

## Memories of the « Philippine Journey » from 1st to 6th July 2018, organised by Françoise Rollin rscj

Our group stayed in the Visitors' Centre of St Hugues de Biviers. We were 9 lay people and 15 rscj, from seven different nationalities: Austria, Belgium, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Uganda, Philippines. On the final evening of our meeting, each person shared a favourite memory from his or her Philippine Journey. We would like to share these accounts with you.

From the first day, gazing at the Monastery of Sainte Marie d'en Haut from the sky, in the "eggs" (the "bubbles" or cabins of the Cable Car), was a magnificent moment; then this was complemented by visiting the convent itself. I felt full of joy there; this was strengthened at each new stage of the journey.

*Everything was of a piece: Philippine's rootedness in the town, the nearness of the Grande Chartreuse Monastery, her openness to the events of the time in Vizille. These helped us to understand all that had nourished her missionary desire.*

The visit to the Fifth-century Baptistry with this international group brought me very close to the first Christians!

*These days brought Philippine to life for me. I could be with her in the very places she had walked! To my great surprise, I climbed the 250 steps even though I had thought I would not be able.*

I was helped twice by Philippine: In the train to Grenoble, which had been an hour and a quarter late, someone offered to drive me by car as far as Saint Hugues de Biviers. And the next day I hitched a lift and was driven to the Monastery of Sainte Marie d'en Haut!

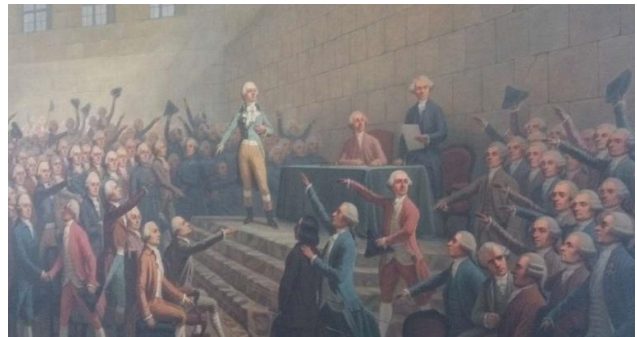
*During these four days I was able to feel the strength which emanated from this great woman. I am going away with deep admiration for the life of Philippine Duchesne.*

Continuing to place my footsteps where she had walked: in the cloister of Sainte Marie d'en Haut, and where she was baptised...Getting to know better all that happened in her family, in the Visitation Convent, in Vizille during the French Revolution. All this presented by the lecturer who has such profound scholarship...allowed me to understand the links between events, how one thing depended on others.

*The corridor of the « meeting » in Sainte Marie d'en Haut is a place filled with grace. Our spirituality springs from this meeting. Without knowing what God expects nowadays from our meeting, we need to know what it is that we love. Thank you for all that I have lived here.*

All that I have read during these recent months about Philippine, added to all the marvellous explanations received here, before she travelled on the Rebecca, will give me the possibility of writing a little booklet in order to spread the knowledge of Philippine. I am keeping that in mind and I am staying with the beautiful experience of silence that we had in the cloister of Sainte Marie d'en Haut.

*Philippine has pursued me all my life. She was waiting for me in front of her picture at the door of the Noviceship, in the tribune where we spent nights in adoration, in Canada where I had an experience of poverty, and later in Egypt. In Sainte Marie d'en Haut the pelican on the door of the tabernacle and the corridor of the encounter touched me in a special way.*



Like Philippine I escaped from my home in order to enter the Noviceship... and I suffered. Philippine went up to Sainte Marie d'en Haut three times: for her first Communion, to enter the Noviceship and to take up religious life again after the Revolution. Philippine needed to be cloistered to be there, on her knees on the tiles of the choir, to pray and to feel the need to go everywhere. She is a "contempl-active" – one and the same thing. At the end of her life she is the woman who prays always.

*In the Square of St Louis Church, in front of the family home and in the interior courtyard where the 12 children played – that is where Philippine came completely to life for me. And that wasn't all. In the monastery of La Grande Chartreuse during two hours in silence her experience of the absolute God became present; finally Vizille, which placed us in the context of the French Revolution, which she experienced... Philippine is a gift for our religious life. May she accompany me, may she accompany us.*



I came for Philippine; her experience speaks to me because I myself have lived abroad. Everything began at the Church of Saint Louis, at the baptismal fonts. We sang and prayed there. It was so good to be together! In a word, I was reborn at this place of her baptism, in the corridor of the encounter between herself and Madeleine Sophie, at the Grande Chartreuse with Saint Bruno and finally at Vizille at the museum of the French Revolution – the beginning of another world.

*In 1940, the year of her Beatification, I was 13. In 1988, the year of her Canonisation, I did the walk organised by Françoise, and in 2018, the year of the Bicentenary, I am taking part again in the Philippine journey! I came to France to discover Madeleine Sophie and Philippine. In this group I have discovered the "Open Heart". The rscj have such a big heart, because I had not understood what the open heart was, and it is open, which makes sense of the logo.*

During my Candidate year I often prayed to Philippine. Before entering the Noviceship in Lyon my Sisters in Hungary wanted me to take part in the Philippine Journey. Here I am finding myself face to face with her! My prayer has become Life. Sainte Marie d'en Haut was a starting-point for Philippine, and it has become this for me too...



*I didn't come for Philippine, but I discovered a lot of things that I hadn't known. Among other things- the expression on your faces, the words that you use. That has challenged me and I don't know where that will lead?*

I am influenced by this woman, her return to her family, her entry to the Monastery, the great journeys for which she was prepared...I liked our prayer times, the Eucharistic Celebrations. After what happened in the Jura the initiative to have this journey is to be admired!

*The Visitor Centre at Saint Hugues de Biviers had arranged the times of the Masses for 6.20 pm. Without realising this I had planned to arrive here at 6.20 pm! Philippine gave me this gift! That is Philippine!*