



Greetings, everyone !

You may have heard from others about these 15 days with Philippine, a week of sharing of experiences and of pilgrimage.

All went very well, and it has been a time of intense sharing of experiences. We had a beautiful celebration at Grâne, which was attended by Mr. Estrangin (a member of Philippine's family who has renovated the Grâne property and lives there) and Father Raymond Peret who has written a little book on Philippine.

The group was very international. There were rscj, young people, women religious of other congregations, and Jesuits, coming from Hungary (20), Poland (20), Romania, Spain (4), Luxembourg (1), Switzerland (1), Egypt (4), Madagascar (1), Belgium (5) and France. There were even two young women from the USA, one of whom is to be in charge of pastoral care in a Sacred Heart institution.



We were very lucky with the pilgrimage : no storms, health worries, injuries... just a bit of tendinitis but nothing serious. Sarah, leader of a healthcare team with two young people and with pharmacy provisions laid on, was almost unemployed !

We walked in the Vercors, from Vassieux to Lans en Vercors. So we went through places steeped in history, (Vassieux, the Vercors Chapel, the village of Valchevrière); they are also places of great beauty.



The days began with a touch of humor: Do you know that there is a new rule for a person to be canonized? No ? She must have made a joke!

This raises the question whether all the canonized saints can stay canonized ! So we had two inspectors from Rome to try to answer this question (Amelie and Virginie) ! They had met various people who had spoken to them about Philippine: a ship's captain, the descendant of a child from the streets of Grenoble, a native American Indian, a bishop .... All these personages were presented by a Jesuit, Benoit de Maintenant, who is from Philippine's family (through her sister Amélie). This enabled us in a humorous way to re-visit the theme of the day – the spiritual journey.

This was followed by testimonies from religious, (cenacle, auxi, rscj) and a couple (Etienne and Emmanuelle de Giovanni) who made the link between the theme and their life.

A short period of prayer completed this introductory day.



Then the “tribes” began their walk, allowing a fair amount of time for silence. This period was greatly appreciated and was often prolonged at the participants' request.

During the walk, our meals and other breaks facilitated some deep encounters, before resuming our walk with other tribes in the afternoon and then arriving at our accommodation.

We spent nights either at the campsite (the Vercors Chapel, Villard de Lans) or in buildings: a sports hall with nets and trampolines among the trees (near Saint Martin en Vercors) or again in the gym of Boifleury, the school which has just been renamed St. Philippine. Everywhere we felt very welcome.



At day's end, we celebrated Mass for those who wished, and we parishioners and holiday makers. We also celebrated in Villard de Lans campsite, with the approval of our neighbors.



An "à la carte" day in Villard allowed some walkers to climb up to the peak of St Michel and contemplate the view of Grenoble and the mountains. Others went on "Lovers Way" to see a waterfall, and have a swim and an ice cream on the way back. That day allowed each one to go at their own pace.

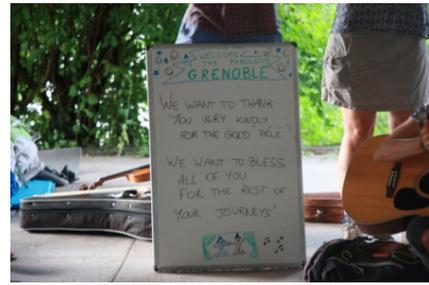
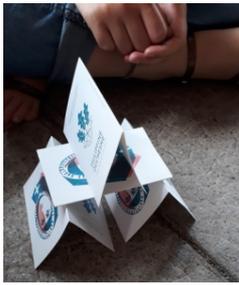
An evening of Reconciliation in the Villard Church ended the day.



Meals provided times of relaxing with a festive feel: cold buffet, a giant paella; and we were treated to baby onions by caterers all along the way. The logistics team managed to come every two days and they assured good humored service, despite some unforeseen eventualities!



We descended on Grenoble on the evening of July 27, and enjoyed a party organized by the participants who displayed a lot of creativity, humor, joy.



On Saturday 28th, we had an appointment to meet Philippine in Grenoble, first in the town then at the Dauphinois Museum (Philippine's former Visitation Convent) where an experimental theater group gave a performance taking us wandering through places significant for Philippine and helping us really to see Philippine's life in Grenoble. At our pilgrimage's end, many were touched by this moment. For example, to see Philippine leaving alone for America and receiving the cross from Sophie, or again Philippine at the time of the Revolution being brought back home from the convent by her father. ... Moments such as these the amateur actors presented with both strength and delicacy. The theater staff was particularly welcoming and happy with this event, including their security people, one of whom was particularly touched by this performance.



We ended with Mass with the bishop of Grenoble, Msgr. Kérimel, in the Church of St. Louis. The songs were prepared by the music group, the celebration perfectly organized by Odile and two associates of Lille (Bernadette Sanz and Bernadette Flament). Joy and the thanksgiving were very perceptible.



Finally the departures.... The young ones who came by plane leaving on the 28th or 29th..

During these 15 days there were ‘first times’ for several : the first time camping, under a tent, the first really long march, the first shrimps peeled of their shells, the first time to lend one’s car, to drive a minibus, to be in charge of the logistics team, the first time to live an activity with the Magis network, to experience a retreat, to be with people with disabilities... the first time to share about her faith story (in English), the first time to act on a stage ! In a word, with Philippine, many frontiers were crossed, enabling a growth in one’s humanity, through encounters with others, with oneself, and with God!



This adventure greatly helps to weave links among members of the Ignatian family, religious and lay, allowing us to appreciate one another mutually.

It has also woven bonds beyond the Magis network: the ‘Chemin Neuf’; L’Arche; the Dauphinois Museum that welcomed us in Grenoble; the Spiritans who lodged us at Allex, adjusting to all our changes and unforeseen needs. Doors were opened, and there were surprising conversations in a supermarket, coping with enormous shopping trolleys; not to mention discussions with caterers, with individuals who opened churches for us.... And early on, there had been meetings with pastoral workers and young people, in particular in Grenoble and Valence. In short, a great deal of openness and flexibility, and a lot of reciprocal welcomes.



And now we return to the more normal, the ordinary, « Let’s go ! » Resuming work or holiday.... Thank you for your support. May prayers continue to accompany each one so that inner paths, the paths in the heart, may continue to be opened up !

*Sophie Maille rscj*