

# ŻEŃSKIE ZGROMADZENIA ZAKONNE W POLSCE 1939-1947

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## SUMMARY

The Congregation of Sisters of St. Dominick was founded by Mother Kolumba Bialecka in Wielowieś outside of Tarnobrzeg in the Przemyśl dioceses. The novitiate was opened on July 8, 1881, which is considered to be the official date of the Congregation's founding. The congregation received its erective decree on January 9, 1886, and on March 21, 1885, laudatory decree from Pope Leon XIII. Final confirmation was granted on August 18, 1911 by decree of Pope Pius X, and the congregation's constitution was approved in the same manner, on March 24, 1931.

On July 13, 1925 the headquarters of the general home and the novitiate were transferred from Wielowieś to Biała Niżna outside of Grybów in the Tarnów diocese. The main directions of the congregation's missionary work, as put forth by its founder, were the following: educational-upbringing work, especially amongst village populations, which included the direction of schools, orphanages, catechism for children and the elderly on Sundays and holidays, the preparation of children for First Confession and Holy Communion, the management of religious societies and associations for children and young girls, and charity work amongst the poor and ill, both on cloisters grounds and in private homes. The constitution of 1931 extended the congregation's activity to city areas. In the period discussed the following statistics applied to the congregation: on September 1, 1939 the congregation numbered 31 homes, 226 sisters, 6 novices and 2 postulants; May 9, 1945 – 27 homes, 203 sisters, 2 postulants; the end of 1947 – 27 homes, 203 sisters, 6 novices and 14 postulants.

As a result of military action, the congregation suffered both material and personal losses. Two homes were totally destroyed, 9 homes (in Poznań, Gdańsk and Silesia) were occupied by Germans throughout the occupation and as a result the sisters were evacuated. To the east, after the border was shifted, sisters were forced to desert 10 homes, of which 9 were congregation property. Moreover, as a result of being transported or hidden, and due to fear of search and repression by the occupier, congregation archives were to a large extent destroyed, as with the library at the general home and other filial homes. During this period the congregation lost 32 sisters. Amongst the causes of death, the following illnesses dominated: tuberculosis and typhus. Two sisters perished as a direct result of military activity.

When the war broke out, the congregation was in the process of directing 9 private grammar schools, 2 economic schools, 40 preschools, 6 orphanages, 5 boarding-houses, camps, daycamps and was teaching catechism to children and the elderly at 13 outposts. Aside from this work, the sisters ran and organized catholic societies. Charity work amongst the ill needy was carried out in 25 homes. This consisted, above all, of nursing services and caring for the terminally ill. At 18 outposts the sisters were in charge of upkeep of the church, working as sacristans, and, in 4 homes, also as organists. In the years 1939-1945 two grammar schools were di-



rected by sisters, who also worked as teachers in the underground educational movement. In addition, charity work was carried out.

In the period discussed, aside from continuing principle activities, though to a greatly limited degree, the congregation undertook emergency work, often short-term, but necessary at the time. This emergency work included aid for the Polish Army, participation in the resistance movement, underground education, providing shelter for youth in hiding, care for prisoners, help for partisan divisions of the Home Army and local civilian populations (refugees and evacuees), management of kitchens sponsored by the General Protection Council (RGO), cooperation with clergy, hiding of priests, and aid for the Jews.

With the end to military action in 1945, the congregation resolved to liquidate the effects of war on its own areas. At homes in Western and Northern Poland new directions of work were undertaken, and in the remaining outposts principle activities interrupted by the war were resumed. The sisters worked in 12 grammar schools, conducted winter courses in home economics, sewing, and handicrafts, directed 37 preschools, 4 orphanages, a home for young children, a boarding house for secondary school pupils, 3 homes for the elderly, camps and day camps. Located in 27 homes were health stations, and 4 sisters worked in newly-organized health centers. Among the newly undertaken activities, it should be mentioned that the sisters also conducted 4 day-care centers, a health station for mothers and children and special courses for youth interested in receiving a secondary school degree. In the years 1945-1947, there dominated a certain stability in work being carried out. Changes occurred once again after 1950, when the congregation moved away from work in schools and began to direct its energy towards other forms of activity in line with the aims of its founder.

#### SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Sister Missionaries of Catholic Apostolship was brought to life on March 30, 1943 by Saint Vincent Pallotti in Rome, in the framework of the Union of Catholic Apostolship. Its aim was the expansion of faith and rekindling of love for God by taking advantage of every possible kind of apostolic activity available to sisters.

The congregation was brought to Poland in 1934 by Father Alojzy Majewski, SAC. The congregation's mother home was founded in Rajca, 24 km from Nowogródek, where the sisters purchased a destroyed estate. In the course of 5 years of diligent and toilsome labor the sisters were able to repair the living quarters and farming facilities of the estate, in addition to supporting themselves and their charity activities with the income earned from farming. From 1937 on, i.e. from the time when the first novices took their vows, offers, began to flow in for work in schools, pre-schools, hospitals and parish churches. When the war broke out, the Polish branch of the congregation numbered 4 homes (2 in the Pińsk diocese, 2 in the Vilnius diocese) with a total number of 57 members (30 sisters, 17 novices and 10 postulants). It seemed that the desire of Saint Vincent Pallotti to develop and extend apostolic activity in eastern areas had been fulfilled. Unfortunately, the outbreak of WW II limited, and later interrupted the congregation's work in the Nowogródek and Vilnius regions.

In the first days of the war, which began on these territories on September 17, 1939, the sisters were forced to desert the mother home in Rajca. The majority of postulants and novices were sent back to their family homes. Professed sisters, at first scattered, created several unofficial groups in Rajca and Nowogródek, Vilnius and Plonka Kościelna (Białystok province). Contact between groups was made very difficult and more than once impossible. Throughout the entire war period the Pallotine sisters were engaged in various forms of aid for their repressed fellow countrymen. They worked with the Committee for Refugees in Vilnius, where they ran a sewing shop for Poles escaping from the Germans across the front. In the framework of activities sponsored by the General Protection Council (RGO) they managed shelters for children in Warsaw and Mszczonów, along with a soup kitchen in the latter town. They also provided help for the ill in hospitals, 2 of which were epidemiological hospitals. In the Nowogródek and Vilnius regions, the sisters offered the local partisans medical aid and, to the extent possible, material aid in the form of food. The Pallotine sisters also served the discriminated Jewish population, providing those threatened with shelter in Rajca and Nowogródek, and then, facilitating their transference to a safe place.

After the war experiences, which gave proof to the fact that the young congregation had already put out rather strong roots in Polish soil, there emerged the problem of its reorganization from the foundations (without material means) on the new northern territories of a devastated

country, especially in Gdańsk. The organization of new homes was achieved simultaneously with the undertaking of new activities. At times, however, it was necessary to begin work much earlier, as for example, in the case of providing immediate care for orphaned children - victims of the war and the typhus epidemic, which had spread through the still-burning city of Gdańsk. In the first phase of the post-war period the congregation's homes were concentrated in the north of Poland, and in relation to the congregation's growth the number of appointments spread not only in other areas of the country, but also outside its borders, in France, Rome and at African missions (in Rwanda). In October, 1947 the Polish branch of the congregation was raised to the level of quasi-province. In the end of 1947, the Polish congregation numbered 5 homes (4 in Gdańsk, 1 in Nowy Dwór Gdański) and 28 sisters.

#### SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Daughters of Mary the Assister (Salesian Sisters) was founded in the 19th century by St. Jan Bosco, with the participation of St. Maria Dominika Mazzarello. August 5, 1872 is accepted as the official date of the congregation's founding. On January 23, 1876 it was confirmed by decree of Monsignor Sciancra (Bishop of Acque), and on April 4, 1922 the congregation received a laudatory decree from the Holy Congregation of Religious Affairs. At the request of Inspector of the Polish Province of Salesian Fathers - Father Piotr Trione - the Sisters of Mary the Assister arrived in Poland in 1922. They included 3 Polish and 2 Italian sisters. Amongst them was visitator sister Laura Meozzi, later the first inspector of the Polish province.

At their outposts, the first of which was located in Różanystok (the Vilnius diocese), the Salesian sisters were involved in guardian-upbringing, pedagogical and charity work. They also took on household duties in the homes of Salesian priests. They directed orphanages, technical schools, grammar schools, boarding houses, oratories, summer camps and day camps. From the start, the Polish Province was directly subject to the general administration in Torino, Italy. As of February 2, 1931, it became a visitating province still subject to the general administration. On April 16, 1946 it became an Inspectorate with its own administration, whose headquarters were located in Łódź.

The year 1939 found the Polish visitating province in full bloom, with 9 homes, (4 in the Vilnius diocese, 2 in the Poznań diocese and 1 in Łódź, Siedlce and Katowice). The state of growth was subject to change as a result of the liquidation by the occupiers of 2 homes in the Poznań diocese, 1 in the Katowice diocese, and new outposts just being founded in Cracow, and Przemyśl. In 1945 2 outposts arose in the Poznań district, 1 in the Wrocław district, 1 in the Łódź district, and 1 in the Warsaw district. In 1947 on the repatriated territories 9 new homes of the congregation arose. In the years 1945-1947 14 new outposts were formed, which led to the total of 21 homes owned by the Polish Inspectorate in 1947. Before the war all the homes were private church property except for the home in Myslowice, which belonged to a mine, and the home in Laurów which belonged to the congregation. After the war, the Salesian sisters received 5 homes (Nowa Ruda, Pieszyce, Wrocław and 2 homes in Polczyn Zdrój), from church authorities. From state authorities they received 4 homes (Środa Śląska, Lubinia Wielka currently Dobieszczyzna, Twardogóra and Waschow).

In 1939, the congregation in Poland numbered 101 sisters, 12 novices and 36 postulants. After 9 nuns took final vows the number reached 110 and only for these sisters can information be found in the Inspectorial Archive in Wrocław. This number of 53 technically educated nuns, 18 with secondary and pedagogical education and 4 with higher education. The remainder had either completed or uncompleted grammar school education. The mother superiors raised the



qualifications of their sisters to the extent possible, in the pedagogical direction in order that they be able to work in accordance with the aims of the congregation. Candidates were recruited mainly in the areas where the sisters worked and the majority come from farm families. With the outbreak of war, the average age of the sisters was 25-30 years, and after the war, at which time the novitiate was closed down, the average age was 39. In the years 1945-1947 the average age of sisters entering the congregation was 23.5 years. During the war only 78 sisters remained in the country. Twelve left for Italy, 8 were taken away to concentration camps, 2 perished in the war, 4 left the order and the remaining sisters were separated from the order by war conditions.

The Congregation of Salesian Sisters is geared towards educational-mission work and has been active in this area on Polish territory since 1922. In the school year 1938-1939 its educational-guardian work encompassed 3,000 people in orphanages, pre-schools, grammar schools, year-long technical schools, secondary technical schools, regular secondary schools, oratories, community clubs, youth associations, emergency wards for homeless children, summer camps, health stations, religious guidance for the elderly. The outbreak of WW II had an effect on the character of the sisters activities. For a certain time, the tailoring school in Łódź continued to function. There, in addition to technical subjects, they also taught religion, Polish language and history. After the school was closed, a tailoring workshop was conducted. In addition, sisters worked as assistants in those homes taken over by the occupiers; in the homes of Salesian priests, and in soup kitchens for refugees. They organized charity in the form of packages for prisoners in Vilnius, and for imprisoned priests in Łódź on the Warta and in Kępno Wielkopolskie. Individually, they taught children at the grammar school level, such subjects as Polish language and history, and mathematics. On of the sisters took an active part in the relief campaign for priests in hiding; another risked her life to nurse a priest dying on military terrain; two sisters did laundry for the sick in a hospital, which was formerly a home. Twelve sisters secretly catechized 1,043 people, preparing 1,019 for First Holy Communion.

After the war, in the homes which existed before the war, only pre-schools, cutting and sewing courses, and religious, and religious education were conducted. In the newly-opened homes, amongst others on the repatriated territories, the sisters' activity was dependent upon local needs. Above all they undertook work aimed at preparing young girls for careers and the tasks awaiting them in society.

## SUMMARY

The Congregation of Maidens of the Sacrifice of the Virgin Mary, commonly known as Sisters of the Gift, arose in Cracow in the 17th century. Its founder, Zofia Czeska of the Maciejowski family, organized the first Polish school for young girls (especially the poor, of noble and city background) on Szpitalna Street in Cracow. She called for this religious congregation (whose constitution was confirmed in 1660) to undertake upbringing-pedagogical work. At the beginning of the 18th century the congregation and school were transferred to a new building on St. John Street in Cracow, where even to today can be found the congregation's main home and school, which has continued its work without a break since 1627. For nearly 3 centuries the congregation existed as one convent, dedicated completely to teaching and raising young girls. It wasn't until the 20th century that the congregation's work expanded with the creation of new outposts outside of Cracow, in which, according to the founding aims of the congregation, the sisters undertook teaching and upbringing work of various kinds.

In 1939 aside from the general home in Cracow the congregation owned 3 small filial homes: in Bohorodczany, Ujazdy and Jordanów. These homes were inhabited by 3-5 sisters at a time. The homes in Cracow and Ujazdy survived the occupation. The sisters deserted the home in Bohorodczany in 1939, and were removed from Jordanów in 1942. It wasn't until after the liberation in 1945 that they returned to that home. In 1946 the congregation opened a new home in Świdnica, in the Wrocław district. The congregation's highest authority is the general chapter, which meets every six years to elect a Superior General and Council. In 1939 the congregation was directed by a general administration elected in 1936. At the head of this administration was permanent Mother General Aniela Zofia Szelgiewicz. This administration fulfilled its duties throughout the entire occupation period by virtue of a decision of Cracow archbishop Adam Stefan Sapieha, who postponed further elections until the time when proper conditions would exist. After the war, in 1946, the elective chapter met and elected Mother Magdalena Skalska as Mother General.

The congregation, comprised for a long time of just one home, at the same time did not develop numerically either. In 1939 it numbered 22 eternally professed sisters, 4 temporarily professed sisters, 2 novices and 2 postulants, in total 30 members. In 1939 the oldest sister was 74 years old, and the youngest - 21 years old. During the occupation, growth in the number of sisters was minimal. Difficult material conditions, uncertainty and constant danger deterred the Superior from accepting new candidates. It is characteristic of the Congregation of Sisters of the Gift that from the very beginning there was no division of the sisters into choirs. According to the constitution, all sisters had equal rights and all were bound by their vows to educational-upbringing work. Social background of the sisters did not play a major role. Of the

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31 sisters who belonged to the congregation in the years 1939-1945, 5 were from land-owning families, 2 from the intelligentsia, 11 from the city and 13 from farming families.

An important criterion for acceptance into the congregation was level of education, which enabled the sisters to work amongst children. The congregation also attempted to raise the qualifications of its sisters with the aim of guaranteeing a certain number of preceptresses and teachers. In the period 1939-1945, of 31 sisters, 21 had teacher's qualifications, which makes up 67.8% of the overall number of congregation members. Amongst the remaining 10 sisters, 3 had finished technical schools. In accordance with its founding aims, the congregation's work consisted of the raising and educating of children and youth. In 1939, the sisters conducted a 7-year general school, a grammar school and a secondary school for girls in the main home in Cracow. The combined number of pupils in this school reached 371. They also conducted a 4-year general school in Ujazdy, and day-nursery and small orphanage in Bohorodczany. In Jordanów the sisters managed a day-nursery and a boarding-house for female pupils of the local grammar school. During the occupation, the sisters did all in their power to continue the congregation's principle work, which, as a result of war conditions, took on various new forms. In Cracow, the general school remained open throughout the entire period, whereas the grammar and secondary schools were closed down on November 21, 1939.

Work in the general school was difficult due to conditions which existed on the school premises. In the years 1943-1945 several classrooms were occupied by boys from anti-aircraft defense. Several other schools, which had been kicked out of their own buildings, also took advantage of this general school facilities on both a permanent and temporary basis. By order of the occupier, all education was greatly limited, especially in regards to Polish language, history and geography. In connection with this, the sister-teachers tried to expand the pupils' knowledge through reading, discussions, and other forms of teaching. Also, the school organized various types of charity campaigns, such as, for example, the collecting of gifts for poor children, POW's and prisoners.

Since many Cracow schools were closed down, the number of pupils grew with each year. In the 1939/1940 school year 173 pupils attended the congregations general school; in 1941/1942 - 380; and in 1944/1945 - 487. In the sphere of secondary school education, the sisters taught underground classes. Rooms of the cloister were also made use of by the sisters for conducting secret university-level courses. After the liberation in 1945 the sisters began organizing education in their grammar and secondary schools, which began as early as February 17 of that same year. Supplementary evening courses for adults were also conducted in the schools. In Cracow, the congregation set up a pre-school, in order to begin care for the youngest children. In Ujazdy the general school was expanded to a 7-year school, and in Jordanów a pre-school and a home for orphans and young girls in need were established. At the new outpost founded in Świdnica in 1946, the congregation ran technical courses for young girls, a 3-year home-economics school, both a pupil's hotel and boarding-house, and a pre-school. It should be stated that during the occupation period and after the liberation the Congregation of Sisters of the Gift attempted to realize its founding goals (i.e. the teaching and raising of children and youth) regardless of the difficult conditions resulting from the war.

## SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Benedict was founded on June 24, 1917 by Mother Jawiga - Józefa Kulesza, a cloistered Benedictine nun from Vilnius. After arriving in Rome in c. 1914, she founded the first convent in Biała Cerkiew in the Ukraine. The Congregation's aim was seen by its founder as being the raising and educating of children and youth, who for various reasons were deprived of care. In addition, this goal encompassed the catechization and religious-moral influencing of female laity. In an attempt to realize these aims, the sisters set up orphanages, day-nurseries, pupils' hotels, community centers, schools, and sewing workshops. Up to 1923, they were active in Biała Cerkiew, and then, as a result of the political situation in the Ukraine, they transferred to Kowel in Wołyń. In 1926 the general administration and novitiate were transferred to Luck. In this diocese 3 new homes arose (in Berezne, Horochów and Kiwerce), and in the Sandomierz diocese - 1 home (in Borkowice).

In 1939 the congregation owned 6 homes, 4 of which were the congregation's private property (in Kowel, Luck, Horochów and Kiwerce), 2 of which were Church property (in Berezne and Borkowice). In 1945, after the congregation was transferred to central Poland, 6 new homes arose (in Końskowola, Kwidzyn, Puławy, Rejowiec, Rychnów and Tarnogród) - they comprised both Church and state property. In 1947 of the 9 existing homes (in Borkowice, Elk, Końskowola, Kurów, 2 in Kwidzyn, Otwock, Puławy and Zagorów), only 2, the home in Puławy and Otwock, were private property of the congregation. On September 1, 1939, the congregation numbered 54 sisters (42 professed, 11 novices, 1 postulant). On December 31, 1947 the number had increased to 82 sisters (52 professed, 17 novices, and 13 postulants). During the pre-war the sisters managed the following: 2 orphanages (Luck and Kowel), 2 pre-schools (Luck and Berezne), 3 pupils' hotels (Luck, Berezne, Horochów), 1 general school (Luck), and 1 sewing and embroidery workshop. Moreover, they catechized children and adults, and were involved in nursing work on the premises.

War deprived the congregation of all its material resource and of the possibilities for continuing the work performed up to that time. During the occupation, the sisters from Luck joined in the charity effort being conducted by the Catholic Committee for Aid to the Poor. With the sisters help, 3 charity outposts were established in Luck: a shelter for children and the elderly (about 20 people), a hospital (with room for over 20 ill) and a soup kitchen for those suffering from starvation, which served nearly 400 meals a day. In addition, the Benedictine nuns cared for the sick in private homes. In Kiwerce and Kowel, they directed a campaign which sent packages to Poles deported to Siberia, in addition to visiting prisoners and the ill in hospitals. The congregation's post-war activities were concentrated on education-upbringing work once again. The sisters worked in 4 orphanages (Puławy, Zagorów, Kwidzyn, and Elk), 7 pre-schools (Borkowice, Końskowola, Kurów, Kwidzyn, Rejowiec, Stawiszyn and Zagorów), 3 homes for the elderly (Końskowola, Kwidzyn and Zagorów), 2 workshops (Kwidzyn) and 7 community centers (Kurów). The general home and novitiate were located in Końskowola from 1945 to September 1946, at which time they were transferred to Kwidzyn.

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## SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Benedictine Sisters, Samaritans of the Cross of Jezus, was founded by Mother Vincenta-Jadwiga Jaroszevska on January 6, 1926, the day when Mother Vincenta began work in the St. Lazarus' Hospital in Warsaw. At the beginning it was known as the secular Society of Samaritans, legally confirmed on March 13, 1926. On August 23, 1930 Reverend Cardinal A. Kakowski issued a decree, declaring the Society of Samaritans a church association. On December 8, 1932, this same Cardinal declared the association a religious congregation based on diocesan law. At the outbreak of war, the congregation numbered 139 sisters and owned 8 homes. In 1945, it numbered 135 sisters and 6 homes, and in 1947 – 133 sisters and 9 homes.

The aim of the congregation, as stressed by its foundress, was care for the ill in hospitals specializing in epidemiology and skin and venereal diseases, for mentally-handicapped children, and also for morally-neglected girls. The sisters attempted to realize this aim through their work at the congregation's outposts. On the eve of war the congregation ran 5 rehabilitation-upbringing establishments for children and youth, in Niegow, Fiszor, Henryków and Pruszków (2). Moreover, the sisters worked at 2 Księża St. in Warsaw, at St. Lazarus' Hospital, which specialized in the treatment of skin and venereal diseases. They managed a hotel at 16 Barska St. for women released from prisons and for those who came to Warsaw for outpatient treatment. They also worked at the State Institute for Mental Health at 91 Puławska St., Warsaw.

During the occupation, in addition to continuing its principle work, the congregation undertook new tasks to help the needy. In Niegow, "Samarita" provided help for wounded Polish soldiers, prisoners and Jews. The home in Pruszków, on Szkolna St. cooperated with the Home Army and three nuns working as nurses in a transit camp facilitated escape from the camp for both Poles and Jews. In summing up the activities of the sisters during the occupation, it should be stressed that all homes provided shelter and other forms of aid for those people hiding from the Germans. After the liberation, the sisters returned to their prior work. In the place of outposts lost during the war, the congregation established new ones, for example in Bytów, Mierzęcin and Zalesin.

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## SUMMARY

The Congregation of Sisters of Loretto was founded in Warsaw in 1920 by Father Ignacy Kłopotowski, probost of the parish of the Divine Mother of Loretto. On July 31, 1920 the first sisters living in Warsaw at 21 Nadwiślańska St. began to help Father Kłopotowski with his publishing work, which he had been conducting for many years. Eight years after its founding date, Cardinal Aleksander Kakowski recognized the Religious Association of Sisters of Loretto, whose main aim was apostleship of the printed word. In 1931 the association built a new printing press in Warsaw, at 6 Sierakowski St. and began independent publishing work. In the same year, on September 7, the association's founder suddenly died. His death was a great blow, because he had not completed his work on the legal organization of the congregation. This fact left the association in a very difficult position. It wasn't until 1938 that a canonization gave the association hope for its own existence within the Church. Cardinal appointed a general administration composed of Sisters of Loretto, and named Missionary father Jan Rzymelko commissioner of the association. In 1949 the association received final rights of a congregation. The outbreak of war in 1939 was the next difficult experience for the young association, through which it proved its spiritual maturity.

In 1939 the association owned 3 homes: 2 in Warsaw, (at 21 Nadwiślańska St. and 6 Sierakowski St.), and 1 in the village of Loretto. In 1945 they established an outpost in Horoski Duże, in the Podlasie diocese. It was, however, a transitional outpost which was transferred to the Konstantynów settlement of this same diocese in 1946. In 1947 the association worked out of 4 homes.

On the eve of war the association numbered 37 professed nuns, 6 novices and 14 postulants. From 1939 to 1945, 19 professed nuns joined the order, and by 1947, yet another 9. In total, in the years 1939-1947 the association expanded by 23 sisters. The largest number of members were recruited from farming families, then from families of artisan, worker and bureaucrat background. The majority of sister possessed a grammar school education, and it wasn't until they joined congregation that they received secondary and technical school training. During the occupation they attended secret courses at grammar school level, which were conducted in the congregation's main home. Five of these sisters received a secondary-school diploma, and in 1945, 4 of the most talented were recommended by the examination commission for studies at the University of Warsaw (2 were students of the history department and 2 – Polish philology).

Before the war, the sisters ran their own publishing firm at 6 Sierakowski St., in Warsaw. Moreover, they managed 2 Warsaw preschools (at 21 Nadwiślańska St. and 6 Sierakowski St.), in addition to 6 summer camps for poor children of Warsaw, in the village of Loretto, Ra-

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dzymin district. During the war publishing activity was suspended, summer camps were not conducted and the pre-school on Nadwiślańska St. was closed down. Despite a few-month break in 1944, the sisters continued their work at the pre-school on Sierakowski St. During the war the sisters undertook new forms of work. They provided rooms in the congregation's home on Sierakowski St. both for the conducting of secret courses at the secondary-school level, and seminary activities. They also conducted first aid courses, in which members of the resistance movement took part. Moreover, the sisters cared for the sick, wounded and deserted.

After the liberation, the association first began work on restoration of its printing press and by October 1945, the first post-war issue of the Rosary Club was manually set and published. The needs of society were great at the time and the edition of the Club grew with every month: October, 1945 – 3,000 copies published; December, 1946 – 5,000; March, 1946 – 10,000; May, 1946 – 15,000; November, 1946 – 25,000. In the next year the sisters asked for permission to expand circulation from 50,000 to 100,000 copies. At the same time, Club "M" for youth was being published at the rate of 3,500 copies/month. In total, by 1947 the association printed 225 items, of which 23 were books.

In 1945, the sisters resumed work in the pre-school on Nadwiślańska St. and a new pre-school on Wójcik St. In June, 1946 children from the congregation's pre-schools were received at the summer camps in Loretto, whereas in July and August the sisters took in school children from Warsaw. In 1945 in Horoski Duże the sisters established a 4-year school for village children. However, by 1946 the sisters were not allowed to conduct sick schools and were transferred to Konstantynów on the Bug, where they opened up a private pre-school and undertook work with the sick. Also, in 1946 the sisters set up a home for the elderly at 6 Sierakowski St., Warsaw.

## SUMMARY

The Congregation was founded in 1923 in Drua, a Vilnius diocese, by Bishop Jerzy Matulewicz. It is an active, one-choir congregation whose members take simple vows, and wear habits. Its aim is to raise children and youth in a Christian manner. Its spirituality is exceptionally eucharistic, and directed towards actively helping one's fellow man.

The congregation's contacts with Polish civilian authorities, as with the German occupiers, were purely administrative. Aside from financial difficulties, the sisters did not experience special persecution from the occupying powers. The sisters were partially scattered for a short time during the occupation – from July 7, to September 8, 1944.

In 1939, the congregation numbered 3 homes in the Vilnius diocese and 1 in the Pińsk, diocese. By 1947, 4 new homes were established in Central Poland – 2 in the Warsaw district (Warsaw, Nowo), 1 in the Poznań district (Dąb on the Nar) and 1 in the Bydgoszcz district (Nieszawa). The number of sisters was as follows: September 1, 1939 – 52; May 9, 1945 – 31; December 31, 1947 – 35. In 1945, after the Polish border changes, repatriation took place. Twenty six sisters left the eastern territories and transferred to central Poland. Assistant Mother General, sister Teresa Krupko, took over the duties of Superior General on these territories.

The majority of sisters came from villages, specifically from farming families. The congregation embraced sisters of various nationalities: Poles, White Russians, Lithuanians, Latvians and Russians. Up to the repatriation period, the sisters' level of education did not surpass grammar school and preparation for special trades. Intensive education of the sisters did not begin until after the war, in Central Poland. The sisters' life-style during this period was characterized by total enthusiasm, submission and dedication to God. The sisters expressed a desire to remain in the religious community despite the difficulties and dangers. Prayer and constant contact with God enabled them to survive the difficult war period.

The congregation's work up to the repatriation period consisted of the following: teaching in grammar schools, managing boarding-houses, tailoring knitting and weaving workshops, preparations for the Holy Sacraments, directing religious-educational clubs and associations, charity work amongst the sick and impoverished, and running a home for the elderly. The congregation's work in central Poland after the repatriation period consisted of the following: catechization, directing religious-educational clubs and associations, conducting sewing courses, taking care of household duties for priests, and running a home for the elderly, 2 pre-schools, 2 orphanages and 1 cafeteria. In this way the sisters attempted to realize the task of upbringing and education in the Christian spirit.

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