SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Servants of Immaculate Mary was founded in 1876 by Capuchin Father Honorius Kazimierski. It is a religious order with a social mission, working especially amongst village populations. The congregation was approved by the Apostolic Capital in 1936. During the 20-year interwar period the congregation acted officially under the names of its religious charity organizations: "Bambino”, “Dworzyn”, “Zagrobowiec”, "Głębokie”, "Węgierskie”, and "Burzy”. The 1939 officers included twenty-one people with a total of twenty-three men and women, who had taken final vows, 195 with temporary vows, 114 novices and 77 postulants.

In 1936 the congregation directed 4 of its own technical schools (3 teaching schools and one which offered preparation in home economics), and a grammar and secondary school. Many of these were in large towns and cities. In addition to these private schools, many sisters worked in public state schools. The sisters also managed 6 separate "pupils’ hostels, 2 "station missions” for traveling women, 7 nursery, 40 pre-schools (10 of which belonged to the congregation). The congregation also owned and ran 15 cafeterias and 13 stores.

As a part of their apostolic work the Servite managed service shops, took care of the sick and poor, and directed other religious organizations, such as the Catholic Youth Association and third order groups. They organized receptions for the elderly and sick, taught catechism and took care of the blind and deaf. The Servite also worked in two district hospitals as nurses and went to homes in addition to managing the farms attached to several monasteries and homes for retired priests. The Second World War put a stop to the congregation’s activities in those areas taken over by the Reich, and greatly limited work in other parts of the country. Included in the war damage was the destruction of 11 of the congregation’s properties in the following places: Sanok, Tarnów, Augustów, Łysoń, Łomża, Małogoszcz, Pleszów, Płońsk, and Warsaw. During the evacuation operation the sisters lost houses in Drohiczyn, Gorajcza, Kazimierz Białystok, Łazy, Fredom, Łomża, Nasielsk, Płoń (2 houses), Rudnik and Winogrady.

As a result of the evacuation 10 houses were closed down and 16 sisters transferred to central Poland in 1945. The general administration, clearly seeing the lack of necessary living conditions in some communities, dissolved seven houses. Sisters from the occupied territories were scattered abroad. To the extent that it was possible and based on their own initiative, many founded new communities, some of which survived the occupation.

The educational work at many of the congregation’s properties was continued as the occupiers liquidated schools, pre-schools, pupils’ hostels and boarding-houses run by the sisters. Despite this the Servite congregation continued classes in 3 technical schools in Warsaw throughout the occupation. To a large extent the Servite took part in underground education. Aside from offering clandestine classes on the grammar and secondary school levels, they also organized a secret course for pre-school teachers. Mary sisters took part in the resistance movement, cooperating with partisans, helping prisoners, soldiers, the wounded and sick, and providing any other necessary help, with the support of the Chief Council for Protection (Rada Ochrony Obywatelskiej). The sister sheltered youth from deportation to work in Germany, arming them with a love for God and their homeland. To the extent that it was possible, the Servite provided shelter for the evacuees, offering them material help and education for their children.

The most significant losses suffered by the congregation were personal losses. Five sisters died as a result of sickness. Four sisters perished in concentration camps in Dachau and Pommerschen, whereas two died under torture from the camps. Some of the sisters left the order as a result of the dispersion and lack of contact with superiors, while some left due to panic caused by military action on the front, raids, etc. In addition, some sisters were discharged. Another factor was the increase in the mortality rate during the occupation.

By the end of the war in 1945 the congregation was weakened, but not defeated. Thanks to good leadership it was able to undertake new tasks. Many of the Sisters saved from the turmoil of war continued their work. The first priority was setting up schools, i.e. a grammar and secondary school in Warsaw, and technical schools which survived the occupation, but needed to be returned to their original, pre-war state. These schools were in Sandomierz, Częstochowa and Warsaw (3), each with its own boarding-house. Aside from schools, immediately after the war the following outposts were activated: 9 special homes for children, 54 pre-schools, 6 shelters for the elderly, 3 hostels and 2 hospitals. Fourteen sisters worked in grammar schools, 9 in Częstochowa district, 3 in private dispensaries, 6 in stores owned by the congregation, 3 in soup kitchens, and 5 on farms. The sisters ran service shops, turned the parish sick and poor, and saved after the liquidation and provisional line. In 1947 the congregation owned 125 houses and the sisters numbered 1088. During the war years the number of houses decreased by 13 and the number of sisters by 191.

In the new, post-war reality the congregation concentrated on proper preparation of its members for apostolic work. It took advantage of every possibility to supplement and deepen the general and technical education of its sisters, sending them to various schools and on to further education.
SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Daughters of Immaculate Mary (a secular order) was founded in Zamość on October 1, 1930. In 1941 it was approved by the Apostolic See in Rome. In 1939 the congregation numbered 271 sisters and owned 38 houses throughout Poland. During the occupation under the management of Reverend Mother General Maria Bogowska (Mother Natalia) and her general council, the sisters conducted their work in two principal directions: social-charity work and educational work. Their activities included the following: 3 technical schools, 2 general schools, 12 offices offering technical courses, 5 housing-houses, 2 community centers for youth, 7 pre-schools, 10 sewing shops, 6 orphanages, 2 homes for the elderly, 2 catherdars and 2 parishes serving the local church. In 1939 in the 58 outlets of the congregation, the sisters took care of 2570 children and youth, and 120 elderly and orphans.

During the course of the war the congregation lost 7 establishments in Kowala, Sztuka (2), Wysokie, Wysokie and Starytok (2). In addition it suffered serious material losses as a result of the evacuation from 9 educational institutions in Gródek (3), Radom (2), and Kiely (3), and the destruction of 3 large estates. As a result of the dissolution of some supports and the opening of others, in 1945 the congregation carried on its work in 26 establishments and, in 1947, in 21.

During the occupation years, being sensitive to the needs of the time, the sisters extended their activities to 5 kitchens (operated by the Chief Council for Protection and civil Caritas organizations), which provided food for children, Polish soldiers, the civilian population, prisoners and partisans. During periods of highest demand the sisters served 9000 meals a day, operating from these 5 kitchens. In all the outlets the sisters gave immediate help to those in need, supplying shoes, clothes, food parcels, in addition to helping the sick, wounded and Jews. They washed laundry for the poor and prepared children for their First Holy Communion. As a part of their educational work during the war, the sisters ran 3 technical schools in Radom, 3 general schools in Wysokie and Biezdokada, 5 housing-houses for girls and 6 tailoring courses, participation in which protected youth from being taken to Germany to work and facilitated their participation in clandestine study groups.

Despite the difficult material conditions caused by the war, the sisters supported 540 orphans and children of unknown nationality. Polish, White Russian, Soviet Jewish. The sisters often collected contributions in order to feed them. In addition, 205 children from pre-schools and residents of 2 homes for the elderly were also partially dependent upon the sisters' support. Altogether the number of pupils and wards from these various establishments surpassed 9000 people in 1945, whereas in 1947 the number decreased to 2358.

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SUMMARY

The Congregation of the Religious of the Most Holy Convocation (also known as the Congregation of the Anniversaries of the Return of the Most Holy Convocation, and popularly known in Poland as the Sisters of the Convocation) is a senior order founded in 1898 in Warsaw by Casimir Naturals Konstanci, with the help of co-founder Mother Eliza Teresa Celka.

The Congregation's administration has had its headquarters in Warsaw, on Polna 34, except for a two-year period (1995-1997) when the administration operated out of Copiecuchow. The novitiate was located in Nowy Motow on the Pilsu from 1898 to 1989, in Warsaw from 1889 to 1919, and in Copiecuchow from 1919 to November 1947. Since 1947 it has been based on Zamoyski St. in Copiecuchow.

At the general chapter in 1936 the sisters were divided into two branches. During the years 1936-1947 the congregation conducted its work on Polish territory alone. It owned 10-14 houses and numbered 819 sisters. In accordance with its founding aims, the congregation of the Sisters of the Convocation was geared towards educational work. Aside from this, it also managed special homes and establishments, which offered all types of care and food.

In 1950 the congregation owned 6 educational establishments. Included in this number were 2 youth hostels (in Warsaw and Cupiecuchow), 3 pre-school centers (in Brasica near Katowicie and in Copiecuchow), a boarding-school of the State School for Pre-school Teachers at this time the sisters also ran 2 hostels (one for women teachers at Zelonka near Warsaw, and one for the young students of the Polish stage, in Skolowo near Warsaw), in addition to 4 food establishments.

The new conditions resulting from the occupation significantly affected the congregation's activity during the period. In 1940 an institution for the training of child victims of the war was established in Copiecuchow. In Lublin 2 new establishments were set up with the aim of offering migrants and refugees from the area. They provided shelter and various types of aid for refugees and other victims of the war. The sisters also provided help and shelter for the Jews.

All over the country the period 1945-1947 was one of reconstruction after the destruction caused by the war. In all the congregation's homes necessary repair work was undertaken and the establishments adapted to current needs. After the liberation the sisters began work in Ochcyn, Wolachwa, in the home of the bishop of the diocese and in the Lower Seminary. In 1947 the congregation directed 8 educational establishments, 2 shelters and 4 food establishments.