

At Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, near Paris, a floating parish run by the Assumptionists responds to the need of offering hospitality to hundreds of homeless Tibetan refugees.

Two Tibetan women walk on-board calmly, each wearing the same easily recognizable back-pack. In the chapel of the barge community known as *Je sers* ("I serve"), they were told that here they would not be turned away. From the foothills of the Himalayas of Nepal across the beaten roads of India, the name of this stopover circulates among the diaspora. Here, on the banks of the Seine, at Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, north of Paris, the door stays open.

All the places are taken

It is Hugues Fresneau, director of this floating establishment, who receives them in his office. In his cramped quarters where files are piled on top of each other, a photo of Pope Francis hangs next to one of the Dalai Lama. Embarrassed, he says, *"We aren't the solution; nevertheless, we can't stand by twiddling our thumbs".*

The two women won't be sleeping outside. A couple of men who are on their heels, however, won't be so lucky. They, too, crossed the top of the world by foot, making it first to Katmandu, then to Europe by plane or by train. *"All I can give you is a tent so that you can sleep in the nearby woods with the others,"* he tells them in English. In the absence of alternatives, some fifty young people, in fact, sleep on the other bank under the trees, hidden from public view.



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