

IN PARIS, WALKING WITH
SAINT MADELEINE-SOPHIE

BARAT



SOME KEY DATES



- 1779** : Birth of Sophie Barat in Joigny (Yonne)
1789 : Storming of the Bastille
September 1792 : Proclamation of the republic and beginning of the Terror
January 21, 1793 : Execution of King Louis XVI
- 1795** : Arrival in Paris at l'**Hôtel de Vassé**
November 1799 : General Bonaparte's coup d'état
- November 21, 1800** : First religious consecration
- 1801** : (22 years old) Settling in Amiens
- 1804** : First foundation in Grenoble
December 1804 : Coronation of Napoleon Bonaparte and 1st Empire
- 1806** : (27 years old) 1st general chapter : Sophie Barat is elected Superior General for life
Frequents periods in Paris at l'Abbaye-aux-Bois and St Thomas of Villanova
- 1811-1813** : 1st crisis in the Society
1815 : Restoration of the Monarchy with Louis XVIII
- 1815** : (36 years old) Adoption of the Constitutions.
- 1816** : Settling **rue des postes in Paris**,
- 1818** : Philippine Duchesne's departure for America.
- 1820** : (41 years old) Settling in l'Hôtel Biron (the present Musee Rodin)
1824 : Accession of King Charles X
1826 : Approval of the Constitutions by Pope Léon XII
1830 : Abdication of the King Charles X and advent of the « July Monarchy »
- 1839-1845** : New crisis, concerning the installation of the Mother House in Rome
- 1846** : (67 years old) Sophie Barat's returning to Hôtel Biron
February 1848 : Barricades in Paris and fall of the King Louis-Philippe
December 1848 : Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte is elected president of the 2nd Republic
December 1852 : Coup d'Etat and proclamation of the 2nd Empire
- 1857** : (78 years old) Construction of the Mother House Bd des Invalides, at the end of Hôtel Biron's garden.
- May 25, 1865** : (86 years old) Death of Sophie Barat.

MAIN SOURCES

- **Chapters on Vassé, Abbaye-aux-Bois, Rue des Postes et Biron** :
AC : Adèle Cahier, rscj : *Vie de la vénérable Mère Barat*, 1884 (Tomes I et II)
ML : Monique Luirard, rscj : *Madeleine-Sophie Barat, une éducatrice au cœur du monde, au cœur du Christ*, Nelle Cité, 1999
PP : Pauline Perdrau, rscj, *Les loisirs de l'Abbaye*, Rome 1934 (Tomes I et II)
MFC : Marie-France Carteel, rscj, *Le plan éducatif fondateur de la Société du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus et ses formes actuelles*, Thèse Univ. Lyon II, 2001
MTV : Marie-Thérèse Vimot, rscj, *Le charisme de Sainte Madeleine-Sophie*, 1975
- **Chapter on Madeleine-Sophie Barat today and texts "going further"**
written from interviews with rscj.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SOPHIE...



Why would you set out on a journey with a little Burgundian girl unknown to most people, who arrives in Paris at the age of 15, in a century that seems to us so far away?

Could it be for the love of history? Sophie Barat's, and the history of the religious family she founded? Or the history of Paris just after the Revolution? Or do you love the way Paris has spread, and the profound changes in France's capital during the past two centuries? Are you trying to guess what this very young girl must have felt, coming from a little town in Burgundy, with one desire – to make known the love of God revealed by

Jesus and his open Heart? Do you want to follow her in her journeying through Paris, as she tried to find, in one place after another, where to centre her new congregation? Or are you eager to understand the deepest feelings of her heart at each stage of her long life? Would you also like to get to know her first companions, and how together they faced up to the new developments in politics and in the Church all through the 19th century? Are you keen to enter more deeply into it all, or to discover her fundamental spiritual choice, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, inseparable from the mission of education, especially education of the young?

This booklet invites you to all that and more. It suggests setting out in the footsteps of Sophie, stopping a little longer here or there, starting a conversation with her, measuring the distance covered from her to us today, the resemblances and the discrepancies...

Becoming a pilgrim, or walking with great attentiveness, guided for a few hours by the grace of a life that gives fresh impetus to our own. Madeleine Sophie would not like us to focus only on her; she would tell us to walk with others, with confidence and intrigued by the unexpected. She would tell us that God gives himself to the eyes of loving contemplation.

Enjoy your journey!

Claire Castaing, rscj
Provincial of France



PRACTICAL INFORMATION:



L'HOTEL DE VASSÉ

4, RUE DE SAINTONGE-
75003 PARIS

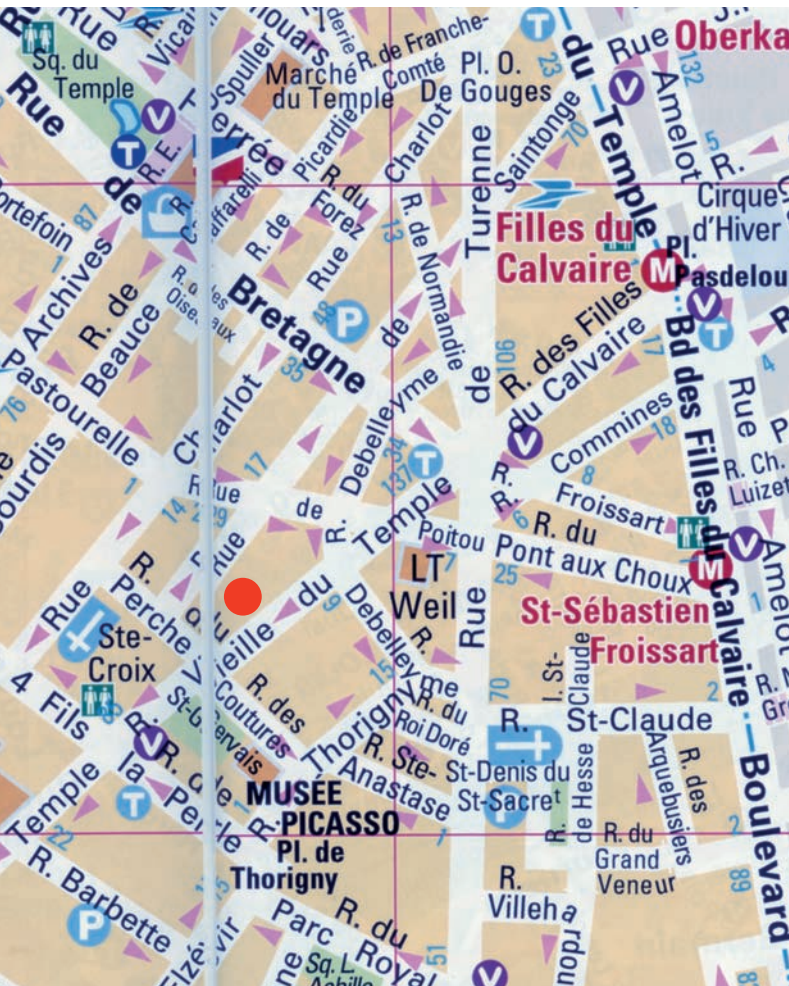
*Metro: Line 8
(Filles du Calvaire)*

The street was formerly called rue de Touraine.

The building, decorated with an attractive external frieze, dates from the eighteenth century, but is not open for visits. Nearby are beautiful monuments as well as alleyways which Sophie must have known and which still survive.

The area of the Marais, not far from the Tuileries Palace, was in the seventeenth century the preferred residence of the nobility. With the departure of the court for Versailles in the following century, the elite gradually left for St Germain which offered more space for building large houses with gardens.

After the Revolution, the area opened up to a whole population of craftsmen and workers.



1795 ~1801

THE BIRTH OF VOCATION

« TOUT VENT CONDUIT AU PORT QUAND C'EST DIEU QUI LE DIRIGE. »

Her stay at the Hôtel de Vassé played an important part in the life of Sophie Barat, and therefore in the history of the Society of the Sacred Heart, for it was there that her vocation matured and deepened.

Sophie was 16 when she left Joigny, a pretty little town in Burgundy, where her father was a cooper and vinegrower. Shy and with fragile health, the youngest of the three Barat children, Sophie dreamt of entering Carmel. She left behind her with regret a loving family whose piety was tinged by Jansenism, so that her older brother could continue her education. Five years later, at barely 22, she would move to Amiens where what would be considered the 'cradle' of the Society of the Sacred Heart would come into being.

The Shock of the Revolution

When Sophie arrived in Paris, at the end of autumn 1795, the Terror – the most bloody episode of the French Revolution – had just ended, arousing a frantic desire to live and enjoy themselves among the people.

The prison doors opened, but religious practice was still forbidden and the churches remained closed. The urgent need of a church and social revolution made itself felt, as Sophie would remember towards the end of her life: « *At the end of the Terror and the abominations of the Revolution against religion and the most holy sacrament, all hearts remained faithful to God (...) and beat in unison (...) To console (Jesus Christ) for the sacrileges, the impieties, the outrages was*



*Madeleine-Sophie maiden
(painting located in Joigny)*

The Historical Context:

ANTICLERICALISM AND DE-CHRISTIANISATION

As Christianity was traditionally linked to the monarchy, the revolutionaries intended to destroy all traces of it in society. From 1789 onwards, important measures of laicisation were taken, like the obligation of priests to take an oath to abide by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, proclamation of freedom of worship, the setting up of a non-religious register of births, deaths and marriages...

This systematic policy of de-christianisation culminated in the Terror (1793-1794). Priests who refused to take

the oath were imprisoned or executed, the order was given that all the churches of the capital should be closed, celebration of private or public worship was forbidden. The traditional Gregorian calendar was replaced by a republican calendar which began with the abolition of the monarchy and no longer made reference to religious feasts.



*Incredible and wonderful
at the time of the Directoire*

This policy continued, though less rigorously, under the Directory (1795-1799). The measures taken against priests who refused to take the oath were repealed in 1797, and through lack of resources, the Republic accepted the re-opening of religious schools. In Paris, those known as 'unbelievable' and 'marvellous' threw themselves into unbridled pleasure. Respect for the sacraments and religious precepts decreased, as is shown particularly by the increase in divorces and suicides.

the need of each soul taken up with reparation and expiation. Two pious people could not talk together without seeking together some means of bringing Jesus Christ to live again in families » (PP I, 422-424)

The Call of her Brother

The nonjuring deacon Louis Barat was freed from prison in February. Ordained priest, he found a lodging in the roof space of the house of a pious person, M^{lle} Duval, where he carried on his ministry in secret and celebrated Mass « in a room concerted into a chapel » (AC I,16). During a visit to Joigny, he suggested to his parents that he should carry on his sister's education in Paris with several other young women.

This plan met with resistance from Madeleine Barat, whose health had been severely affected by recent events, and who, in the absence of her other children, had centred all her affection on Sophie. The latter herself was torn between the desire to stay with her mother and the desire to carry on her studies for which she showed an aptitude. Perhaps she was fearful of falling again under the iron rod of her authoritarian older brother?

Her father, a man of common sense, finally decided that she should follow Louis to Paris, for her foresaw that with her wide culture, Sophie did not have a future in Joigny. However she would come home for the holidays.

Life in Vassé

In Vassé, where Sophie was welcomed by Melle Duval and her servant Marguerite, life was most austere and food was frugal. Louis « entirely ruled the order of her days. He carried on the plan of studies which he had used before, but he suppressed all that might exalt the imagination, excite sensibility, and nourish the over-developed taste of his sister for literary works » (AC I 19-20). « Outings always had to have a useful purpose, and few distractions broke the monotony of the days: they were usually filled by needlework, study and pious reading, with elementary education given to some young children » (AC I,24).

« *The lives of St Francis Xavier, of missionaries who, like him after having evangelised the infidels, signed their faith with their blood, enflamed her withdrawal and the austerities of Carmel. Her drawing to prayer and the interior life, whose delights she was beginning to know and to enjoy, made her desire to bury herself in the obscurity of a cloister in order to unite herself to Jesus crucified and immolate herself entirely in his service* » (AC I, 25).

Her brother was her spiritual director and demanded total submission: « *Sophie's soul became for (him) an open book (...) Ces longues confessions (...), these rigorous examinations of conscience threw her into cruel perplexity: (...) she could not bear to unite herself (to the God all purity) if her conscience accused her of the slightest appearance of evil, and she remained engulfed in the feeling of her unworthiness.* » (AC I, 19).

The Meeting with Father Varin

Louis encouraged his sister's attraction to Carmel, the more so as a clandestine monastery had just opened in the rue de Vaugirard. However in August 1800, he met the priest in charge of the Fathers of the Faith in France, Father Joseph Varin. The latter had returned from migration with the intention of reestablishing a religious family close to the Society of Jesus, wholly dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and to found an institute of women, of which his predecessor, Léonor de Tournély had had the idea, modelled on the Society of the Diletti di Gesu which had just been founded in Rome.

As soon as Louis spoke to him of Sophie, Father Varin sensed that she was the one he needed to carry out his plan. This feeling was confirmed when he saw her: « *I found a young person of a very delicate temperament, extremely modest and very shy. What a foundation stone ! I said to myself; responding to the interior feeling I had had when her brother spoke to me of her for the first time... It was on her that God wished to build the Society of his divine Heart* » (AC I, 28).

Landmarks:

**LEONOR DE TOURNÉLY,
JOSEPH VARIN,
THE FATHERS OF
THE SACRED HEART AND
THE FATHERS OF THE FAITH**



Young fathers de Tournély (left) and Varin (right) almost contemporary of Louis Barat

The Jesuits, accused by the Jansenists of being too lax and by the Gallicans of being too close to the Pope, were driven out of France from 1763 and their 200 schools were closed. The suppression of their order was proclaimed by Pope Clement XIV in 1773.

Some young emigrant priests, fleeing the Revolution, who attributed the de-christianisation of the country to the excesses of Jansenism, sought ways of restoring the Society of Jesus in France.

One of them, Father Léonor de Tournély (1767-1797) founded with Charles de Broglie the Society of Fathers of the Sacred Heart and assigned to it the aim of « Devoting itself to the Heart of Jesus, arousing the love of Jesus in souls and the light of its doctrine in spirits; therefore to take the sentiments and interior dispositions of this divine Heart and to spread them through the education of youth ». He also had a plan for a society of women consecrating themselves to the education of girls with the same aim.



Virgin of Society, before whom Sophie made her first consecration

In 1796, Joseph Varin joined them in Vienna where he would be ordained priest. As Father de Tournéy died prematurely, Louis succeeded him at the head of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart, fully decided to carry out the plan.

The following year, the Fathers of the Sacred Heart amalgamated with the Fathers of the Faith, another Ignatian-inspired apostolic society, which had just founded a first institute of women in Rome: the *Dilette di Gesù*. The Fathers of the Sacred Heart were henceforth called « Fathers of the Faith », for in France any reference to the Heart of Christ was still a symbol of counter-Revolution and was unacceptable.

Father Joseph Varin returned to France in March 1800 and quickly got to know Louis Barat, who introduced his sister to him. Both of them entered the Society of Jesus when it was re-established by Pope Pius VII on August 7th 1814.

Straight away he dissuaded Sophie from entering Carmel: « the means God has given you and the education you have received must not be buried in a cloister; The Lord has other plans for you'. Then developing the idea of Father de Tournéy, he brought out the admirable plan: to be consecrated to the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the salvation of one's neighbour by the education of youth » (AC I, 29).

Consecration to the Heart of Jesus

After the harsh advoce of her brother came the more gentle but no less firm direction of Father-Varin. A kind of novitiate was set up for Sophie, where she was joined by Octavie Bailly, a companion in studies who shared Sophie's taste for prayer, M^{elle} Loquet, a devout young woman from the neighbourhood and Marguerite, M^{elle} Duval's servant.

On November 13th 1800 Father Varin « *lan-nounced to them that under the auspices of Mary, they would be admitted on November 21st to give themselves entirely to the Sacred Heart of Jesus* » (AC I,30)

For the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Sophie, surrounded by her companions, made her first religious in the chapel of the rue de Touraine. Above the tabernacle was the picture of a Virgin and Child, « her brother's nonly inheritance » which would never leave her and which has always been kept in the Mother House of the Sacred Heart as representing « the Virgin of the Society » (ML p.40).

Father Varin carried on the teaching of these young women, « *sapplying himself to expand their hearts by love and confidence, the total abandonment to the will of God* » (AC I, 31-32).

A year later, in November 1801, having found a boarding school to be taken over, he sent Sophie and her companions to found there the first little community of the *Dilette di Gesù* with two other young women from the area, Henriette Grosier and Geneviève Deshayes. For Sophie « *an original apostolic religious life was going to be able to take shape* » (ML p.42)

Going further:

Visiting: THE MUSÉE CARNAVALET

To know more about life in the nineteenth century and the history of Paris in general, you are advised to go to the nearby musée Carnavalet, a beautiful Renaissance building, where the famous Marquise de Sévigné (1626-1696) lived for about twenty years.

Although the museum is undergoing significant restoration, it is still possible to discover old houses, especially those in the beautiful Place des Vosges, alongside which Sophie would certainly have walked on her travels.

Contemplate: «THE EMBROIDERY OF THE HEARTS»

When Sophie embroidered this silk tapestry for her mother, she could not have been more than 17 or 18. She was known in Joigny as a « worker in linen » since she was 12, but it is unlikely that the work was carried out before her arrival in Paris, because it shows great maturity of thought and spiritual life. The whole charism which will form the future Society of the Sacred Heart is already present in it.

The picture, which is read from bottom to top, recapitulates the essential of her faith: God is Love, and he has become food to express this for us.

Right at the base, the sinuous line of a serpent carrying an apple in its mouth expresses evil and our sin. It is crushed by a nest where a pelican feeds its chicks. In Christian symbolism⁽¹⁾, this bird which eats fish before giving it back to its little ones, at the risk of being wounded or even killed when they come to seek their share in its gullet, is Christ: He has given his blood to nourish and save us. The cross and the lance recall his agony.

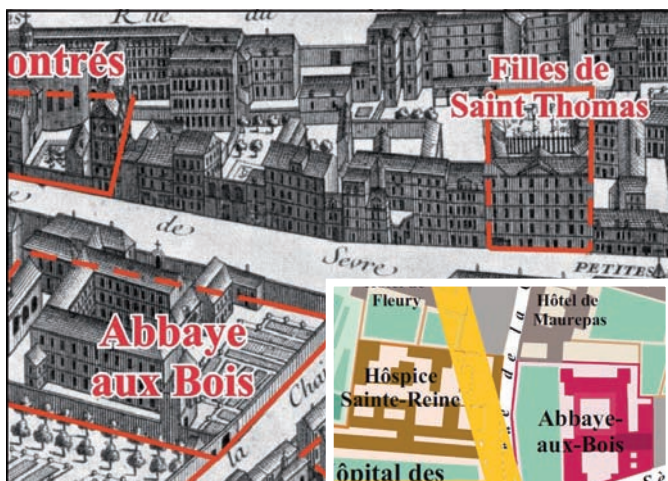
At a higher level, on the left, the heart of Mary, pierced by a sword, is intimately united to that of her Son, both burning like fire. A thrust of the lance has caused fire and water to spring forth from the Heart of Jesus, and that wound remains for us an opening which invites us to enter, to penetrate, to remain...



Tapissery embroidered by Sophie for her mother (located in Joigny)

One element unites these two levels: the chalice (body given and blood poured out). This eucharistic dimension of Sophie runs through all the spirituality of her Society.

⁽¹⁾ Cf. the expression « *Pie Pellicane, Jesu Domine* » sung by St Thomas Aquinas in the hymn « *Adoro te* » which he composed especially for the feast of the Eucharist.



Above :
The neighborhood of rue de Sèvres at the end of the XVIIIth century

To the right :
after the piercing of the Bd Raspail



PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

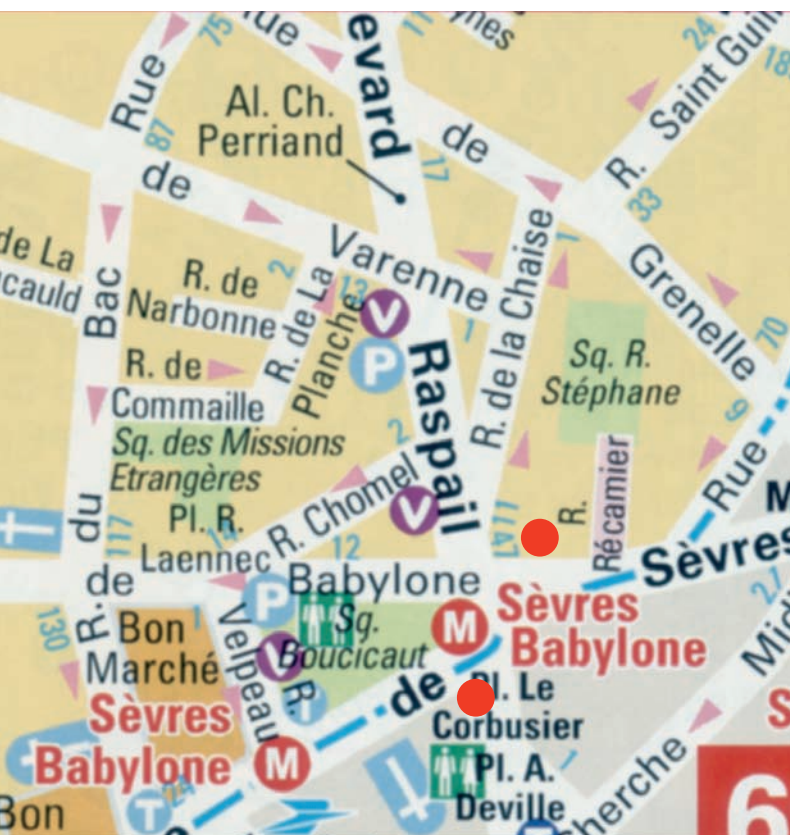


L'ABBAYE -AUX-BOIS and ST-THOMAS-DE-VILLENEUVE
CORNER BD RASPAIL AND RUE DE SÈVRES – 75007 PARIS

Underground/subway/tube:
lines 10 and 12
(Sèvres-Babylone)

The Faubourg St-Germain, named after the important abbey close by, was originally a district “outside the walls” of Paris. From the 17th century on, some notable rich people, among others, took advantage of the space, and many congregations set up their Mother House there, surrounded by vast gardens.

The tunnelling of the Boulevard Raspail in 1906, partly through the lower end of rue de la Chaise, modified the terrain and led to the disappearance of the 2 buildings frequented by Sophie Barat between 1804 and 1816. The first, l'Abbaye-aux-Bois, was situated on the left of the rue de Sèvres, with the *Bon Marché* behind you, between rue Récamier and the present Boulevard Raspail. The second building, the Dames de St-Thomas de Villeneuve, was on the other side of the rue de Sèvres and of Boulevard Raspail.



THE DISTRICT OF L'ABBAYE-AUX-BOIS

1804-1816

AFFIRMING AN IDENTITY

« THE WORKS OF GOD
TAKE THEIR TIME »

Sophie Barat arrived in Amiens in November 1801, and the first house of the Sacred Heart in Paris was opened in June 1816. From 1804 onwards, Sophie Barat spent brief but frequent periods in this district of the rue de Sèvres. Some religious institutions, like l'Abbaye-aux-Bois and the mother house of the Sisters of St Thomas of Villanova, which was almost opposite, survived the upheaval of the Revolution, and welcomed candidates with limited means.

Between journeys to found new houses, Sophie went there for retreats or to consult Father Varin, who had the use of a cell and a small oratory with the Sisters of St Thomas. It was there that the first Constitutions of the newly founded congregation were drawn up and voted on, the day after a serious identity crisis.

Father Varin, an impetuous sponsor

Father Varin, who showed boundless zeal to establish his *Fathers of the Faith* and to found women's institutes throughout the country, named Sophie superior of Amiens in December 1802. She was only 23, and in his visits and letters, he was not sparing of his advice. When the *Fathers of the Faith* broke with the *Dilette di Gesùin* 1804, he considered himself the "major superior" of the little community, which took the name of *Society of the Ladies of Christian Instruction*", for it was not possible to make open reference to devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Sophie's talents in formation and in the art of discernment inspired Father Varin to send her to recruit



Starting 1810, Sophie signs all letters with her sole family name in order to show her authority

The Historical Context:

NAPOLEON, THE CONCORDAT AND THE EMIGRES

This episode of Sophie Barat's life is largely dominated by the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte, who became First Consul, and later, Emperor of the French.

The Revolution brought about the emigration of almost 160,000 people: aristocrats, rich financiers or non-juring priests. When General Bonaparte seized power after the coup d'état of 18 Brumaire in the year VIII (9th November 1799), he intended to use authoritarian means to restore civil and religious peace throughout the country.

The Concordat issued by Pope Pius VII in 1801 annulled the terms of the Constitution of the Clergy. But while the Catholic religion was recognised as the most widespread in France, and its link with the Papacy was admitted, the control exercised over it by the government was still very strong. Some churches remained

closed, and only the religious orders recognised as “useful” were accepted: i.e. those whose vocation involved care of the sick, social or educational work. That explains how a Society like the *Fathers of the Faith*, which was considered suspect,



*Signing of the Concordat
by Napoleon Bonaparte
on July 16th 1801*

could be dissolved in 1807 and its adherents put under house arrest. A general amnesty was granted to the émigrés in 1802. Many, however, were unable to reclaim their property. After his coronation in 1804, Napoleon wished to associate the ancient nobility with his new court, and so gave them fresh encouragement to return. But the armies of the coalition had combined against the First Empire, which collapsed in April 1814.

With the restoration of the Monarchy – temporarily interrupted by Napoleon’s regaining of power during the “Hundred Days” (from March 20th to June 22nd 1815) – measures favourable to the Catholic faith were introduced.

new communities for the infant Society. And so on 6th April 1804, he wrote to her from Lyons: “*On my journey, I made a fine acquisition for you...*” (AC 1, 76). This was Philippine Duchesne, a former Visitation nun; he promised to send Sophie to her.

Just then, however, Sophie was convalescing in the home of a certain Mme Bergeron at l’Abbaye-aux-Bois, after being treated for cancer by the Daughters of Charity (AC 1, 68-69). It was already obvious that the Society needed access to a central point in Paris from which to function; there was even question of purchasing that very building (AC 1, 70).

Postulants and communities on every side

Returning to Amiens before setting out for Grenoble, where she was expected, Sophie confided the responsibility for the community to Mother Anne Beaudemont, a former Poor Clare. On 13th December 1804, Sophie arrived at the convent of Sainte-Marie-d’en-Haut. Mother Duchesne, though her senior by ten years, threw herself at her feet: “*At last I saw on the holy mountain the feet of those who announce peace and things that are truly good*”, she would say (AC 1, 88). Sophie immediately took charge of the new community, its junior school and poor school, and opened a noviceship. She was thinking about drawing up “*a few points that would form the basis of the Constitutions*” of the new institute (AC 1, 107).

A year later, at the request of Father Varin, Sophie returned temporarily to Amiens for the first General Chapter of the Society. There on 18th January 1806 she was elected Superior General for life by all but one vote: “*a terrible and agonising responsibility*” (AC 1, 111), for she could already feel the dawning hostility of certain sisters.

No sooner had she returned to Grenoble, than there was a letter from her mentor charging her “*to set out immediately for Poitiers, where some pious persons were waiting to place themselves under obedience to her*” (AC 1, 116). In the former monastery of Les Feuillants, which these persons had acquired, she once more opened a noviceship and a free school for 150 little girls from the district. Then from Poitiers an establishment was made in Niort, one at Gand and another, from Amiens, at Cugnières.

Unity under threat

In 1807 a situation that had been simmering below the surface, assumed crisis proportions. It was to last almost 8 years and split the newly founded congregation. Sophie was away from Amiens for long periods, and then, by the Emperor's decree, Father Varin was put under house arrest in distant Franche-Comté; these absences left the field open to Mother Baudemont.

Encouraged by the community confessor, Father de Sambucy de St-Estève, she hoped to return to the spirit and monastic customs of her former congregation. More seriously still, Mother Baudemont saw consecration to the Sacred Heart as a mere devotion, not as the basis of a spirituality. Finally, she rejected the very Ignatian idea of a Superior General and of a congregation perceived as a single body.

Father de Saint-Estève, who presented himself as the counsellor and founder of the *Ladies of Christian Instruction*, began to draw up rules for the whole association: *"He made a compilation of various monastic rules, which changed the spirit and form of the new congregation"* (AC 1, 168). At Amiens, the situation became untenable for the nuns who wished to remain faithful to the original project. The establishment at Gand broke away.

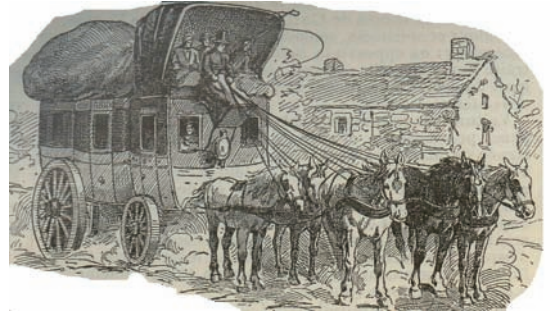
Return to the first intuition

"In spite of her natural vivacity and the ardour and energy of her will, (Sophie knew how) to wait for God's hour" (AC 1, 168). Her authority was contested, but *"in wanting to go too fast, there was a risk of compromising everything, and the cure could be worse than the disease. To disapprove of the rules proposed, and even already in vigour, without being able either to replace them, or to consult the man whom the Lord had used to lay the first foundations of the little Society, would have been really imprudent; it was better to wait for the right time and for help from on high to give light and show how to proceed"* (AC 1, 169).

Sophie paid a visit to Father Varin, who was detained at Besançon. He advised her to go to Abbé Montaigne, director at Saint-Sulpice, whom she consulted several times in 1808 and during the summers of 1810 and 1811, *"for her situation*

Landmarks:

SOPHIE BARAT'S HEALTH



Old vehicle common at the beginning of the XIX th century : repeated trips, in precarious conditions, have still deteriorated her health

Sophie Barat was born prematurely when her parents' house caught fire, and it would seem that she was always frail. The first time Father Varin saw her, he found *"a young person of very delicate temperament"* (AC 1, 28).

The hardships imposed by her brother, then the lifestyle of the new house in Amiens, where the Sisters had no outside help; lack of sleep, mortifications; the weight of responsibilities assumed very young - none of these helped. In March 1803, she seemed to have cancer, and consented to treatment only after much *"repugnance"* caused by her shyness and *"an extreme reserve"* (AC 1, 68).

She recovered from this episode, but her health would remain precarious, as many letters show. In 1814, she even received the last sacraments after a *"complicated inflammation of the mucous membrane"*.

That would not prevent her from showing indefatigable energy all through her life. In a particularly unstable political context, she would succeed in coming through the two grave crises experienced by the



*Sophie was healed
by the ladies of the Charity in 1803*

Society, from 1807 to 1814, and again from 1839 to 1845. She would undertake innumerable journeys in France and abroad, to open new houses and maintain links among them. In this work she sometimes had to assume the roles of superior general, superior, mistress of novices and mistress general... without neglecting to take care of her sisters and of the children confided to her.

“Unless it was absolutely impossible, she read everything addressed to her, even when she was sick, and dictated her replies, (...) for her perfect self-forgetfulness allowed her a level of work which no one else could have sustained” (AC 2, 308).

As she herself wrote in 1819: “If I had double strength and a double body, they would be kept busy. I don’t take much notice of fatigue, but you have to know how to put up with it.”

was becoming increasingly tense; at the same time the work on the Constitutions continued in the house of Amiens, and the primitive spirit was being more and more debased” (AC 1, 193).

The crisis reached its climax between 1811 and 1813, but the false allegations that de St-Estève had made to get his constitutions recognised by Rome were finally unmasked.

With the restoration of the Monarchy in April 1814, the Jesuits, whose order had been re-established by the Pope in August 1814, were able to open a noviceship at the rue des Postes in Paris. Father Varin applied immediately to join, as did Louis Barat. With the aid of his future colleagues Julien Druilhet and Pierre de Clorivière, he drew up the first Constitutions of the Society, going back to the original insight of Father de Tournély and the vision Sophie Barat had expressed to him during their long sessions in Franche-Comté (ML p. 72).

The vote on the first Constitutions

On 1st November 1815, the 9 religious appointed by Sophie gathered around her at the House of the Sisters of St Thomas, in Mme de Gramont’s former apartment, which served her as a pied-à-terre. There they unanimously adopted the Constitutions on 15th December 1815.

As Philippine Duchesne, the new Secretary General, notes: *“The 16th December 1815 was the time of our rebirth or rather of the strengthening of our Society which had always wished to be able to glory in belonging in name and in fact to the Sacred Heart of Jesus” (ML p.72).*

Sophie for her part communicated the result of the Council to the members of the association in these terms: *“To consecrate ourselves to spreading and propagating the knowledge and love of this divine Heart by working for the sanctification of souls (...), such, I repeat, is the end which God was pleased to show forth at the beginning of our society”.* She spoke of the spirituality of the Sacred Heart as its centre and its source of unity (Ph K p.197). The rules drawn up for its organisation were *“as far as possible”* similar to those of St Ignatius; from them *“we drew all that could be suitable for us” (AC 1, 242).*

Going further:

Visiting: THE CHURCH OF SAINT-SULPICE AND THE CHAPEL OF THE RUE DU BAC

At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a considerable amount of urbanisation, which severely modified the appearance of the district. There are, however, two places that deserve our attention:

• **The Church of Saint-Sulpice.** Follow the rue de Sèvres on the side opposite the *Bon Marché*, and turn right into the rue du Vieux Colombier; follow it to the end.).

This important church with a neo-renaissance entrance was a “Temple of Victory”



under the Revolution, then became a banqueting hall under the Directory. It returned to use as a church in 1802. This was where Sophie Barat regularly consulted the Abbé Montaigne from 1808 to 1813. The Lady Chapel, situated behind the main altar, was where Philippine Duchesne kept praying earnestly that her dream of setting out for the Missions might come true.

• **The chapel of the “Miraculous Medal”.**
(140 rue du Bac, just behind the *Bon Marché*.)

In 1813, an imperial decree gave the use of the former hotel de Châtillon to the Sisters of Charity to establish their new mother house. Its chapel, completed in 1815, is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The proximity of the pied-à-terre used by Sophie at this time, the fact that she was cured of cancer by these very sisters, and finally the dedication of the chapel, all lead us to believe

that she took an interest in this building. This was where Our Lady appeared in 1830 to Blessed Catherine Labouré.

A Meditation: THE PRIMORDIAL IDEA OF THE LITTLE SOCIETY

“The spirit takes precedence over the text”. Every rule governing the organisation of an institution is never anything but a “spirit” that justifies it and gives it momentum.

According to her secretary, Pauline Perdrau, Mother Barat, in the evening of her life, speaks of the “primordial idea” of her little society in these terms: *“The primordial idea of our little Society of the Sacred Heart was to gather young girls to establish a community, which night and day would adore the heart of Jesus outraged in his Eucharistic love.*

But, I said, when we shall be twenty four religious able to replace each other on the prie-Dieu to keep up perpetual adoration, that will be much but very little to do for so noble an end... But if we had pupils whom we could form to the spirit of adoration and reparation, how different that would be!

(...) That's it, I said before a solitary tabernacle, we must vow ourselves to the education of youth, and lay once again in souls the solid foundation of a lively faith in the Most Blessed Sacrament, (...), (and) we shall raise up a crowd of adorers of all nations, even to the ends of the earth”. (PP 1 422-424)

The Constitutions of 1815 were to be full of this idea, and it becomes clear that the “glorification of the Heart of Jesus”, obtained by “the imitation of (his) virtues” by the members of the Society, and the work for “the sanctification of others”, is the aim of the association (art 4). And education, the instruction of poor children, retreats and necessary contacts with people outside our communities are the means by which this sanctification of others can be reached (art 6).



Above :
the Saint-Médard Church was
the parish of the nuns, who had
their own chapel on the other
side

Above : t
he ancient area map
at the end of the
XVIIIth century



PRACTICAL INFORMATION:



THE RUE DES POSTES

ACTUAL RUE LHOMOND
75005 PARIS

Metro: Line 7
(Censier-Daubenton)
Bus 27, 47

In Sophie's time, the 'Mouffetard district' – today very popular with a certain intellectual middle class – was one of the poorest and most unhealthy of the capital. Since the seventeenth century, many religious communities have found opportunities there to help the destitute.

It is difficult to work out exactly where '40 rue des Postes' was, as the street changed its name in 1867 and it is not certain that it has kept the same numbering. Furthermore new buildings have appeared.

The same is true of rue de l'Arbalète, where the Society, lacking space, decided to extend by renting at number 24 a building whose garden adjoins that of the rue des Postes. A rue Lagarde was created in 1903. However the buildings situated at numbers 24 and 26 seem old.

1816-1820

ANCHORAGE AND SENDING

« IT IS NOT JUST A QUESTION OF SETTING OUT, WE MUST SEE WHERE WE ARE GOING, AND WHAT WE CAN DO »

Sophie Barat was 36. She was about to spend four years in the rue des Postes, in what can perhaps be considered the first Mother House of the Sacred Heart. The General Council which had just ended had strengthened her authority and made it possible to better define the identity and the plan of her « Little Society ». In a favourable political context, requests for foundations flowed in, and her secretary general was longing to leave for the missions... But Sophie did not have the means – either human or financial – to respond to all these requests.

Learning from the recent crisis, the first task she gave herself was to gain her independence and to give a good formation to the young novices who were already presenting themselves. But quite quickly, the premises proved to be too small. While Philippine Duchesne and her four companions were finally sailing to Louisiana, the idea of a move became urgent. It would take place in 1820, to the prestigious hôtel Biron in the rue de Varenne.

The Priority of Union

On the day after the vote on the Constitutions, Sophie's priority was to strengthen union within her Society. She left straight away to present the new rules to Amiens, Poitiers et Niort, while her councillors were looking for a house in Paris « large enough to hold the general noviciate(...) and the boarding school » (AC I 244). For « our Society will only become strong when we have formed this establishment. A general noviciate



The boarding of Philippine Duchesne for America in March 1818

The Historical Context:

THE RESTORATION AND THE RENEWAL OF CATHOLIC FAITH

The whole episode of the rue des Postes took place in the reign of Louis XVIII (1815-1824), brother of the earlier King Louis XVI.

After the short period of 100 days (March-June 1815) when Napoleon tried to re-take power, the Bourbon monarchy was definitively restored. It was favourable to the influence of the Church in society, as the old regime had been. Catholicism was the religion of the « majority of the French », according to the Charter of 1814. Churches were re-opened.

A decree of the same year imposed the observation of Sunday and re-established processions in the street. Divorce was abolished. 30 new dioceses were created, which led to the recruitment of more priests. The State accorded 4% of its budget to religion.



Louis XVIII, brother of the late King Louis XVI, favorable to the Church influence on the society

A law of January 2nd 1817 allowed legally recognised congregations to acquire buildings and income, and to receive gifts and legacies, especially encouraging the development of congregations of women.

However outside the circles traditionally attached to religion, religious practice remained weak. The population which was reaching adulthood had not received religious education in its youth. In 1826, the Nuncio made this statement: « More than half the nation is in a state of complete ignorance of Christian duties and is plunged into indifference. In Paris, barely one eighth of the population is practising, and it can be asked whether there are 10,000 men in the capital who are practising ».

will give the same spirit, will unite all hearts to the leader. » (AC I 244).

Their choice fell upon premises which had belonged to the Dames de Saint-Michel, 40 rue des Postes, in a working class neighbourhood where many congregations were already present. The Jesuits, whose order had already been re-established in August 1814, had just opened a noviciate at number 20, and, in fact, Fathers Joseph Varin and Louis Barat were postulants there. The house acquired « *left much to be desired in the buildings and the garden, but it was necessary to make a beginning* ». The times did not permit « *heavy expenditure (...) and it was decided simply to rent.* » (AC 1,244)

The setting up of the premises was confided to Philippine Duchesne, the new general secretary, who spared no effort: « *Not only did (she) direct the workmen, but she was seen by turn as mason, painter and glazier* » (AC 1,244). The house was solemnly inaugurated when the Mother General returned, on June 30th 1816.

The First Mother House of the Sacred Heart

Five novices were called from Grenoble and four from Amiens to make up the core of the general noviciate. Eugénie de Gramont, who had been tempted to associate herself with the rebellion of Anne Beaudemont when she was in Amiens, was named mistress general.

As the house journal states, hardly a day passed without Fathers Varin or Druilhet coming to say Mass, to administer a sacrament, or for First Communion or clothings. For now that it was possible to show attachment to religion, the Council had made *decisions about the habit, the cross and ring that would be worn henceforth* » (ACI 251).

« *The boarding school did not take long to show promise. The wisdom and tact of Mother Eugénie de Gramont in her responsibility as mistress general justified the confidence of the distinguished families who brought their children to her. Mother Barat shared her free time between the children and the novices, by whom she was equally cherished and venerated* » (ACI 262). Every return from her journeys was joyfully celebrated.

But the building which combined Mother House, noviciate, boarding school and free school was too small, even unhealthy. As Alexandrine de Riencourt says of her arrival in the noviciate in October 1816: « *We were so cramped that 12 novices had a small room for their dormitory to which they had to go in the evening, groping their way through an attic* » (Ph K 210). In September 1817 an epidemic struck the school and the community: 2 novices and 3 pupils died of it. And so a search was made for a bigger house, and as one was not found, « *we ended up by renting a second house in rue de l'Arbalète which could communicate with the first through the gardens* ». The noviciate and the free school were installed there in 1819.

The Time of Discernment

Requests for foundations came from Quimper, Nîmes, Aix, Poland, Martinique... The Duke of Gramont, a relation of Mother Eugénie, wanted the Society to take charge of the royal house at Saint-Denis (AC I 262-264). But except for Quimper, where a pious person offered a school which she had just acquired, Sophie « *refused everywhere having neither subjects nor money* ». In a letter of December 18th 1818, she wrote to Philippine Duchesne « *Never have we been so lacking in both. This is what the dispositions of Divine Providence show us. We must stop for several years and try, in this interval, to sanctify ourselves and to prepare ourselves to carry out the plans of the Lord.* »

Philippine, for her part, since her first vows and especially her « *night of fire* » on Holy Thursday 4th April 1806, constantly talked of her desire « *to instruct idolaters of other countries* ». But she was too precious an ally for Sophie to accept being separated from her.

The Mother General did not discourage Philippine but did not give way. She exhorted her to patience, sometimes a little severely. Thus she wrote on 4th May 1808 : « *It seems very surprising to me (...) that you come up with such an idea. (...) Lastly acquire that good spirit, the spirit of all the saints: that one can only become holy in following the will of our Superiors* ». And on 17th August 1809: « *Calm your imagination, work at your perfection where you are, while waiting for something better* ».

Landmarks:

PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE: A PIONEER (1769 - 1852)



Philippine Duchesne in the middle of Potawatomi indians

The second great saint of the Sacred Heart, canonised by Pope John-Paul II in 1988, was the contemporary of Sophie Barat, who met her on 13th December 1804.

Ten years older than the foundress, Philippine was born in Grenoble into an upper middle class family involved in finance and government.

For Father Varin, who discovered her and sent her to Sophie, « *she is a great and generous soul* » who stopped at nothing. From childhood she was drawn to be a missionary, and she did not hesitate to defy her father's refusal and to enter the Visitation monastery of Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut at the age of 18. As her community was forced to disperse before she had made her final vows, she helped nonjuring priests and created the Association of Ladies of Mercy, consecrated to the education of children and the support of the poor.

She was not able to bring back to life the monastery which she was able to buy



*Sanctuary of Philippine Duchesne
in St Charles (Missouri)*

back thanks to her many connections and to restore with her own hands, and so she asked to join Sophie's Institute of Ladies of Christian Instruction. From 1806 onwards, Philippine spoke to Sophie of her ardent desire for the missions. She wanted to follow the example of two Jesuit saints whom she venerated: St Francis Xavier and St John-Francis Regis.

Enthusiastic, filled with zeal, intrepid, sometimes even a little exalted, for which her superior had to reproach her, Philippine's propensity to throw herself at the feet of those whom she implored says a great deal about her passionate character and how she must have suffered in waiting 12 years before her plan could be carried out.

On March 21st 1818, at the age of 49, she finally embarked at Bordeaux with four companions. After eleven weeks of a trying journey, she arrived at New Orleans, where she learned to live in extreme poverty. A first school was opened in St Charles, then in Missouri and Louisiana.

In 1841, although ill and tired, she spent a year, as she had dreamed of doing, with the Potawatami Indians. Seeing her great piety, the Indians called her « *the woman who prays always* ».

In spite of distance, she would always keep close links with Sophie Barat with whom she corresponded faithfully until the end.

The Time of Sending

Curiously, it is through Louis Barat that matters were resolved. In May 1816 the latter got to know the new Archbishop of Louisiana in Bordeaux; he had come to Europe seeking help for his vast diocese. And no doubt Louis told him about his sister's little Society.

In a letter of November 11th 1816, he informed Philippine about the impending arrival of Mgr Dubourg in Paris, so that when the bishop presented himself on January 15th at rue des Postes to ask for religious, Philippine immediately pleaded with Sophie « *not to let such a wonderful opportunity pass* ».

The following morning, the Mother General, beginning to allow herself to be swayed, gave Mgr Dubourg to understand that she would perhaps have a « *person ready to give him* ». Delighted by this opening, Mgr Dubourg asked to see this future member of his diocese, who prostrated herself at his feet.

On May 16th 1817, the prelate renewed his request and Philippine again threw herself at Sophie's feet, imploring her finally to give her long-awaited consent. The Superior, moved by that perseverance, could no longer doubt the will of God. « *I give you my permission, my dear Philippine, and from now on, I am going to look for companions for you* ».

For about a year, Philippine prepared to leave, moving heaven and earth, asking help from her wealthy relations. On the eve of her departure, Sophie named her superior of the mission, and on February 8th 1818, she took the coach for Bordeaux with four companions. From there they embarked for the New World on March 21st.

The 'time of Providence' had arrived, it seems. In August Sophie agreed to found a house in Chambéry, which belonged to the Kingdom of Sardinia, and then opened a boarding school in Lyon and in Bordeaux in 1819. The Third General Council meeting in rue des Postes in August 1820 decided to acquire a bigger and better situated house; this would be the Hôtel Biron.

Going further:

Visiting: **THE CHURCH OF SAINT-MEDARD AND THE CHAPEL OF THE SPIRITANS**

The works of Baron Haussman under the Second Empire (1852-1870), with the opening up of several wide boulevards, have changed the appearance of the district. But the alleyways adjoining the rue de l'Arbalète, filled with old buildings, small businesses, cafés and workshops have kept their character.

The church of Saint-Médard, in rue Mouffetard, was the parish of the community, which had however its own chapel in rue des Postes, blessed by Father d'Astros on July 15th 1816. Nevertheless links existed between the religious and the parish priest of the beautiful fifteenth to seventeenth century church, as is shown by this extract from the house journal of 8th June 1817: « *Celebration of Corpus Christi in the parishes. The procession of St Medard passed along our street and the most Holy Sacrament was placed on our altar of repose* ».

The Mother House of the Spiritan congregation at 30 rue Lhomond was practically next to that of the Sacred Heart. It is one of the last convents still present today. The beautiful chapel dating from the eighteenth century can be visited. Its facade on rue Lhomond has a fine pediment, the work of Duret, a sculptor under Louis XV.

Meditate on: « **THE INTERNATIONALITY OF THE SACRED HEART** »

The departure of Philippine Duchesne for Louisiana in March 1818, undeniably marks the beginning of the international expansion of the Society of the Sacred Heart, present today in around 40 countries. She had to battle for 12 years before she obtained the authorisation of her superior to embark for the New World.

However it cannot be doubted that the universal vocation of the Society of the Sacred Heart is clearly inscribed in its charism from the beginning. It is in its genes. The « fundamental idea » of Sophie who founded it specifically refers to this: « *We will raise up a crowd of adorers from all nations, to the ends of the earth* ».

Moreover Sophie Barat, in her confidences to her first companions at Amiens as well as under the seal of secrecy to Philippine, does not hide this. From childhood, Sophie had been attracted by the



The logo of the Society expresses a charisma extended to the whole world

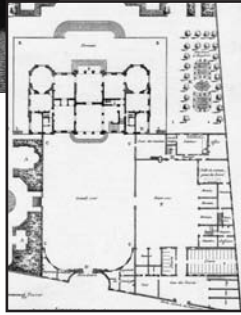
missions. Rue de Touraine: « *the lives of St Francis Xavier, of missionaries... enflamed her with generous ardour* » (AC1 25) She wrote to Philippine on February 3rd 1806: « *It is one of my secrets. Before I even knew our little Society, the desire to carry the name of the Lord to infidel nations was in the depths of my heart (...) and St Francis Xavier became my patron* ».

When she became Mother General, Sophie's attraction had to give way to her own mission. Others would leave in her place; It was for her to verify and deepen the call of her sisters and to read the signs of the times in order to orient her Society, when Philippine, with all her spontaneity and generosity, gave it her impetus. But both were inspired with the same passion: to manifest the love of the Heart of Christ. And how could this know boundaries ?

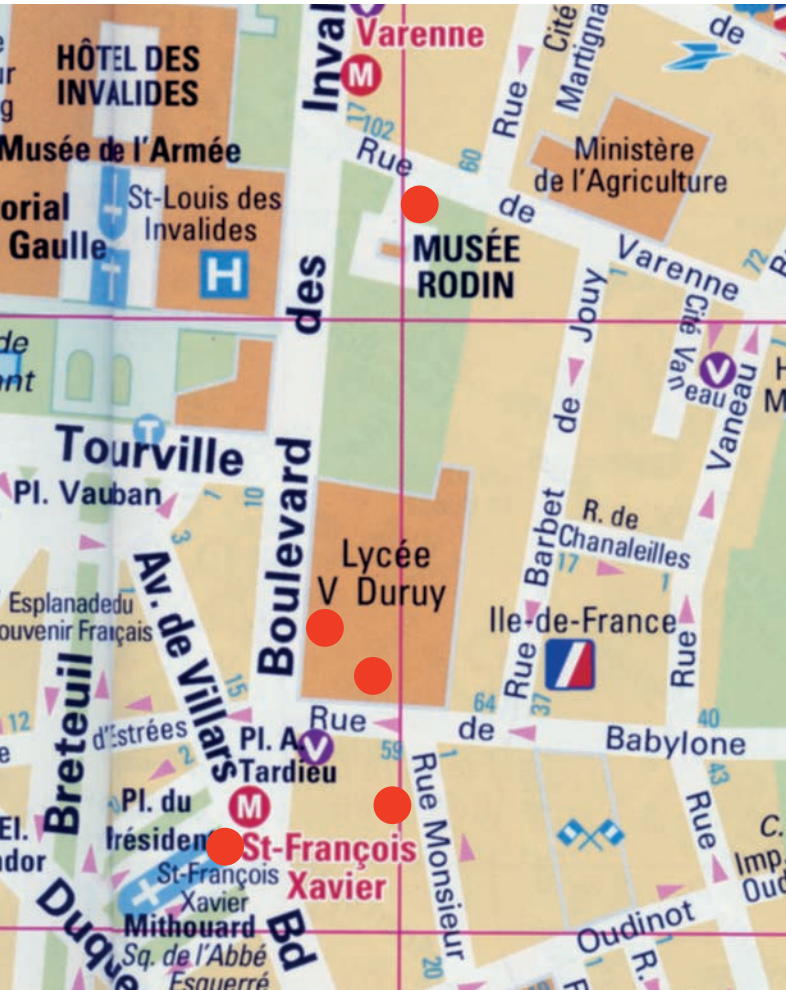
This internationality would be an opportunity for the members of the Society, accustomed to being in close contact with different cultures and unceasingly invited to openness and creativity.



Above :
the Biron hotel at the moment
of the expulsion of the rscj in 1905



Right : the hotel at the arrival
of Sophie Barat, with sizeable
service quarters
at the right of the yard



PRACTICAL INFORMATION:



THE HÔTEL BIRON (THE PRESENT MUSEE RODIN)

79 RUE DE VARENNE –
75007 PARIS

Metro: line 13 (Varenne)

Bus 87, 92

At the time of Sophie Barat, the Hôtel Biron, built in 1732, was in a suburb on the edge of the aristocratic Faubourg St-Germain. The Esplanade des Invalides was a place for walking and the church of Saint-François-Xavier did not exist.

Very large outbuildings were at the right of the present main courtyard, extending as far as the house. Later the religious added a wing to the left of the building which thus formed a smaller courtyard closed by a gate.

On the other side of the building there was a large garden with a vegetable garden and an orchard. The farm and the school for the poor were located at the end, giving on the rue de Babylone. In 1857, Sophie built her Mother House, which is now the Lycée Victor Duruy, at the angle of the Boulevard des Invalides and the rue de Babylone.

1820-1865

FULFILMENT

« I HAVE FEARED THE DANGERS OF PROSPERITY FOR US, I DO NOT FEAR PERSECUTION AT ALL »

Sophie Barat was 42. At the end of the Third Chapter of the Congregation, which was held in the rue de Postes at the beginning of the summer of 1820, it was unanimously decided to acquire a larger and better-situated house. This would be the Hôtel Biron.

It was considered as the 'administrative centre' of the Society of the Sacred Heart until the expulsions of 1905; its elegance contributed to the reputation of the Society of the Sacred Heart, but it ran the risk of drawing the Society away from the first intuitions of its foundress.

It would require much intelligence, faith and humility for this « daughter of a modest cooper » to maintain communion among the « great ladies » of her Society during the serious crisis of 1839 to 1845, out of which the Society would emerge strengthened.

On May 25th 1865, Ascension Day, Sophie would die in the new Mother House which she had had built at the end of the garden of the Hôtel Biron, which is occupied today by the Lycée Victor-Duruy, on the Boulevard des Invalides.

A Prestigious Acquisition

It was not without hesitation that Sophie resolved, after fruitless searching, to buy the Hôtel Biron, fearing « an acquisition which would give the new Society an appearance of grandeur and luxury so little in tune with its spirit » (AC1 343).

This palatial eighteenth century building, situated on the edge of the very aristocratic Faubourg Saint-Germain, had one of the largest private gardens in Paris on more than « 10 arpents » (3 hectares), stretching from the rue de Varenne to the rue de Babylone. The Society would have a vegetable gar-



Behind the visible splendour, knowing to stay faithful to own's initial intuitions

The Historical Context:

AN EXCEPTIONAL PERIOD OF INSTABILITY

Thus, for the single period between 1820 and the death of the foundress in 1865, France experienced 4 different regimes: the Restoration of the Bourbons with the reigns of the two brothers of Louis XVI, Louis XVIII and Charles X, the July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe of Orleans, the Second Republic and the Second Empire. Furthermore, these regime changes were interrupted by popular revolts in 1830 and 1848, and a coup d'état in 1852.

Throughout the century, partisans of the Revolution and counter-revolutionaries would confront one another. But there were also divisions within each camp. The royalists were divided between 'Legitimists' attached to the Bourbons, and 'Orleanists'. And among the republicans, radicals and moderates were opposed to one another. As far as the



*The century is marked
with popular riots*

recent working class was concerned, it did not exist politically.

The Church for its part, closed to new ideas, was essentially rural, feminine and monarchist. The elites among the intellectuals and the middle classes were free-thinkers and readily anti-clerical.

During the reign of the very conservative Charles X, Catholics, feeling supported by a power which was essentially Catholic, as was the monarchy of the old regime, were often 'Legitimists' or Gallicans'. But with the accession of King Louis XVIII, who desired to make concessions to the republicans, they turned to the Pope as their only possible guide.

Finally the Second Empire would again be close to the Church. Anecdotally, it can be pointed out that the Empress Eugénie de Montijo spent four years at the Hôtel Biron.

den, an orchard and a meadow where 7 cows grazed; the cows would be milked by the novices in the morning before the 6am Mass.

Its owner, the Duchess of Charost, having agreed to lower the price, the business was concluded on September 5th 1820, thanks to various loans and a gift from King Louis XVIII, asked for by Madame de Marbœuf and the family of Eugénie de Gramont.

The handover took place several weeks later, and a large reception was held for the visit of the Duchesses of Angoulême and Berry, daughters-in-law of the future King Charles X (AC1 344-345).

It was decided that « *the boarding school alone would live in the house itself* », from which the « *looking glasses, the paintings which were not at all in harmony with its new purpose* » (AC1 344-345) had been removed, while the community, the Mother House and the novitiate would be installed in the large outbuildings which had formerly been occupied by barbers, cooks, cooks' assistants and valets...

The Snares of Success

The responsibility for the boarding school had been confided to the young Eugénie de Gramont and the Sacred Heart was considered « *the best establishment to which to send a young girl as a boarder* » (pp 1 131). The most noble families of the time wanted to send their daughters there. There was even a « marriage bureau » to allow the older pupils to be established according to their rank.

Some « celebrities of the capital » came there to follow retreats given by famous preachers: « *rows of carriages parked or circulated in the adjoining streets (...) Inquisitive pupils climbed on to their stools to see a crowd of lackeys, in livery well known to most of them* » (pp 323).

Many young women presented themselves for the novitiate. Sophie Barat recognised later that their vocations had not been sufficiently tested: « We have made everywhere a mistake which would be irreparable if we continued it: the admission of subjects without a vocation, many doubtful ones, others too mediocre », she would write in 1849 to Mother Garabis.

A Delicate Position

What Sophie feared had happened: the Hôtel Biron became in public opinion the symbol of the Society of the Sacred Heart (ML 5). Certainly she was not unaware that it was « *for the upper*

classes of society that we were founded » (MSB to Amiens in 1843) and therefore relationships and friendships with the « great ladies » of her Society were necessary for her. But for her, « The true spirit of poverty is so essential to the Society of the Sacred Heart that, were it to be lost, Jesus Christ would no longer acknowledge it as belonging to Him » (Const. 1815, n° 339)

The schools for the poor, like the one situated at the end of the garden in Biron, on the rue de Babylone side, had great importance for her. As article 215 of the Constitutions says, « *(this work) is incomparably dearest to the Heart of Jesus. They will, therefore, consider as a favour and as an enviable mark of preference the choice made of them to work in this apostolate ».*

She was likewise full of solicitude for the coadjutrix sisters, whose vocation of ‘housekeeping’ she compared to that of the Holy Family. She envisaged a « work for lackeys » to instruct the coachmen of the ladies attending days of recollection (PPI 330) and suggested that Eugénie de Gramont should receive 12 orphans after a cholera epidemic, and a handicapped girl who had not been accepted elsewhere. (AC1 560).

A Gradual Distancing

Sophie was often absent. She visited her houses and founded new ones to respond to the ever more numerous requests from bishops, where she installed trusted professed and stayed for several months. When she was in Paris, the formation of the novices was dear to her heart. But being close to the liveliness of the boarding school seemed burdensome: « *We will never have a Mother House, she said openly, except in a place with no exterior works, dedicated only to the work of the generalate » (PPI 141).* Events were to give her the opportunity of moving away.

The people of Paris revolted, infuriated by the support given by Charles X to the ultras of his regime. After three days of rioting, on 27th, 28th and 29th July 1830, he abdicated, and his cousin Louis-Philippe was proclaimed King of the French. Barricades had been set up not far from Biron: « *We heard the gloomy sound of the warning bells. There was continuous gunfire (...) Our children prostrated themselves in their classes and implored Mary immaculate with us ».*

The parents came to fetch their children. For Sophie, « *Among the measures which a sudden revolution made necessary, moving the novitiate away seemed the most urgent ».* She established herself in Switzerland in the property of a friend and then

Landmarks:

THE POOR SCHOOLS



The school entrance for the poor people remaining at rue de Babylone

From the beginning, a free school was almost always associated with a Sacred Heart boarding school, as in Amiens, Grenoble, Poitiers... At the time of Sophie Barat's death, out of 89 houses, 74 had a school for the poor. And this is indeed the case in almost all the religious congregations which, in the nineteenth century, were the only ones to consecrate themselves to the education of girls, with the exception of the famous institution of the Legion of Honour.

In the first draft of the Constitutions in 1805, « the free education of the children of the poor » figures in the same way as « the education of young persons received as boarders » (AC1 108) And the Constitutions will emphasize the zeal which the religious must bring to this work « which is incomparably dearest to the Heart of Jesus » (Const. 215).

These elementary schools generally have numbers twice those of the boarding schools. In Paris in 1850, there were 160 boarders and 400 pupils in the free school.

Religious education was a priority in these schools, because « the eternal and spiritual good of their souls is the object



For Sophie Barat,
the free education
of the children of the poor
is dearest to the Heart of Jesus

to be aimed at » (Const. 204). « Reading and writing shall be taught, and arithmetic also to those to whom it is likely to be useful » (205). They will also be initiated into « manual work... to procure them means of subsistence and of gaining a suitable and respectable livelihood » (207).

These schools were always separate from the boarding schools, but there were links between the two. The school fees of the boarders provided for the costs of the free school, and the boarders, in order to awaken their social sense, were encouraged to render different services to the little schoolchildren. At Biron, for example, the smallest children « gave from what they had in order to give sand to the poor school » (PP1, 332-333).

In addition, according to needs, orphanages, sewing classes and workshops were set up, as in Niort, Paris, Bordeaux or Rome.

left for Italy, first of all for Turin and then for Rome, where the Pope had entrusted the Trinità dei Monti to the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1828 and had now asked her to open a novitiate.

Tensions appear

The Legitimist tendencies in the Society, « even among the coadjutrix sisters » (PPI 359), are well known. But when, after the sack of the bishop's palace in Paris in 1831, Eugénie de Gramont, who shared the prejudices of Mgr de Quelen against the new government, offered to install him in « a building called the little house next to the large one, in rue de Varenne ». Sophie was worried about the repercussions this might have for the Society.

She wanted then to move the general novitiate back to France to « bring to an end a dispersion which could harm the unity necessary in a religious body » (AC 1 614), but she did not set it up at Biron. In 1835, she rented a beautiful building nearby, in 8 rue Monsieur, which belonged to her friend the Marquis de Nicolay, and set up her Mother House there (AC 1 614). Then she left again to visit houses in the south and to transfer the new Roman novitiate to the Villa Lante.

She had a premonition that « the Society is on the verge of a crisis » (ACII 2) and decided to organise her 6th General Chapter in Rome because of the continuing insecurity in Paris.

The Crisis of 1839-1845

The Assembly opened on June 10th 1839 at the Trinità dei Monti. With the spread of the Society in France and outside France, in Missouri, Louisiana, Italy, the question of its government had become crucial. There were already 41 houses, of which 27 were in France and 14 abroad, and recurring health problems showed that Sophie could not continue to direct her institute by direct contact, by multiplying her journeys and letters to superiors.

Notable decrees of the Council were the installation of the Mother House in Rome and the division of the Society into large provinces, headed by provincials named by the Superior General to represent her.

Instantly in Paris, where Eugénie de Gramont had remained, there was an outcry. For the headmistress of Biron and Mgr de Quelen, who considered himself her ecclesiastical superior, the residence of the superior in Rome undermined the French identity of the Society and placed it

outside the control of the bishops. On the opposing side, for the superiors abroad and the ardent Mother Elizabeth Galitzine, a young Russian Orthodox princess converted from Orthodoxy, to whom Sophie had just confided the houses in America, a religious society with a universal vocation like the Sacred Heart could only have its seat in Rome.

Sophie Barat, caught in the middle, feeling rejected on all sides, proposed to put the decrees into effect on a trial basis for 3 years (AC II 12). At the end of this period, she would receive a 'course of action' from the Holy See (AC II 19). Gregory XVI asked her to « return to France and make it her ordinary residence » and he assigned a Cardinal Protector to her who advised her to hold her next Council in France « so as not to anger the bishops of that country » (AC II 19).

On account of the gravity of the situation, Sophie prepared to convoke a Council at Lyon during the summer of 1842, as had been suggested to her. But the new Archbishop of Paris, Mgr Affre, was violently opposed and made this known to his fellow bishops. He even wrote to the Pope to tell him that if the decrees of 1839 were not annulled, the government would go back on the approval accorded by Charles X in 1827, so that the Society would no longer be able to receive gifts and legacies nor acquire buildings (AC II 42-45).

Arbitration by the Pope

A congregation of cardinals examined the famous decrees and after the intervention of the Bishop of Besançon, a faithful friend of Sophie, the Pope decided to « restore matters to their former state before the Council of 1839 » (AC II 42). He allowed her however to be helped « by religious with more extensive power which they would exercise in her name ».

Sophie submitted herself straight away « in spirit and will to the will of Our Lord expressed by His Vicar » (ACII 44) and addressed a long circular to all her sisters on 6th April 1843 to inform them of the decision of the Holy Father and to invite them to remove all trace of bitterness among them so as to have « only one single aim, one thought, to put into practice more and more our beloved devise, 'One heart and one mind in the Heart of Jesus' » (AC II 46).

The Return to Biron

At the height of the crisis in 1842, the novitiate and the Mother House in rue Monsieur had been trans-

Landmarks:

THE PLAN OF STUDIES OF THE SACRED HEART



« Mater Admirabilis »,
patroness of all the Sacred Heart schools
in the world

The aim pursued by Sophie Barat was to restore faith in society by forming Christian women of the upper classes, who would bring up their children well and bring their husbands back to religion. The first educational programme was drawn up for Amiens. It would remain a point of reference in the Society, and other congregations would be inspired by it (MFC 191).

Unlike what was being done at the time, Sophie « saw broad and solid classical studies as an important factor of women's education » for « culture seemed to her a means of acquiring the sense of human values, an essential basis for the supernatural structure that she desired ». The basic programme offered by the religious, whom it was important to form well, was made up of reading, grammar and



The Empress Eugénie, boarder at « 4, rue de Varennes » during 4 years

spelling and also history, geography and literature. (PhK 247).

The way in which the teaching must be done is itself innovative. The act of education must be « contagious ». The educator must above all 'allow the Lord to pass'. » And it cannot be the work of a single person, however competent she might be/It cannot be the work of a single person. « All those employed with the children, remembering that they all share the common responsibility with regard to the important work confided to them, must be careful always to co-operate with one another and to act in perfect harmony » (Const 1815 349).

The final major characteristic is the flexibility of the programme according to mentalities and local needs. On the advice of Father Varin, uniformity of the Plan of Studies had been envisaged. But with the expansion of the Society overseas, Sophie quickly changed her mind.

Already in 1820, she wrote to Philippine Duchesne that she « understands very well, after what you have written to me of your position, that it is scarcely possible for you to follow the Plan of Studies ».

Later, she would ask Eugénie Audé who was in Rome to send notes « on the changes and innovations that seem necessary in the country where you are ». And in 1839 she told Eugénie de Gramont even more explicitly: « We will postpone the Plan of Studies until later. The base will be laid, then each kingdom will develop its own, because for us women, it seems to me impossible that it should be the same universally! The education of women varies according to the nation ».

ferred to Conflans so as to be there « more healthily and above all more religiously » (AC II 84).

On the death of Eugénie de Gramont, who had asked Sophie's pardon, in December 1846, Sophie decided to return to Biron, where she regained control of the house and reinstalled her Mother House until the next General Council. But the coexistence of such diverse activities was not an ideal situation.

In 1854 the Society acquired a second house in the neighbourhood of the rue Saint-Jacques « destined to gather around the Superior General those who must help her in this laborious task and from which other activities likely to distract from this end can be removed » (PP 141). However the stay in Les Feuillantines was interrupted by the urbanisation projects of Baron Haussman.

Thus from 1856 it was resolved, with the price of the expropriation, to build a Mother House at the end of the garden at Biron where « this time we shall not be dependent on anyone » (ML 12), and a small house in rue Cassini was rented for the duration of the work.

The first stone of the future Mother House was laid by Mother Barat on June 29th 1857. She would sleep there for the first time on November 28th 1858.

Her Love of Children

Sophie was now 79. She no longer travelled. In spite of fatigue and illness, she was able to bring the 8th General Council of the Society in 1864 to a successful conclusion. At the end of a long life spent in the business of the Society, she felt very strongly the need to be surrounded by children, to see them, to listen to them: « I open my windows during the hours of recreation at rue de Varenne... » (PPI 417) After a morning working with her Vicar General and Assistants, opening her mail, a little walk was obligatory; she was drawn in her little carriage by sister Agnes (PPI 464-465).

The works at the rue de Varenne were flourishing; the boarding school had 200 pupils and the school 400 (PPI 428-429). The Society had more than 3500 religious and about a hundred communities.

She died on May 25th 1865, Ascension day, whereas nearly just under her window, on the other side of the boulevard des Invalides is built the church, where she rests now.

Going further:

Travel round: The BOULEVARD DES INVALIDES, THE RUE DE BABYLONE AND THE RUE MONSIEUR

As well as her innumerable journeys to visit or found houses in the provinces and abroad, Sophie Barat changed the place of her Mother House more than nine times: from Amiens to the rue des Postes, then rue de l'Arbalète, Biron, rue Monsieur, Conflans, Biron again, Les Feuillantines, rue Cassini and finally the Boulevard des Invalides.

The present lycée Victor Duruy, situated at 33 Bd des Invalides, is the last Mother House which she had built, according to the plans of the convent of



Les Feuillantines, which she had much appreciated. Both the general noviciate and the services of the Generalate were there. The apartments of the Assistants General were on the first floor and gave on to the Boulevard. The community lived on the second floor on the garden side.

At 72 rue de Babylone the « farm » which can still be seen would have accommodated the « poor school », destined for the children of the neighbourhood.

A few steps away, at no 12 rue Monsieur (formerly no. 8) the hôtel de Bourbon-Condé housed the noviciate and government of the Sacred Heart from 1835 to 1842. The circular facade of this beautiful building from the end of the seventeenth century can be seen from the Bd des Invalides, at the height of the church of Saint- François- Xavier. It is there that the reception took place on the occa-

sion of the celebration of the return of the châsse of Madeleine Sophie Barat on June 19th 2009.

Meditate: « COR UNUM... »

« *Cor unum et anima una in corde Jesu* » (One heart and one mind in the Heart of Jesus). These words with which the first Constitutions of the Society end, and which Sophie Barat had given as a devise to her sisters, asking that it be « *engraved on the cross that you will wear henceforth on your heart* », shows the great importance she attributed to unity within her congregation.

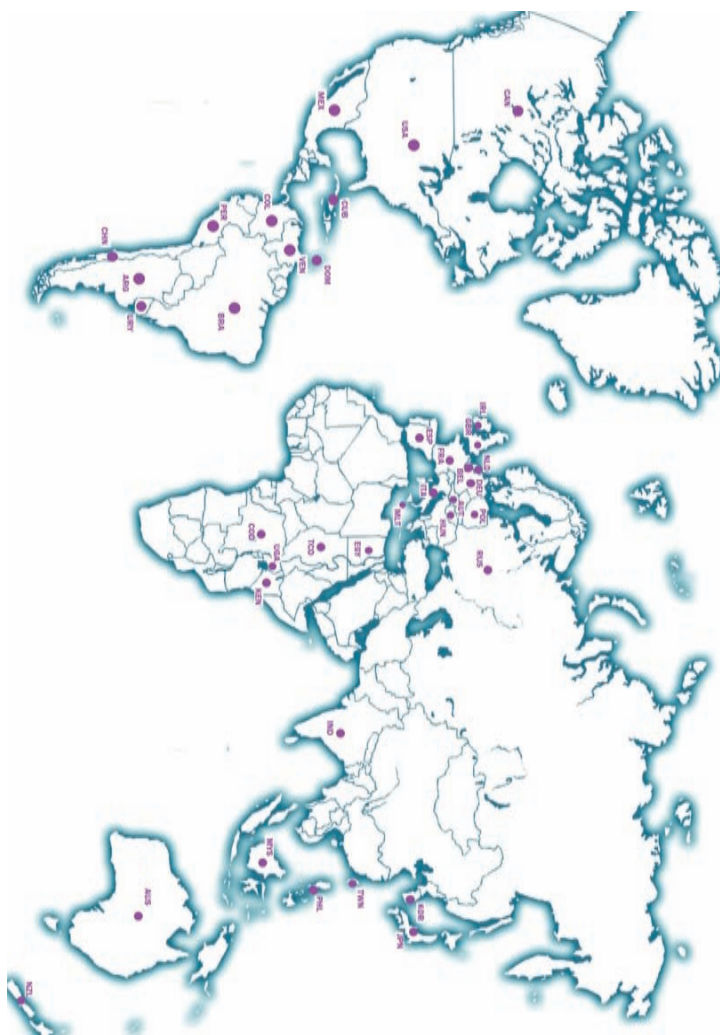
Sophie used to say that she was committed to « *asking the Lord every day for the perfect fulfilment of this devise* » (AC1 243), and in fact she spared no effort in establishing communion among the members of her Society, as well as among her houses, setting out on the roads of France and Europe, on which she travelled in every direction in conditions which were often very uncomfortable, writing more than 14,000 letters to reach and bring together those who had gone far away.

This exhortation expresses both the central place of faith in the Heart of Christ in the spirituality of the Sacred Heart and in the union of its members among themselves. If the Heart of Christ is the symbol of his infinite Love, if it is indeed the centre of his person, the place where all the relationships of the religious of the Sacred Heart have their source, how could they not take to heart asking for and living this unity among themselves? « *This is the mark of their identity, of their belonging to this body of the congregation and to the Church. This is also what authenticates the truth of their apostolic life* » (Const. 329).

« *Then will be accomplished in our Society and through her, the prayer of Jesus; ' that they may be one as we also are one: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one' (Jn 17: 22-23* »). (Const. 178)



The Saint-François-Xavier Church where is exposed the shrine of Ste Madeleine-Sophie since June 19th 2009



PRACTICAL INFORMATION:



ST-FRANÇOIS-XAVIER CHURCH AND THE BURIAL CASKET OF ST MADELEINE SOPHIE

12 PLACE MITHOUARD –
75007 PARIS

*Metro: line 13
(Saint-François-Xavier)
Bus 82, 87 et 92*

In her lifetime, Sophie Barat would certainly have been aware of the first stages of building the Church of St Francis Xavier, which began in 1861; the building is exactly opposite the Mother House, where she died on 24th May 1865.

She was first buried in Conflans. When her body was exhumed for the first time, with a view to her beatification, it was in an inexplicably good state of conservation. Her coffin was later transferred to Belgium, because of the expulsion of the religious from France in 1904. There, her body was exhumed a second time and placed in a gilded bronze casket.

This casket was brought back to France and installed on the 19th June 2009 in the Church of St François Xavier dedicated to the patron saint of the Missions so much beloved by Sophie Barat and Philippine Duchesne.

It is exposed on the right side of the nave of the church, in the Sacred Heart Chapel.

MADELEINE SOPHIE BARAT TODAY

« OTHER INSTITUTES HAVE HAD A FOUNDER OR A FOUNDRRESS. OURS IS DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN THIS RESPECT: OUR FOUNDER IS THE HEART OF JESUS. »

Since the death of Sophie Barat in 1865, the world has changed a lot.

Even in her day, while she was trying to rechristianise society by revealing the love of the Heart of Christ to the children confided to her care, Sophie always adapted to changed circumstances. Whenever she thought it necessary, she did not hesitate to adapt her plan of studies, or to open free schools, orphanages, vocational workshops, after-school education, beside her big boarding-schools...

With the deep intelligence which characterised her she understood that it was necessary to start with reality, with the given circumstances. She acted with prudence and with humility, and in the case of serious disputes, she submitted herself in the last resort to the decision of the Church.

In this way she opened up ways for her descendants and their companions of today to evolve and to be endlessly creative, encouraged in that by the renewal called for by Vatican II.

Renewal asked for by the Church

After Vatican II (1962-1965) the Church invited all the religious congregations to examine their rules of life to see that they were consistent with the text on *“The Renewal and Adaptation of Religious Life”*. The Society of the Sacred Heart had already begun to evolve. The expulsions from France at the beginning of the 20th century had emphasised its internationality even more. In Egypt, the boarding-schools were open to Muslim pupils; in Japan, Buddhists and Shintoists were welcomed. Schools were founded in rural areas.



Young pupils from the Sacred Heart in Uganda

THE SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART IN 2016

1. Numbers:

Today there are a little more than 2000 rscj in the world, in 27 Provinces and 41 countries: Asia (284), Africa (141), Latin America (411), Canzus (Australia, New Zealand, United States, Canada) (372), and Europe (1034)

2. Main apostolates

- **Education in schools:** in Sacred Heart Schools or other schools

- **Socio-educational projects:** Rscj feel specially challenged to serve children, young people and women, above all those who are excluded from society. For rscj, education is seen as a life-long process. (General Chapter 2000).

- **Pastoral projects and activities:** in church situations, in hospital chaplaincies, by spiritual retreats, psychological counselling, pastoral work with young people, etc.

• Collaboration with other institutions: lay or religious.

• Recognized as a NGO at UNO.

3. Sacred Heart Schools throughout the world

• There are currently 117 schools in the world, including 63 schools in Europe.

Landmarks:

« SOPHIE » OR « MADELEINE-SOPHIE »: HOW TO CALL HER ?

The youngest little child of the Barat family was known in Joigny by the simple name of Sophie. She was called this too by her first companions, or she signed herself this way in her first letters. It was only in 1810 that she opted for the more severe and solemn signature of "Barat"; eventually she would add "your mother" or "Superior General". That was when she needed to insist on her authority at the time it was questioned in Amiens.

In her communities, her feast was celebrated on 29th September, the Feast of Saint Sophie and on 22nd July, the Feast of Sainte Mary Magdalene. Thus she wrote to Mother Emilie Giraud on 22nd July 1809: *"I have just finished this Feast of St Mary Magdalene (...). The feast would have been worthy of another Magdalene, but this poor unworthy creature never had such a beautiful feast."*

On her Baptism Certificate we read that « Madeleine » was the first of her three names, along with Sophie and Louise; this was also the name of her mother to whom she was so attached. All during her life she never made a secret of her devotion to this great sinner who had been raised up by the love of the Lord, and was the *"apostle of the apostles, who was the first to reveal the Resurrection of the Lord to them"* (AC I 616).

A letter of 17th July 1853 to Mother de Bosredant possibly explains this devotion

The religious began to create new ways of serving those who were disadvantaged...

The demands of the Church were examined during a Special Chapter in 1967. But the Society could not respond immediately, because the Constitutions of Sophie Barat had *"such a strong and deep unity"*; so it was necessary to have a time of experimentation beforehand, in order not to "break" the spirit. With the agreement of the Sacred Congregation, it was decided to wait until the Chapter of 1982 to adopt new Constitutions.

Unity with regard to the new Constitutions

From the 1967 Chapter on, and also after the following Chapters, attempts were made to adapt to the "signs of the times": the end of having a Superior General for life, the lifting of enclosure, the unification of categories of religious, structures of government aiming at having more co-responsibility and a greater respect for local realities...

In preparation for the Chapter of 1982 all the religious of the Society in the world were invited to participate in the revision of the Constitutions. These had to be re-edited and translated into every language – which had not always been done before.

For 18 months they studied the text of the Constitutions, at a personal level and in community. They sought to differentiate what appeared to them to be "the soul" of the Society, from what was able to be changed. It was not enough to rewrite a text while keeping faithful to its inspiration, but it was a question of responding to the urgent calls of the last quarter of the 20th century and of proceeding to a re-evaluation of all that had been lived experimentally during the previous fifteen years.

Deepening of the charism of Sophie Barat

The new Constitutions are the fruit of a deepening of the spirituality of Sophie Barat in the light of the Gospel and in response to the calls of the Church and of the world.

They still have as their centre the glorification of Christ's heart which is « gentle and humble" (Mt 11, 29), and which was pierced on the cross: *"the*

symbol and source of a love given to the end". But this was reformulated in new terms: "By our charism, we are consecrated to GLORIFYING THE HEART OF JESUS: we answer his call to discover and reveal His love, letting ourselves be transformed by His Spirit so as to live united and conformed to Him, and through our love and service to radiate the very love of His Heart" (C. 82 art 4).

Connected to the needs which had appeared during the most recent years, the mission emphasised: "the sense of Church; the sense of personal responsibility; ongoing formation; internationality seen as diversity (as opposed to uniformity); educational direction; preference for those who are poor; prayer and discernment".

The most far-reaching changes concerned the way of governing in the Society. In former times decisions had come from the Superior General; from now on the wealth of experiences and situations of local communities would be most important, then the Provinces, with the Mother House assuring unity.

Favouring education

As for education, which remains the privileged means of making known and manifesting the Heart of Jesus, already in the time of Sophie Barat it had not been limited to institutions such as boarding-schools or primary schools; there had also been "contacts with people outside", retreats, etc. From now on education would be understood in a wider sense as wanting "people to grow in dignity, as human beings and as children of God" (Cf C. art 7,8,11 et 30); it can now be carried out in settings such as chaplaincies, hospitals, prisons, youth camps, in collaboration with other congregations or with lay people.

The text drafted at the end of the 1982 Chapter was approved unanimously by the Chapter delegates, a lived unanimity « like the clear expression of this union of minds and hearts » which Sophie Barat held so dear. It opened the way to a permanent adaptation of the mission, following the inspiration of the Spirit, in order to respond to the urgent needs of a world wounded by sin.

and shows us that she found in Mary Magdalene an ideal which the religious of her Institute could follow: « Ah, if we could only all love Jesus as ardently as his lover did! She was the first, along with Saint John, to see the wound which showed this divine Heart to us mortals. Without doubt, Jesus revealed this mystery of love to her; she understood it and her life was henceforth one of reparation. Let us try to obtain the same grace and let us love as Magdalene did, without limit; this should be the way for the Spouses of his Heart. »

The universal Church, uniting what Sophie was and the ideal to which she was aspiring, canonised her on the 24th May 1925 with the name of Saint Madeleine-Sophie.

SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Favourite prayer
of Ste Madeleine-Sophie:



O, Sacred Heart of Jesus
I hasten, I come to you
Because you are my unique refuge,
My only sure hope....

I am certain
That you will never tire of me
And that you will never cease to love me,
To help me and to protect me,
Because you love me with an infinite love.

So, have pity on me, Lord,
According to your great mercy,
And do with me, in me and for me
Whatever you wish,
Because I am abandoning myself to you
With the full and total confidence
That you will never abandon me!

Going further:

Discover: A COMMUNITY NEAR YOU

The BFN Province of the Sacred Heart, which united the former provinces of Belgium, France, the Netherlands into a single province in June 2011, suggests numerous possibilities of meetings, spiritual accompaniment, prayer in common, etc., in several cities.

- The headquarters of the BFN Province is in Lyon: 57 rue du Docteur Edmond Locard - 69005 Lyon. Tel.: 33 (0)7 82 18 08 57
Internet: www.rscj.com

- The birthplace of the foundress is in Joigny. There you will find the Spiritual Centre of Sophie Barat:
3 rue Davier - 89300 Joigny.
Tel.: 33 (0)3 86 92 16 40
Internet: www.centre-sophie-barat.com

- In the Paris region, two communities will welcome your enquiries:
 - 26 av de Lowendal - 75015 Paris:
Tel.: 33 (0)1 47 83 39 29;
E-mail: lowendal@rscj.com
 - 100 rue Jean-Jaurès (Esc. E) - 94800 Villejuif
Tel.: 33 (0)1 46 78 09 31;
E-mail: rscj.villejuif@free.fr

- If you are a former student from whatever country, don't hesitate to get in touch with l'UFASC (Union Française des Anciens et Anciennes du Sacré-Cœur) (The French Association of Alumni and Alumnae of the Sacred Heart) by means of the "contact" page on its internet site:www.ufasc.fr

Meditating: CONTEMPLATING THE HEART OF JESUS AND ACTING LIKE HIM...

How do we love as Jesus loves, if we do not know his heart and the way that he loves? Is there any better way of knowing this heart than by contemplating him?

To contemplate is to look and allowing oneself to be taken over by something or someone.

In the time of Sophie Barat, the traces of Janse- nism had not totally disappeared; she would have to get rid of these effects in herself. Fear could stop people allowing themselves to admire God or have confidence in him. Wasn't he just a God who judges, a severe God who punishes us?

And then the images of the Sacred Heart were circulated secretly... images of a Man who looks at you with a gentle expression, while showing you his heart. Images of someone who was saying to you: "Look at me, contemplate my gestures and my way of treating people... See how people meet me and go away, feeling calmer, more confident, able to stand up again... because: 'Come to me, all you who labour and are over-burdened, because I am gentle and humble in heart...' (Mt 11, 28-30)".

Sophie looked, opened the Book and contemplated the heart of Jesus. She heard: "Learn from me". She let herself be loved, comforted and strengthened. She wanted to live like this Jesus, welcoming him into the depths of her heart and to help him build up a broken world.

On the picture of the Sacred Heart a little mark indicates a wound... this heart, opened by the lance on the cross became a source of life and of Love. For Sophie it became a place of inspiration, to help young people, to help each person to live from their heart, to accept themselves with their wounds and strengths, to live from the deepest part of themselves, from a place of freedom and their ability to commit themselves.

Contemplating the heart of Christ arouses our confidence in Him, in oneself, in others and opens us to the service of this world.

Sophie discovered – and so do all her sisters with her – how "to unite and conform themselves to the heart of Jesus", how to be more and more like him. From this she would draw strength from an education of the heart which believes the best of the other person, reveals it to him/ her, and commits him/her to the service of others, whatever form this takes.

In our day, as in the past, the contemplation of the Heart of Christ continues to be the place where the energy of all the educational apostolates of Sophie Barat's religious family is rooted, in more than forty countries, all imbued with the same spirit.

IN YOU I LOVE



In you I love, Madeleine-Sophie,
the woman who is fragile and strong,
the woman who is tender and firm,
the woman who is demanding
and compassionate.

In you I love the woman of action
whose activity draws its inspiration from
the Heart of Christ.

In you I love the woman of contrasts:
a friend of the humble people,
you communicate in simplicity with the great of
this world;
a friend of silence and of prayer,
you rush around the roads of Europe
to bring your communities to birth and to support
them;
you can love deeply
you can also say goodbye.

Madeleine-Sophie, in you I love
your zeal in the service of families, young people
and children.

I love your creativity, your energy,
that ability to keep renewing yourself, which
made you say at 83 years of age:
“the world is changing, and we must change our
plan of studies.”

Thank you, Madeleine-Sophie,
that you didn't let your weakness stop you,
but that you let God's strength be at work in you.

In following you, we discover that it is from a wounded
Heart that the source of life springs forth.

Marie-Thérèse Théry, rscj (BFN)

THIS BOOKLET IS THE RESULT
OF A COLLABORATION
BETWEEN UFASC
(FRENCH UNION OF ALUMNI AND
ALUMNAE OF THE SACRED-HEART)
AND THE RELIGIOUS
OF THE SACRED-HEART OF JESUS



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