

Reflection for the Feast of St Madeleine Sophie Barat May 25th 2006

Sophie's own spirituality was one that developed and changed in her lifetime but it was always one that moved her towards 'the light of God's love revealed in the Heart of Christ'[1]. Her journey was a reaching out from the dark place of Jansenism, with its emphasis on a distant God and the innate evil within the human being to the place of love, peace and self-acceptance- *I am loved and accepted by God just as I am.*

We can follow Sophie in this awareness of living with paradox in our lives, the need to live with contradictions, to face uncertainty, to hear the other, to be open to change, to balance the tension of light and shadow in everyday life, to hold together contradicting forces, to find the equilibrium of "Cor Unum et Anima Una in Corde Jesu."

Like Sophie, we must move to that place of love, peace and self-acceptance. Even that journey is a paradox. We must both stand still and journey on. As Meister Eckardt says "*we make progress by stopping*". Sophie herself suggests a way to make that journey towards love and peace - "*In prayer we come to Him with everything that touches our life, with the sufferings and hopes of humanity. We learn to remain in silence and poverty of heart before Him*"[2]

On 25th May take a few minutes to pray as Sophie prayed: find a quiet place; stop; "*be still and know I am God"* [3]; let God "be" in the silence within. "*This is a journey we have to make, a pilgrimage to our own heart*"[4]

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[1] P. Kilroy rscj Madeleine Sophie Barat 1779- 1865 A Life Cork University Press, 2000 p 239
[2] Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Para 20
[3] Psalm 46:10
[4] John Main osb Word into Silence Continuum, New York, 1998, p22

It is said that when each of us has peace in her heart then we can bring peace and justice to the world at large. "*The peace, the stillness, the harmony we experience in meditation become the basis for all our action*"[5]

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[5] John Main osb For further information about meditation as a way of prayer in the Christian tradition see www.wccm.org