

## Creation of an independent and multidisciplinary research commission

Châteauneuf-de-Galaure,  
9 September 2019

Dear fathers and lay members of the Foyers,  
Dear friends of the Foyers,

In 2018-2019, we have been questioned on a number of occasions about Fr Georges Finet without being able to verify the truth of the testimonies ourselves. One particularly painful testimony was broadcast on the radio and on the internet, which has caused confusion and led to a reaction inside and outside the Foyers.

### **Obligation to establish the truth**

Given the role and importance of Fr Finet in the history of our foundation, we cannot let any doubt and confusion continue to spread in people's minds and hearts without taking action. The truth must be told, whether something occurred or not. In every case, establishing the truth is an obligation that we have towards the people concerned, and a necessity for the Foyers de Charité, for every member and for the future of the Work.

We are well aware that simply raising the question will provoke a strong emotional response for many people. What's more, we spent some time, with the help of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, to decide on the best possible course of action to be taken, while respecting the people involved. Given the great complexity of the task at hand, it immediately became evident that an independent investigation was required, rather than the matter being handled internally.

### **An independent and multidisciplinary investigation commission**

With the help of the observations provided, I therefore decided, with the International Foyer Council, to entrust this task to an independent and multidisciplinary commission.

The person chosen to **chair this commission is Mrs Françoise Gausson** - who has all the credentials required to fulfil this task, given her professional and ecclesial career (*she is a doctor in Catholic theology, was responsible for crisis management at the general secretariat of Catholic education, episcopal representative of Bishop Boffet, Bishop Ricard and Bishop Thomazeau in Montpellier, then episcopal representative of Bishop Pontier, Archbishop of Marseille, and chairman of the Conference of Bishops of France, where she led the training on the protection of minors in 2018-2019*).

In accordance with the guidelines of the Dicastery, she has formed the Commission herself with independent experts (canonist, historian, clinical psychologist, lawyer, specialist in the protection of minors, vocations, teaching methods and practical theology, etc.)

## **Mission and schedule of the Commission**

In addition to establishing the truth regarding the events in question concerning Fr Georges Finet, we have asked them to evaluate the measures taken today by the Foyers de Charité in combating sexual abuse and abuse of conscience, and to put forward any recommendations they may deem necessary.

The report, intended for the International Council and the Dicastery, will be submitted in March 2020.

I have agreed to publish the conclusions of this investigation.

In the meantime, we will not make any intermediate communications so that the Commission can conduct its work without any undue pressure or influence and fulfil the mission entrusted to it. So that the mission can be carried out properly, the Commission will have unrestricted access to the archives and documents. It will also be required to conduct interviews to facilitate its research work, with due respect for those concerned.

An email address has been set up as well as a dedicated phone line for this purpose. It will be managed exclusively by the members of the Commission.

### **Direct contact details of the Commission:**

These contact details are open to everyone:

E-mail address:	<a href="mailto:commission.recherches2020@gmail.com">commission.recherches2020@gmail.com</a>
Phone:	+ 33 (0)6 46 72 98 10

## **A movement of conversion, with the whole Church**

Finally, I would like to quote Pope Francis in his letter to priests sent this summer :

*"I am convinced that, to the extent that we remain faithful to God's will, these present times of ecclesial purification will make us more joyful and humble, and prove, in the not distant future, very fruitful. Let us not grow discouraged! The Lord is purifying his Bride and converting all of us to himself.»*

We are all invited to join this movement of conversion, to which the Holy Father calls the Church, with confidence and hope for the future. I also encourage you to continue to give thanks for everything that is happening in the Foyers. Once again, this summer, the many retreats and gatherings organised throughout the world have borne witness to the fruitfulness of our mission in the service of the Gospel, that we want to live out to the full and make known to others.

Let us give thanks to the Lord for all this and keep the members of the Commission in our prayers.

May Our Lady of the Foyer accompany us and keep us in peace on this journey,

**Fr Moïse NDIONE** , Moderator Father of the Work of the Foyers de Charité