



Patricia Hevia (ESP)

As I try to write about the journey that has brought me to the Society of the Sacred Heart, I still feel the strength of the mark I felt within me when I arrived in my first rscj community: home at last! After some years of searching I experienced the joy of arriving in this place where I would be able to learn how to be my most truthful self and allow the Other, God, to change that into gift.

When I recall the ‘journey’ that has brought me to this place I remember the poem *Ithaka*, written by C.P. Cavafy:

*As you set out for Ithaka
hope the voyage is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way.*

*Hope the voyage is a long one.
May there be many a summer morning when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you come into harbours seen for the first time.*

Remembering the moment I decided to undertake this journey I feel again in my heart the doubts of my adolescent self, and the lack of understanding of my family who had different plans for me. I was consumed by the deep thirst of the Absolute God and the desire to give myself fully. I was fortunate to be able to share that first searching with friends in school and with the Sisters who accompanied us. There is where I discovered the rich soil wherein my vocation began to grow and become real.

It has been a long journey to reach the Society of the Sacred Heart and my little boat has berthed in various ports; I am grateful that it was so, for it has brought me a wealth of experience and is part of my story. I was able to discover the potency of a life of silence in a contemplative monastery, and get closer to the suffering reality of the world in a congregation whose preferential option is to the serve the poorest in society. My journey has brought me to share life with older people, abused women, prisoners, the sick, and to make different cultures of Asia and Africa my own. Yes! It has been an intense, vital journey with times of joy and sorrow, where I have learned - and continue to learn - to welcome the clay that is me, my lights and shadows, my wealth and my poverty.



Patricia at different moments of being with young people

Reaching home, reaching the Society of the Sacred Heart, I found that our way of life invites me to live with openness, and draws me on to more Life. From the beginning I was attuned to our *elder sisters*: Sophie, Philippine, Janet Stuart and many others...As I read the Constitutions I felt that they were putting words on my search for a life inserted in the world and a life lived from a contemplative perspective. When I began to get to know individual religious I was attracted to these women who lived a deep communion with reality, with people, the suffering and joy of the world. I was drawn by their way of prayer and how they welcomed God and His Good News in everyday life.

After a time of formation in Spain and France (it was a gift to experience our internationality!) I have been in Bilbao for a year in a community of five sisters. I work in a centre for drug addicts at risk of social exclusion. Together with them I can live the experience of the open and vulnerable Heart of Jesus, and with them I try to be involved in the building of another world that is more just, more fraternal, where everyone has a place. Along with my job I have a lot of connection with other pastoral activities and spiritual accompaniment. I collaborate in a university centre for young people (Magis-Bilbao) as well as a good number of other projects in the spiritual field (www.rezandovoy.org, Ejercicios Espirituales on-line, etc...). At this point in my life I am experiencing the abundance of God's gift, which He pours out generously, in spite of my smallness.



Patricia, with RSCJ in Spain (left photo), and with an international group of young RSCJ (right photo)

In the Society of the Sacred Heart I am drawn by the possibility of learning to show forth the Heartbeat of God in everyday life through taking care of my own heart and interior life; I am drawn by its internationality and the richness that comes with sharing the journey, sharing life with sisters of so many cultures; I am drawn by the educational call that can be expressed in many areas and ways... I believe that God blesses us with a precious vocation and my desire is to be able to keep on sharing this call with new sisters, to carry on showing forth the strong and tender love God has for each person, especially those who suffer most in this world.