

Philippine Duchesne: Ambassador of Reconciliation and Peace¹

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Abstract

2018 marks the bicentenary of Sister Philippine Duchesne's landing in America. Born in Grenoble, France, she began her missionary life at the age of forty-nine in the harsh and poor surroundings of St. Charles, Missouri. Philippine's lifelong wish, to live with Native American Indians, was finally realized at age seventy-one after retiring in poor health among the Potawatomi Tribe. Philippine Duchesne, a pioneering missionary and educator, was canonized in 1988 because of her witness to the values of the spirit of poverty, humility and love of God.

This paper interprets Philippine's spirituality from the perspective

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of a theology of reconciliation and explores possible ways of following her in today's world through the lens of the 2016 General Chapter of the Society of the Sacred Heart. From the perspective of a theology of reconciliation, particular characteristics of Philippine Duchesne's spirituality are as follows: ① Fortitude and persistence (in relationship with God); ② Humility and self-emptying (in relationship with herself); ③ A spirit of poverty and compassion for the poor (in relationship with others); ④ Inner Peace: All-encompassing unity (in relationship with creation). Philippine Duchesne's call to become ambassadors of reconciliation and peace overlaps with the four calls of the 2016 General Chapter of the Society of the Sacred Heart: ① To reach new frontiers, ② To live more humanly, ③ To create silence, ④ To be and to act as one body.

- **Keywords**

spirituality, new frontiers, reconciliation, peace, theology of reconciliation

I. Introduction

The year of 2018 will be remembered as a historic year for all Koreans. After 70 years of division of the country as the South and the North of Korea, the leaders from both sides met and sought ways of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence on the Korean peninsula. The two countries are in front of the denuclearization and the end of the war, which is a reality almost like a dream.

For me, as Religious of the Sacred Heart, the year of 2018 is also a historic year. This year, we celebrate the bicentenary of the event that Philippine Duchesne, the second saint of the Society of the Sacred Heart went to the United States of America as a missionary. In 1988, the process of canonization of Philippine Duchesne was initiated by the St. Louis Diocese, and the bicentenary celebration was also done as an important event in the local society and the same diocese.²

Reconciliation and peace in this peninsular is important not only for the North East Asia, but for the whole world. In this paper, I attempt to introduce the life and spirituality of Philippine Duchesne who is not well known from the view point of the theology of the reconciliation of today, and draw out some teachings from her life for the Korean Christians.

Philippine Duchesne had wanted to be a missionary since she was young, but it was in 1818 when she was 49 years old that she could finally step on the land of America. She served for the education of

2 The Society of the Sacred Heart United States-Canada Province held "Sacred Heart Frontiers Conference" on July 19-22, 2018 at the Pallottine Renewal Center and followed by pilgrimage to St. Charles and Sugar Creek, footsteps of Philippine Duchesne. There were 115 participants from 23 countries including Sacred Heart sisters, Alumnae, Associates, and Sacred Heart Friends and Colleagues. I presented Chapter III, IV of this article orally in this conference.

young girls in the remote areas of Saint Charles, Florissant, and Saint Louis in the state of Missouri, and finally she went to Sugar Creek to serve the Potawatomi American Indians at the age of 71. In spite of the language obstacles, severe poverty and other difficulties, she lived a life of love of the others. Though her life was full of failures, she was regarded as a saint even before she died.

In this thesis, firstly, I introduce the life and activities of Philippine Duchesne (Chapter II) and attempt to single out some characteristics of her spirituality from the viewpoints of the theology of the reconciliation (Chapter III). And finally suggest how to live as the ambassadors of the reconciliation and peace in relation to the 2016 General Chapter calls of the Society of the Sacred Heart as descendants of Philippine Duchesne. I do this because the life and spirituality of Philippine Duchesne goes beyond a particular congregation, and speaks to the Christians of the universal church.

II. The Life and Activities of Philippine Duchesne

Since Philippine Duchesne lived a long life of 83 years, she can be a good role model about how to age gracefully for us who nowadays live a long life. I want to introduce some of the characteristics of her life into the four stages.

1. The period of youth in Grenoble, France (1769-1792)

On August 29, 1769, Philippine Duchesne was born as the second daughter of 8 children of a rich and influential bourgeoisie family of

Grenoble, France. Her father, Pierre François Duchesne (1743-1814) was a renowned lawyer and politician and her mother, Rose-Euphrosine Périer (1748-1797) belonged to the upper bourgeoisie class, and she was deep in faith, noble, had inner strength, and lovingly took care of the family. Her family lived together with the family of her uncle, Claude Périer (1742-1801) forming an extended family.

The friendship between Philippine's mother and the Philippine's aunt had been a good role model for Philippine. Philippine was sent to the convent school at Ste. Marie d'en Haut with her cousin Josephine (1770-1850) to be prepared for the First Communion. Josephine remained a lifelong friend and supporter, and they exchanged letters until the last moment of Philippine's life, supporting each other.

Philippine liked to help the poor since she was young. She loved to read about the lives of the saints, especially about the lives of the missionaries. She dreamed of going to faraway places as a missionary.

Philippine wanted to be a religious of the Visitations at Ste. Marie d'en Haut, but because of the opposition of her parents, she had to return home in 1783. With the desire of becoming a religious, she continued to live like a religious even at home, and in spite of the opposition of the family, she finally went to join the Visitations at Ste. Marie d'en Haut in 1788. She received a black religious habit and a white veil as a novice. During this time, the characteristics of her spirituality grew up such as the attraction to the foreign mission, the respect for the Jesuits and self-sacrificial love.³ However, because of the French Revolution, in 1792 all the schools and hospitals run by the re-

3 Catherine M. Mooney, *Philippine Duchesne: A Woman with the Poor* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 43.

ligious men and women were closed, including the religious orders themselves. Philippine Duchesne had to leave her beloved convent and went back home after four years of her life at Ste. Marie d'en Haut.

2. Philippine's Experience of the French Revolution and Encounter with the Society of the Sacred Heart (1792-1817)

With her deep desire for the religious life, Philippine continued to look for the possibility of living the religious life, for 12 years from 1792 to 1804. Living with her family, she began the charity work in Grenoble, taking care of the poor children, the sick and dying and of the priests who were in prison or hiding themselves. When the typhoid fever was around in 1794, she risked her life taking care of the sick.

Philippine continued her religious practices like prayer and fasting, but later she had to stop doing these because her family criticized her, not understanding her devotions and ascetic life style. Philippine continually explored the balance between her works and prayers. The ways to do so later turned out to have great values for the future missionary who would live at the frontiers in the United States of America.⁴

Through her religious pursuit and charity work, Philippine Duchesne encountered Jesus incarnate among the poor people.⁵ She recognized the dignity of humanity beyond the traditional way that other people of her class usually did. She thought that the charity for the poor was needed for the salvation of the rich people.⁶ She formed a

4 *Ibid.*, 61.

5 *Ibid.*, 64.

6 *Ibid.*, 69.

group of 15 to 20 street children and educated them.⁷

In 1801, as the influence of the French Revolution weakened and as the religious orders began to open their gates, Philippine tried hard to get back the convent at the Ste. Marie d'en Haut. However, many Sisters turned away from her, thinking that Philippine Duchesne tried to reconstruct the convent according to her own way, which led Philippine to decide to join another congregation. Her strict and strong characters caused rejection among other people. In the meantime, she heard about a congregation called Religious of the Faith (the Congregation of the Sacred Heart today)⁸ which was under the guidance of Joseph Varin (1800). Philippine and her companions wanted to join this group. The first meeting was made, when Madeleine Sophie Barat (1779-1865), the superior of a little religious community in Amiens came to visit Ste. Marie d'en Haut on December 13, 1804. Philippine became a religious of the Sacred Heart under the spiritual direction from Madeleine Sophie. Though Madeleine Sophie was 10 years younger, their friendship was very deep. The massive volume of letters show their deep affection toward each other, and their mutual respect.

As religious of the Sacred Heart, Philippine served as the secretary of the Superior, the principal of the boarding school, a teacher, a nurse, a manager of the matters for the convent and school and had many other duties. She showed her enterprising, independent and strong characteristics and showed a typical person of action. What took her

7 "Education" for Philippine meant that they "learned the entire catechism, their prayers, and some hymns." Cf. Mooney, *Philippine Duchesne*, 68.

8 This religious community was found in 1800 named "Dilette di Gesu", but names had been changed into "Ladies of the Faith" in 1802, "Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" in 1806, and finally changed into "Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" in 1815.

mind always was the time for prayer and devotion to her work.

In 1815, she had to leave Grenoble, for she was named as the secretary of the Superior General. She always had a dream for serving as a missionary, and at last the opportunity for it came to her. In 1816, Bishop William DuBourg (1766-1833) of the Louisiana Diocese of the Northern America visited Paris and asked the congregation to send missionaries for his Diocese. As a newly born congregation, to send missionaries to the frontiers of America took great courage. However, Madeleine Sophie as the Superior General appointed Philippine as the leader of the first missionary group. Philippine was reluctant to take the responsibility as the superior, but accepted it thinking it would be a penance for her. For the superior of a faraway foundation, a great authority was entrusted to decide matters such as the foundation of a community, the accepting and dismissing of a new vocation and appointing people for the different apostolates, which normally only the Superior General could decide.

3. Life on the American Frontier (1818-1840)

On March 21 of 1818, at the age of 49, Philippine Duchesne set out on a journey with four other companions. They started their journey on a ship called Rebecca from Bordeaux, the southern French port, and arrived in New Orleans on May 29, 70 days after their departure. Philippine and her companions were welcomed to stay at the Ursulines for their first 6 weeks, then continued their journey on a steam boat towards St. Louis, which took another 6 weeks. On August 21, they arrived in St. Louis, but instead of going to the Indians, Bishop Du Bourg wanted them to go to St. Charles to teach children who

spoke English and the Creole children who spoke French. For Philippine Duchesne it was a great disappointment not to be able to work with the Native Americans.

Philippine and her companions opened the first school for the poor on September 14, 1818, then a boarding school with 3 students on October 3, 1818. The life at the mission was extremely poor. In the first year in St. Charles, it was a period of hardship because of the lack of food, excessive work and severe cold. The area was poor and there were not many people, so the income was meager, only the free school was prosperous. They experienced some loneliness in the new culture, and got frustrated because of the difficulty of learning a new language. English language got stronger in the American frontiers, so for Philippine who could not manage English, the language had become a life-long burden. In spite of the difficulty, Philippine was a very strict realist, and never thought of giving up nor returning to France. Instead, she looked for work which fitted her better.

One year later in 1819, they were asked to move to a small village called Florissant, on the banks of the Missouri River. Philippine wanted a part of them to stay on in St. Charles, thinking of the free school children, but they had to close the convent and the school and moved to Florissant. Philippine kept the balance between the financial realism that the Society should be founded on the solid financial base and the call for the poor and the isolated people. She put the first priority on the option for the poor in terms of spending financial investment, affectionate energy and personnel.⁹

In 1821, Bishop Du Bourg strongly recommended that the religious go to the Opelousas, (Called Grand Coteau) in the Southern Louisiana.

⁹ Mooney, *Philippine Duchesne*, 149.

The religious opened the second foundation and the second school in America there. Then in St. Michael, they opened the third school. Eugénie Audé had a great success at the school, which showed a district contrast to the northern school of Philippine Duchesne.

The financial situation of Florissant did not improve but with the arrival of Belgian Jesuits, the Sisters received spiritual dynamism. In April of 1825, Philippine got the permission to educate 4 Indian girls, because the priest in charge brought two Indian girls to the boarding school. The school for the Indian girls did not prosper and was closed in 1831. Because these young Indians did not want to be away from their family, found it difficult to sit in the classroom for a long time, and ran away from the school.¹⁰

In 1827, they had their 4th school and a City House in St. Louis, and reopened the convent and a school in St. Charles, 10 years since the closure. These northern communities and the schools had always had financial difficulty, so they questioned the leadership of Philippine Duchesne.

4. The Old Age among the Potawatomi Indians¹¹ and Last Stage of Her Life (1841-1852)

Philippine Duchesne wanted to resign from the role of the Superior, thinking that she did not fit the job. 22 years after she began to serve as Superior, she was finally released from this role in 1840. In 1841 at

10 Carolyn Osiek, *Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne: A Heart on Fire across Frontiers* (Saint Louis: Society of the Sacred Heart, 2017), 41; Mooney, *Philippine Duchesne*, 165.

11 About the Sugar Creek Indian Mission (1841-1847), cf. Maureen J. Chicoine, *Grave on the Prairie: Seven Religious of the Sacred Heart and Saint Mary's Mission to the Potawatomi* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2018), 36-68.

the age of 71, Philippine Duchesne left for the Sugar Creek in Kansas with the Jesuits who began their mission for the Native Americans to live among the Potawatomi Indians.¹² Philippine thought she might die any time because of her weak health, but Father Peter J. Verhaegen, who was the leader of this missionary group invited Philippine to join the group, saying, “The prayers of Philippine Duchesne will lead us to success of our mission. Her presence itself will bring all the graces to whatever we will do in the mission.”¹³ The life condition was very poor, and Philippine could not communicate with the Indians because of a failure of acquiring their language, but they respected her and called her “a woman who always prays ” (Quahkah-ka-num-ad). They often approached her respectfully to kiss on her habit.¹⁴

On June 19, 1842, Philippine had to go back to St. Charles, a bit less than a year since she went to the Sugar Creek, on account of the bad health. She was affected by the personal failures, weakening health and her frequent time of loneliness, especially by the closure of Florissant foundation and misunderstanding between her lifelong friend, Madeleine Sophie.

The last stage of her life spent in St. Charles was a life closely united to God, a very saintly life. She was quiet but actively helped with the household chores and small things for the missionaries. On November 18, 1852, after receiving the sacrament of the sick given by Fr. Verhaegen, she passed away. Her last words were: “I give my heart and spirit to God. Oh, all my life, without reserve”.¹⁵

12 Osiek, *Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne*, 49.

13 Mooney, *Philippine Duchesne*, 229.

14 Osiek, *Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne*, 50.

15 Mooney, *Philippine Duchesne*, 249.

In 1895, the movement for canonizing Philippine Duchesne started from the St. Louis Diocese, and in 1909 she was called 'Venerable', and was beatified on May 12, 1940. The Society of the Sacred Heart decided not to continue the process of canonization,¹⁶ but the St. Louis Diocese began the movement to continue the process that she be recognized by the church as a saint. Finally she was canonized as a saint officially by John Paul II on July 3, 1988. Her life of radical poverty, pioneer of education and, above all, her union with God through prayers were recognized by the Universal Church.

III. The Spirituality of Philippine Duchesne as an Ambassador of Reconciliation and Peace

"So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:17-21 New American Bible))

From a Christological point of view, reconciliation means restoring

16 *Ibid.*, 10.

to a status of “God saw everything which he had made and it was very good.” (Gen. 1:31), that is, building right relationships with oneself, with neighbors and creation based on one’s relationship with God. Therefore, the spirituality of reconciliation is one of relationships. Spirituality for an individual manifests itself as the sum of the relationships that he/she has made with God, other people, and the world.¹⁷

Reconciliation is possible only when we surrender to God, and we receive power from God to build reconciliation. Reconciliation is a form of spirituality. Since reconciliation is the work of God, we are the representatives of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). The spirituality of reconciliation is rooted in the respect for oneself, one’s neighbor and the earth, and is accomplished through truth and justice.¹⁸ The reason that I call Philippine Duchesne, “an ambassador of reconciliation and peace” comes from St. Paul, when he says that God entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation, and we carry out that mission, as “representatives of Christ.” Philippine Duchesne lived a life of reconciliation through her relationship with God, herself, people and creation. It is in these relationships that the features of her spirituality are revealed. I will attempt to single out some of the features of her spirituality.

17 Cf. Hae Young Choi, “The Christian Mission of Reconciliation: ‘Word made Flesh Methodology’ and the Spirituality of Mary,” *Madang: Journal of Contextual Theology* 25 (June 2016): 26-43; Heup Young Kim, “Embracing and Embodying God’s Hospitality in Asia,” *Madang: Journal of Contextual Theology* 23 (June 2015): 1-15; Jeong Joon Kim, “Christian Spiritual Education: A Holistic Approach,” *Madang: Journal of Contextual Theology* 29 (June 2018): 109-138.

18 About “Reconciliation is a Journey with God,” Chris Rice and Emmanuel Katongole, *Reconciling All Things* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), Chapter 3, 47-56.

1. Fortitude and Persistence

“Her name has been associated through more than a century with strength, endurance, austerity, with burning zeal for souls and patience under trial and failure, with a certain severity of manner and outlook, and complete detachment from the things people generally cling to so tenaciously.”¹⁹

Many people have said that she was born with the strong and faithful temperament of the Duchesne family (The name, Duchesne, means the oak tree.). I think her outstanding virtues were not just acquired by human endeavor, but were given her as a gift from God.

Her tough human nature and her tremendous faith in God produced a harmony between her relationship with God and her relationships with people. They were like two branches on one tree.

Philippine’s toughness and persistent personality fit well with the dream of being a missionary, a dream she had had since her childhood, and she eventually became a brave pioneer who did not fear failure. But the dream of being a missionary did not come to realization quickly. Philippine recalled the vision she had of leaving for a foreign land on the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord in 1806 as the Magi had done, but she had to wait until 1818. The fact that the Society was less than twenty years old, and sending members to the distant new world of America, shows the dynamism of the Society of the Sacred Heart, which desired to realize the great dream of God. In this way, the internationality of the Society of the Sacred Heart has been a dream of

19 Louise Callan, *Philippine Duchesne: Frontier Missionary of the Sacred Heart 1769-1852* (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1957), 5.

God since the beginning.

Philippine reminds us of the persistent prayer and courageous action of a poor widow (Luke 18:1-8), and in the words of the gospel: "There is nothing impossible for God" (Luke 1:37). Philippine was not frustrated by failure, but rather she simply understood it as God's plan for her. I believe that her constant courage came directly from her beliefs and contemplative views. Philippine modified her quick temper through long waiting. Through prayer she learned to depend on the love and mercy of God, and she was united with God, surpassing her personal limitations. She lived to be 83 years old, a long time in her day. She burned with vitality and was faithful to her mission. Philippine, though she had a big dream, did not neglect the trivial daily work. She was faithful to do trivial matters like sewing, and did not mind doing hard labor.²⁰ Her willingness, courage, lively and firm faith have been the source of inspiration for the Society.

2. Humility and Self-emptying

20 This resonates with the vision of Ignatius, reiterated by the Pope Francis. "I was always struck by a saying that describes the vision of Ignatius: *non coerceri a maximo, sed contineri a minimo divinum est* ("not to be limited by the greatest and yet to be contained in the tiniest—this is the divine"). I thought a lot about this phrase in connection with the issue of different roles in the government of the church, about becoming the superior of somebody else: it is important not to be restricted by a larger space, and it is important to be able to stay in restricted spaces. This virtue of the large and small is magnanimity. Thanks to magnanimity, we can always look at the horizon from the position where we are. That means being able to do the little things of every day with a big heart open to God and to others. That means being able to appreciate the small things inside large horizons, those of the kingdom of God." (From "A Big Open to God: An Interview with Pope Francis" by Antonio Spadaro, S.J.) <http://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2013/09/30/big-heart-open-god-interview-pope-francis>.

Reconciliation with oneself is the basis for other expressions of reconciliation. Without the help of God, it is difficult to accept oneself and love oneself. To accept the changes which come along at every stage of our lives and to integrate these are a means of reconciliation.

The virtue of humility tempered Philippine's stubborn nature and allowed her to grow as a person of God. Like gold tempered by fire, God created in her an entirely new self, one ready to work with God. I heard the story about Philippine meeting Madeleine Sophie, who was ten years younger than she was, that she knelt to kiss the feet of Sophie, saying aloud, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who announce peace." (Isaiah 52:7) As an Asian who is conscious of the importance of age differences, I was greatly shocked by her action. She respected Sophie as her superior until the end. Sophie called Philippine "dear daughter." In contrast to her strong personality, Philippine's obedient attitude is amazing. In the icon that represents the encounter of Philippine and Sophie (similar to that of the meeting of Elizabeth and Mary),²¹ we learn of a deep friendship and trust which surpasses difference of age. The fact that from the outset Philippine saw in Sophie a figure to lead the Society of the Sacred Heart, shows her excellent intuition and contemplative regard.

Philippine's deep respect and obedience for priests showed a remarkable humility as well. When I read about her struggles with priests, I was surprised that one time she did not participate in the Mass for the feast of the Sacred Heart but rather chose to pretend to be sick because the priest denied her Communion. It was difficult for me to understand her, but I also thought that her spirit of obedience to the priests was heroic. Indeed, she tried to follow Jesus who was

21 Icon, "Sophie and Philippine meet" by A. Davidson R.S.C.J.

poor, insulted and who died on the cross, obedient to his Father. With her strong pride, it would not have been easy for Philippine to ask forgiveness. I can imagine how much sacrifice it was on her part to practice humility and to submit to priests.²²

Despite her zeal and love for her new mission, Philippine did not learn English well. This weakness of Philippine's reminds us of the words of the Apostle Paul, "Therefore, that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me." (2 Cor. 12:7 NAB) "I would rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me." (2 Cor 12:9 NAB) She said, "I am happier when other Sisters are loved more than me. I just want to be of help to them. God did not give me a gift of a language." "You are destined to please Me, not so much by success as by bearing failure."²³ In prayer she realized that she was destined to please God more by failure than by success. In this we know that for Philippine, the purpose of her apostolate was to pursue God's work, not her own.

Philippine was the oldest missionary in the newly founded American community and was entrusted with full authority from the Superior General. However, whenever she had the opportunity, she pleaded that she should be removed from her position, saying that she was not fit to serve as a superior. Although she did not stop being a superior until the age of seventy, she seemed to be in a constant agony as to whether she might be an obstacle to manifesting the glory of God. Considering her character, which never gave up wanting to be right, we can see how humble she was. It is clear that Philippine

22 About "her relations with Van Quickenborne and other Ecclesiastics," cf. Mooney, *Philippine Duchesne*, 154-162.

23 Mooney, *Philippine Duchesner*, 208.

exhibited extreme self-control, self-denial, and a propensity for penance, which were valued virtues of the spirituality of her time. It seems that Philippine regarded her life as the process of a grain of wheat being buried and dying in the ground.

3. Spirit of Poverty and Compassion for the Poor

Though Philippine was born into a prestigious bourgeois family and grew up loving her parents and many siblings, she did not seek worldly happiness, but pursued a simpler life by helping the poor, even from childhood. Her desire for God's love was much greater. "It is my happiness and glory to serve my divine Savior in the person of the unfortunate and the poor."²⁴ She encountered the incarnated Jesus among the poor.

Life in the new world, such as in St. Charles and Florissant, was poverty itself. She always lived in material poverty and needed the help of others, but she did not despair.

Rather, she had the conviction that to care for the poor is to do God's work.

Her special love for the poor and those on the periphery was demonstrated by her determination to open a free school as soon as she arrived in the United States (October 18, 1818); to accept children of mixed descent without discrimination; to open schools for Native Americans; and to petition many times in order to accept those of mixed descent as nuns. Even though Philippine was not a revolutionary figure protesting the abolition of slavery or other social injustices, she did not demonstrate any sense of authority or superiority. With

²⁴ Callan, *Philippine Duchesne*, 48.

the restrictions of her time, she was a woman who served God and associated with people of other ethnic groups.

It was in her old age in 1841 (72 years-old) that Philippine could go to the Potawatomi Indians of Sugar Creek, but had to leave there after only a year because of her deteriorating health. When she experienced herself as unfruitful, she said, “You will see when I am dead everything will prosper.” Indeed her prophecy was realized and the Society spread rapidly in North America.²⁵ We see in Philippine Duchesne a noble soul emptied of herself and filled with a love of Jesus on the Cross. The title “the woman who prays always” suggests that her heart embraces whole world. Her attitude fully witnesses the goal of the Society of the Sacred Heart: “for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.”

4. Inner Peace: Surpassing Unity

Philippine had very faithful relationships with those she knew. These were based on a trust that was as strong as her character. Her friendship with her cousin Josephine revealed her strong bond with her family and lasted a lifetime. Notably, Philippine’s friendship with Madeleine Sophie was marked with a very deep trust and affection showing how human her love was. While she could not communicate with Madeleine Sophie except by letter, she missed Sophie greatly. Hers was a steadfast friendship which lasted a lifetime. This human love balanced her seeming stubbornness and toughness. The roots of her security and genuine love for others seemed to have come from

25 Marion Bascom, *Rose Philippine Duchesne: Pioneer Missionary of the New World* (New York: Manhattanville College, no date), 32.

her faith in God and her sincere relationships.

Although Philippine had a strong attachment for her hometown of Grenoble and convent of St. Marie- d'en- Haut, where she lived, she did not forsake her dream of being a missionary. She lived for 34 years in America and died there. She never returned to her country or home. Many religious groups which had their origins in Europe went to the New World, where they became independent congregations due to the physical distance. This was not the case with Philippine who was intent on keeping the unity of the Society of the Sacred Heart with the motto of "One heart and one mind in the Heart of Jesus." Like a deep-rooted tree, she was faithful to maintain the unity of the Society. The figure of Philippine, pictured in prayer in front of the map, reminds us of the prayer for unity in John 17. "That they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 17:21)

The inner peace which Philippine had drawn from her deep unity with God enabled her to be stable in the face of any adversity and enabled her to integrate everything into the unity she so prized. Especially in her old age, we can see in Philippine one who accepted herself as she was. She had learned to lay down everything and to be peaceful within herself. Undergoing times of solitude, inability, waiting, poverty and continuous spiritual struggles, she became a holy woman. Indeed, after a great deal of effort, she had walked the journey of sanctification, and finally reached the stage of an integration of all relationships and a deep unity.

This experience of reconciliation was broad in scope. It consisted in a reconciliation with everything in the universe, that is, everything on earth and in heaven. "Through the blood of his cross, through him, I

unite all things which are on earth or in heaven.” (Col. 1:20) The fact that the whole universe was created by God is the foundation for global solidarity. This global solidarity is not only between human beings but also with all living things. All that has been endowed with life form is part of the life of the entire earth. When we abide by the order of the creation, all beings find their place.

I think that some characteristics of the spirituality of Philippine Duchesne, such as fortitude, persistence, humility, the spirit of poverty and her compassion for the poor and inner peace, had a great influence on the spirituality of the Society of the Sacred Heart. These form our spiritual legacy which we need to take with us on the Rebecca as we set sail toward new frontiers. Philippine was steadfast like the oak tree in her relationship with God and with people, and she manifested great courage which enabled her to overcome many adversities. She also invites us to have the same dream which Jesus had: that humanity may all be one (John 17:21).

In the spirituality of Philippine Duchesne, I see three images of the General Chapter 2016: one body, bread patiently made, and a family setting sail for the new lands. Her firm faith is the center of the life of the Society of the Sacred Heart that tries to form one body. Imitating her virtues, we, the daughters of Philippine Duchesne, are connected to each other weaving various kinds of networks, and now also are connected to the enormous earth community and huge ecosystem. Human consciousness has been extended in this way.

The hardships and trials Philippine had to suffer are related to the bread transformed by the fire until the loaf of bread is ready. Her simplicity, spirit of poverty, and modest attitude of self-denial, can be compared to a time of purification in the furnace until she became a

woman of God.

Currently, the Society of the Sacred Heart is regarded as the family who decides to embark for a new land. This reminds us of Duchesne who sailed on the ship Rebecca to spread the love of Jesus Christ. We, too, are now preparing for a new voyage. We are called to be “ambassadors of reconciliation and peace,” restoring our relationships with God, our neighbors and with all things. It is the call with which the resurrected Jesus sends to us. “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20:21)

IV. Descendants of Philippine as Ambassadors of Reconciliation and Peace: Searching for the New Frontier

I think the most significant spiritual root which Philippine planted in the Society of the Sacred Heart is the spirit of unity found in our international community. Her pioneer mission as an educator became the root of internationality in the Society. At that time, it was one-sided, but now our internationality has shifted into what is called interculturality.²⁶

Called to live as an ambassador of reconciliation and peace is mentioned in the four calls of the General Chapter 2016. Why do they feel that Philippine is a living saint, journeying with them? Although they live in a world that has changed so much from Philippine’s time, the world where she traveled so hard to reach the Native Americans now

26 Before Vatican Council II, unity and uniformity were emphasized, but post-Vatican Council II “unity in diversity”, furthermore “interculturality” is emphasizing. Cf. Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, *General Chapter* 2000, 31-35.

calls us to live as a family of God, as a world citizen. Philippine's life tells them about the primacy of God's love in a world where money takes the place of God.

1. To Reach New Frontiers

"To go out, to 'set sail' as a Society and go with others to new geographic and existential peripheries."²⁷

What does it mean today "to reach new frontiers"? A Peace Studies scholar expressed an objection to the title of this article, "Searching for New Frontiers." For him it brought to mind the image of the colonial conquest. He thought the image of the frontier was negative, because it surfaced memories in recent history of conquerors who destroyed other cultures and forced their culture on the other culture. Perhaps for that reason, Cardinal Bergoglio, who became Pope Francis, used a term, "existential peripheries." This refers to the marginality which comes from sin and results in suffering, injustice, ignorance, apathy, lack of thought, and... misery.

I think today's frontier could be regarded not so much as an uncharted geographical place but rather as being with those who are ignored or marginalized, poor or alienated, those who need help.

I will provide an example of such a frontier. From 2013-2017, the Sacred Heart schools in Korea protested against the Computer Horse Racing Casino which was located near our schools. The school community continually staged rallies and participated in Masses offered on the public sidewalk to register their protest against having a mega

27 Society of the Sacred Heart, *General Chapter* 2016, 18.

casino so near an educational institution. A tent was erected to continue the protest even during the night by the teachers. All this effort was to protect and insure a sound educational environment. This experience taught us what it means to go to the frontier. This is not to exclude other means such as resolving ideological conflicts, for example, narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor. There are many ways to go to the “existential periphery.”

“To reach new frontiers” could be interpreted as the courage to overcome limitations and weaknesses with generosity and an attitude of inclusiveness. It is in the spirit of humility and self-emptying of Philippine Duchesne that the Society of the Sacred Heart has been able to form a body as an international community.

We are now called to be ambassadors of reconciliation and peace as an international apostolic community. With the conviction of God’s mercy and faithfulness shining forth in a world wounded by sin,²⁸ we proclaim that we “wish to be women who create communion. By the witness of our love and apostolic dedication, by sharing the life of peoples whose cultures are rich and varied, our communities throughout the world help to further communion in Christ”²⁹ (Constitutions 6).

While Philippine departed for a specific destination in the world, these times suggest that we look at the whole world as the place where we can establish a human community as a part of the family of God. It is the call for God’s justice and peace in the ecosystem. Where does today’s world call us? It may be a specific place, but it seems more important to begin creating a network from the place where one is. The educational mission of our congregation today is to create a commu-

28 Society of the Sacred Heart, *Constitutions* 2.

29 Society of the Sacred Heart, *Constitutions* 6.

nity of peace and to build a more just and equal world.

2. To live more humanly

“In the radical style of Jesus of Nazareth, we wish to be in closer relationship as sisters with one another and with others.”³⁰

Philippine’s humility and spirit of poverty were in accordance with the radical life style of Jesus of Nazareth. In a material world where worldly goods are substituted for God, it is still a great challenge for us to live among the poor and meet God in their midst. Meeting Jesus in the poor reminds us how precious each person is. The 2016 General Chapter says that our service of education is a process of humanization rooted in the gospel and the educational intuition of our founder. “The education of humanization is relational and inclusive, and it fosters a critical vision of the world.”³¹

The journey of reconciliation is God’s request to “live more humanly.” In 1994, the General Chapter of the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus emphasized the call for reconciliation, compassion, friendship and education for reconciliation. “Responding as educators and as women of friendship, compassion, reconciliation”,³² we want to commit ourselves to fostering life, and creative collaboration. “We want to work together and cooperate with organizations and institutions which work for the protection of human rights and for justice and peace.”³³

30 Society of the Sacred Heart, *General Chapter* 2016, 19.

31 *General Chapter* 2016, 22.

32 *General Chapter* 1994, 16.

33 *General Chapter* 1994, 19.

According to the radical lifestyle of Jesus of Nazareth, the Society of the Sacred Heart wants to live more humanly, creating a network of courageous people with the belief that there is nothing impossible for God. The means that an ambassador of reconciliation and peace will use are poverty and humility. The truth that God's power is exerted in weakness and all things are possible to God is manifested. Our part is to pursue peace and reconciliation. Reconciliation is a long journey and can only be achieved through perseverance, awaiting God's response while remaining in a painful reality. The prophetic and educational mission of the Society is to devote itself to education for reconciliation and peace. As the times change, ways of regarding education have changed. For example, now we speak of justice education, education for reconciliation, transforming education. The Society has increasingly been committed to reconciliation in its educational endeavor.

3. To Create silence

"To deepen our interior life, our capacity for contemplation and for listening to the heartbeat of God in ourselves and in our world; to discern in silence and welcome the action of the Spirit that transforms us, energizes us, and call us to live our prophetic and educational mission."³⁴

The reason that Philippine was able to remain constant without abandoning her goal, in the midst of failures in apostolic activities, was because she had the conviction that all she did was for God, not

³⁴ *General Chapter* 2016, 19.

for human accomplishment. We all know that it is not easy to forge a path of reconciliation and peace. The reason that she is strongly present among us and that we pray through her intercession is that she pursued only God with a strong faith in face of all adversity. Her perseverance, sustained in the midst of the hardship, has given us courage over two hundred years and brings us together. The journey toward reconciliation and peace does not come overnight, and we cannot judge the success or failure of it. We cannot continue the journey without the help of God. The firm belief that Philippine has shown gives us the courage to look at the world with a contemplative outlook and to do God's work in it. The spirit of Philippine does not allow an attitude of helplessness, simply following past practices, or laziness. Prayer, interior spirit, and a contemplative regard inherited from Philippine are not intended only for RSCJ but for all whom we meet.

4. To Be and Act as one Body

"To revitalize our unity in diversity and to act as one Body, dynamic, interconnected, linked with other bodies, in the world and as Church, in order to share, collaborate, and be in solidarity among ourselves and with others."³⁵

In the 2016 General Chapter document, the phrase "with others" appears very often. It is mentioned as something very urgent: to be in solidarity with Associates, Sacred Heart friends, colleagues and those in civil society. This is important not because of the diminishment of membership but because of the demand of the times for internation-

³⁵ *General Chapter 2016*, 19.

ality and openness. The internationality of the Society of the Sacred Heart seems to me more than ever to be a very precious gift for peace and reconciliation in the world.³⁶

In fact, creating a community of faith across all borders is an invitation to go beyond one's own selfishness, limitation, and greed. It is an invitation to consider other people beyond my own culture, to think from someone else's point of view, and to change from considering my views as the only point of reference. Creating an international community is a time-consuming process and includes the possibility of many conflicts. It also points to the necessity of learning other languages, to living in ambiguity arising from cultural differences, and to being humble in accepting incompleteness. It asks for an open attitude, admitting that what I have until now considered important might in truth be insignificant, and what I thought was correct might be incorrect. We need to broaden our views from our own centers to the center of the world.

The call to be and to act as one body symbolized by the globe, reminds us of the sacrifice on earth, as Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) wrote. As the shrine of God, this world must become a body centered on Jesus Christ. The family members of the Society of the Sacred Heart, the followers of Philippine, as ambassadors of reconciliation and peace, must be the people who are eager to look forward to the peace Jesus gives and hope that the peace of Jesus will surely come true.

Recently, the problem of refugees and migrants has become more

36 "Our internationality is for us a gift and a responsibility. We desire to put it at the service of life, responding to the challenge coming from the birth pangs of humanity and the whole of creation": *General Chapter* 2008, 28.

serious than ever. It is difficult to express the immense suffering of migrants and refugees, but it reminds the world that if a part of humanity is sick, it affects everyone. It is the call of all the people of the world to live in forming a new family. Like Philippine Duchesne, we are ambassadors of reconciliation and peace, “united in our searching and open to the gifts of the Spirit in this new moment”.³⁷ I believe that Philippine will give us the wisdom and courage to respond to this call of our time.

V. Conclusion

Today the peaceful coexistence between the South and North of Korea is the mission of the times not only for Korea but for the whole world. Considering the situation which surrounds the Korean Peninsula, the fact that the South and the North try to work towards peace and reconciliation despite many obstacles sounds like a miracle; I think without the Hands of the Invisible it could not be possible.

The journey towards reconciliation would not be possible without the love and trust in God, and the trust in the goodness of humanity. Why do we speak about the life and the spirituality of St. Philippine Duchesne at this moment? Philippine left behind the easy life of her own language and her own culture, and went to the new world and committed herself to the education of young women. Philippine responded with free will to the Gospel demand “Go to the end of the world and proclaim the gospel to all the creatures.” (Mark 16:15). Her life reminds us that the call to sanctity is universal, going beyond the

³⁷ *General Chapter* 2016, 18.

barriers of differences of people, politics, culture and ethnicity.³⁸

Philippine was full of zeal to spread the love of God and was faithful to the evangelical life to help the poor, though she had the limitations of her times or her weaknesses. Only when she was 49 years old, she was given a chance to begin her missionary life, which had been her dream since she was young. And at 71, she went to the Native Americans, to be present as ‘a woman who prays always’ among them. She tried to encounter God through the Potawatomi Indians. Her life keeps giving inspirations to those who are passionate about the missions and for those who love poor people.

From the viewpoint of the theology of reconciliation, Philippine Duchesne lived a life of sanctity as an ambassador of reconciliation and peace, through the relationships with God, herself, neighbors and creations. The characteristics of her spirituality such as fortitude and strength, humility and self-emptying, poverty and love of the poor, and the inner peace which comes from detachment speak to all those followers of Jesus who feel called to live as an ambassador of reconciliation and peace.

The four calls of the 2016 General Chapter will show orientations not only for RSCJs and lay Sacred Heart educators who follow Philippine closely, but for all the Korean Christians. The first call is to seek the new frontiers today, the second is to live more humanly, and the third is to create silence, contemplate the world and see the work of God in it. The last call for today is to be and act as one body ‘with others’.

The missionary zeal of Philippine Duchesne who shared God’s love in whatever adversities speaks to us today. I hope it will be the light

38 Cf. Mooney, *Philippine Duchesne*, 38.

of hope for us, catching fire in our hearts as the flame of love.

The very tough life of Philippine Duchesne who never lost hope in her life full of failures, trying to be the instrument of God urges us to seek for the new frontiers as educators and to practice justice and peace of God in our endeavors. I believe that the strong will and ceaseless passion in the middle of many adversities as woman of communion Philippine will give us a big hope in our journey to peaceful coexistence.

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