

Today we celebrate the journey of our sister Philippine. Why is Philippine Duchesne significant for us today? The church names people as saints in order to help God's people in their own journey to holiness – a journey similar to our own. Philippine was a woman with a keen focus on God and a total commitment to serving God's people. She was also a complex person who had a clarity of purpose tempered by unsureness, with deep courage and humility sometimes bordering on self-doubt. She had a temperament that seemed strong, whose personal sense of weakness and failure sometimes chipped away at her self-confidence. She had tremendous imagination ready to cross wild frontiers and yet deep loneliness exacerbated by the geographic and existential distance between her new home in America and her country of origin, France. In a word Philippine was a very human person whose journey towards holiness teaches us how to navigate the present and the future and to do this with deep faith, extraordinary fidelity and tenacious commitment to what she believed was possible.

The Society became an international community because of Philippine's courage in crossing frontiers and her determination to stay connected with Sophie and her sisters in France, despite the difficulties of distance, communication and a growing difference in culture and experience. In the 19th century, houses multiplied in the countries of Europe, followed by foundations in North and South America and the Antilles, in Asia, Oceania, Africa. This journey continues today as the Society continues to respond to the needs of God's people in Haiti, Indonesia, Morocco, and other places.

The challenge for us today, the model of holiness Philippine Duchesne offers us, especially in the complex and polarized world in which we live, is a renewed call to contemplation and action. A call to Contemplation of our own experience, to touch into where God is in life, as well as recognizing the biases and prejudices that hold us back. A call to Action, to not only acknowledge that something is amiss or get mired in the cultural practice of the day, but to do something about that which we see. A call to pray, turning to God, with the cry of lamentations in front the sufferings of so many people in our world, yet with deep belief and hope in resurrection. Let us celebrate our sister Philippine today, a woman of courage who gives us courage, a woman of hope who gives us hope, a woman of vision who urges us to participate in creating a world that mirrors God's vision for his people.