

A Woman for our Time

Venerable Marie Madeleine d'Houët and her story



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The FCJ Sisters would like to tell you about the newly opened FCJ Lieu de Memoire in Paris.

This special place tells the story of a valiant woman,
Venerable Marie Madeleine d'Houët,
the Foundress of the Faithful Companions of Jesus.

Marie Madeleine d'Houët was born in France in 1781, and in her teenage years experienced the social unrest that followed the Revolution. She married Joseph de Bonnault d'Houët in 1804 but after just ten months was widowed. Her baby was born a month after Joseph's death. As a young, single mother she lived a committed Christian life. She doted on her child, showed herself a responsible daughter and a loving sister and showed a strong social conscience.

Marie Madeleine enjoyed a social life too, and seriously considered remarrying. But deep in her heart she sensed she was called to something else and step by step followed this call. Mary Magdalen and the women of the Gospel were an inspiration to her. The words *I thirst* spoken by Jesus on the Cross touched Marie Madeleine's heart deeply. This ardent young woman known for her generous spirit, zest for life and firm will became what she was called to be, a faithful companion of Jesus. God himself led her in 1820 to form a Society of apostolic women who would live out the Ignatian ideal, and be **faithful companions of Jesus**.

The **Lieu de Memoire** tells the life story of Marie Madeleine and that of her congregation through graphics, text and audio-visual. The objects displayed tell **this ongoing, living story**.

Marie Madeleine travelled widely, and established communities in England, Italy, Ireland and Switzerland. In the later years of her life her home base was in rue de la Sante in the parish of St. Medard.

This valiant and holy woman died in Paris on April 5th 1858.

Her mortal remains are in the Blessed Sacrament chapel in the parish church of **St Dominique, Paris**.



Above
The FCJ Lieu de Memoire
157 Rue Maurice Leon Nordmann, 75013 Paris

This property was bought in 1847 by Marie Madeleine d'Houët, the Foundress of the Faithful Companions of Jesus. It is a place where she prayed and worked. It was here that she died on Easter Monday, April 5th 1858.



Above:
The shrine of Venerable Marie Madeleine d'Houët -
Church of St. Dominique, Rue Tombe Issoire, Paris 14

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<https://www.fcjsisters.org/fr/>

... giving just a flavour of the Lieu de Memoire

... 24 countries

One of the attractive features of the **Lieu de Memoire** is the display of objects from each of the 24 countries where the FCJ sisters have lived and worked.

A brief text highlights the focus of ministry in each of these world-wide places. Further, there is a little music from each of these countries.



During the **first 150 years** of the FCJ Society there was a strong involvement in school education. The sisters taught in boarding and day schools, and always showed commitment to parish primary schools.

There are reminders of this ... uniform, school badges, photo albums and more.

The Lieu de Memoire

acknowledges the FCJ tradition **of honouring Mary.**

The following prayer, composed by Marie Madeleine and traditionally known as 'Our Lady's Blessing' is prayed every day in FCJ communities.

Holy Mary, Immaculate Virgin, Queen, Superior General of our Society, our Mother, Mother of the novices and postulants, the Companions in Mission and all those to whom we are sent, pray for us.

My good Mother, beg of your Divine Son to give us his blessing and please give us yours also.



The FCJ sisters enjoyed a life-giving renewal after Vatican II.

It resulted in new Constitutions and different ways of living, praying, and working.

The FCJ Sisters continue to respond discerningly to God's call and this **place of story** tells something of our response. It shows how the service and love of God's people has flourished in new ways, often in difficult and sometimes dangerous situations .

The **Lieu de Memoire** illustrates how the sisters experience the hopes and griefs, joys and sorrows of humankind, asking and ask continuously,

"... what it is that God and people today are asking of us."

Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter



Marie Madeleine d'Houët, foundress, Faithful Companions of Jesus

Marie Madeleine is a 'friend' who is looking out for us, interceding for our needs and inspiring us as a role model.

If you need help with something, ask her to pray with you.