



*When someone knocks at the door, don't ask him "who are you?"  
but say him "come in, seat down and eat." (Siberian proverb)*

## News letter 2009 December

Dear parents and friends,

We love very much, both alike, read over our Beth-Salem gold book; we find again, through the words, faces of people who enjoyed us with their coming.

A few years ago, a Congolese bishop wrote that words from the Bible: "Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people has entertained angels without knowing it." (Hb, 13, 1-2)

It's remarkable that, in French like in other languages, the same word refers to somebody who welcomes and to somebody who is welcome. As a matter of fact, these two situations are a same movement: I must bet that I will be able to share with other people, for a time, the same space, (his or mine) and show a part of my private life secret. I will be able to discover how the other can enrich me by his difference, marvel at he is and I am not.

During that Christmas time, where we keep memory of God who welcomes as a baby, "sunrise who visits us" (Simeon hymn) we taste of call each one who, during this year has accepted to share with us this hospitality mystery. They are a lot for we were out of our home about 12 days/month\*. When we were at home, we were rarely alone.

### OUR FAMILY

Is it not natural to begin with our family?



At first, Christian, Odile's brother, is dead; illness struck him down.

With Françoise, his wife, they welcome us for the last "goodbye" in their garden, with friends and family (about 300 people at the cemetery).

Thanks a lot, Christian and Françoise for your beautiful life sign.

This event was also a profound time between Fernande, (Odile's sister), our nephews and nieces and us.

We have got also a week at Cambrai, by Mamilie, Jean-Michel's mother. It is good to get quiet time with her, like only a scrabble play. That stay gave us also a time by Marie-Claire (Jean-Michel's sister), and a family lunch (Mamilie, her three children and their partners.) We also met again our great friends, Jean and Rita.

On the way back, we stopped by Françoise, our sister in law, whit whom we are in great complicity.

\* Thanks to our friends who keep care of our garden, our turtle and our aquarium.

Lydie and Jean-Michel, Sara and Benoist, Céline and Ghislain welcome us from one to many days with enjoy and simplicity. It is more difficult for them to come at home, because of their works and family activities.

On May, we were at St Pourçain for the Lydie's parents in law 50th wedding anniversary, and a second time on June for Lydie's 40th birthday.

Anne-Lise is 14, in the 3rd class at the French college.



She is on the friend's time and does not feel like coming by her grandparents for holidays. She stays kind and feels affection with us.

She enjoys going on playing trumpet.

Charles (11) is found by many subjects, in particular archeology and Middle-Age. This summer we have got a medieval meal in a medieval Corbières castle with him.

For the All Saints' Day holidays, he came with his friend Jonas, and, with Jean-Michel, they have both done the groundwork on the back of the garden river. They were very efficient. We went for many tours and walks, like Fenailles museum of Rodez, medieval Castle of Calmont d'Olt, where they saw medieval war engines shows.

They have got also a climb walk day through the canyon of the Cesse, organized by Jean-Michel, our neighbor.



Orianne (6) and Estelle (5) are inseparable. You have to hear, both alike, how they cry: "my cousin..."

Maxime and Alexandre are just one year old, and are very different, but know already how giving a smile to welcome us. We miss them as soon as we do not see them since a long time.



We have got them on holidays this summer; they are two of kind! What vitality! Estelle plays dance and judo.



On March, we went to our friends Véronique and Jean-Michel near Dax. It was a good friendly and walking meeting. On the back way we stopped at the Clarisse monastery, at Orthez. Our adapted daughter, Marie Reine de la Paix, took one's solemn vows. During the celebration we read her mother's blessing and used some Congolese rituals. Marie Reine went to visit her family in Africa on this summer and brought us back a thanks letter from her brother saying we became their family's members. Then we stopped at Tournay, for our "Penguin" meeting (once a year.)

We could appreciate the monks'hospitality, according to holly Benedict's rule: "All the guests who arrive will be welcome as Christ."



On august, we went to La Guerche, for the Benoît and Armelle's marriage. It was a nice time with friends at the family castle.

We enjoyed seeing two young people seriously binding, after a long preparation, accompanied by many friends!

It was also a great happiness to see Marie and Hubert (Benoît's parents), and some friends from "pingouins" group!

Ma Teresa Janelle, our Philippine sponsored girl (with C.S.E.P.) works well at school. Her family was very hurted by natural disasters that frequently append in that country. We write to her regularly.



<http://www.enfance-philippines.com/>

## SERVAS

We are always filled with wonder at the extraordinary meetings we get where travelers come by us. So we decided to stop always by Servas members as soon as we travel through France.



<http://www.servas-france.org/>

Among our meetings, we remember that Israel family who came from Sdé-Boker kibbutz. With their two children, they have got a sabbatical year. What a rich exchange meeting! We spoke about religion, politics, geostrategy, non-violence, etc...

And that two French couple who share a meal and whom we will have pleasure to meet again!

And Jane, who came from Maine (USA) after the St Jacques of Compostelle's way, French teacher tracking down one's ancestors!

And Jean-Louis and Nadine; we helped them to lay a beam into their house, and Nadine came by us to learn lime coating with our neighbors.

And what are we able to say about that oceanographer who works from the far of the Corrèze with the greatest Chinese oceanic laboratory! And his wife who translate technical files from Danish to French! And this pedagogue artiste who lives half time in Guinea!

On September we went to Capcir (in the Pyrenees) a Franco Spanish Servas meeting; we have got a humanity meeting, and have danced traditional dances like "sardane".

Cultural mixing is close at hand: our new neighbor is 6, has blood from Europe, Africa and Asia, and already speaks fluently three languages!

## AIDES



This year, we had not any welcome. The association had to restructure itself. We had a very interesting meeting about new therapies and how ill and healthy people look at each other.

<http://www.aides.org/>

A woman has just annulled her stay as soon as she learnt we have not TV at home. We understand how entertaining may be interfered!

## Les Fontanilles ("the little springs")

It is our "rising place". We test how it is possible to say God through the hospitality.

Giving, getting, welcoming, being welcome are a same movement.

We are going by that community to receive the word of God, and to work on the property and into the houses. We also get rich human relations with people we meet there.



<http://www.rochedor.fr/>



## Beth-Salem : the house

In order to increase Beth-Salem welcoming, we are going on our house fitting out. This year, we finished the cellar, the grocery, the linen room and a bathroom. The future kitchen is using as an office by Jean-Michel.

The building does not speed up; we are often far from the home.

We also worked in the vegetable garden and eat good food now.



I'm "only" a half-time worker in this firm, but I feel fully involved in it. I do love this work, and, above all, the working atmosphere and the ethics we try to develop are exceptional. Our profession is project management; at present, I'm in charge of the development of a software tool for helping the project managers; I'm master of apprenticeship for a young girl who just entered an engineer school (they alternate periods of school and periods of working in the firm). I'm also supervising two students groups who have last year projects. So I often go to Rodez, and every time it's possible, Odile comes with me and helps in the house. The friendship and welcome of Pierre and Nadine are very precious for us.

## Beth-Salem Service

The cooking training periods are close to my heart. "Everybody is able to cook" and I want to pass on the taste of a simple and pleasant art. A meal is a feast, and one of my goals is to reveal how each dish can become a delight for the five senses.

"Every day cooking is almost nothing."

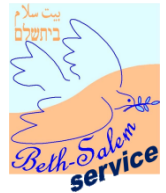
I invite you to discover tricks and ways I collected for sharing with you.

In addition, I have an idea of "home cooking." You need a meal, at home, relax?

I come by you, I cook, I serve you: no more trouble, you leave with your guests.

Here are my projects... beginning of creation... and development. I'm officially "self contractor."

It's a way to occupy my retirement time!



## Future prospects

Odile prepares, for spring time, a trip in Scotland with her friend Sylvette. They hope to meet Scottish people.

Jean-Michel gently prepares his retirement, may be at the beginning of 2011.

During 2010 spring time, Charles will have his profession of faith (a French catholic ceremony.)

We hope we'll manage at least to fit out an additional bedroom during 2010.