

THE ABBEY

ST RAMBERT-EN-BUGEY, FRANCE

PROJECT NAME	<i>Renovation for the Abbey of St. Rambert Building, France</i>
PROVINCE	<i>France</i>
COUNTRY	<i>France</i>
CONTINENT	<i>Europe</i>

Description

For almost 70 years the RNDM Sisters at the Abbey of St Rambert have offered a place of welcome and hospitality on the site of an ancient Benedictine Monastery. From 1949 to 1979 young Eurasian children from Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) were educated at the Abbey and in nearby primary and secondary schools. Since 1979 the Abbey has been a Centre for pilgrimage, spirituality, formation and retreat. It is a venue for seminars in scripture and theology, diocesan and parish meetings, catechetics, yoga, professional groups, sessions in conflict management, personal growth and healing. Students preparing for major exams find a place of tranquillity to study; families seeking a rural environment close to mountains and lakes as well as the cities of Geneva and Lyon find an ideal place to bring their children; couples and individual desiring a place of rest and refreshment enjoy the beauty of St Rambert.



The Abbey today

Project of Renovation of the Abbey

Goal:

St Rambert-En-Bugey is situated close to Lyon, the birthplace of the RNDM Congregation, and to Canterbury, England, the burial place of the Foundress, Euphrasie Barbier, the Abbey has played and will continue to play a significant role in helping to preserve and develop the charism and spiritual patrimony of the Congregation in the 21st Century. Welcoming RNDM and lay pilgrims from all corners of the world, the Abbey will be a sanctuary of peace and prayer in the tradition of St Domitien and his followers.

Ministry:

The RNDM Community at St Rambert will continue to offer friendship and hospitality to a variety of groups, clergy, families, students and other persons seeking a place of rest and refreshment.

Beneficiaries: 10,000 people

Historical Background

The Abbey of St Rambert traces its colourful history back to the 5th Century and the arrival of the hermit Domitien in the beautiful valley of the River Albarine. Other monks soon followed him to settle on the sloping hills where Domitien is believed to have established a hospice for the poor. Towards the end of the 7th Century, mystery and intrigue shrouded the narrow wooded valley and the pathway that led from the monastery into the town. Ragnebert, a young and pious nobleman, a knight of the medieval Frankish Kingdom, was pursued and murdered by the minions of Ebroin, the tyrannical and egotistical mayor of the palace of Neustria and Burgundy. The remains of the unfortunate Ragnebert were brought to the monastery, which was named in his honour, the Abbey of St Rambert. Historical records show that in the 9th Century the monastery counted 56 monks living under the Rule of St Benedict. A list of the monks is preserved in the Abbey of Reichenau in Germany.

The cross along the pathway leading from the monastery to the town marks the site of the murder of Ragnebert in the year 680



The Castle of Cornillon, jutting out on a promontory opposite the Abbey, was built in the 10th or 11th Century, and was a critical observation point dominating the valley. In 1196 the Castle was ceded by the Abbot Regnier to Thomas the First, the Duke of Savoy, in exchange for his protection of the monastery and the town of St Rambert. In the 12th Century devotion to St Rambert spread and the Abbey became an important place of pilgrimage. The monastery became powerful and one of the richest in the Region. 700 years later, in 1788 the monastery was disbanded and the buildings destroyed following the French Revolution.



Ruins of the Castle of Cornillon

While the ruins of the castle stand in constant vigilance above the town of St Rambert, and traces of ancient cloister and the Abbatial Church are evident in the grounds of the Abbey, the Crypt of St Domitien, with its 9th Century pre-roman capitals, remains intact today and has been classified as a monument of France.

Exterior of the Crypt of St Domitien



At the beginning of the 19th Century, the present Abbey was built over the ruins of the former monastery. In 1949 the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions were invited to take up the ministry of the education of Eurasian children who had been brought to France from Indochina by the Federation des Oeuvres de l'Enfance Francaise d'Indochine (FOEFI). The Abbey at St Rambert was adapted for this purpose. In recognition of the care and education of more than 500 children over a period of 30 years by the RNDM Sisters, the Federation donated the property to the Congregation. In 1979 The Abbey was converted into a centre of welcome and spirituality for lay, religious and clergy.



The garden chapel, built above the 9th Century Crypt of St Domitien, at the beginning of the 19th Century



RNDM pilgrims from Bangladesh, India, Ireland, Kenya, Myanmar, Peru, the Philippines, with Sister M. Benedicte, France

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The present buildings are over 200 years old and in order to carry out the mission of the RNDM Sisters today and in the future, major renovations are needed to provide a simple but reasonable level of comfort for guests and to conform to standards required by the European Union.

We invite you to share in the spiritual heritage of St Rambert through your prayer, your visit to the Abbey and through your financial contribution to the project of renovation.

Cost: 610, 000 euro



Former Eurasian Students Enjoying a Reunion at the Abbey



Fountain on the site of the Abbatial Church



Winter at St Rambert



The garden in summer



Mass in the main chapel at St Rambert with the Bishop of Belley-Ars

Below: Guests enjoying a summer's day at the Abbey





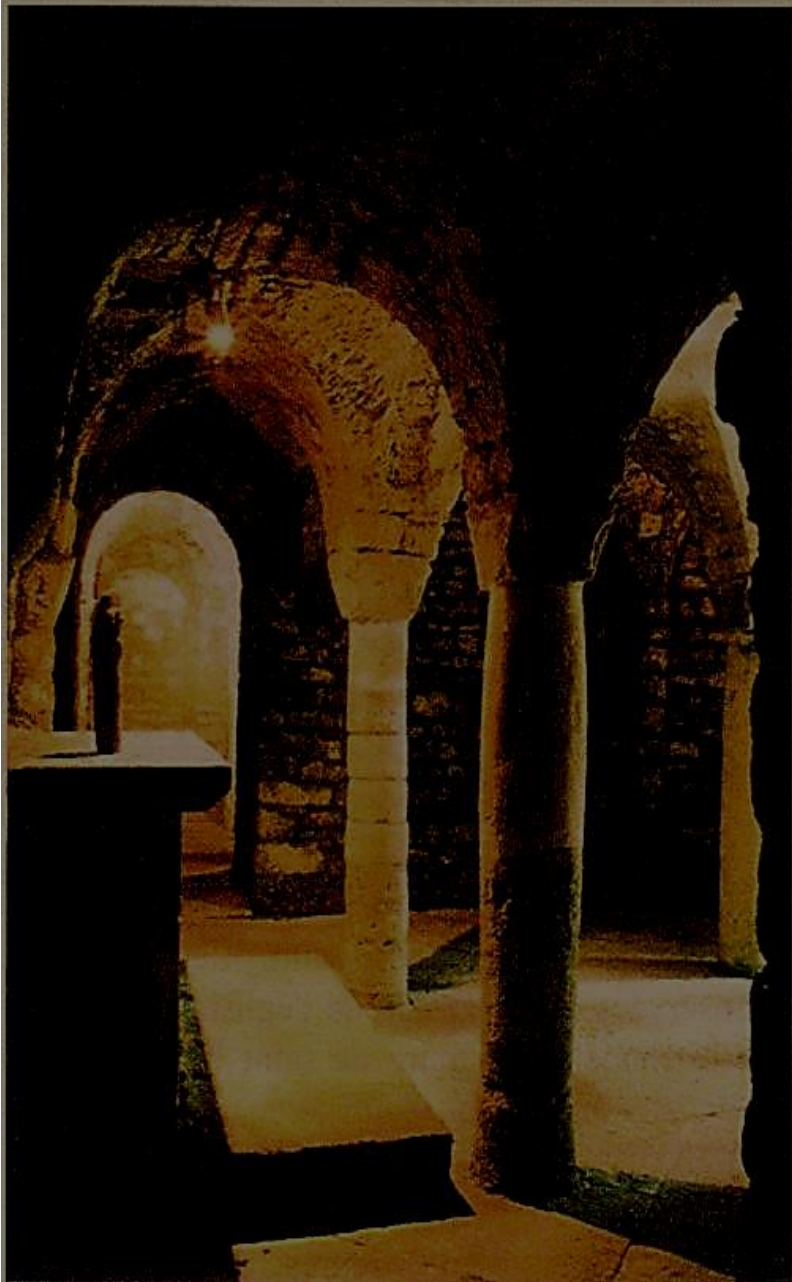
Time for some strategic planning: A group of entrepreneurs with Sr Elisabeth, RNDM



The Abbey's cuisine draws from the produce of its well-maintained garden and fruit trees



Exterior of Crypt of St Domitien, showing ancient columns and parts of an early wall surrounding the monastery.



*Interior of the 9th Century Crypt
St Domitien*

Deer's Head. Capital inside the Crypt of St Domitien



The Hand

Capital inside the Crypt of St Domitien



The Face

Capital inside the Crypt of St Domitien