vadodara province, India. The experience she has in Canada is part of her formation. She also stayed at St. Roch but has just returned to India for the Intensive Juniorate .

They do their accompaniment with Sr. Lourdes Varguez and also follow some sessions with Sr. Françoise Barras. They participate in the mission of the community in disadvantaged areas and in the life and the mission in the parish.



The Provincial Council encourages the ongoing formation of sisters and offers experiences to live each stage of life. During these years, the province has developed a **series of periodic publications** to encourage the involvement and participation of religious and lay people, as well as to promote growth and formation in spirituality: the "INFO JM", The " Spirituality Clip", "Let's walk together" (theme of Pope Francis' trip to Canada), "Good ideas" (with a view to experiencing Covid as best as possible) , Circulars from the Provincial Superior.

FAMILY JESUS and MARY ASSOCIATION

Currently, there are 5 groups in the province. The groups are largely made up of seniors who are very happy to participate. The big challenge is recruiting new members. In Beauceville, there have been new members for several years. In Sillery, Sr. Louise



Bilodeau tries to integrate younger people into the group. In Trois-Pistoles, even without the presence of the religious, the AFJM group continues to meet.

From 2019 to 2024, there were a few activities bringing together two or a few groups. Recently, there was a pilgrimage to the tomb of Blessed Dina organized by the

AFJM group from Beauceville; joining them were members from Lévis and Sillery.

PASTORAL SERVICE OF THE AUTHORITY

Leadership (superior and economie) at the provincial and local level is a big challenge. This leads to the search for solutions and a new structure in Sillery: There is no local superior but a lay person, Mme. Sonia Bergeron, responsible for the Residence and delegate of the provincial superior. She assumes the functions of a local superior. Canonically, the two communities depend on the Provincial Superior and her Council (AC 76). We thank Mme. Sonia for her commitment to this new service.



RECONFIGURATION AND RESTRUCTURATION

The Province of Canada wishes to establish collaborative networks with other provinces-zones of the Congregation to continue to grow in internationality and a sense of belonging. As part of the reconfiguration axes, they are involved in:

- ***Axis on Formation:*** On September 5 they welcomed S. Priyanka Vasava, of temporary vows from the Province of Vadodara, India. She did a second period of six months, according to what Immigration Canada allowed. They remain open to receiving more sisters for initial or continuing formation.
- ***Axis on Consolidation Province:*** Discernment on some community works and structures continues.
- ***Axis New configuration:*** Peru has been part of the Andean Vice-Province since February 2023. The province of Canada is in the Youth Ministry network with other Latin American countries.

ASSEMBLY IN LEVIS

The Provincial Assembly took place on June 1-2, at the house in Lévis, with the presence of 57 sisters, the postulant Geneviève Peticlerc and Mme. Sonia Bergeron. Some sisters joined by Zoom on June 2 during the reading of the Book of the Visitation.

To each of the sisters, AFJM, mission companions, who made the visit possible: **THANK YOU!!!!**

Blessed Dina Bélanger and St. Claudine Thévenet continue to walk with you!

