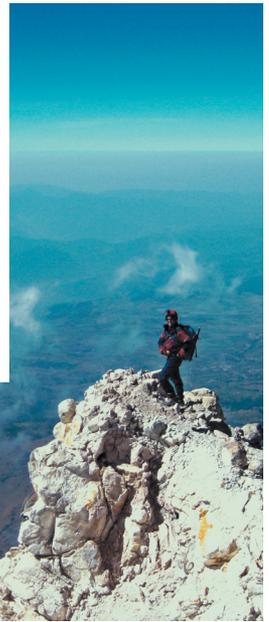


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Understand  
our **faith**  
proclaim it  
**LIVE IT!**



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A Centre for christian education and development

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Québec - Canada

# The Agapè Centre

Building ties between who we are and what we believe, live, and share... as we become rooted in something that gives strength and confidence, so our faith may bloom, so we may reflect on our life's path, and commit to building a better world. In 1988, a group of Theology students, along with their professor, began an experience that was dynamic and life-giving... and the Agapè Centre for Christian Development was born!

Since then, more than 350 people (students and young adults who were already in the workforce) have dedicated one year of their life to live the challenging Agapè experience. They took the time to discover their inner self, where God waits for us all.

The diversity of our team and the flexibility of our programs are greatly appreciated by the participants. Our goal is not for you to fit into our mould: this resting place represents a stepping stone, a springboard that helps one discover one's authentic true self. Our program is described in the first section of this document.

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The last pages of this document present the Mexican expansion of the Centre Agapè.

Over the years, the Centre Agapè has spread its mission to the city of Puebla, then to the mountains of Huatusco. It is there that a team from Agapè established the Juan Pablo II Community Centre that aims to be a stimulating presence in the area, particularly among youth, women, and the poor.

Every year, we offer to over 120 teenagers and adults the opportunity to live a humanitarian experience there!



Photo : Pascal Huot

# The experience Agapê

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## FOR WHO ?

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Our journey is offered to every person from 18 to 35 years of age. No matter where they are in their faith experience : with openness of mind and heart, everyone is welcome to move forward at their own pace in Agapê's Catholic environment. In order to successfully meet the challenge of this program, a good psychological and relational maturity is required.

To live the Agapê experience entails being available to spend one school year ( eight months ) in our home away from home in Quebec City. It goes without saying that this experience, lived right in the middle of the Church's birthplace in North America, represents a fascinating opportunity.

We are always happy to welcome participants that come from different countries around the world. Although the journey takes place in French, we can accompany and guide students who speak English, Spanish or another language, so as to facilitate their linguistic and cultural integration.



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## WITH WHO ?

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The Centre Agapê is led by a team of lay people, diocesan priests, and religious from various congregations. These men and women of faith, competent and devoted, come from different ecclesial backgrounds. They are between 30 and 80 years old : the intergenerational character of our environment is extraordinarily rewarding ! Every leader, guide, and professor brings their own spiritual richness with them.

Our program leaders and coordinators consider themselves on a journey as well, as disciples of Christ accompanying other disciples. Year after year, our creative team is open and willing to being transformed, touched, and amazed by the Agapê experience.



***Agapè is a Greek word used in the Gospels to express love with which God loves us : a merciful and unconditional love.***



# The Agapê experience - 4 pillars -

Our pedagogy takes root in the rich tradition of the Church; it is inspired by the following text from the Acts of the Apostles: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Ac 2: 42-47)



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*Over the years, the Centre Agapê has developed an approach and an expertise that favours an authentic Christian experience, on both a personal and ecclesial basis. It is an excellent program for Catholics connected to current issues of our time.*

- Cardinal Gérald Cyprien Lacroix, Archbishop of Québec.

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## SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Agapê adventure is designed to nourish an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, our God. Personal and community prayer, religious celebrations, training sessions, retreats and spiritual guidance: so many ways to root oneself in a rich, spiritual life.

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## ACADEMIC LIFE

Academic is at the heart of the Agapê programs. The classes given at the Centre Agapê aim not only to deepen the participant's Christian faith, but to make an integral part of this experience. It is also possible for the students to be registered at the university in a full-time Theology program, if they so wish.





Photo : Pascal Huot

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## COMMUNITY LIFE

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Just imagine living under the same roof with other young adults in a family-type atmosphere : that is quite the experiment ! They say that the Christian faith implies loving one another and building community, even with our differences ; well, we offer an in-depth opportunity to experience this.

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## COMMITMENT

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By their active participation in the household, participants aim to develop a lifestyle centered on sharing. The gift of oneself is also a part of our community and pastoral internships.



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***My time at the Centre Agapê gave me the opportunity to live my faith, simply, from day to day. Through very concrete gestures, I opened myself to the world.***

- **Jean-François Langlais**, former participant with a BA in Theology. He is also a technician in organic farming, an active member of Development and Peace, and a pastoral worker in schools.



# The Agapê programs... helping one nourish their search for meaning...

Photo : Pascal Huot

Here is our academic outline, which is at the heart of the Agapê experience ;  
these are the main themes that are developed throughout the year :

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## DISCOVERING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

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- Theology and the role it plays on a personal level, as well as in society
- Deepening our understanding of the key elements of the Catholic faith
- Major passages from the Bible : interpreting and adapting the Word of God in my life
- Ethics and Christian anthropology
- Treasures of Christian spirituality : living the Alliance with the Father through Agapê love
- The sacraments : nourishing my life as a child of God



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***For me, the Centre Agapê was a school of life  
and a school of faith; I learned to live a more  
well-balanced, a more harmonious,  
and a more complete faith.***

- **Pierre-Olivier Tremblay**, omi, Doctor of Ministry, former pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Ottawa, and current Rector of *Our Lady of the Cape Shrine*



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## CHRISTIANITY : A PATH TO HUMANIZATION

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- Developing a connection between what I believe, what I say and what I do
- Discovering and appreciating myself to better give of myself to others
- Finding my place in the Church and the world : elements of spiritual and vocational discernment
- The pillars of effective interpersonal communication
- Building bridges between my faith with my emotional and sexual life : a path of integration
- Learning to manage my time and my life

This program can lead to a Certificate in Theology, at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at Laval University. To do so, one must have already completed the prerequisite courses at either the high school or Cegep level.

A classroom at the Centre Agapê allows us to welcome professors on-site, offering a warm and inviting learning environment. The Agapê experience also includes internships in different community and pastoral placements.

The courses that are offered may vary, depending on the experience and needs of each student.



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***I was in a period of my life where I was faced with many choices, and the Agapê experience greatly encouraged the discernment of my call.***

- **Magdalie Nadeau**, B.A. in Theology, trained in accompaniment, mother of four children, of which one is adopted from abroad, founder of the *Pèlerin d'Art-Vida* retreat house.



# PATHS OF DEVELOPMENT

The general academic program described in the previous pages can be rearranged to allow students who wish to focus on a particular aspect. There are three options : a missionary option with an internship in Mexico, an option for those who are interested in the arts and communications, and a vocational option.



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## Missionary option

### *Deepening my roots in order to take part*

The missionary option at Centre Agapê offers an opportunity to go to Mexico for three months and experience life in the Mexican Church and culture. More specifically, after eight months of the Agapê experience in Quebec City, a summer internship takes place in Mexico, mainly in the city of Puebla. This stay allows students to discover for themselves the dynamism and the challenges of the Latin American Church.

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### **MORE DETAILS ABOUT THIS OPTION :**

Besides the intensive Spanish classes, as well as courses about the host country, the following are the main themes and questions that are a part of the program in Quebec City :

- Spiritual identity and one's personal mission : how to live the missionary aspect of my Christian life.
- History of various missions, particularly on the North American continent.
- Social Doctrine of the Church and Latin American theologies.
- Missionary attitudes and spirituality
- Issues and challenges of the enculturation of the Gospel
- Once in Mexico, there are courses on the Mexican culture and history of the Church of Mexico, in association with the Universidad Iberoamericana (a Jesuit university in Puebla).



Photo : Pascal Huot

# Arts and Communications option

## *Deepening my roots to be a witness*

This option is for anyone with an artist's soul : musicians, painters, actors... It is also for those who are eager to share the Gospel through media : journalists, video directors, graphic designers... We adapt the Agapê experience to allow students to perfect their talent in a very concrete manner, through custom-made courses and training. It offers the opportunity to unite their faith with their artistic side or their implication in the world of communications.

### **MORE DETAILS ABOUT THIS OPTION :**

- Learn to recognize and interpret aspects of Christian spirituality in both modern-day and past expressions of art and culture.
- Relate my own creativity to the contemporary world and to the history of the arts, communications, and Christianity.
- Integrate my Christian experience in an artistic approach or in a domain of the communications, in dialogue with a given environment.
- Issues and challenges of the Church through communications or the arts.
- New evangelization and new means of communication.
- Mentoring and internships in the fields of the arts or communications.

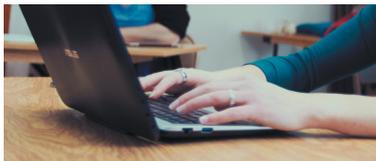


Photo : Pascal Huot

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# Vocational option

## *Deepening my roots to answer a call*

Finding one's place in the world and answering God's call is not always easy. When one starts questioning their own vocation, time should be taken to explore this path. Over the course of eight months at the Centre Agapê, the participants have the opportunity to learn how to navigate between the different options that are presented to them. This program is supervised by members of our team, as well as by the Vocations Office of the Quebec Archdiocese and various partners.



Photo : Pascal Huot

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## **MORE DETAILS ABOUT THIS OPTION :**

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- Different vocations within the Church : spiritualities, charismas', and missions.
- The Word of God : Answering the call.
- A modern-day portrait of vocations : issues and challenges for the future.
- The main spiritual families of the Church. Which ones echoes the most with my own spiritual identity ?
- Courses in spiritual and vocational discernment.
- Discover the founders of the Church of Quebec.
- Mentoring and placements.



# Admission

If you are interested in one of these programs, we invite you to contact us to receive our admissions questionnaire. Next, you will be contacted for an interview with the person in charge of admissions. Then, if you want your program to be credited by the university, we will accompany you in the admission process at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at Laval University ; if you are from another country, we can also help you obtain a student visa for studies in Quebec.

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## **COST :**

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The requested contribution for an 8-month stay at the Centre Agapê is \$4,000. This includes accommodations, food, activities, and supervision.

### *Cost for the academic portion of the program*

There are two options with regards to the academic training proposed by the Centre Agapê :

- 1)** Register as a full-time student at Laval University. The participant receives credits for his courses and must pay the current tuition fees at the university ( for 2015-2016, the tuition for Quebec students was \$3000 for eight months of courses ).
- 2)** If you do not want to officially register at the university, we ask that you contribute \$1300 for the eight months of courses.

### *Special contribution for Agapê-mission*

The Missionary program is spread out over eleven months and includes a 3-month internship in Mexico. There are therefore additional expenses :

- \$2000 for the internship in Mexico ( three months )
- Approximately \$1000 for airfare and travel insurance
- The fees for a university semester in Mexico ( for those who wish to obtain university credit )

Laval University's International Office offers, under certain conditions, a grant covering a major part of these additional expenses ( only for full-time students registered at Laval University ).

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Students from Quebec registered full-time at the university have access to government loans and bursaries. Similar programs exist for students coming from other Canadian provinces. For non-Quebec students, it is possible that tuition fees differ from what is indicated in the present document.

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*We do not want fees to be an obstacle for you if you want to live a year at the Centre Agapê. Please contact us for more information.*

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# Agapê in Mexico

## *Community Involvement : Puebla*

Since 1996, Agapê has been present in the city of Puebla. A group of people, growing together in their faith are involved in different activities and charities, according to the needs of the local people.



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***I had the desire to live a humanitarian experience on an international level, one that included more than just lending a helping hand. I also wanted to deepen my faith: make it concrete by giving it hands, words, a body, and roots. The year I spent at Agapê was a foundational experience in my life.***

- **Isabelle Duval**, M.A. in literature, teacher, multidisciplinary artist



Every summer, during the participants' internship (Agapê-Mission), this mission grows. The participants live with a host family during this experience. After a 3-week course at the Jesuit University Iberoamericana, focusing on the culture, history and religious traditions of Mexico, they begin to participate in various activities within one of the city's underprivileged parishes. With the local team, they also work on developing some projects there. But most of all, this experience is about living and sharing "with" the local people; it is so much more than just accomplishing projects for them.

## *The Centre Juan Pablo II: Huatusco*

At the request of the local bishop, the Centre Agapê, in partnership with the Brothers of Christian Instruction (La Mennais Brothers) founded a community centre in 2006 in the town of Huatusco. Settling in an old school, the centre was renovated little by little, offering a number of rooms and functional spaces to welcome hundreds of people who have passed through there.

This centre is very similar to a beehive! Day after day, seven days a week, there are countless events, meetings, classes, and workshops. One of the main projects, a summer camp for underprivileged children, gathers more than 450 children and their 75 camp leaders every year! There are also classes on interpersonal communication, reading workshops for children, and a program for mothers that includes cooking and sewing classes, as well as activities that promote autonomy. The team supports the local parish too, by forming the catechists, among other things.

Every year, this unique team, comprised of people from Quebec and Mexico, welcomes several volunteer groups of all ages. With this additional help, they can work on developing the small surrounding villages: the construction of concrete esplanades and playing fields are only two examples of projects that are already in place. As always, our team always works side by side with the local population and agencies.



# Agapê for volunteers and missionaries

Besides its Agapê-Mission program, the Centre Agapê coordinates since 1997 diverse types of internships in Mexico. These experiences are opened to all, no matter one's age or religious beliefs. Individual journeys or in a group, school stays, specialized work or pastoral implication, of variable duration... Ready for the adventure?



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## SHORT COOPERATION EXPERIENCES

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Several times a year, our Centre Juan Pablo II in Mexico welcomes school or parochial groups. They enjoy during about ten days an intensive cultural immersion, while realizing a project of help in a deprived village.



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***I went to Mexico because I wanted to learn to give, and it rather taught to me to receive. I wanted to learn to know different people, and it showed me that at the bottom of our heart, we are every fellow men. I went over there to discover the world, and I discovered a part of myself, which today takes a lot of space in my life.***

- **Anne-Sophie Allard**, former participant in a cooperative mission of Centre Agape





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## EXPEDITIONS OF SOLIDARITY MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

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From the Centre Juan Pablo II, we have a magnificent view on the third highest peak of North America : Pico de Orizaba. We organize expeditions of mountain climbing, inviting adults of any ages in good physical condition to climb Orizaba or one of the other peaks in the center of Mexico. They gather donation to support the development of the Centre Juan Pablo II, where they have the opportunity to stay following their adventure. Incredible challenge, which fascinated all the adventurers who dared to to take the challenge...



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## MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM MISSIONS

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We offer the possibility to adults, young (and less young) people to join for a few months or even a few years the team of missionaries of Huatusco. A preparatory training on the spirituality of Agapê, the mission and the community life is given and a particular project is then developed in dialog with the participants who work on the spot.

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DÉVELOPPE DES RACINES  
ET DES AILES

DÉPLOIE TON \_\_\_\_\_

• **IDENTITÉ CHRÉTIENNE**

**OSE L'AVENTURE** DE TA VIE

ANCRE-TOI \_\_\_\_\_

DANS **L'ÉGLISE**

D'AUJOURD'HUI

**GOÛTE** UNE EXPÉRIENCE **FORTE**  
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