



— MAISON —
MAGDALENA

NEWSLETTER OF THE MAISON MAGDALENA

April 2026

«Now I am doing a new thing, it is already sprouting, can you not see it?» (Isaiah 43,19)



Dear friends of Maison Magdalena,

At a time when creation is once again gaining momentum and drawing us into its spirit of renewal, we have taken the time to reflect on what has made the heart of Maison Magdalena beat since 2016. One truth became evident: life is often born from “the boldness of an encounter.”

It is by taking that step toward one another—at times hesitant, at times bold—that new life unfolds, generous and unexpected. Whether that encounter took place ten years ago for the founders of the house, five years ago for Laurence and Alexis, or just a month ago for the youth group, we see how the moments we share transform our perspective, broaden our hearts, and invite us to walk with confidence toward what has not yet been written.

We hope you enjoy the read. We would be delighted to continue the conversation with you, by email or by welcoming you for a visit. The table is wide, open to all: there is a place for you.

The editorial team

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- Two together, rooted in God — without fear
- Daring to journey further into the discovery of the other
- Accompaniment: a shared road where genuine encounters blossom

A home born of encounter and Providence

Conversation with three founders: Maurice, Jean-Michel, and Jean

Ten years after the opening of Maison Magdalena, we asked three of its founders to look back on the beginnings of this human and spiritual adventure. Their testimonies reveal the boldness, trust, and Providence that accompanied each step.

Maurice: the boldness of an encounter

“Opening a home to welcome people wishing to leave prostitution and help them reintegrate was a completely new project for us, and a true adventure. Beyond financial, material, and human resources, it required deep listening, an ability to adapt to each person’s situation and unique journey, and a desire to move forward together—without assumptions or prejudice—despite the challenges.”



Jean-Michel: The First Steps, Guided by Providence

"December 2015. Jean called me on the phone: *'I've found a house! We're going to see it, but don't tell anyone!'* And off we went to Ecuelles. We had found the perfect place: a chapel, an oratory, bedrooms for the women, rooms for volunteers, a large garden, a candle-making workshop, and more. It was the first sign of Providence—followed by so many others: a bishop who supported us; the village mayor whose father had once led the 'Nid' association in Lyon; the manager of the industrial waste center, familiar with the Brothers of St. John, who generously granted us access to dispose of the substantial volume of material we had to discard.; volunteers who restored the house; an architect who offered his services and oversaw all the work; benefactors who helped us get started when we didn't have a penny; a women's rights representative at the prefecture who welcomed us with open arms; a future director who believed in the project and joined even before the house opened... and so many other people and events! Providence had truly aligned the stars.

The first residents arrived in September 2016. The house was ready to embark on its great adventure. And I can only marvel at what it has become, ten years after those first steps."





A Motto That Still Lives: "Everyone Gives, Everyone Receives"

What the founders discovered during those early, defining years remains at the heart of the house's life today. Their experience continues to inspire both volunteers and the women welcomed here.

Maurice continues:

"This journey has been a mutual enrichment—marked by patience, perseverance, and the steadfast hope of a new life filled with light. What has struck me most deeply over all these years, and what I hold most dearly, is the admirable determination shown by most of the women we welcomed: their desire to reclaim their human dignity, wounded and trampled by circumstances on which they were entirely dependent, and the courage they show in giving themselves the means to recover it. This is truly the mission of the Magdalena House, and we are profoundly grateful to see it continue in the same spirit and with the same enthusiasm."



Jean: A House Desired and Brought into Being

"These were all signs of Providence. The Lord wanted this house to exist; He placed on our path the people who accompanied and supported us, despite every obstacle. My motto was: *'Do everything you can; the Lord will do the rest.'* What courage from all those who take part in this mission—both those who help and those who are helped."



Two Together, in God—No Fear!

Five years ago, Alexis and Laurence discovered the Magdalena House...

This text is an excerpt from their upcoming book, to be published on May 6, 2026: *"We Couples Who Walk the Earth"* (Artège Editions). [No Title]

We were immediately charmed by the place—full of beauty, almost reminiscent of a holiday retreat. But the beginning was rather challenging; Laurence even calls it a kind of tough initiation. "We had to learn to collaborate differently: our shared-life community was no longer a company, nor was it our family. It was a community made up of adults, wounded in different ways... ourselves included.

Every crisis—whether with one of the women, with a co-leader of the House, or with a member of the Board—became the starting point for an inner examination, a moment to polish some aspect of our character. Community life accelerates inner transformation. It multiplies the occasions for interaction among its members. Conflicts, which inevitably arise, become repeated opportunities to choose again and again "to spread on earth the divine qualities that Jesus came to bring us: peace, justice, truth, love, forgiveness, unity, fidelity," as the priest prayed at every Saturday morning Mass at the Magdalena House.



At times, we mistakenly slipped back into our “old wineskins,” and naturally, they burst. Alexis, the only man living at the Magdalena House, more than once felt tempted to walk away and slam the door behind him. It was the divider at work—the one who tries to separate those whom God had gathered from the Bois de Boulogne, from Porte de Clignancourt, from Belleville, from Igbo land, from Versailles, and brought together under one roof.

Each of us had to return to the community, ask forgiveness for our anger, and choose once again to love—because this was more than a project; it was a vocation. Five years later, we are more at peace, because we believe that it is God, and God alone, who keeps the Magdalena House standing.

Every day, the two of us spend a great deal of time putting words to what we have lived and rebuilding our couple after a day spent side by side, though not always together. We are learning to love each woman we accompany, and we remain wary of our own biased assessments of each person’s contribution to community life.



Now that we have a second house, we must make sure to stay close to our children —through our thoughts, of course, but also through phone calls and family celebrations. They are very independent, certainly, but they naturally miss having us as available as before. From the beginning, they respected our choice of life, [No Title] understanding the meaning behind it.

We try to return to our family home every other weekend. And recently, we became grandparents! This joyful arrival gives us the opportunity to reorganize ourselves and renew our family bonds around this little one.



Each evening, whether under the stars or in the mist of the night, we go out walking together. The presence of the other at one's side dispels the fear of the dark and the unease that comes when nocturnal animals stir. We recognize how much speaking with one's spouse can transform a painful moment into a conversion, an opening to grace; how facing a challenge together can turn a success into a song of praise. We entrust to the night both our doubts and the graces received, before lying down in peace, according to His word.



Daring to Go Further in Discovering One Another

The Magdalena House has the joy of regularly welcoming groups of young people from nearby parish youth ministries. These days spent together are true moments of encounter, rich in discoveries and surprises.

Sandrine, who accompanies the Moret youth ministry, shares:

“Last year, at our request, Laurence and Alexis came to speak about their mission within the Magdalena House. Their testimony—deep, simple, and full of enthusiasm—left a mark on the hearts of the young people, as some of them wanted this year to go further and spend a full day with the entire House.”



The Young People’s Perspective: From Apprehension to Encounter

Luna, one of the young participants, shares:

“I didn’t know how it was going to go. I was a bit skeptical, but I have a very good memory of that day. I really appreciated the sister’s testimony and the meal, which allowed us to share a simple yet moving moment.”

Emma also had hesitations before coming:

"Before going to Magdalena, I felt a bit discouraged and didn't really know what to expect, but in the end this experience helped me and did me good. I found the church very beautiful, and I was touched to see everything they managed to build from nothing—it made me think. Today, what stays with me most is that moment and what it brought me."



A Welcome that Touches the Heart

Sandrine continues, sharing what moved her most during this special day:

"If I had to express in just a few words what I experienced as a youth leader during this rich and meaningful day—something that still lives in my heart—I would speak mainly of two things:

- The welcome: a warm welcome filled with simplicity, sincerity, fraternity, and sharing, where each person, with their own personality and talents, could find their place, give of themselves, and receive everything that the day offered. Personally, within just a few minutes, I felt completely at home.
- Service: I was touched by our young people, who genuinely wanted to serve the House, but also by the spirit of service shown by all who live there. It is a House of hospitality where love is lived, and where each person places themselves at the service of the other."



How could we not see the Holy Spirit in the beauty of all the exchanges we experienced, in the gift each person offered, in the simple and warm life that fills this place and each of those welcomed here?

May the Holy Spirit continue to bless this entire House, where love is lived and shared. May He continue to strengthen all those who serve here, near or far: Laurence and Alexis, the Sisters, and all the volunteers. Amen!

Accompaniment: A Shared Journey, Built on Real Encounters

As volunteers, we feel privileged to experience “family moments,” close to those who are moving forward on their path of rebuilding.

The Magdalena House is a large family home—a place of encounter where the women welcomed, the leadership team, the community of sisters, neighbors, donors, and volunteers all work together to transform lives. And like in any family home, there are tensions, shared joys, disappointments, successes to celebrate, and sorrows to work through.



DominiqueDominique, a volunteer at the House, shares what she discovers day after day:

“I arrived at the Magdalena House with a very simple—though rather vague—idea: to offer a bit of my time and let myself be guided by the encounters. From the very first moments, I discovered a community life marked by listening, respect, and fraternity... Immediately, I felt the desire to take part in this momentum where the women welcomed can develop their skills but, above all, gradually regain confidence, hope, and pride!

For the past few months, we have been moving forward together, and I am discovering how accompaniment is a shared journey, built on real encounters where each person nourishes the other. I would add that for me, someone whose faith is very much ‘lived on the ground,’ this commitment—following Christ—is an opportunity to serve and to continue growing in attentiveness to others.”



SAVE THE DATE

la Maison Magdalena Fête

10



ANS

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