

## A JOURNEY TOWARDS THE 55<sup>th</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER 2019

Vice Province  
Middle East

June 2019

### **Name of the first six french sisters who arrived in Mosul in 1873:**



**I saw our well beloved Religious family with its various languages, its multiple works sown in all the countries, its different characteristics as just one soul under the same rule, in the same sacred bonds.**  
**Rev. Mother Josepha**

The mission of the Presentation in Asia was developed in Mesopotamia, Armenia, and in Kurdistan extending to Van, not far from the snow-covered top of Mount Ararat as far as Bassora to the confines of the Persian Gulf. When the first missionaries of Mossoul were shaken by the Mediterranean gale, they could only ponder the tragic adventure of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, the successor of St. Dominic who was lost in a shipwreck during his voyage to the Holy Land.

There like elsewhere, the adventurous spirit of charity of the Sisters without discouragement, gave life to the charism. Unfortunately, the war of 1914-1918 had extended its ravages on the mission in Asia:

The mission of Mesopotamia (Iraq) is distributed along the length of the Tigris to Mossoul and to Bagdad as well as Bassora on the Chath el Arab.

**“To build and to demolish is always work”. In this way, the history of our presence in the Orient was made.**

## **Iraq**

### **1. Mossoul**

Mossoul is at the center of a region totally immersed in history. Situated on the ancient route of the Indies, it belonged to this portion of Mesopotamia, which is Nineveh. Arabs called El Djezireh, the isle on the Tigris; it is the bridgehead of ancient

Since 1632, the French Religious were living in Mesopotamia and their scientific mission was not any better than their religious mission.

In this country where superimposed civilizations attest to the fragility of earthly empires, Father Poidebard, thanks to his aerial exploration, was able to detect through the desert of Syria as far as the Tigris the strategic organization of ancient Rome. Sir Aurel Stern completed his work by flying over the northwest region of Iraq. For his part, Father Vincent Schiel expounded in his teaching at the Sorbonne the discoveries he had made in the area of Assyriology. We cannot forget also the role played in the post-war by Monsignor Berre, Apostolic Delegate :”While an imprudent negotiation made us lose Mossoul, it is this Dominican who kept Mossoul under French influence”.

The Dominican Fathers had been in Mossoul since 1750. They began their mission through humanitarian aid and spiritual services. They were desperately in need of help in their mission, particularly with the young, the poor, and the sick. They called us to help. Responding to the call of the Dominican Fathers, the first six Sisters of the Presentation under the direction of Mother Saint Gelas left Grande Breteche on September 15, 1873 after renewing their vows and having received the blessing of the Reverend Mere du Calvaire, Mother General.

Having disembarked at Alep on the 30<sup>th</sup>, they left immediately in a wagon under the direction of Father Duval on October 17<sup>th</sup>. They crossed the Euphrates and reached Beridgite, a small Turkish town where the mission of the Dominican Fathers began.

On November 7<sup>th</sup>, after several hours of navigating in the Tigris, they arrived at the port of Mossoul where the Dominican Fathers, the Armenian bishops, the clergy of various rites, and the consul of France came to welcome them to bring them to the Latin chapel where all intoned The Deum. The mission of the Sisters had extended to the north of Iraq and to the south of Turkey first and then was headed to the south with the river of paradise, the Tigris.

On August 4, 1885, the first Iraqi Sister pronounced her vows.

From then on, they went to live in a new world where they journeyed from surprise to surprise. The study of the Arabic language gave them many worries. They began by teaching manual work.

The printing shop established by Msgr. Amanton, the first Dominican Apostolic Delegate of Mesopotamia, published writings in various languages: Chaldean, Syrian, Turkish, and French.

The works of the Sisters of the Presentation were to collaborate with the Dominican Fathers: two classes, a preparatory school, an asylum, a course to teach manual skills and a dispensary, the foundation of a confraternity of the daughters of Mary, the Dominican tertiaries, the first elementary school for girls in the north of Iraq.

## **The War of 1914**

It is August 6, 1914 when Mossoul was informed of the outbreak of the war. The Sisters did not stop their classes at the beginning, but the search through the houses started immediately among them. They searched everything- They broke through the walls to uncover all the hiding places; it is true that among the Dominican Fathers their own tombs were not respected.

In the middle of the retreat of the Sisters before the feast of Presentation, on November 20<sup>th</sup>, the Reverend Father Berre was interrupted in his preaching. The yard was full of policemen.

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, the Sisters had to seek refuge at the Apostolic Delegation.

On February 24, 1915, the order was given to the Sisters to leave the country – on foot or on horseback, with the exception of the native Sisters. The convoy consisted of: two Dominican Fathers and thirteen Sisters of the Presentation under the guard of four police agents.

In 1921, the original work was maintained by the tenacity of Sister Fidelia nevertheless persistent the asylum and two classes with a total of 50 children, a workshop of 30 students and the confraternity of the children of Mary with 25 followers. Finally, 24 orphan escapees from the massacre of the Turks having suffered from hunger, maltreatment and sick with an embittered condition remained together around Sister Fidelia.

When this terrible war ended, the Mother General Leon Joseph sent a group of Sisters on October 4, 1921 to start the mission again.

The reorganization of the mission of Mossoul after the war was made on ruins. The population of Mossoul who had changed in the midst of sufferings had lost confidence. In the presence of such a disaster, there was no discouragement among the Sisters.

The works began at the end of January 1922 in the midst of unnamed misery and at Easter about a hundred children were perseverant, but the discipline was mediocre and the work was much more. Little by little, the meetings of the third order resumed and the gathering of the Christian mothers. At the beginning of 1932, the mission counted 320 children.

In 1942, the last three Sisters had left Mossoul for Bagdad.

In 1927, the Dominican tertiaries formed by our Sisters spread their teaching in the villages and were reunited to a congregation (Sisters of St. Catherine of Sienna).

## 2. Bagdad

On January 21, 1880 Msgr. Lion, Apostolic Delegate and administrator of the diocese asked for Sisters of the Presentation in order to establish the same works as at Mossoul. The four Sisters arrived in Bagdad on December 29, 1880. On January 18, 1881 after the Mass of the Holy Spirit, they were settled in a simple house situated in a zone near the Shordja "Christian Zone". It was the first convent established with the help of the Carmelite Fathers who had their church in the same zone. They opened classes in the college of the Center for 300 students, two French classes and three Arabic classes.

On the verge of the war of 1914, the works of the Presentation at Bagdad were in full prosperity. There were 50 orphaned girls, 45 workers in the workshop, 90 consultants each day at the dispensary, 800 girls in the classes.



On November 25, 1914, the persecutions began. The Carmelite Fathers were expelled from their convent under the pretext of having written against the Turks. Mother Rose Marie, foreseeing the fate which threatened her Sisters dared to go find the governor and express the following "we will not leave; we are here for service of God and of France. Let us organize your hospitals we will care for its poor wounded without exception of nationality". She obtained the following answer "yes I know that each Sister is worth 10 nurses. I will try to speak in your favor".

These were the tragic events that followed against the Christians on November 2, 1915: numerous Christians, above all the Armenians were stopped and sent into exile.

In Bagdad, the Sisters began their mission in three principal areas of Bagdad: school at the Center school at the Oriental gateway (Bal Al Sharqi) and one a little farther at Karadeh.

## 1. The way of Christians (Ackidal Nassarah)

At the end of the first World War, the commander of the French army and the British general Maud payed tribute to more than a dozen Sisters of charity of the Presentation at Bagdad and at Bosra for their valiant services during the war: receiving the wounded of two camps and caring for the sick affected with cholera and their services in the Public Hospital during the years of 1912 to 1937.

With this encouragement, the Sisters continued working with greater vigor. They accomplished numerous projects including: The reopening of the school of the Center, the first important mission carried out by the Sisters in 1881, closed in October 1973. Then a section of the boarding school near the Latin Church of (Shordja), a sewing and embroidery workshop in 1886, an orphanage for girls in 1890 as a result of the spread of cholera in Bagdad and the increase in mortality, there were many orphan children.

Establishments in 1911: a center for the care of blind orphans, a project founded by Father Pierre, a Carmelite brother.



## 2. Bab El Chargy School

When Faycal 1<sup>st</sup> was named king of Iraq in 1921, he honored the Sisters. He ordered the Orfelly family to give to the Sisters a plot of land in front of the gateway of the old town of Bagdad in the region of Bab El Chargy. It was a marsh for cows and buffalos. Access to this place was by the Tigris with the so-called “kufah” or hump.





*Quelques filles de classe  
terminal, fête fin d'année  
La deuxième à droite*

*" Zuha Hadide "*

*La fameuse architecte*



The Sisters then obtained the authorization necessary for the building of a convent and a school on this site. The marsh was filled, dried and the construction began in 1923. The Sisters lived in mud houses and received the children and youth to teach them the principles of reading, writing, and catechism. The mission grew in scope and the school was enlarged to successfully complete its educational tasks.

In 1928, a school was opened and progressed with time: kindergarten, elementary school, then a junior high school and high school with literary and scientific sections. A boarding school for girls was opened, then an orphanage was opened. The rooms of the Sisters were on the second floor of the elementary school in 1952 on top of the chapel of the convent.

## **The nationalization of schools and the orphanages**

In 1973, nationalization descended upon all our schools. In 1986 with the unpleasant changes for our Sisters, the community of Bab El Chargy was transferred to a small house. This was bought and became the community Mar-Behnam, the name of the Church of Catholic Syrian Rite in a quarter (Ghadir) near the Christian majority to bring the spiritual, moral, and maternal support to the families and to the churches located nearby. In 2003, the Sisters left because of the war, political climate and lack of security.

After the nationalization, the Sisters continued to carry out their duties in management or teaching in the elementary school until their withdrawal in 2006 in order to keep a Christian perspective, especially teaching catechism.

In the year of 1992, the property of the school buildings at Bagdad and Bassora were returned to the Congregation.

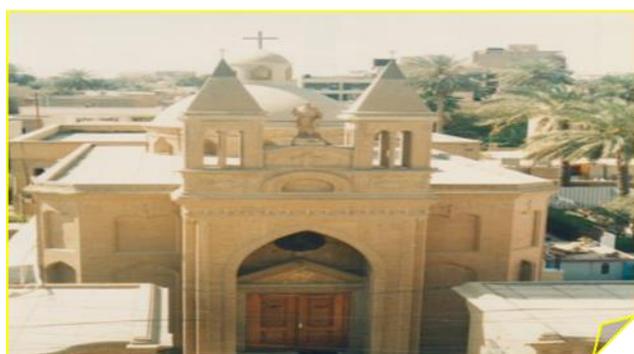
The Elementary School of Karrada Bagdad was transformed into an orphanage to avoid nationalization; after one year, the orphanages were nationalized in Bagdad and Bassora, thus the school of Karrada considered as an orphanage returned as our own property. The congregation loaned the building to the Sisters of Mother Teresa for their social work and residence. In 2005, the Nunciature bought two large houses for mother Teresa's Sisters and they returned the school which required major transformation and repair.

In the year 2010, our society has not renewed the contract with the minister of education concerning the school of Bassora, therefore they left the school in a lamentable condition, also requiring major repair. But it must be said that the college Bab El Chargy since the nationalization was administered by the minister of education from 1993 until 2003. We were to receive a more or less exact amount of rent. Therefore we made a settlement for contracts with the minister of education. It has been five years and we received nothing. This situation is part of the degradation and corruption in the country.

### **3. Karrada - a quarter very close to the Tigris**

Karrada is a quarter very close to the Tigris, the famous historic river.

In 1928, one of the benefactors of the Sisters offered them land at 5 km. south of Bagdad. They began the new project by constructing a church in 1931(Christ the King) as well as a small house and an elementary school (St. Thomas Aquinas) in 1932 a workshop for sewing and embroidery.



In 1938, a house was built for the Sisters, Christ the King Community.

In 1962, a house was constructed for girls discerning their vocation and desiring to join religious life (Juvenat). The same year a nursing school was opened and a small house was bought which served as a home for the nurses.

When the Sisters of the Presentation arrived in Iraq, they had to work hard to accomplish their mission and they succeeded in becoming leaders in the domain of education and the pioneers in the area of healthcare such as it was at Mossoul, at Amara or at Bassora and Bagdad and other countries. Such was the challenge such is the same challenge today because the faith is manifested particularly by our the joyful service in the mission of the Congregation and through it, the Church. Close to the poor, sick, youth, the little ones and adults, all our actions are able to reveal the Kingdom if they witness to the love of God in the everyday of our lives.

## Healthcare

The mission of the Sisters in healthcare at Bagdad had a very humble beginning followed by several courageous stop overs. In 1891, was the opening of a dispensary with two small rooms to prepare the medications and to care for the various injuries and sufferings of the sick poor. Monsignor Duriere presented his request to the Mother House. Four sisters were sent for the civil hospital of the town in 1914. The Sisters obtained permission to care for the wounded of the war. Their devotion was recognized and appreciated by all.



Les deux pieces pour le dispensaire



In 1924, the civil hospital at Bagdad having become the royal hospital cared for 3114 sick without counting the sick being cared for at the dispensary.

In 1936, the contract of our Sisters with the royal hospital ended, when nurses arrived from England. Our Sisters who were nurses were given the responsibility of its administration.

In 1937, our Sisters withdrew in view of building a small private hospital. In 1940, Corpus Christi was the day of the blessing of our modest dispensary for the poor; during the year of 1943, the number of sick who were cared for was 16,939. This number increased the following years.

In 1947, the dispensary was enlarged in view of a new clinic.

On April 3, 1950, Monsignor Du Cheyla loaned us 5,000 dina to continue the construction. On November 30<sup>th</sup>, the blessing of the new clinic was done by Monsignor Du Cheyla.

In 1954, was the blessing of the maternity ward and the birth of the first baby, Joseph.

In 1957 was the construction of Bethlehem, free rooms with 6 beds and a delivery room.

In 1963 was the placing of the first stone of the future hospital, Saint Raphael.

In 1968 was the inauguration of Saint Raphael's Hospital.

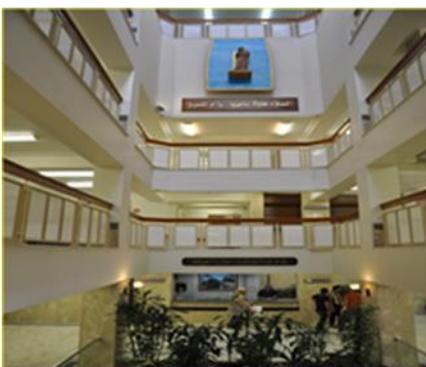
In 1977, was the conversion of a place in the hospital to reopen the maternity section which had been closed in 1975.

## Enlargement of Saint Raphael's Hospital

The increase in the number of sick, which surpassed the capacity of the hospital, led us to widen our tents and to enlarge the hospital in order not to refuse the sick who come from far especially during the night and from situations of insecurity. March 2001, witnessed the placing of the first stone for a new building, which was going to be joined to the old building of the hospital.

On January 21, 2011, the blessing of the new building was done by the Latin Bishop Monsignor Jean Sleiman and the Chaldean Patriarch, the Cardinal Emmanuel Delly, secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio, and the Dominican Father Youssef Thomas were present at the celebration. Today Saint Raphael's Hospital is well equipped. Its reputation brings sick from all the towns of Iraq and several embassies, foreign enterprises and companies who have made contracts, which permit the admission of their sick at the hospital.

Situated in the center of Bagdad, Saint Raphael's Hospital offered its services and care: surgical, maternity, clinic for extreme cases, dispensary, offering their services without any distinction of religion, but with special attention to the poor who are admitted gratuitously, also the clergy, men and women Religious and their families. The personnel of the hospital and close members of their families profit also from the gratuity of its services. This establishment offers better care in order to relieve as much as possible the suffering of their sick in a humane and charitable spirit. The old and the new building contain 90 rooms for the sick. Today the kind deeds and the mission of Saint Raphael's Hospital touch not only the sick, but also pay a good salary to the 375 employees.





*Décoration de Sœur Maryanne Pierre  
CHEVALIER DE LA LÉGION D'HONNEUR*

## **Mission in Turkey**

### **1. Van**

This country, which has known nothing except heartbreak in its history keeps even in its monuments the traces of its Christian past. The apathetic population is composed of Turks who do nothing and Armenians who do not dare to work out of fear of being plundered and massacred.

Mother Marie Anastasi founded the mission in 1901. In 1914, eight Religious were in charge of a school and an asylum with 500 students:

- A workroom for dressmaking and lace.
- Workshop for fabrication of rugs.
- An orphanage of 36 girls, made necessary by the massacres of 1895.

### **2. Seert**

The house of Seert is located in Kurdistan. It was founded by the Dominican Fathers in 1879. Three sisters of the Presentation who numbered three, under the direction of Mother Appolinus assured the following services:

- Orphanage for girls after the massacre of 1875 following the model of that which the Fathers had for the boys.
- Two schools for girls, with approximately 400 students.
- An asylum with 200 children.

- A workshop for fabrication of rugs.
- A dispensary- 300 sick in need of care, consultants, medications and a Sister to visit the sick at home.

The Sisters were helped in their mission by 10 tertiaries who were teachers.

One of our native Sisters had been a witness to the massacre of nearly all the Christians of Seert (Armenian, Jacobite, Chaldeans, and Syrians) about twelve thousand. A Chaldean priest, a former seminarian of the seminary of Mossoul had been cut in to pieces on a road of this town; also, the Chaldean Archbishop of Seert was shot. Many men had been subjected to horrific torture.

## **Missions of the Presentation Discontinued by the War of 1914-1918**

If all the missions of the Presentation in the Orient had suffered from the war, three had been ruined and could not open their doors. These were Van, Seert in Turkey, and Amarah in the south of Iraq.

## **Returning to Iraq**

### **3. Bassora**



At Bassora, the mission of the Sisters of the Presentation was established on February 2, 1906 under the direction of Mother Adele.

In 1906, the religious obtained land at Bassora next to the Latin Church of the Carmelite Fathers. They involved in numerous projects. In 1906, the residence for the Sisters, a dressmaking shop, and in 1910 a small clinic

In 1912, an elementary school was opened for boys and another for girls in the populous quarter of Ashar. The King Faycal 1<sup>st</sup> insisted on visiting the works of the Sisters at Bassora.

On December 7, 1928 he made his entrance into the classes of the Presentation to the cry "long live the king" right from the start of his entrance. He expressed all his satisfaction and brought his offering for the orphans the following day.

In 1928, the mission of Bassora-Ashar counted:

- 250 students of all religions and even 50 pagans.
- 40 orphans.
- 12 Jewish or Muslim boarders.

Around 1958, the convent as well as St. Joseph's School was transferred from ancient Bassora-Ashar toward Manaoui Pacha Road on July 14<sup>th</sup> and complimentary classes for the girls opened. The schools had been nationalized but the Sisters had remained at their teaching posts. In the year of 1987, the mission of Bassora was closed due to the Iraq-Iranian war.

The mission had been reopened in 1997 as a kindergarten in the locations and spaces of the convent; in 2005 we had not renewed the contract with the minister of education for the kindergarten and subsequently in 2010 for the school. The school required Major repairs. By the effort of Sister Suzanne, the reparation was realized by the organization McDonald and they even equipped us with all that was necessary for the kindergarten. The work was finished in 2012. This same organization built a large room for celebrations and for the welcome of groups and a small house for the family of the caretaker. Today the number of kindergarten children of St. Joseph's number about 450; they have lots of space to work, to celebrate and to play.

From 2002 to 2010, the Sisters have received university students coming from central or meridian regions of Iraq, the majority being Muslims. The office of Christian worship and other religions is at home with us. This office has built a small house at our place for another employee.





*Un groupe d'étudiants de l'institut des Beaux-arts, ont présenté quelques activités aux enfants de notre Jardin, en Mars 2019*

## 4. Amarah

On December 10, 1907, Sister Mederic and another Sister withdrew from the mission of Bagdad. They were welcomed by about fifty Christian families carrying lanterns and torches leading them to their little house while singing Arabic songs.

- The Sisters put themselves into the task- school and catechism- about 30 little girls
- The dispensary.

The war of 1914 came not only to stop the upward progress of the mission, but ruined it for good.

## Mission in Syria

### 1. Kamechlie

The establishment of the Sisters was made at Kamechlie by the request of Msgr. Jean Hebbe, bishop of the Catholic Syrian Rite, previous secretary of Msgr. Berre at Mossoul. In 1933, a small girl's school was founded by three Iraqi Dominican Sisters, but in a country with a French influence. It was necessary to replace these former sisters by French Sisters.

In 1936 the mission counted:

- A school with 290 students. The school began to prepare for the Arabic Certificate and French Certificate as well as a certificate of general education.

- Another girl's school
- 18 young Assyrian orphan girls.
- A boarding school with 13 children.

## 2. Derbessie

It is a town of 12,000 inhabitants who are insistently asking the Sisters to open schools and other religious and educational works.

In resume, the effort of the Sisters of the Presentation in the Orient occupies an important place in the French missionary work that extends its network from the Persian Gulf at the Black Sea and at the Dardanelles to the Mediterranean at the Persian frontier.

The Presentation with its social organizations and hospital personnel shows that modern France always merits her ancient name of **“Country of Charity”**. One line suffices to underline the spirit of sacrifice of the Sisters of the Presentation in the missions in the Orient.

## 3. Alep

There was the construction of a convent and a school, but with the torment of the Second World War, the French Religious were expelled. Our Sisters put the mission back into the hands of the Armenian Sisters. The mission in Syria was closed by the consequences of the Second World War. The Sisters had four schools. They entrusted them to the Armenian Sisters of Syria.

## Lebanon



## A Small Historical Reminder

In Lebanon, the Catholic school constitutes a strategic choice of the Church and contributes in maintaining its living presence despite an increase in the challenges which multiply in quality and intensity.

Our Sisters, since the beginning of the presence of our Congregation in the 1960's have had the concern for excellence in the areas of education and the edification of humanity. They were called for education in several places.

At first, in the year of 1964, the first community that was started at Beirut was Annunciation School in Museum Road, composed of four Sisters with Rose of the Cross, as Superior.

- From 1964-1970 our presence at the high school of the Museum ( Badaro, Beirut) was dependent on the Syrian Catholic Patriarchate to help strengthen the membership and the national cohesion and at the same time spiritual and cultural openness. In addition, our Sisters established various courses of action. Among others, they launched the audio-visual for the first time, equally at the elementary school Al-Beshara of Syrian Catholics for the Syrian refugees and the poor in the road of the Museum at Beirut.
- From 1964-2010 at the school Mar Behnam (Fanar) in collaboration with the Catholic Syrian Church, our Sisters have assured the young of various confessions and families of modest means and the poor, an education at all levels. They paid particular attention to Christian and civic instruction, and to the values which are typically Lebanese and also of freedom , democracy and non-violence.
- In 1965-1976 we also had a fruitful mission at Saint Rita's School – Dbayeh- in the region of Kesrouan dependent on the Marianite Maronite Order who understood the educational process going from nursery school to high school. We were under pressure to leave this school during the war due to security concerns.
- In 1996, we had the transfer of the residence for young female university students at Verdun (Beirut). It was a French Patrimony taken by the Dominican Sisters of Notre dame de Tourelle. Sixty girls were staying in this residence and the community was available to welcome and accompany them at all times in order to convey the dynamism of our charism and respond to the advices that Marie Poussepin gave to the first Sisters whom she sent. This lasted until 2010 when France sold everything.
- The closure of Mar Benham school in 2010 and the closure of the residence for young students of Bail at Verdun were two ordeals that really saddened us. However, the Lord was always there to support and help us. Our community had then been welcomed among the Capuchin Fathers at Hamra (Beirut) in 2010 where we responded to the welcome of young immigrants coming from Africa and Asia looking for work in the homes of some families, and any other person in fragile condition. In this way we responded according to our possibilities despite all the difficulties of daily life in a non- Christian environment to animate the parish( Masses, preparation for the sacraments, baptism of adults Confirmation of several adults, conference etc)
- Today the Congregation is still present in Lebanon. It is a small community in the region of Hazmich-Beirut. It is true that there are only two Sisters, but they are committed to the parish Of Mar Takla Church at Hazmich and they always want to be near to the people, attentive to their problems, sharing their lives and their worries.

In fact, a decline in the social and political influence of Christians, dwindling by reason of emigration which continues from the Lebanese Christians due to weakening of their position at the end of the war (1975-1992). But we always live in the hope of the future.

Our house of Ghodrass is nearer to completion. We are close to the finishing touches of the restoration which will open the door to youth groups (retreats-prayer and recollection). It is therefore practical wisdom that the community needs to be a true place of hope, of fraternal communion, a community of faith and celebration, of contemplation and prayer and of listening to the Word of God. Where we can learn to put in common the apostolic concern for the world.

A narrow way for the community, but we firmly believe that we will be able to have the light, provided that our arms do not lower.

Prière du Rosaire dans les familles  
durant le mois de Mai



## Jerusalem

In the year of 1964 was the opening of the house of Abraham in Jerusalem (at that time the region was part of Jordan). The community was composed of three Sisters attached to the Vice Province of the Middle East. With the war of 1967 and the Israeli-Arab political problems, it was necessary to break the ties with this mission.

## Returning to Iraq

Other departments and projects developed at Karrada in the course of last year.

1. New building for the community of Christ the King at Karrada-Bagdad.



The Sisters participate in the mission of catechesis in the parishes. They welcome the young of other parishes for retreats, prayer and sharing of the Word. They also visit the sick and refugees.

2. In 2005 was the opening of social work (Casa Famiglia) which has admitted girls aged 3-15 who come from families with economic difficulties or other problems.



3. Kindergarten and elementary school at Bagdad- Karrada.

In 2005, the kindergarten reopened in order to hand out an assignment to the children in three languages: Arabic, English, and French.

In 2007, the children passed into the elementary school with the completion of the work of major reparation on the old building of the St. Thomas Aquinas school.



## Another missionary effort

In the year 2000, the jubilee year of the coming of Our Lord into the world, the Vice Province of the Middle East decided to reopen the mission at Mossoul. A house was opened for the welcome of students of the towns and villages who were studying at the University of Mossoul since participation in the activities of the parish was very much alive in the faith.

With the incidents of violence since 2003, the students were no longer able to stay at Mossoul. In 2005 with the worsening of the violence, the Sisters went up toward the north at Duhok taking a location in a small house.

In 2011, construction of a house and a residence for the young Christian girls who come from the villages of the region of Amadiéh and Zahko was accomplished as well as a large room for recollection and retreats.

On October 31, 2015 the ceremony of the blessing of the new mission at Duhok took place – convent, residence for the young girls, large room. It was presided over by Father Gadir, Carmelite, delegated by monsignor Jean Seleiman, Archbishop of the Latin Church in Iraq and in the presence of Sister Maria Escayola, Superior General, and Sister Mariamma Paul, General Councilor.

## A new mission: Jordan



The Italian hospital had been founded at Amman by an Italian general surgeon, Dr. Fausto Tisio, in 1927. It was the first hospital in Amman and the pioneer institution that belonged to the Italian National Missionary Association (ANSM).

The Cambodian Sisters had been responsible for it for 70 years. The hospital had been entrusted to the Vice Province in 2007, having

heard of the reputation of Saint Raphael in Bagdad.

The Congregation had accepted to take on the mission of this hospital in view of helping the refugees who were coming from countries with wars and troubles – Iraqis, Palestinians, Syrians- and other poor foreigners as well as the poor sick Jordanians. There we receive contributions from the humanitarian organizations and Caritas. There are now four Sisters of different nationalities (2 Indian Sisters, one Colombian Sister, and one Iraqi Sister).



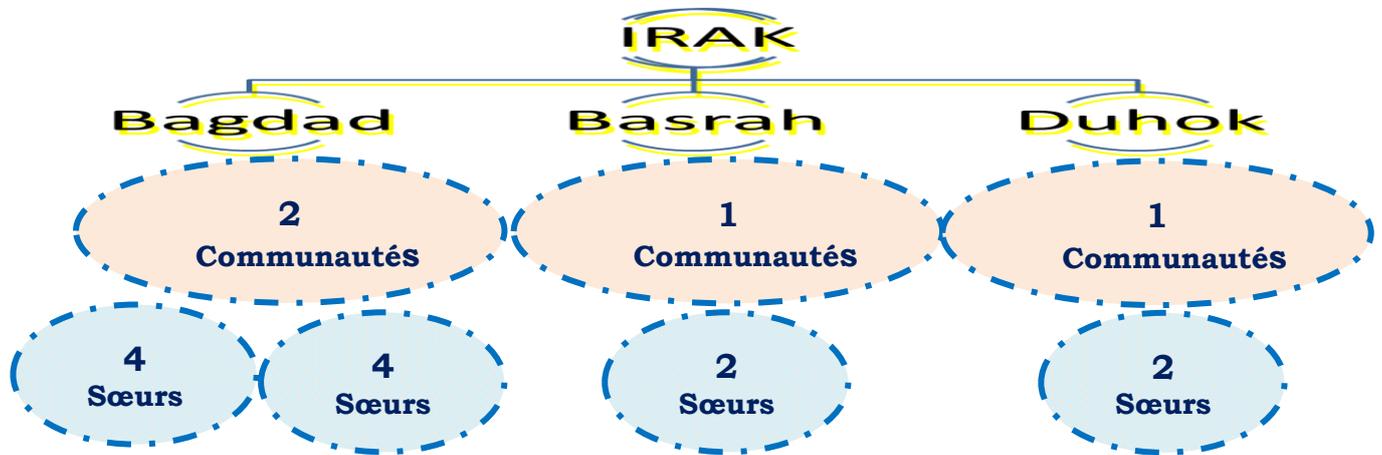
Their mission is above all to keep watch over the good administration of the hospital, to maintain order



and to keep a close eye on the hours of service of the nurses and to keep a human and Christian atmosphere around the sick and the poor in all sectors. One Sister tries to become familiar with the Iraqi refugees by well-organized visits, listening to them and seeing their needs and tries to help them materially and morally. The hospital has celebrated 90 years of service at Amman. The King , Abdullah 2cnd., honored the president of the association (ANSMI) and the distinct work of the hospital.

## Today we are

A small number of 19 Sisters: 18 Sisters of perpetual vows and one of temporary vows with a median age of 69, four of whom are older- of 85 years and are in need of several kinds of help.



## Presence in Bagdad

- ❖ Christ the King Community of elderly Sisters
- ❖ Sainville Community
- ❖ Our large chapel is open to the people for daily Mass
- ❖ Residence (Casa Famiglia) for girls of families of modest means
- ❖ Hospital Saint Raphael where two Sisters work-directress and person in charge of maternity
- ❖ Kindergarten and elementary school where two Sisters work-directress and treasurer
- ❖ House to welcome youth groups for recollection and retreats

## **Presence at Bassora**

- ❖ Community Saint Joseph
- ❖ Saint Joseph Kindergarten where two Sisters work in the direction and careful observation of the quality of education and pedagogy of the children and good relations with the parents
- ❖ Social pastoral ministry and Confraternity of the Good Samaritan

## **Presence at Duhok**

- ❖ Community of the Guardian Angel
- ❖ Residence for university students
- ❖ Welcoming various groups for prayer and recollection
- ❖ Visit and support to families, visits to the sick

## **Presence in Lebanon**

- ❖ Participation in pastoral activities
- ❖ Social pastoral ministry

## **Presence in Jordan**

- ❖ Attend to the good direction of the Italian hospital
- ❖ To be close to the refugees and support them

## **Our aspirations**

- ✚ To be able to continue our missions in the Middle East by the solidarity of the Congregation
- ✚ Some changes in our lifestyle and mission for a better radiance which calls forth the vocations of today
- ✚ Maintain the witness to the Risen Christ daily in our lives
- ✚ The peace and stability of our countries

The route has not been easy in the Orient. It was not the same as today. In general, the mission of the Sisters everywhere was evidenced by its works and witness of fraternal and charitable life in a world of Muslim majority and with churches of different rites and each rite with its faithful. The principal objective of the Sisters had always been to carry the knowledge of Jesus Christ there where they were called. Today we continue to work for a better life for everyone in our environment of mission. We try to build a culture of peace and fraternity by the strength of the Holy Spirit who lives within us. With the situation of instability, which is ours, we rely on the Providence, the solidarity in the Congregation, and the courage of the Sisters to bring our missions for the glory of God.

References:

Pacifiques Conquetes, by Raoul Mercier 1949 concerning the first foundations

The archives of the Vice Province