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NEWS FROM CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS

Descendants of the Des Places family in South Africa

Fr. Heinz Kuckertz, currently the Superior of the South Central African Foundation, has worked for many years in South Africa. At the end of 2000, a Catholic family by the name Naudé came to live on

a farm near the town of Vrede, F.S., where the Spiritans have a mission since 1927. Eventually Mrs. Naudé told about her family background, which was none other than that of Poullart des

Place! The story she told obviously needs more research in Mauritius, France and Australia, but in view of our imminent 300th birthday, we give below a summary of what Heinz has discovered so far.

In his historical, penetrating work, *Led by the Spirit*, Fr. Seán Farragher (1992:1) says: "Claude's father... was the last representative of a family once distinguished by its noble title." This belief held by the historians does not necessarily imply the end of the Des Places family surviving through a line of cousins after the death of our founder's father François Claude Poullart des Places. Pere Le Floch researched the descendants of our Founder's sister, Jeanne-Françoise, up until the early 20th century. But so far, it appears, no descendants in the male line have been found. Therefore it seems to be of interest that, by some lucky chance, a **Mrs. Jeannine Naudé (née de St. Philippe Desplaces)** told us in early 2001 that she was the daughter of Jules Joseph de St. Philippe Desplaces, a descendant in the male line, of the Des Places family. In one of the handwritten documents which Mr. Jules Joseph left to his children, he makes the statement that "Claude François Poullart (sic) des Places (is) the greatest of all the Des Places, in front of whom we feel obliged to bow our heads."

Jules Joseph de St. Philippe Desplaces

Born 2nd December, 1905 at Mapou, in the north of the island of Mauritius, Jules Joseph was the only son, followed by three daughters, of Joseph Jules de St. Philippe Desplaces, the owner of a business in Mapou and of a sugar estate in Cluny in the south-east of the Island of Mauritius. Jules was about six years old, when his father died of typhoid, 1912. Subsequently, the widowed mother sold the estate at Curepipe, to a certain Helene Naz, who in turn donated it to the Church. In honour of the generous benefactor, the Church, which was built there, was dedicated to St. Helena. Soon afterwards, Jeannine's grandmother, together with her family, moved to Durban, in South Africa.

After his matriculation at the Christian Brothers' High School, in Durban, Jules studied medicine for two years. But he changed his plans and studied law at the University of Durban, very much in the tradition of the family since Poullart des Places. He graduated and was appointed a notary and in February 1933 he was admitted as an attorney.

With this qualification, he returned to Mauritius and was installed as magistrate in the nearby islands of the Seychelles, St. Brandon Diego Garcia etc. One of his surviving reports on the islands under his jurisdiction indicates his concern for the poorer employees in public offices and in the private sector pleading for an increase in their wages and for a betterment of their conditions.

In Mauritius, Jules married Alice (née Touche Poujol) of Port Louis. He had nine children, seven of whom were born of his wife Alice. The two daughters, Jeannine and Blanche, born in 1949 and 1958 respectively, were the major informants of the present report. Jeannine had already come to live in South Africa when her parents followed and settled in Durban in 1974. Her father, Jules Joseph, died on 22nd November 1993, at the age of 89. He left a number of hand-written documents, including a fully developed manuscript of his memoirs, speaking about the family and matters of the recent history of Mauritius.



Mrs Alice née Touche together with her daughter Jeannine and her son-in-law Johann Naudé (The photo was taken in August 2001, in Vrede, South Africa)

There is an oral tradition in this branch of the Des Places family that, by a request of their saintly ancestor, Claude François Poullart, the family coat of arms should never be used by the members of the family. This request was made and was kept as a sign of respect for Claude's vow of



Jules Joseph de Saint Philippe Desplaces in an advocate's garment. The photo may have been taken in 1933

poverty. At the same time the noble origin of the family was never forgotten. Jeannine (Mrs. Naudé) told us that an ancestor of her own great-grandfather, Adam Dieudonné de St. Philippe Desplaces, married into the family of a Comte de St. Philippe. It was agreed that the family of "Baron des Places" would retain the name of his wife, by adding it to his own name,

so as to be able to use the coat of arms of the family of the Comte de St. Philippe. This tradition is kept ever since and all the members of the de St. Philippe Desplaces family are given a ring with that coat of arms engraved on it.

The handwritten documents of Mr. Jules Joseph also record a number of other descendants since the time of Claude Poullart Des Places. The record starts with Claude François Poullart des Places himself, the son of François Claude and Jeanne (née le Meneust), and Claude's sister Jeanne-Françoise, who got married to Sir Henri le Chat.



Souvenir medal of the wedding of Dieudonné Desplaces and his wife Méloée, 29 April 1871 (Front)

Further memories

Some more details come from the memories of Alice, the widow of Mr. Jules Joseph, and of Sr. Mary Desplaces, confirmed by certain records, which Mgr. Amédée Nagapen,

the Vicar General in Port-Louis (Mauritius) was able to supply. A certain François Antoine Desplaces married Nanette Guidot, who apparently was of the de St. Philippe family and therefore related to her husband. François Antoine also was a lawyer. His son, Adam Dieudonné, by tradition known as Arthur, was born 6th June 1841. He married twice and became a sugar farmer. Sugar farming was an established enterprise in Mauritius since about 1735. The son of his first marriage was Emmanuel, who eventually went to Australia, where he introduced sugar farming. Joseph Jules, Jeannine's grandfather was Adam's first son in his second marriage. He was born in 1872 and followed his father, as the owner of the sugar estate on Mauritius.

Joseph Jules' younger brother was George, who had 8 children. The second child was Madeleine, who married Guy Margéot, an uncle of the Bishop of Port

Louis, Cardinal Margéot, the predecessor of our confrere, Bishop Maurice Piat, CSSp. George's fourth child and aunt to Cardinal Margeot is Sr. Mary Reparatrix SMR, alias Nancy, a member of the Societe de Marie Reparatrice. She is the only surviving member of the Desplaces family on Mauritius, and lives in the community's convent in Mahébourg.



Coat of arms of the family de Saint Philippe shown by Mrs Archer.

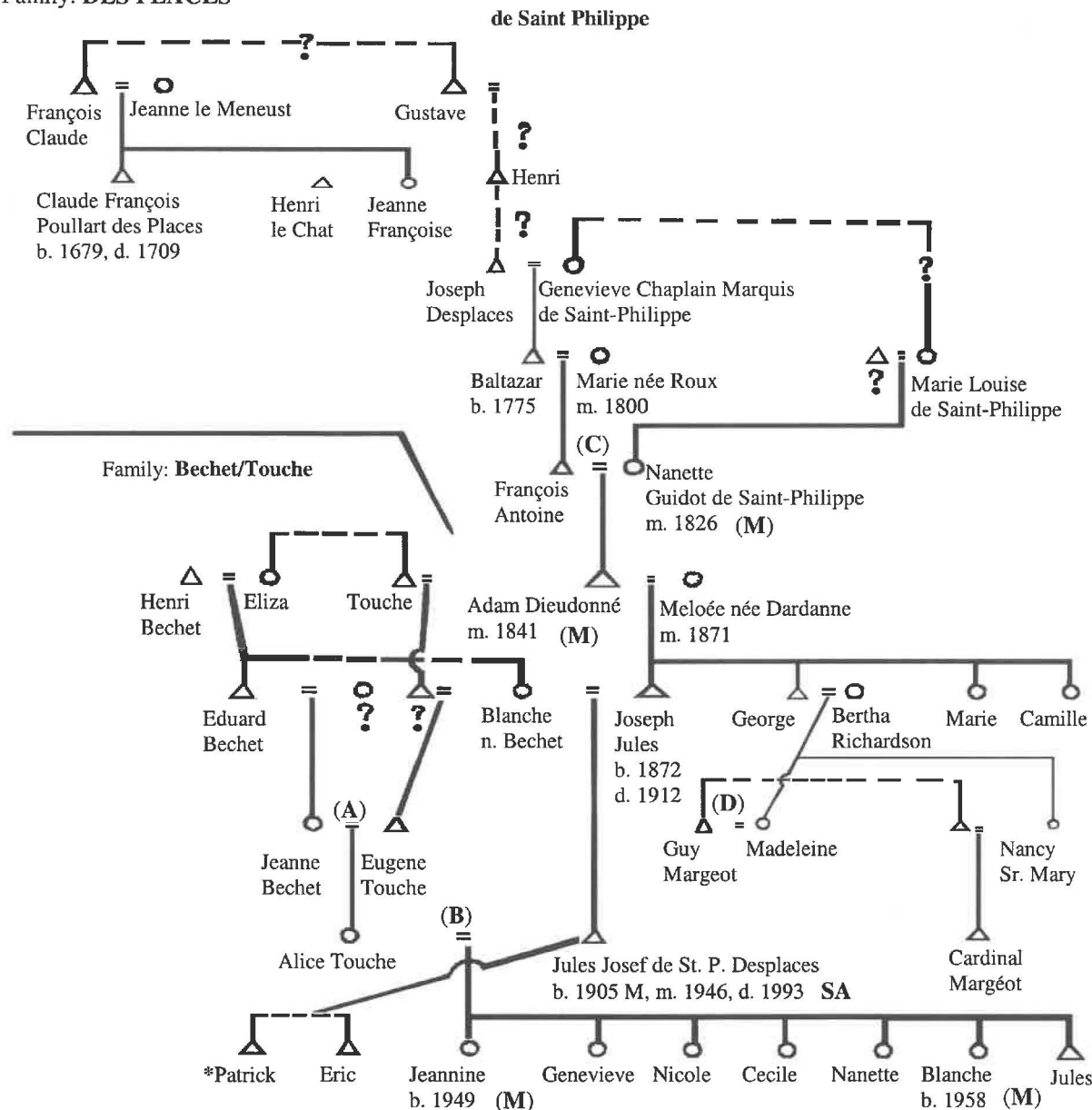


Souvenir medal (Reverse side)

There are not only other members of the Desplaces family living in Durban and in Johannesburg, whom I have not been able to contact, but there are also others living in Marseilles, in France. It should not be too difficult to follow up the clues to continue the reconstruction of the history of the family of our Venerated Founder, Claude François Poullart des Places.

The following page contains the family tree of the family de Saint Philippe Desplaces in its relationship to the families de Saint Philippe and Touche as constructed by Fr. H. Kuckertz.

Family: DES PLACES



*) The two eldest sons, Patrick and Eric are children of a different mother.

Symbols:

(A-C) : cousin marriage.
m : year of marriage.
SA : in South Africa.

--?-- : uncertain relationship.
(D) : in-law relation.
= : indicates marriage.

M : in Mauritius.
b./d. : year of birth/death.

NEWS ITEMS

PRAYER FOR THE SPIRITAN YEAR : 2 February 2002 - Pentecost 2003

Holy Spirit, you are calling us to seize this favourable time to renew ourselves in our Spiritan life as we celebrate the memory of 300 years since our foundation and the charism passed on to us by our predecessors:

May your gifts of strength and wisdom help us to deepen our service to the poor;

May your gifts of humility and devotion help us to live our religious life to the full;

May your gifts of intelligence and discernment help us to recognise what you are calling us to do at this time;

And by the fire of your love, enkindle in us that missionary enthusiasm which filled your Apostles from the day of Pentecost. AMEN.

Decisions of the General Council

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council,

- decides to open a Noviciate for the Foundation of North West Africa at Boffa in Guinée-Conakry from September 2002.
- prolongs the mandate of Fr. Seamus **FOLEY** as Superior of the Malawi International Group, for one year, with effect from the 21st October 2001.
- nominates Fr. Francois-Xavier **ROUSSEL** as Superior of the District of Guadeloupe, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from the 1st January 2002.
- The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, confirms the election of Rev. Michael **LISTON** as Major Superior of the International Group of Pakistan, for a second mandate of three years, with effect from the 2nd January 2002.
- confirms the election of Fr. Evarist **SHAYO** as Provincial Superior of the East African Province, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 11th January 2002.
- nominates Fr. John **KINGSTON** as major Superior of the International Group of Mozambique, for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1st February 2002.
- nominates Fr. Pierre **BUIS**, of the Province of France, as Assistant Secretary General of the Congregation for a mandate of three years, with effect from 1st February 2002.
- and in agreement with the Provincial Superiors of France and the EAP, transfers Fr. Jean-Yves **URFIÉ** from the General Administration to the East African Province, with effect from 1st February 2002.

Hospitality in the Generalate

The Generalate community in Rome has a long tradition of hospitality and we are anxious that this should continue. However, we would like to remind confreres that unlike some other religious houses in Rome, it is not structured as a guest house that is open to all. In order to save us the embarrassment of having to refuse requests, please note the following points:

- Members of the Congregation are always welcome and it is our practice not to ask for any payment for the first week. For longer periods, confreres are expected to make a contribution towards their keep.
- We are always very happy to receive friends or relations of confreres as long as they are accompanied by the confrere concerned. They would normally be expected to make a donation to cover their expenses.
- As you will appreciate, it is difficult to cater for guests during the holiday period (mid-July and August) when the domestic staff are on holiday. There can be other times during the year when it is not possible to receive guests because of meetings etc.
- Whenever possible, please let us know well in advance of your plans to stay with us as accommodation in the Generalate is limited.

Spiritan Publications

Gregory Ikechukwu Olikenyi, C.S.Sp., *African Hospitality, a model for the communication of the Gospel in the African cultural context*, Sankt Augustin, Bonn, 2001.

Mémoire Spiritaine, Histoire-Mission-Spiritualité, N° 13, 2001, *La France pays de missionnaires*, Rue Lhomond, Paris.

Thomas O'Malley CSSp., *Tales Without Reason, Forgotten Heroes of the Apostolate in 1840s Australia*, The Columba Press, Dublin, 2001.

Tony Neves, *Angola, A Igreja Católica pela Paz*, Rei dos Livros, Lisboa, 2001.

Père Gérard Meyer, LEXIQUE BADIARANKE-FRANÇAIS, *Parler de la région de Koundara Guinée*, Dakar 2001.

Père Gérard Meyer, ELEMENTS DE GRAMMAIRE DU BADIARANKE, *Parler de la région de Koundara Guinée*, Dakar, Hivernage, 2001.

Zbigniew Warcholik, *Bl. Ojciec Laval*, Wydawnictwo 'M', Krakow, 2001

Fr. Peter Jeffery C.S.Sp., *GOING AGAINST THE STREAM – Ethical aspects of Ageing and Care*, Gracewing/The Liturgical Press, 2001.

P. Zygmunt Kosielski CSSp., *All meine Quellen entspringen in dir, Predigten und geistliche Impulse für Ordensleute*, Bydgoszcz, 2001.

Fr. Ikechukwu A. Arjinta, C.S.Sp., *The Sin of Conformity*, Snaap Press Ltd, Enugu, 2001.

OUR DEAD

18 Nov.	Fr. Roger HEYRAUD	France 72
25 Nov.	Br. Bartholomeus T. WISSE	N/Lands 70
02 Dec.	Br. Celestin A. HARSTER	France 78
05 Dec.	Fr. Thomas J. CLEARY	Ireland 77
09 Dec.	Fr. James W. DUNNE	Ireland 62
09 Dec.	Fr. Jean BARASSIN	France 90
16 Dec.	Fr. Michael F. CUNNIFFE	Ireland 73
19 Dec.	Br. Constantinus J. GEVERS	N/Lands 81
23 Dec.	Fr. Anthony J. QUINN	England 83
25 Dec.	Fr. Fernand COSTE	France 83
28 Dec.	Fr. Oliver D. BARRETT	Ireland 81
31 Dec.	Fr. Gérard KLING	France 75
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03 Jan.	Fr. Fernando M. SILVA	Portugal 91
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04 Feb.	Fr. Michael SIBEKO	SCAF 43
04 Feb.	Fr. James GILTINAN	Ireland 97