

# An Introduction

## ON PILGRIMAGE, SHARING OF THE HEART AND LACEMAKING

*Ideally, a human life should be a constant pilgrimage of discovery. The most exciting discoveries happen at the frontiers. When you come to know something new, you come closer to yourself and to the world. Discovery enlarges and refines your sensibility. When you discover something, you transfigure some of the forsakenness of the world.*

~ John O'Donohue, *Eternal Echoes*

**Pilgrimage**—a single journey? a lifetime? a single journey that informs a life?

However, we might experience pilgrimage—a time of prayer, meditation, or travel; it can be an experience where we become ever more aware of an encounter between the human and the divine. Taking time away from our normal routines or task-oriented natures, we can advance our entry into another realm—where our senses can be more aware and our boundaries more porous. Reflecting on these kinds of encounters can help inform our next steps.

As we embark on this journey toward learning more about and experiencing the CSJ spiritual foundations. May it one that informs our lifetimes.

*Pay Attention.*

*Be Astonished.*

*Talk about it.*

~ Mary Oliver, "Sometimes," *Red Bird*

At heart of CSJ spirituality is a practice called **Sharing of the Heart**. Mary Oliver's "Instructions for Life," stated above, describe the essence of this practice. Read more about the background of [Sharing of the Heart](#) and find steps for practicing it with a group in CSJ Resources. May this practice help build connection and relationship among you and fellow pilgrims in your company.

### **Lace and lacemaking in LePuy**

Since the 15<sup>th</sup> Century lace has been central to Le Puy-en-Velay's culture and economy. According to legend, in 1407, the bishop of LePuy asked a young needlewoman named Isabelle Mamour to decorate a cloak for the [Black Madonna](#). To create something fine enough, she created lace. Another legend suggests that during the Middle Ages, LePuy's location on the pilgrimage route to Santiago, Spain, Le Puy attracted merchants, shoppers and traveling peddlers who introduced lace and taught folks how to make it.



*Lacemaker, Cathy Steffens, CSJ*

Whatever the truth of the legend, lace has been and remains ubiquitous in Le Puy! While standing at the Sisters of St. Joseph's [hearth](#) one can easily imagine the sisters and women in their company sharing their hearts with one another while making lace together. Lace designs show the beauty found in making connecting threads and keeping open spaces. Keeping in mind how much connection and relationship is at the heart of CSJ mission and spirituality, be reflective of lace and lacemaking. How might it be a sign or symbol of your experience of pilgrimage and CSJ mission and spirituality?