

## **Messages from Sion Schools around the World for the Founders' Day Service on the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

Joe: Our Lady of Sion has schools in America, Canada, Costa Rica, Brazil, Turkey, Australia and France as well as our own school here in Worthing.

Mr Scullion met many of the Heads of these schools at a convention held in Strasbourg in 2009. He is looking forward to seeing them again this year at a special meeting which will be hosted by the Sisters of Sion in Jerusalem.

Esme: As we approached this special 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Mr Scullion invited the Heads of our sister schools to send us a message to mark the occasion. We are delighted to be able to read a selection for you.

The first message comes from Alice Munninghoff, Head of Notre Dame de Sion School, Kansas City in the United States of America

Rachel: Notre Dame de Sion School of Kansas City congratulates our Lady of Sion School, Worthing, on providing 150 years of academic excellence in the mission of our founding Sisters... and our founders Theodore and Alphonse Ratisbonne. May your rich tradition and legacy serve you well as you embark upon the next chapter in your school's history. We join you from the heart of the United States in celebrating your achievements and in rejoicing in the unity we share as Sion Schools around the world. God bless and keep you as you continue in this wonderful mission of education in the unique Sion tradition.

Esme: We now move to Costa Rica. Gustavo Rodriguez Vargas, the Principal of Our Lady of Sion School in San José, wrote to us in English:

Elliot: We share with great joy the celebration in your school to mark 150 years of providing quality education to children and young British people. I hope that God and Our Lady of Sion fill the entire educational community with many blessings.

Joe: We also received messages in Portuguese from Brazil. This translation represents the good wishes sent from three senior members of staff in Rio de Janeiro and was written by Sandra Calvet, the Director of the school:

Elliot: We are happy to congratulate your school on your 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is clear that Our Lady of Sion in Worthing has helped to shape the lives of children and young people in England. We hope that, through your dedication, the work of Sion will continue to live on.

Joe: In Montréal, Canada, Our Lady of Sion has a bi-lingual school. From there, Veronique Lemieux-Boyer and Sister Jackie Chennard sent this message:

Esme: Firstly, they quoted the words of our Founder, Theodore Ratisbonne, written in 1862: "Yes, I have solid hope that the Sion of Worthing will be fruitful", and then continued: Congratulations on 150 fruitful years of living Theodore's vision and hope. May the spirit of Sion continue to grow in each of you in all of your moments of learning, of shared delight, and life together.

Esme: Our Lady of Sion has several schools in France. Joe will now read, in French and English, the good wishes of Sandrine Bathilde, Head of Notre Dame de Sion in Strasbourg

Joe: Je suis très heureuse de pouvoir vous rejoindre par la pensée et les prières pour ce bel anniversaire ... 150 ans que vous accompagnez en vos murs des générations de jeunes gens qui ont appris à grandir dans le respect des différences tel que l'ont souhaité nos pères fondateurs. Longue vie à votre communauté éducative et à très bientôt à Jérusalem.

*I am very fortunate to be able to join you in thoughts and prayers for this great anniversary... Over 150 years you have... helped young people to grow up with respect for people's differences, just as our Founding Fathers wished. We wish your community long life and look forward to seeing you very soon in Jerusalem.*

Esme: At our school in Evry, there is an 86 year old sister, Soeur Denyse Marie, who still teaches the catechism and occasional lessons in French and Maths. Their Headmaster, Philippe Tamisier, invited her to send us her personal wishes.

Joe: Je tiens à te dire combien nous nous réjouissons de pouvoir avec ce courrier participer à votre fête qui est aussi la fête de toutes les écoles de la congrégation; aussi merci à toi. Belle fête, donc à vous tous et à bientôt à Jérusalem!

*I want to tell you how much we rejoice at being able, through this message, to participate in your celebration, which is also a celebration for all the schools of the community, and also thank you, Headmaster. I wish all of you a wonderful festival and see you soon in Jerusalem.*

Esme: Finally, representing the staff here in our Worthing school, Mrs Jane Baker will read two messages sent from Australia.

Jane: *The first message comes from Peter Houlahan, Principal of the Marist-Sion College in Warragul, Victoria, who says: Congratulations on the occasion of your sesquicentenary. By the grace of God, may the compassionate and generous spirit of the sisters of Our Lady of Sion continue there for the next 150 years.*

*I was fortunate to visit the Melbourne school in 2005. This message is from Karen Jebb, the Principal of Our Lady of Sion College, Box Hill. We send you our very best wishes and heartfelt congratulations as you celebrate your 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, a truly momentous occasion for you all. We enjoyed hosting two of your students for World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008 and we found we have so much in common. May your celebrations be wonderful!*

20<sup>th</sup> January 2012