



BICENTENAL PILGRIMAGE TO DOUAI

HOLY UNION SISTERS

19th – 26th June 2026

‘FROM THE HEART OF DOUAI TO THE HEART OF THE WORLD’

reflection for orientation

What I will share with you is based on my reflection on Easter this year from the Gospel of Math. 28:10 “Go to Galilee; there you will see me”

The message of the risen Christ is not just a geographical instruction. It is an invitation into memory, into identity, into renewed understanding.

Galilee was where it all began. It was the place of first encounters, first calls, first teachings. It was where confusion and wonder lived side by side—where the disciples heard, saw, followed, and often did not fully understand. Yet it was also where the seeds of everything were planted.

Why does the risen Christ send them back there?

Because the resurrection cannot be grasped in isolation. It only becomes clear when held together with the beginning. The end is not separate from the start—it fulfills it. What once seemed obscure becomes luminous when revisited in the light of Easter.

For the disciples, returning to Galilee meant:

- remembering their call,
- retracing their steps,
- reconnecting with the words and signs they had witnessed,
- and allowing those memories to be transformed by the reality of the resurrection.

It was, a journey of faith—a movement from partial understanding to deeper vision.

And this speaks directly to us of our pilgrimage to our beginnings.

Franco-Belge and specifically Douai is our Galilee. It is the place where our congregation’s story began—where a charism was first received, where a “yes” was first spoken, where the Spirit quietly planted something that would grow far beyond what could be seen at the time. Like Galilee, it holds both clarity and mystery, courage and uncertainty, beginnings that may not have fully revealed their future. To return here is not merely to honor history. It is to seek understanding.

Perhaps there are moments in our present life and mission that feel unclear, challenging, or even heavy. The Gospel suggests a path: go back to our Galilee. Return to the founding grace. Revisit the original inspiration. Listen again to the first call.

In doing so, we may discover:

- that what once seemed small was actually profound,
- that what was not fully understood then now speaks with new meaning,
- and that God has been present all along—hidden within the journey from the beginning until now.

Pilgrimage, then, is not nostalgia. It is revelation.

Here, we are not simply looking back—We are learning how to see forward. We are allowing the light of the resurrection to illuminate our origins, so that our present mission can be lived with renewed clarity and faith.

Just as the disciples encountered the risen Lord in Galilee, may we, too, encounter Him anew here, in our memories, in our shared story, and in the quiet rediscovery of our founding charism.

And perhaps the deepest invitation is this:

If there are things you do not yet understand about our Congregation, our values, our mission or even your own journey, do not be afraid to return to your Galilee.

For it is often there, at the beginning, that the risen Christ is waiting to be recognized.

Carol Regan- “When we go on pilgrimage, we go to the core of our life” We are here at the heart of our commitment to the church. In this way, our presence here is not by chance but by grace. We stand at the heart of our story, at the wellspring of our vocation, where the first “yes” continues to echo in our lives today.

The Pilgrim Scarves.

Symbolically, I will represent our pilgrimage with twin scarves, woven in one colour, mirroring a shared path—distinct souls bound in quiet harmony. Draped upon our shoulders, they will carry both warmth and witness: of prayers whispered, miles walked, and burdens gently halved. Each pair speaks of companionship not as sameness, but as unity—two journeys interlaced, woven together in faith. In their colour rests a silent vow: to walk beside, to uphold, and to remember that no pilgrimage is ever truly taken alone.

Conclusion: As we conclude this reflection, may we carry with us a renewed awareness that our journey forward is led by our return to the beginning. May the risen Christ, who awaited the disciples in Galilee, meet us here too, strengthening our faith, deepening our understanding, and renewing our commitment to live our mission with courage and hope.

God Bless our time together.

Caroline Njah

Song-----We are companions on the Journey. (pick your scarf)