

A Wonderful Journey

Paris, France

Thursday, 19-Sep-19



A reflection by Erlina, Companion in Mission, Indonesia, on the FCJ pilgrimage for [Companions in Mission](#) and lay collaborators on the footsteps of [Marie Madeleine](#) that took place this Summer.

Joining the lay pilgrimage on the footsteps of Marie Madeleine gave me a chance to recall, feel and reflect God's loving presence in my entire life. God's grace has made it possible for me to visit places, cathedrals, churches and other buildings related to the history and journeys of a great, blessed lady, Marie Madeleine d'Houët, the FCJ Foundress. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the FCJ sisters for giving me this amazing chance.

During the pilgrimage, I made efforts to 'rest a while' in order to ponder, pray and feel the sacredness of those places. Most of all I tried to reflect on Marie Madeleine's great endeavour to know what God really wanted from her and her determination to accomplish God's holy will faithfully. For me, personally, Marie Madeleine is an inspiring woman who was always willing to help people who were living in poverty, neglected, uneducated, and sick. Born a noble and rich woman with lots of financial privileges, she made good use of her fortune to help others, without taking into account the risks she might face, for instance, when she fought for the right of sick people to get appropriate food from the hospice.

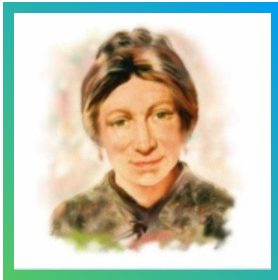
Marie Madeleine reminded me of the importance of making time to build a good relationship with God, to come before HIM, to surrender all of the life struggles in the hands of the Lord and believe that God is always with me, walking side by side with me, even carrying me whenever I am facing hard times. Marie Madeleine had a listening heart, she always listened to people around her, that's why she knew their needs and tried to respond as best as she could. And most important of all, her willingness to listen to God intentionally enabled her to know His holy will and to make her best effort to accomplish it faithfully and joyfully, regardless of the challenges she encountered along the way.

Do I have a listening heart? Do I dare to trust the voice inside me, in the deepest part of me? Can I listen to God's call? Can I listen to the whisper of the hopeless? Can I respond to those who are 'thirsty'? Those questions challenge myself to be a better person.

“ The pilgrimage experience sharpens my awareness of God's abundant blessings for me, therefore, I have to be willing to share these blessings with the people I encounter in my life, to help people to encounter God and to experience God's love.

In my life I sometimes experience darkness, desolation, pain, and frustration, and feel that I am going nowhere. Another valuable lesson I got from Marie Madeleine is the significance of having great confidence to trust God when facing the challenges of my life. By having a better relation with God, I can feel His love, his guidance in my life. No matter how hard the situation, I feel calm and keep building a close relation with Him since I am aware that the Lord is guiding me with his great love and I am in the place where I am meant to be. It makes me dare to faithfully stand at the foot of the cross, my own present cross, when I struggle with life's hardships.

The pilgrimage experience truly encourages me to have a listening heart, great confidence to trust the Lord and to share the love and blessings I get from the Lord with others. And as a Companion in Mission, I will try my best to live the FCJ charism and spirituality in my work and service so that I can be a witness of God's love.



“ Never give way to discouragement, for it will be our ruin. Courage and confidence! Let that be your motto. (1837) ”

Marie Madeleine d'Houët

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