

Days of Grace: The Story in Pictures

Paris, France

viernes, 24-Ago-18



Transfer of the remains of Marie Madeleine from Stella Maris, Broadstairs, England to the Church of St. Dominic, Paris, France

On Thursday, 20th September 2012 a tribunal set up by the Catholic Archbishop of Southwark, the most Reverend Peter Smith, met at [Stella Maris Convent](#), North Foreland, Kent, England. Representatives of the French Consulate were also present. Both the civic and ecclesial representatives were at Stella Maris to seal the casket containing the mortal remains of the Venerable Marie Madeleine d'Houët, for its journey back to France.

The representatives of Church and State both had important jobs to do. Don Riccardo Petroni sealed the inner plexiglass casket with church seals. The representative of the French Consulate in London sealed the outer wooden casket and issued the necessary documentation for the journey back to France.

The following photos tell something of the story

Before the outer casket was sealed a parchment 'rogito' was signed by the ecclesial tribunal and by the representative of the French Consulate. The rogito is written in French and English and gives the names of the civil and ecclesial representatives. In the photos below, the middle picture shows Sr Katherine Mary O'Flynn FCJ (General Superior) signing the rogito and sealing it with the Society seal. The manuscript was rolled and tied with ribbon (left hand picture) and placed in the casket.



The LH picture below shows representatives of the French consulate with Sisters Katherine Mary, Susan and Claire. The RH picture shows the ecclesial tribunal with (left to right) Fr Jim Hurley, Valerio Rasi, Don Riccardo Petroni, Abbot Laurence O'Keefe OSB, Sr Claire Sykes (vice postulator), Fr Philip Seed, Sr Katherine Mary. The casket was bound and sealed with the ribbon and seal of France and this is shown in the middle picture.



The casket was sealed by state and by church. This 'signing and sealing' is a process few of those present had ever seen. The pictures below were taken during the sealing process. The person from the French consulate even had a special lighter for the process. The inner plexiglass casket was sealed only by the postulator. The middle picture shows another of the French seals and the rather lovely French ribbon.



The pictures below show the casket, sealed by Church and State and ready for its journey to France. The casket is made of lime wood, reminiscent of the trees behind Stella Maris. It is hand carved and simply bears the full name of our Foundress and the FCJ cross. The casket is so made that no joints are visible. Quite simply, at first glance, it looks like a beautiful piece of wood.



The Thanksgiving Mass was a most joyful celebration. Monsignor Eric de Moulins-Beaufort the chief celebrant is shown in the middle photograph. Pere Slawek the parish priest (shown in the photo that is second from the right) made us so welcome. One of the altar servers was from our Foundress's family.



There were fifty FCJ sisters present at the Thanksgiving Mass with representation from each province. Teams of FCJs welcomed people into church and in the picture below we see Sisters Cristina and Francesca giving out Mass leaflets. The prayers of intercession at Mass were read by FCJs in Italian, English, Indonesian and Spanish.



The previous pictures and the one below show FCJ sisters wearing their distinctive blue scarves.



The Liturgy was glorious and musicians from [Notre Dame de France](#) (the FCJ school in Paris) contributed magnificently to the celebration, (some instrumentalists are shown in the photo second from left). Srs Rita and Ruth fcJ sang the responsorial psalm. The de Bengny and de Bonnault d'Houët families were well represented. The children in the LH picture are of the 7th generation of Marie Madeleine's descendants whilst in the RH photo are members of the de Bengny family. One of the de Bengny family did most of the flower arrangements in church, one arrangement of which is shown.



In the LH picture below some of Marie Madeleine's descendants sing out God's praise and in the RH picture her daughters renew their vows



After Mass, as the litany of the Saints was sung, the casket was taken from its place in front of the altar to the recess in the Lady Chapel. The RH picture shows two of her descendants carrying the casket to its place of rest. A small bouquet of flowers, symbolic of life, had adorned the recess during Mass. [David John](#) the liturgical artist (left in LH picture) and Andrew Nobe, (right in the LH picture) fitted the metal grille as the singing of the litany continued.



In the LH picture, Philippe Housse, (the French undertaker who has been such a help to us) and Andrew Nobe who made the grille, carry it to its position in the Lady Chapel before Mass starts. The middle picture shows the scene after Mass, when Andrew Nobe and David John helped by Philippe Housse fasten the grille and so secure the relics of our Foundress. The Litany of the Saints continued right through this process. The wooden casket, visible through the metal grille, is well protected. The reliquaire opens to provide space for 12 night lights. The design of the grille is inspired by the flames of Pentecost.



*Seigneur notre Dieu,
par l'intercession de la bienheureuse Vierge Marie et de la Vénérable Marie Madeleine,
accueille nos prières que ce reliquaire devienne un lieu
où ton peuple exprimera sa prière, et renouvellera sa foi et son amour en toi.
Par Jésus, le Christ, notre Seigneur. Amen.*

(Lord our God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of Venerable Marie Madeleine,
hear our prayers that this reliquary may become a place
where your poeple will pray and renew their faith in and love for you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.)



“ Pidamos a Nuestro Señor que nos dé el Espíritu de la Compañía de Jesús; ya que tenemos sus Constituciones, es la voluntad de Dios que tengamos su espíritu. ”

Marie Madeleine d'Houët

Fieles Compañeras de Jesús

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