

Franciscan Immaculatine Sisters Consider invitation to come to Australia

2 August 2003



The Congregation of the Franciscan Immaculatine Sisters was founded at Pietradefusi (Avellino), in the Archdiocese of Benevento by the Capuchin Friar, Fr. Lodovico Acernese on the 8th December, 1881.

On March 18th 1951, the Congregation received the decree of approbation from the Holy See and became an Institute of Pontifical right.

In 1950, the Sisters opened their first mission in Brazil. In 1982, the centenary year of their foundation, the mission in the Philippines was opened and in March 1990 a foundation was made in India.

The Constitutions of the Immaculatine states *"Our rule of life is to live the Holy Gospel of Our Jesus Christ as it is presented to us in the example and teachings of St. Francis of Assisi."*

The congregation is juridically aggregated to the Capuchin Order and the sisters live their Franciscan spirituality in the tradition of the Capuchin Reform.

The Franciscan Immaculatine Sisters dedicate themselves primarily to the instruction and education of the children and youth especially young women, catechetical instruction, pastoral works, missionary activity, social assistance compatible with the spirit of the Institute and in response to the needs of the Church.

The Philippine Mission Maria Santissima Regina (Mary Most Holy, Queen)

On December 8, 1981, to commemorate the centenary of the foundation of the congregation, five sisters were chosen to go to the Philippines to establish a presence there. Before their departure, the missionaries had a private audience with the Holy Father, John Paul II who gave his approval and blessing to the opening of the new mission dedicated to "*Mary's Queenship*".

On January 8, 1982, the five missionaries together with their Superior General, Sr. Elisabetta Gnerre and her Vicar, Sr. Angela Vetrone, accompanied by the statue of the Immaculate Virgin blessed by the Holy father, stepped on the Philippine soil where they were to carry out the apostolic mission entrusted to them by the Church, announcing to all the good news of the kingdom of God.

On January 16, 1982 they set up house in a rented residence provided by a generous lay couple in Caloocan City. Two years later, on December 1984 the Sisters moved to their new convent at Greenfields, Novaliches, Quezon City together with their Filipina vocations. The convent was designated for the formation of Aspirants, Postulants, Novices and Junior Professed.

Due to the increasing number of vocations, the congregation transfers their novitiate house to Tagaytay City. The construction of the novitiate was realized through the help of generous benefactors. In November 1990 the novices moved to their new house and were assisted by our Capuchin brothers under the leadership of Fr. Joseph Nacua.

It was also in 1990, that the sisters, after having completed teacher teaching courses, opened a "Kindergarten" school with the assistance of the De La Salle Brothers. The sisters involved in the school also have an outreach apostolate towards the parents and guardians of the students.

On May 1991, another house was opened at the request of Msgr. Josefino Ramirez. It was an invitation to work in the Campus Ministry of Elizabeth Seton School with 3,800 students from Elementary to High School level. Their work includes the supervision of the school's outreach programs and the retreats of the school's staff. There are presently five sisters working in this apostolate.

In 1998, the first stage of Sr. Maria Carmela Brescia School and Outreach Centre was opened in the Capuchin Parish of Tagaytay City. The school is meant to cater for children who come from poor families. These children are helped by the Centre to study for free. The financing of this project is provided by benefactors of the sisters. The school also runs an outreach apostolate for the parents helping them to live their Catholic faith.

The sisters in the Philippines are also active in vocation promotion. Every month, they conduct vocation discernment days with youth. Not only with those who are interested in religious life but they also give spiritual assistance to the many young people who are being misled and exploited in many different forms.

In parochial activities, the Sisters are involved in the animation of the liturgy and in music ministry. They visit the sick and the elderly and prepare them for the reception of the sacraments. They catechise in the public schools and work in the "squatter areas". The sisters also minister to single parents and unwed mothers.

At present there are 18 Junior Professed sisters in the Philippines either in ministry or in training to prepare them for future ministry.

There are 19 Filipina Sisters working in Italy and one in Brazil

The Immaculatine Sisters have a house in Assisi "*Casa S. Chiara*" attached to the Cathedral of San Ruffino (above) where they take care of the sacristy and the preparations for the liturgy. They also have a house in San Giovanni Rotondo "*Casa Pace e Bene*".