

Welcome to St. Rambert for the RNDM Renewal Session

29 March -15 May 2016.

29 March, Easter Tuesday, and 30 March, Easter Wednesday saw the RNDMs arrive from India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Vietnam and England (UK-British Isles Province) for the "Come and Rest a While" Renewal Course. The participants were met at Lyon airport, Amberieu train station and St. Rambert train station. Most travelled by air. The Sisters from British Isles travelled by train and coach, and Sr. Jacqueline, who is French, drove up from her community in Toulon. It was a very busy two days for the St. Rambert Community. Sr. Felistus from Kenya arrived late on April 2nd as her visa was only granted the day before.



On 31 March, Thursday, Sr. M. Benedicte shared with us the the History of St. Rambert. The Crypt of Domitien, which remains on the property, dates back to the 5th Century. She also showed us, on the Map, the places we would visit whils't we are here: Caen, where Euphrasie was born, Lyon, the cradle of the Institute; Taize, where an ecumenical monastic order was founded by Brother Roger Schutz in 1954; and Lourdes, a very famous Marian Shrine in France.

Later on in the day we had our Opening Liturgy, at which each of us placed our symbol, something that has been part of our RNDM journey, on the Centre-Piece, after explaining what the symbol meant for us. We then took a little flower and placed it in a dish of water and at the same time expressing what were our hopes and expectations during our time here in St. Rambert.

Sr. Josephine Kane pronounced the Renewal Session open and lit the Paschal Candle representing the Risen Christ. Sr. M. Benedicte, Fr. Joseph the Resident Chaplain, and Sr. Patricia Boyd the Provincial of France, graced us by their presence. Sr. Patricia welcomed us formally to the French Province and to St. Rambert.



The first two days 1st -2nd April we spent time sharing our stories about ourselves and our families. Some of the guiding questions were –

1. What have we come from?
2. What have we come to?
3. And what do we expect from this time of Renewal?

April 2nd our theme " Rest " saw us looking at and sharing on the words -



What brings you good rest?
How do you know when you need rest?
Where is the place you find rest?
At the end of this day we Presented a cultural evening to some of the St. Rambert Community.

Sunday April 3rd was a free day and we attended Sunday Mass in the Parish, at which we were introduced to the Parish Priest and the congregation present there. Sr. M. Benedicte had the pleasure of doing this.

Monday April 4th began the week of "A journey with Jesus through the Gospels" with Sr. Maureen McBride. We had a very full day with this and learned about the various groups and structures in place in Palestine during the time of Jesus; Social, Economic, Cultural, Political, Religious. The Roman Occupation of Palestine was despised by the Jews.

We looked at the Synoptic Gospels of Mark, Mathew and Luke and their similarities, and at John's Gospel which is more concerned about WHO JESUS IS rather than about what He did. We presented the Annunciation and Visitation in Drama each group dramatising a section of the story. After Mass we processed to the garden, Sr. Josephine carrying the statue of Our Lady of the Visitation, which was placed in a little niche there, We sang the Salve Regina and some of us made some prayers of Intercession to our Lady. The statue will remain in place until the end of the summer.

Tuesday 5th April saw Sr. Maureen sick in bed with a cough and sore throat unable to speak. Srs. Josephine and Lucy came to the rescue and so our programme was somewhat adjusted for the next two days during Sr. Moureen's absence. As Felistus arrived late we had a chance to listen to her story and in return we told her a little of our story.

Wedness 6th April – Srs. Josephine and Lucy also facilitated this day and we began as we did in all the sessions with a prayer and reflection, usually using Power Point. We watched the film called 'John's Gospel'(part of the original plan of Sr. Maureen's presentation) and at the same time followed it by reading the text . We did this in three sessions as the film was three hours long. During this time we jotted down the things that had spoken to us whilst watching the film.

Thursday 7th April .Sr. Maureen was back on duty at this point we remarked on the film and on the things that we reflected and noted the day before. Sr. Maureen apologised for being sick and unable to

follow through her original plan for the week. We were happy to have her back and we thanked Srs Josephine and Lucy for coming to the rescue. We welcomed Maureen back but had to farewell Sr. Josephine who had to return to Rome. She was with us 9 days and we benefitted greatly from her presence. We were sorry to see her go but we will see her again when we go to Rome on May 9th.

In the afternoon we learned the meaning of Exegesis - How to place the story in a deeper context and try to understand the message more deeply. We also learned a few new words.

Pericope – A passage of Scripture with a complete beginning and a complete end. This helps us to find the real meaning and what Christ is trying to teach us today. During this session we were given a scripture passage to do a simple exegesis? This certainly made us work as we studied the place of women in the Gospels and how Jesus' approach to, and treatment of women was counter cultural.



Friday 8th April – After the introduction and reflection we were asked to read and reflect on the Resurrection stories in each of the Gospels, each group being given a Resurrection parable and to respond to it in drama in a creative way that depicted what had happened to the Apostles when they had realised that Jesus had Risen and how He had revealed himself after the Resurrection.

This has been a very life-giving and interesting 10 days which we will treasure. The new insights we received into the Scriptures are very precious to us and have encouraged us to explore them even more. Thanks to our French Province for allowing this Session to be facilitated here; our own Province Leaders for making it possible for us to come and to the C.L.T for this unique opportunity. We will never forget it. It certainly has been a time of reflection and a resurrection experience. We are very happy to be here, and we do not forget that God is with us.

Felictus, Jacqueline, Bibiana and Helen.