

Sharing of Our Experience of the Anniversary of Blessed Alix Le Clerc

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When Sister Rosangela, SSND and I arrived at the Paris Beauvais airport we went by bus and taxi for 40 minutes to the East Train Station (Gare de l'Este). On the way to Gare de l'Este, we passed by the Arc de Triomphe, the Eiffel Tower, the river Seine and also the Musee de Louvre.

At the Gare de l'Este we met many sisters and guests who would also attend the 60th anniversary of the beatification of Alix Le Clerc. From there we left for Nancy by express train which took us 1 hour and forty minutes. On the train we were warmly welcomed by Sister Therese Poizat, who is the secretary to the General Counsel. Upon arriving in Nancy, we went to the Hotel Astoria with our English translator who was a sister of the Congregation of Notre Dame.



At Nancy we had the possibility to choose between three activities. Our choice was a multi choir concert at the Cathedral. Before the concert we visited the neighborhood near the cathedral and a palace that is now used as the Hotel de Ville. During our visit to this beautiful area, our translator mentioned that Alix Le Clerc walked these streets often because her convent was in this neighborhood and the convent was where she died. Three years after her beatification in 1947, her bones were discovered in this same house.

Upon arriving, we found the Cathedral beautifully decorated with flowers, candles and banners for the next day's celebration. At 5pm we listened to an inspirational concert given by two choirs, Ste Jeanne d'Arc and la Maitrise de Reims. They sang in both French and Latin and with beautiful voices.

After the concert we went to the Hotel Park Inn for our dinner. We were very hungry, since we had no time to eat prior to the choir performance.

Many sisters and guests came from around the world to celebrate this anniversary with the sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. During this meal, I learned that we have 9 cousin congregations with similar foundations. Visibly we are very diverse, because of our differences in dress, but all of us share the same founding spirit. After a short while we were talking and sharing as friends.

During the dinner there were introductions of sisters and guests who came from around the world. Also, an explanation of how the relic of Blessed Alix was found in her home of birth. Sister Rosangela and I were introduced by Sister Theresa, the counsel's secretary. The dinner was delicious and lasted for two and a half hours. Needless to say, we returned to the hotel very satisfied in body and spirit!

The actual day of the celebration was clear and beautiful. All of the sisters and guests gathered in front of Blessed Alix Le Clerc's home. While we were waiting for the relic to arrive, a sister gave a talk about Blessed Alix's life and the discovery of the relic in 1950.

We moved in procession to the cathedral with the Superior General of La Congregation Notre Dame, Sister Marie Paula Tang, leading the procession with the holy relic.

When we arrived at the cathedral we were welcomed by three bishops and numerous priests and choirs. Here again were more introductions and sharing on the life of Blessed Alix, especially the relationship of the Congregation of Notre Dame with other sister congregations. Along with other congregational representatives, Sister Rosangela explained the SSND relationship with the other Notre Dame Congregations.

At 10:30am the Solemn Mass began with the singing of one of the many choirs. In the homily, the local bishop spoke highly of Blessed Alix's dedication to God and to the poor. After the liturgy the Bishop placed the relic in the coffin of Blessed Alix, which was in a side chapel. The Solemn mass was a beautiful experience and all left the cathedral inspired by the life of this Blessed woman.

The liturgy was followed by a grand reception at the Hotel de Ville, which at one time was the palace of King Stanislas of Poland (father-in-law of Louis 15th of France). The palace has been named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The following day we participated in the mass at Saint Leo IX church. In one side chapel there was a stone altar with a mosaic of Saint Peter Fourier. Before beginning our journey back to Rome, we visited one last time the altar dedicated to Blessed Alix in the cathedral, to thank her and ask for her protection of our congregation. It was a great joy for us to participate in this celebration and we are thankful for the graces we have received.

When we began our journey in Rome we were concerned about not speaking French, but found many helpful people along the way. We also feel that Blessed Alix took care of us also!

In Rome we shared our experience in Nancy with the sisters in the Generalate community. Needless to say, in the presentation we felt the presence of Blessed Alix Le Clerc and St. Peter Fourier.

I hope to continue to be inspired by the spirit of Blessed Alix and to always remember her words "Take this child and make him grow".

Thank you very much for giving us this precious opportunity.

Note..... October 14, 2007 is 60TH Anniversary of the Beatification of Blessed Alix Le Clerc.