

## **A PILGRIM'S POSTSCRIPT**

Bernard Canty SSS

I begin my summary on the 2011 Pilgrimage of Eymardian places across France, with the report concerning our departure from Sydney. Our journey was delayed due to the cancellation of the scheduled flight to Singapore and we were transferred to a London-bound Qantas flight through Singapore on route to Europe. As a result we alighted in Singapore with only minutes to spare for connection to our Air France service to Paris. Thankfully we made it and joined the other members of the group.





On arrival at Charles De Galle airport the excitement we had was in the taxi journey to the Community at Eymard House in Paris: an interesting trip through the early morning traffic. They certainly know how to weave their way around the slower moving vehicles. Anyway we arrived safely at the Community and had some time to recoup after all the time spent in the plane. It was good to have time to get my feet settled again before we began the Pilgrimage. After a day or so in Paris we were off to the countryside, namely La Mure and surrounds. When I say surrounds I mean the locations where Peter Julian used to visit, places like Monteynard, La Salette, Grenoble and Lyons. Of course

these were not the only sites we visited and do not really describe the experience we had in seeing the French countryside which is breathtakingly beautiful as well as rugged.

The very fast train took us from Paris to Grenoble. There we met up with Fr Manuel, who was to be our guide and chauffeur during our stay in La Mure. Thus for me the most interesting part of our journey was beginning. It was wonderful to celebrate at the parish of La Mure and to receive such a gracious welcome from the parishioners. The time spent visiting the Chapel, Eymard Museum and other sites around the town was very inspiring. It helped us to get to know Peter Julian and what he would have experienced throughout his life especially in such challenging countryside.

With La Mure as our base we ventured out to other locations, places like Notre Dame De L'Osier, Chatte, and St Romans. And on the following days places like Notre Dame Du Laus, La Salette, and Grenoble before ending our stay at La Mure and having to say farewell to the Community and People who looked after us so cordially. I was still much taken by the terrain and wondered what the countryside would be like in winter especially for Peter Julian.

From La Mure we travelled to Ars (there was a very cold wind which let us know summer had past) to visit the Basilica where we joined in for daily Eucharist and guided tour, before leaving en route to Lyons. The next day in Lyons we visited the Cathedral of St John, Pauline Jaricot's house and on to Fourviere for the Eucharist and finally visiting the Church of St Paul. It was hard to take in all the beauty of each building; they were in so many cases intriguing. The next day was the return train trip to Paris and preparation for the Paris tour.

Paris by bus was next with a very different chauffeur. I found it hard to remember most of this mainly because it was hard trying to place what had been modified or even removed over the years. So I was not able to picture an image of the past era. Time had changed many of the locations especially as one tries to see things through Peter Julian's eyes and walk in his footsteps, but not Chateaubriand. It was very impressive and great to actually be in and try to reflect on what it was like for Peter Julian. The other outstanding part of Paris for me was La Sainte Chapelle and just trying to take in the history of its existence. After that visit it was time for our lunch and a stroll around Paris before a ferry trip on the Seine in preparation for using our wings to return home.

Well I think there is not much more I can say except that I enjoyed the whole experience and am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to be part of our first Pilgrimage. Thank you to all those responsible for the hard work of the organisation the tour.

Bernard Canty SSS