



Give me a sign

In Lyon, on Fourvière hill, the house of the Sisters of the Cenacle opens onto a tableau of light: the “Cenacle” from the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, according to the painter Arcabas. This colourful scene was created in 2005 for the bicentenary of the birth of Thérèse Couderc, founder of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle.



Photo : Ghislaine Côté r.c.
avec l'autorisation d'Arcabas

Arcabas *Pentecôte*
cénacle de Fourvière

The Word made flesh in Jesus has finished its journey. Jesus has just passed on the baton.

The companions from the beginning are there, in the Upper Room.

Gathered with Mary, the women, and the brothers, they are in a suspended moment in time.

A space that is all spaces.

The Spirit that breaks down all walls is the new space.

Prayer is forever their home.

All that remains is the golden horizon where a sky festooned with embers crackles.

We are in the first act of this book of the Acts of the Apostles, where Luke will unfold their fabulous adventures, thanks to the Spirit.

During all their intrepid incursions, they will remain rooted in this definitive and perpetual first act: to remain, with one heart, in prayer with Mary.

Around Mary, her head wrapped in the midnight blue of faith, the Living-Absent One who dwells in them forever has clothed them in his “grace of a thousand colours.”

These men and women, on a crucified Word, believed that God had come to console them and rejoice with them.

Fear deserted them. Joy unfolded their souls.

At the forefront, the disciple in glowing white is magnified by the brand new faith that bursts forth.

The Living Absent One is there in the arrow of their joined hands, pointing to where the essential can be found.

He is there in their gaze turned inward or to the horizon of their astonished eyes.

At the corner of mystery, rapture, whether intimate or more exuberant, looms forever.

When God keeps His promise, eyes dance. In this frieze of a brand new dawn, men and women, heavy with Presence, sentinels who break through boundaries on all sides, overflow towards us.

This scene stands on an axis.

The book has just opened at ground level.

We must bow down to raise ourselves to its height and savour the Word, coloured with milk and honey.

For they are all together a great open book, a poem with tightly packed notes that unfolds. So colourful that they are perfumed with the Sun.

The Church of flesh and Spirit has just been born.

The Church upon which the Risen One has just breathed His breath.

The Church, vibrant and fragile like the flesh of men and women.

The world is there.

The world that awaits them is already there in the bundle of their bodies and in the variegation of their differences, peacefully offered to the gaze.

It is there in this flame-sign illumined by Mary's radiance.

The world as God dreams of his own: singular, plural and equal.

And ruby chips rain down on the world as a flame of awakening shines. A candle that conquers the night and spells out Love to the ends of the earth.

Everything has calmed down. We are at the dawn of a new world. A moment of supreme tranquillity. Just before all the acts of the Word to come are set in motion.

Their morning faith leaves an infinite certainty on their faces: He is waiting for us on the shore.

Mary leads us there. She knows the crossing. The shimmering blue of the sea towards which this golden ship is sailing has remained clinging to her dress.

Clad in rainbows, these survivors of the tsunami of Passion that swept away their hope along with their Beloved, hold fast to a Woman. An inner watchwoman who leads them to the harbour of their desire.

The Father's Promise has become fire in their hearts, sparkle in their eyes, wind on their lips. Inhabited by it, they will know how to give birth to the future.

Sister Ghislaine Côté