



1866 - 2016

150 ans de Service
150 years of Service
150 Jahre Dienen

Versailles

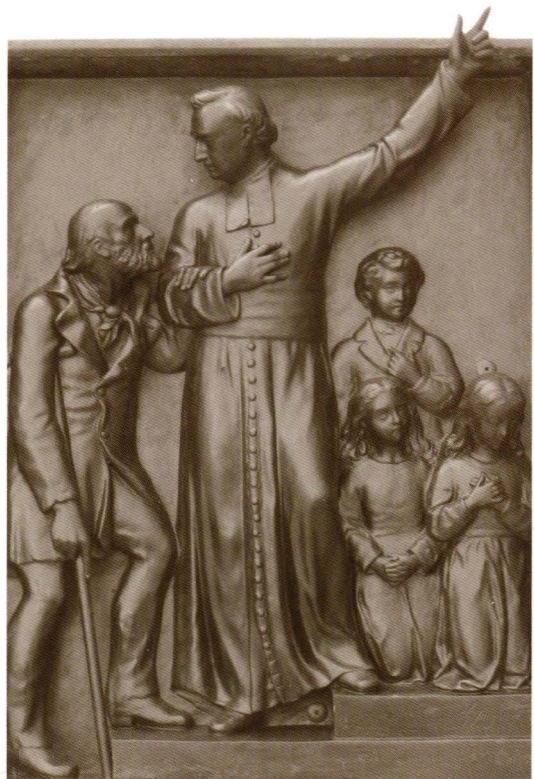
Chigwell

Wien

Sœurs Servantes
du Sacré Cœur
de Jésus

Sisters of the
Sacred Hearts of
Jesus and Mary

Dienerinnen
des heiligsten
Herzens Jesu



"Comptez sur le Cœur de Jésus et mettez la main à l'oeuvre"

"Trust in the Heart of Jesus and go to work"

"Vertraut auf das Herz Jesu und geht an die Arbeit"

Victor Braun

Federation Victor Braun

Versailles - Chigwell - Vienna

Préface

Ce livre se veut un regard sur les 150 ans d'Histoire des „Filles du Père Braun“ à travers laquelle nous découvrons la prévenance des Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie.

Tout au long de ces années nos Sœurs ont livré leur vie à l'amour de Dieu dans le service des plus démunis.

Notre souhait est de poursuivre ensemble ce cheminement en Fédération dans l'actualisation du Charisme légué par notre Fondateur.

Foreword

This book is an excellent look back at the 150 years history of our three Congregations. This challenging history shows how the Sisters were guided by the Love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Our Sisters totally gave their lives in serving Jesus Christ in the Poor.

It is our prayer that we continue to hold the Vision and Spirit of our Founder Father Pierre Victor Braun as we journey together to serve Jesus Christ in the Poor and those marginalized in society.

Vorwort

Das vorliegende Buch versteht sich als Rückblick unserer 150 jährigen Ordensgeschichte in drei Kongregationen. Die wechselvolle und zugleich kraftvolle Geschichte zeigt deutlich die Führung durch die Heiligsten Herzen Jesu und Mariä.

Unsere Schwestern haben ihr Leben im Feuer der göttlichen Liebe hingegeben, um Jesus in den Notleidenden bis in den Tod zu dienen.

Es ist unser Gebet, dass wir mit der Vision und im Geist unseres Stifters Vater Peter Victor Braun weiterarbeiten, wenn wir gemeinsam auf dem Wege sind, um Jesus Christus in den Armen und denen, die an den Rand gedrängt werden, dienen.

St. Peter Victor Braun

Sister Mary Margaret

S. M. Adelinde Grouhls

Versailles

Chigwell

Vienna

May 18th, 2016

in the year of compassion

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Peter - Victor BRAUN

a convinced Believer,
a zealous Priest,
a courageous Founder
in the Service of LOVE.

* Saint-Avold, 5th July 1825

† Argenteuil, 18th May 1882

A Man of his Country and of his Time

Doubtless, **Peter-Victor BRAUN** was a citizen of his century and of his Country. He was born in Lorraine, near the river Moselle - a country which since its beginning had experienced many invasions. This French region lies on the border of Germany and Luxembourg.

At that time the emperor Franz-Joseph reigned in Austria, and Queen Victoria in Great Britain. On the other hand France was on the way from a Kingdom to a Republic, then again to an Empire and again to a Republic ... Victor Braun experienced the horror of war and the revolution of 1870 in Paris. He started his work when the industrial development began and when the labour movement was born.

The Church in that century experienced opening of the 1st Vatican Council and growing **Veneration of Mary**. The Virgin Mary appeared in 1846 in the village of La Salette, and in 1858 in Lourdes. In 1854 the dogma of Immaculate Conception was proclaimed. The **Veneration of the Heart of Jesus** was also growing and in 1856 this feast was officially declared.

Victor Braun was a convinced believer, an enthusiastic priest, a courageous Founder and, as is seen by his whole life, a true **servant of the Gospel**. When we remember him, we admire the strength and energy coming from his faith.

Abbé Kremer, with whom he was united in friendship since his childhood wrote about him: *"He had a clear and extraordinary intelligence ... I ask myself how it was possible for him to do such great works with such weak health ... But he had his heart united with the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and from hence he got his strength."*

The founder of the institute of the Brothers of Saint Vincent De Paul, the Priest **Le Prévost**, underlined his strength of will, his simple heart and the continuing goodwill of Victor Braun. Concerning his state of health he adds: *"He is a weak tool, but it*

pleases the Lord to accomplish masterpieces with such a tool ..."

A Faith – nurtured in the family

Peter-Victor Braun was born on the **5th June 1825** in St. Avold and he was baptised on the same day in the Abbey St. Nabor. He got his first Christian name from his godfather Peter and his second from his godmother Victoria. Generally he was called Victor. He was the 9th child from 11 siblings, coming from two marriages.

His father had a shop in Hombourg Street (now Rue Poincaré). He traded in wine, seeds and spices. He and his wife, Marie-Gabrielle, née Richard, lived a deep Christian family life. Every evening, before praying the rosary together, stories from the life of saints or from different missionaries were read so the children could dream.



Font in St. Nabor

Notwithstanding, his constitution was weak, Victor lived a very happy childhood in the midst of his brothers and sisters. He was lively, cheerful

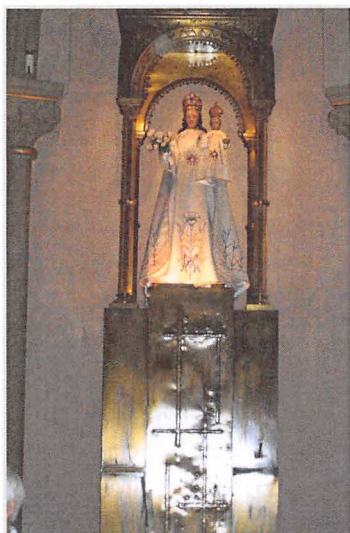
and loved to play jokes. From this comes his cheerful character and his sense of humour which can be seen in all situations.

He experienced a deep faith and lived a devout life. He discovered the catechism with heartfelt joy, and soon he had the steadfast wish to become a priest. During his whole life he was always convinced: ***"God is Love! In every moment of our life His Grace is available for us, so that we can bring fruits of salvation."***

We want to add that he often listened to tales from his

grandmother: during the revolution the family hid several priests and the statue of the holy virgin was rescued from a brook and kept in a safe place. Later it found a worthy place in the Chapel "Mary of Good Help" (Notre Dame de Bon-Secours)

Doubtless his ardent veneration of Mary dates from this. Later he said in the simple language which he always kept: *"Do*



not do anything without the protection of Mary, and without having asked her; if she makes your matter hers, then the success is sure - however big the difficulties might be."

A Vocation – matured through hardship

When he was a child, Peter-Victor loved to meet his friend in a grotto near the city, there they played at saying Mass and preached. Both wanted to become priests, and in 1839 both entered the Junior Seminary in Metz.

St. Mary's Statue in St. Avold

Unfortunately Victor fell sick three times and had to interrupt his studies. Each time he returned home to recover and as soon as possible he went again to Metz. Because of his weak health he feared that he would have to give up his dream of the priesthood.

But these difficulties contributed to the deepening of his faith. During times of recuperation, he walked alone and meditated, often in the Chapel of Mary of Good Help.

He studied with diligence and in spite of all the unfavourable circumstances he was able to enter, at the age of 18, the Senior Seminary. Again he fell sick and was forced to

continue his Theology studies at home and alone. The curate from the Parish of St. Avold and Anton, his brother, who entered the Jesuits, supported him.

Because of Victor's health-problems, Monseigneur Dupont de Loges delayed a long time before he allowed be ordained to the priesthood. At last he agreed, mainly because of the moral and spiritual qualities of his seminarian.

Finally on the **14th June 1851** Peter-Victor Braun became a priest. The authenticity of his vocation and his perseverance had overcome all obstacles.

At last he could write to his parents: *"Now I have arrived where the loving and fatherly providence of God wanted me to be. The way was marked by difficulties and obstacles... I ask my dear little sister Mary to light a candle in the Church of Valmont and to pray there, to the holy Virgin, for me."*

A Priesthood - by listening to the Spirit

After his ordination, Victor Braun became a religious teacher in the school of St. Augustin in Metz. Soon he became deputy - headmaster. Although this is not exactly what he wanted to do, because he was attracted by the work in the Parish, he gladly accepted this place. He was much loved by his pupils and highly esteemed by the parents. This was proof of his great educational talent.

Two years later the Jesuits took over the leadership of this school and Victor Braun was given the task of founding a new institute: the School of Notre Dame. Because of financial difficulties this school existed for only two years.

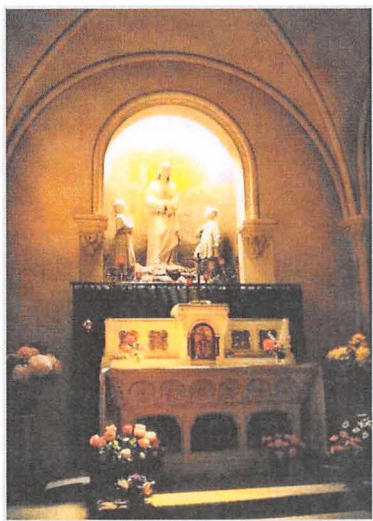
With the consent of his Bishop he accepted the call to the Diocese of Nancy and became headmaster of the boarding school of "Providence" in **Flavigny**. Soon afterwards he became curate in the Parish and was responsible for youth-work.

He was very much attracted by the religious life and considered entering the "Fathers of Mercy". But his state of health did not allow it.

In Nancy he discovered the apostolate for the "Poor and the Working Class". He went to Paris to continue with this work. At first he became the spiritual leader to a "House of Correction", where young girls, who were sentenced for different offences, were kept. His kindness worked real miracles with these girls. He wants to give them, hope and dignity again.

But again he had overdone his strength and fell sick and had to return to his family.

We are now in the year 1859. Thanks to the loving care of his sisters and of his niece he recovered quickly. During his



La Salette

convalescence he worked with diligence because he did not want to be idle. He was given a new duty by the Bishop and was entrusted with the very new Parish of **Dourd'hal**.

In 1861 he thought that he was completely recovered and decided to go to Paris to realise his wish for a religious life.

There he received news of the recently founded Institute of the Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, whose motherhouse was beside the Church of **Our Lady of La Salette**. He contacted the

Superior General, Father Le Prévost, and 1862 he was admitted.

Now he really had found his way. He did not dream any longer of bringing the Good News to people at the ends of the earth because he understood that his mission was to accompany

the poorest of his fellow human beings.

He was assigned to "**Our Lady of Grace**" (Notre Dame de Grâce) to work with working class people Grenelle area. He organised a home for apprentices, an evening school, a library and a savings bank. At this time about 20% of the population of Paris spoke German, so it was only good and just to offer them the sacraments in their own language.

Father Le Prévost wrote in one of his letters: *"Father Braun hardly arrived when some Germans of the area attached themselves to him. They urgently asked him to organise preparation-retreats for the Easter Communion - and so we did. In 2 days, Five hundred attended, and afterwards even more. He has now to care for at least twelve- to fifteen hundred souls ... It seems that he is entrusted with this work by Providence; he has only a little free time."*

Victor Braun abandoned himself completely to these groups, which gathered together in a hall belonging to the Church in Fondary Street. His example was the Cure of Ars. He was regularly in the confessional in the Church of Our Lady of Nazareth and in the Church of **Our Lady of Victories**. During the cholera epidemic he fainted several times during his service. He recognised the great need and abandoned himself without hesitation. This was for him the greatest joy.

Happily he wrote to his sisters and his niece: *"God blesses my service ... if only I could be stronger for this rich harvest of souls!"*

A Spiritual Experience

Victor Braun wanted to be able to respond in a better way to all the needs of his German speaking communities and that is why he attended in 1864, a conference which took place every year in Germany - the "Day of Catholics". There in Würzburg he listened to a lecture concerning the **Sacred Heart of Jesus** - and

was deeply moved.

Later he said: *"I am ashamed to admit that I lived several years of my priesthood without understanding this beautiful and comforting devotion ..."*

At the end of this conference little pictures were distributed and on them was written the promises given by Jesus to



Paray-le-Monial

Margaret-Mary. He was especially impressed by: *"The sinners will find in my heart the source, and the endless ocean of mercy..."* and *"I will give to the priests the gift to touch the hardest hearts ..."*

When he came back to Paris he received a letter from his cousin, the Jesuit Eugen Braun, and there he found a little picture with the same promises. We have to add that this was the year **1864**, the year of the beatification of Margaret-Mary.

This coincidence encouraged him. From now on he applied his devotion to the Heart of Jesus in all situations. He recommended all his friends and acquaintances to do the same, and he committed himself to do the utmost to make this devotion known.

***"The adorable Heart of Jesus
is the furnace of pure love
it is the true guide to life!"***

"Trust in the Heart of Jesus and go to work!"

With this same attitude he participated, in 1873, together with the Provincial Superiors from France, England and Austria at the international pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial. He had the joy of celebrating the Holy Eucharist on an altar situated exactly on the place of the apparitions, and there he put a little heart with the names of all the Sisters of those days and a copy of the first Constitutions of the Institute.

A Foundation because of Necessity

With the foundation of the "German Mission" Victor Braun helped the young apprentices, but he recognised the risk which the young girls took as they arrived every day in Paris - without money, without employment and without shelter. He contacted different convents to explain the situation, but nobody saw any possibility of being able to do anything to help.

After much thought and encouraged by his Superiors, he established with three young women, whom he knew, a home for "Domestics without Employment". To that end he leased a modest flat, which quickly becomes too small for all the girls who arrived, so they had to move from Ulmer Street to Humboldt Street (today: Rue Jean Dolent).

To establish the spiritual basis of this new institution, Victor Braun was anxious to teach his co-workers so he gave lectures concerning the Christian Life. Soon these young women decided to change this little community into a real religious order. He agreed, and on the 17th of October 1866, the feast of the Blessed Margaret-Mary, he consecrate them to the Heart of Jesus. This day is seen as the Founding Day of the Congregation.

From this day on the young women call each other "Sister", they all wore the same simple dress and he worked out a programme for them which became more and more precise. In the end he wrote a real Rule of Life.

Father Victor Braun loved to say to them: *"You, as Sisters, should not be recognised by your habit, but by the love you have for one another."*

Thus he became, almost against his will, the Founder of a Congregation, only because he wanted to answer the needs of the time. With great attention he cared for the sister's spiritual life and he reminded them again and again:

"GLORY! LOVE! THANKSGIVING! REPARATION!

to the Heart of Jesus!

***If ever you forget this four-fold aim,
you will not have any longer the right to exist."***

A Congregation, serving and poor

The guiding principles Father Victor Braun has left, are advice for life as disciples, as apostles and as witnesses. He recommends:

"Come to the Heart of Jesus, this divine furnace and there pray and ask and let yourself become enflamed so that you may be able to pass this flame on ..." Again and again he reminds: "Praise Jesus Christ in your hearts and by your life!"

Very often he points out the name of the Congregation: ***"Be worthy of that beautiful name you have ... not ladies, but servants!"***

Always in service

To live in the footsteps of Christ means to work with Him for salvation, to adore God and to serve the neighbour. He said: ***"To become tools for the divine mercy we have to be empty of ourselves; and only a few among us are truly humble"*** and he

added: *"Don't be attached to things which could bring you praise; the work to which nobody pays attention, that you should love the most ... God withstands the haughty, but gives grace the humble ..."* With emphasis he recommends to live simply and modestly: *"Remember not to leave poverty, until now it is your strength and your virtue ..."*

The Virgin Mary - an example

Father Victor Braun reminds his Sisters: *"Your vocation is to praise, to love and to adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and to praise, to love and to bless the Immaculate Heart of Mary, his holy Mother."* He addressed the Virgin Mary in his prayer also with other names: Our Lady of Good-Help, comforter of the afflicted, Our Lady of La Salette, Reconciler of sinners, Our Lady of Victories. He recommends the Sisters to call upon her with the name: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, because: *"by her and in unity with her we shall go to the Heart of Jesus."* He urges the Sisters to meditate on Mary, the best example, **the servant of the Lord.**

In the School of the Saints

With Mary he liked to connect St Joseph, the modest, attentive and faithful servant. The Sisters were urged to call upon him in every need.

The message from Paray-le-Monial changed Victor Braun. In his letters he often quoted words of St. Margaret-Mary: *"Each of you receives from our Lord this beautiful mission, as his blessed servant Margaret-Mary: My divine Heart is so full of love for all, it cannot keep the flames of ardent mercy, they should be distributed by you ..."*

Victor Braun was also inspired by the Congregation of the Visitation, so he gave the Superiors, St. Jane de Chantal

(1572-1641) as an example. In his advice to the Sisters he refers again and again to St. Frances of Sales (1567-1622). *"Be equable ... keep a holy, heartfelt cheerfulness, which nourishes the strength of the spirit and builds up your neighbour ... live merrily, have an open heart; and even if you can't be always cheerful, be courageous and faithful..."*

In all things concerning dealings with the poorest he referred to St. Vincent of Paul (1581-1660): *"Your greatest*



Vincent Paul / Frances of Sales

concern should be, after the love of God, to serve the poor with gentleness and cordiality ..." He also recommended: *"Look for the poor wherever they might be; your love for them makes your generosity,"* and courageously he adds: *"All we own is the heritage of the poor."*

As with most female Congregations of that time, Father Victor Braun adopted for his Sisters the Rule of **St. Augustine**. There he found advice to live in poverty: *"It is better for us to reduce our needs than to increase our wellbeing"*, and also for the life in community: *"Remember that the great aim for which you are united in this Congregation is to live in the House of the Lord in peace and harmony, and that you are in God one heart and one soul."*

An Answer to the Needs of the Times

The work with the domestics developed in the "Shelter of the Sacred Heart". Many more people joined. Within six months the number of the Sisters increased to fifteen and, with their help about 200 girls found employment. Once again it was necessary



Relief Victor Braun

to move, this time to two different places, but situated close together: Rue du Théâtre and Boulevard de Grenelle.

At this time also the Sisters were asked for other services. Sick people or people who knew of sick people approached them. Father Braun recognised God's will: ***"My daughters, it is the will of God, you will care for these destitute people ..."*** And when in the neighbourhood a worker died, the Sisters saw a new challenge. Father Braun said: ***"My daughters, it is the will of God, you will be mothers to these orphans."*** In no time the Sisters were responsible for about twenty children.

The poverty was extremely great, but nobody thought of complaining. The furniture was very modest. There was only one cupboard and a board on struts serves as a table. In the evening mattresses were rolled out on the floor. Each day a Sister went to the market to buy food as cheaply as possible, and also to take whatever is given to her, to supply the household. Whatever the Sisters brought to the Community is already gone, now they depend on donations.

Step by step Father Braun recognised that his Foundation which was growing in members, had a vocation for different services - as was required by the society of the time.

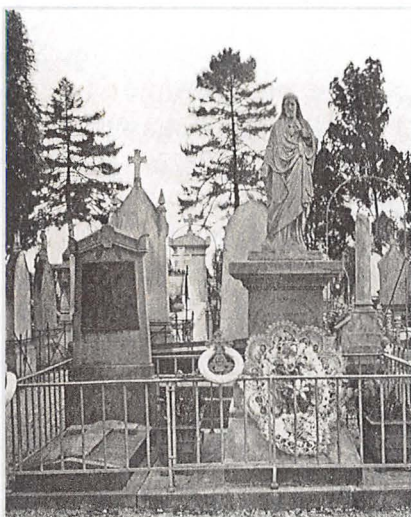
By his living faith he committed to the memory of the Sisters the *"spirit of loving sacrifice"*. He did not hesitate to remind them over and over again:

***"For you there are only two thing in this world:
Jesus Christ and the Poor."***

It was his heartfelt wish that by the presence of the poor and by the different services carried out by the Sisters, they might realise God's love for them.



*Tombstone of Victor Braun
in the chapel of the convent
in Versailles*



*Former tombstone of
Victor Braun in Argenteuil*

An International Vision

In spite of all the difficulties in the beginning, the Congregation developed very quickly. In addition to the two communities in Paris it was soon necessary to establish new foundations.

In 1868, in **Sèvres**, the first profession, and also the official recognition of the Institute by Father Mabile, Bishop of Versailles, took place. There, the Sisters were confronted with difficulties from the neighbourhood and in 1869 they had to move to **Saint-Cloud**. In the same year some Sisters were asked by the local priest to go to **Argenteuil** to care for the poor and sick. When suddenly, in 1870, war broke out, the Foundation in **Loiret/Pithiviers** was postponed, but it would be realised one year later.

The war and the siege of Paris was a time of great suffering, but in these circumstances the Sisters had the opportunity to prove their commitment, both in their houses as well as in the military hospitals. During the battles their four houses were destroyed, but because of this it was possible to establish foundations beyond the borders.



*Stratford
church of St. Francis*

An Irish Sister, provided with a permit from the English Red Cross, wanted to see Father Braun, who was serving in his hometown as a military pastor. She had to pass through London and there she put herself under the protection of Father Manning - these circumstances led to a Foundation in **Stratford** and later in **Homerton**.

She also travelled to Germany



First little convent in Kühr

to see the German Sisters who had had to leave France, and lived then in **Cologne**. This led to the Foundations in **Darmstadt** and in **Niederfell**.

When finally peace was made, an Austrian surgeon who appreciated very much the commitment of the Sisters in caring for the wounded in the military hospitals, asked for a Foundation in **Vienna**, Rudolf's Hospital. Soon afterwards also **Gainfarn** was founded.

Father Victor Braun could write:

"Our Congregation is built up by different nationalities and because of this also by different characters and views ... which are bound together to into a beautiful bouquet ... Our Community is not national, but really Catholic."

An Unexpected Development

The little Community, which was consecrated in 1866 to the Heart of Jesus, on the recommendation of Canon Condant and Father Mabile, became on February 28th 1868, a Congregation of Religious Sisters.

But in 1872 all the Sisters were still Novices. The first Professions were made in the Parish of Stratford, East London and in the same year in the Basilica of Argenteuil.

Constantly new Candidates arrived and fifteen years after the Foundation the Institute already had 400 members. This unexpected development fitted very well with the different and increasing demands.

It was impossible to answer all requests and sadly Father

Braun had to refuse some of them. He accepted some requests solely because of his apostolic commitment - he himself would never have chosen them. Some decisions were taken because of gratitude to benefactors: for example the presence of the Sisters in Seminaries.

During this period, joy and suffering were close together. The Congregation was now organised by Provinces and Mother Gertrude was installed as Superior General. Unfortunately she died in January 1881. Elections for the second Superior General had to be prepared rapidly and in March, Mother Francis de Sales, the Provincial Superior of England, was appointed.

With all the travelling necessary for his many duties, Father Victor Braun became weak. From Pope Pius IX he received the apostolic blessing for his Congregation and shortly before his death he had the joy of receiving a special blessing from Pope Leo XIII.



Mother Gertrude

On the 18th of May 1882, the Feast of the Ascension, Father Victor Braun left this world, suffering and exhausted but calm, whispering to those around him the words of St. John:

***"Little children,
love one another."***

A Way of the Gospel - always valid

The spiritual Foundation of Father Victor Braun was marked by the circumstances of the time and by his personality but principally based on the Gospel and, because of this, it is timeless.

It is possible for each baptised person to anchor the Christian life in the contemplation of the Saviour's love; each one can learn from serving Christ and can participate in His saving mission; each one can be a witness of the Lord's boundless mercy by a simple and cordial presence, to be near to the suffering, the destitute and to all those marginalised by society. So it is possible that everyone can feel their own dignity, and everyone can use their gifts to make a better world.

Father Victor Braun recommended to his Sisters: *"to be at the same time Martha and Mary", he told them: "The active and the contemplative life will be united in you to a perfect apostolic life - and this is the participation in the work of salvation."*

The life of Father Braun shows that it is much better to rely upon God's energy than on our own.

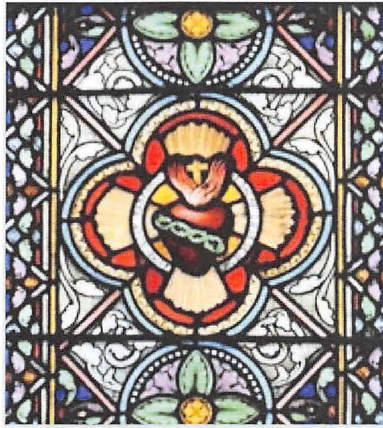
By **faith** Father Victor Braun received courage and perseverance, and this light allows everybody, whatever their situation, to choose this way of life.

In his total **commitment** to Divine Providence he found courage and strength for new beginnings, and this same confidence is, for us all, the way to true freedom.

His firm decision to offer himself to the Service of the Heart of Jesus guided him to realise projects which he would never dared to plan. In commitment, in generosity, in sharing and in respecting differences. The prophets of hope and fraternity recognise one another.

Today as in Father Braun's days, it is all about:

*"Follow Jesus Christ,
eyes fixed on His Heart,
and have with Him only one will."*



Chapel in Versailles

2nd part

A WORK TO CONTINUE

**in the Adversities
of History**

1882 - 2003

Foreseeable Tensions

The death of Father Braun, less than sixteen years after founding the Congregation, threw the Sisters in great confusion. Certainly, structures were established, but nevertheless everything was still weak. The personality of the Founder and his presence were very important for the spiritual dynamism and for the unity of the Institute in face of such a rapid development.

In spite of this, in all three countries, many entered in the novitiate. The number of Sisters was increasing and the communities had a great vitality. And finally the celebrations for the first Eternal Vows were prepared.

Since 1884 the Motherhouse had been in Versailles. The construction was very expensive and the Congregation was confronted with financial difficulties. The Superior, Mother Francis of Sales, had to go to Charolles, this caused problems both in Vienna and in London. Divisions occurred and some Sisters were outraged.

It was not possible to prepare the General Chapter, which was summoned by Mother Martha, in a friendly atmosphere. Relationships became more and more tense and the Provincial Superior from Austria did not come to the General Chapter. The separation of the Austrian-German branch became official by a letter from the Archbishop of Vienna to the Bishop of Versailles.

At the same time the English Sisters complained because of a lack of communication with the Motherhouse in France and the desire to be independent grew. In 1903 the separation of the English Province took place, after the Cardinal-Archbishop of Westminster requested it from Rome.

After these two separations each Congregation developed their own mission in total independence. Each of these countries was affected during the 20th Century by two world wars.

But the original charism stayed alive and could happily

develop in the prevailing cultural sphere.

A Century of Growth in different Ways In France:



Motherhouse in Versailles

The Motherhouse was, from then on, in Versailles and also the Orphanage, but it took 20 years before all debts which arose from the construction were settled. Sisters worked day and night. Apart from that the separation was also difficult.

But step by step calm and composure returned, the joy of working was stronger than discouragement. The spiritual life became normal again and it also deepened. In several districts new communities were founded - to answer the needs of the time.

The Institute is recognised

The Constitutions were presented in Rome, and Mother Camilla had the joy of receiving on the 29th March 1899 the

Decree of Praise - the first step of Recognition. Some modifications were requested and changes in the Congregation were to be taken into consideration. But probably because of new canonical norms, the recognition was not granted until the 28th January 1917. For seven years there was a period of probation.

Because of the war, and also because it was necessary to receive from each Bishop in whose Diocese there was a Community, an affirmative reply, the final recognition arrived only on the 1st of May 1934.

50 years later on the 1st of July 1984, the new rule of life which was worked out together with the Sisters was acknowledged by the Vatican.

Meantime the Congregation was allowed to transfer the mortal remains of Father Braun from the cemetery in Argenteuil to the Chapel in the Motherhouse. This ceremony took place on the 19th September 1925, one hundred years after his birth, on the Feast of our Lady of La Salette.

The beginning of the 20th century

In this period we enjoyed both suffering and joy. Since 1905 it was necessary to deal with the law of **separation of Church and State**. This law seemed to endanger the religious Institutes. It was necessary to look for safe places in **Belgium**: in Bizet, in Ghlin and in Grâce Berleur. Some years later, when it was forbidden for religious women to teach, the orphans at school-age had to go from the Motherhouse to Wervicq.

In England, about 40 Sisters wanted to remain with the French Congregation. They stayed in the Communities of the French Hospital and of the Care Home in Brighton. Two further Communities were founded in **London**, one to receive young girls looking for work, and the other as a workshop for sewing and embroidery.

At the same time new houses in the North of France were founded: in Bousbecque, Ronq, Halluin, Hazebrouck and in the surrounding area of Paris: in Brunoy and Rueil Malmaison and also in the East: in Saint Mihiel.

During the **First World War** (1914-1918) there was much fear, suffering and pain. Some Sisters were killed, several houses were damaged and others were confiscated and used as barracks for the military. Communication was extremely difficult and the Communities were totally isolated.

But everywhere there was the opportunity to help, to support the population and to care for the wounded soldiers. Half of the Motherhouse was a military hospital, about 130 Sisters were caring tirelessly in 19 different locations for the war victims.

When the war was over, there were many orphans everywhere, so the Congregation decided to open a new orphanage in Argenteuil, in Grand Rue, next to the Basilica.

Over the following 20 years there were many Vocations and new Communities were opened, about 40 in all. Sick people were cared for, both at home and in hospital, children were housed in orphanages or with godparents and young girls in difficulties were also looked after.

Then the **Second World War** (1939-1945) started with all its radical changes.

After some months the Motherhouse became again a military hospital for wounded soldiers. Later the Sisters cared for refugees.

Several of our houses were bombed. The Sisters lived in private households so they could continue to do their different duties. Some Communities had to be closed and in the occupied zone the Sisters fled along with the rest of the population.

As a precaution, the Novitiate was temporarily transferred

from Versailles to Lozère in Saint Rome de Dolan. The orphans too were evacuated for a time, but shortly afterwards they were able to return to the Motherhouse. Fortunately, there, it was possible to hide Jewish girls among the rest of the children, so they escaped deportation. Later this fact was to be acknowledged in the memorial of the "Just".

When at last peace was declared, all work started again with great energy, especially the work with the youth, activities with the Catholic Action, for example: "Watchful Souls" and "Joys of France", and also holiday-camps.

So at the start of the second half of the 20th century the Congregation was flourishing and growing. All problems, even financial, disappeared. Communities became active and there were many vocations. The existing activities were flourishing and new ones were started. The courage to work in an apostolic way was encouraged and was supported by a zealous spiritual life.

An apostolic way was encouraged and was supported by a zealous spiritual life.

Missions in Africa

Inspired by the Encyclical "**Fidei Donum**" the Sisters went, in 1954 to Conakry, **Guinea**. There they opened two Communities. The Sisters worked in a hospital and also established a school which included a boarding facility for children who had to travel a long distance. The Sisters worked for 13 years in Guinea, until they were expelled. At that time all foreign missionaries had to leave the country.

But this was the opportunity to establish Communities in other countries. Firstly in **Mali** in 1968. The next year in **Niger** and then the **Ivory Coast**. Whilst there, the Sisters worked in the health system, they supported women, and they took over different duties in the parishes.

The Amalgamations

Twice the Congregation has been asked to receive Sisters from smaller Institutions, who wanted to be involved in a more active and larger group.

The first time it was the Congregation of the "**Christian Unity**" from Mende who amalgamated in 1961 with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Communities of this Congregation were mainly in the district of Lozère, where it was founded in 1696, but they were also present in the districts of Gard and Bouches du Rhône. At first the aim of this Congregation was to help protestant girls who converted to the Catholic Church. Later, nearly all the Sisters worked in education and formation, in large and small schools in the surrounding area.

Having explored for some years and following a stay of different Sisters in our Communities, the "**Comforters of the Heart of Jesus**" also amalgamated with us in 1974. This Congregation was founded in 1873, and had Communities in the South of France and also in Belgium, which was also their Motherhouse. This Congregation came from the same background as ours. They wore different habits, but their spiritual direction and their active life was quite similar to ours.

The Development in today's world

Years have passed and life in society is changing. As well as all the traditional opportunities, new ones are growing for the Sisters to get involved in, with actual guidelines and orientations from the Church.

"Catholic Action" is being developed, and in some Communities the youth-work within the parish is of great importance. Adults who want to deepen their faith, whilst still being involved in the world of work are being accompanied.

Some pastoral areas are called "workers-mission".

Christians want to reach people who are often far away from the church, in their daily life, in their poor quarters and at their modest employments. Therefore Sisters take employment in public institutions as nurses, helpers and cleaners, some work in industrial places. For the same reasons some Communities live in social-flats, to live with their neighbours in friendship and closeness. And, really, by this closeness relationships are built, deeper than ordinary brotherhood, and some people find their place in the church again.

At the same time in our own Caring-Institutes and Schools more and more lay people are employed, and step by step it is possible to hand over the management to them.

Entries to the novitiate are becoming fewer, and over the years a great many Sisters have reached the age of retirement. This does not mean that they are idle, but they are changing their activities. Many engage themselves in voluntary work with local Christian or non-Christian associations, and in a spirit of solidarity they put their services to great use with the poorest of modern society.

This integration in the world leaves its mark in the common prayer, and by "the heartfelt Communion with Christ the true needs of our sisters and brothers are seen."

in Great Britain

A Century of Growth (1903 - 2003)

The sudden outbreak of the Franco Prussian war in the summer of 1870, brought about an unforeseen change of direction for the Servants of the Sacred Heart.

Josephine Gibson, a young Irish Sister working with the British Red Cross in Paris crossed the English Channel bringing sisters to safety and this led to the founding of the English mission. An increasing diversion of vision between London and

Paris resulted in 1903 with a decree from Rome on March 19th 1903 recognising a separate congregation known as the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Mother Winefride Tyrell was appointed as the first Mother General. On the Feast of the Sacred Heart, 1903, the sisters changed to a new habit. The first ceremony of profession and clothing was held in the oratory at Chigwell on August 28th, 1903. Nineteen sisters made final vows, seven made first profession and one postulant was received. The opening of the novitiate on March 4th, 1904, was another milestone for the new Congregation.

The Heart of the Congregation - Education, Rescue, Nursing



Sacred Heart

by Leslie Langille Benson (1885 - 1972)

At the end of the nineteenth century England had begun to recognise the special needs of children with learning difficulties. The Catholic hierarchy turned to Religious orders to provide schools for these children. The Servants of the Sacred Heart had opened Pield Heath School in 1901 for children with special educational needs and it was in this specialised field that the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary were destined to make their

strongest contribution to Catholic education in England.

In Ormskirk, Lancashire a school for girls with learning disabilities was opened and soon, boys joined them. The girls transferred to Allerton Priory in 1915, The same year a school in Dunmow was opened.

There was also much concern about the plight of students with learning difficulties, who, when reaching the age of 16, were cast adrift from the system and, especially for the young women who were often ready targets for exploitation and abuse. The Rescue Home at Sudbury, Suffolk, had been given to the English Province of the Servants of the Sacred Heart for the care of women with mental disabilities. This now came under the care of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

In 1906, the House of Providence, Durran Hill, Lancaster, was re-opened, for rescue work or shelter for poor unprotected girls, supported by laundry work. Then a Home in Barrhead was also opened.

In May 1908, Mother Sylvester was named Superior General at the first chapter to be held in Chigwell Convent.

In 1908, Chigwell Convent was designated as the Mother House of the congregation. A separate wing was built to accommodate the increasing number of boys in the ophthalmic school. And finally in 1911, the long awaited opening of the convent chapel in Chigwell took place.

The First World War, 1914 - 1918

Despite the difficulties imposed by the 1914 - 1918 war situation, the Congregation continued it's commitment to special education, opening other foundations in the period 1910 -1918. Residential schools in Ormskirk, Liverpool, Allerton Priory, Dunmow & Buntingford.

On November 20th, 1916, Mother Winefride Tyrell died in

Hillingdon. A woman of integrity, single-minded, uncompromising, she was deserving of the great confidence placed in her by the first Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. We look to her as co-foundress of our Congregation.

The number of women uprooted by the events of the war increased tremendously and another rescue home was needed in London which resulted in The Cedars in Belmont Hill being opened in 1918. Over the following years, new foundations were made and extensions were added to several existing houses.

New Developments

In 1912 two sisters began a service of nursing to sick miners and their families living in and around Cardiff. In 1918 the sisters moved to a large house at 18 Cathedral Road, donated by the Bute family. Such was the beginning of the Lord Ninian Hospital which was to become a byword for health care among the people of Cardiff and beyond.

Soon a hospital in the Outer Hebrides, a small , remote island, off the coast of Scotland was opened.

The proclamation of the Irish Free State in 1922 raised the urgent question of unmarried mothers and their babies. In 1922 the first home for unmarried mothers was opened in Blackrock, Cork. This was the first such place in Ireland. Two more homes were opened in Roscrea in 1931 and Castle Pollard in 1934

The apostolate of teaching in parish schools, and in special education, also continued to grow with sisters teaching in a number of parishes in UK and Ireland.

In 1927 St Patrick's Open-Air School, in Hayling Island was opened. Two years later in 1929 a fire broke out at St Patrick's. Sr Celestine lost her life amid efforts to save the children and the community. It is believed she died attempting to rescue the Blessed Sacrament from the Chapel. As a result Mrs

Weguelin donated a property which became known as St Dominic's Open Air School, Hambledon, Surrey.

In 1934 the first purpose built convent opened in Dagenham, Essex. where sisters taught in the Parish Schools.

At this time the sisters also became involved in taking care of domestic arrangements at two seminaries, one in Sussex and one in Lancashire.

The Institution is approved

In 1936, news came from Rome that the constitutions had received Papal approval.

In 1937, Mothers Laurence, Antonia and Rosalie made a pilgrimage to Rome and were received in private audience by the Holy Father Pius XI. They returned home via the convent in Versailles where they were most affectionately received by the French Reverend Mother General, Mère Blandine.

The last pre-war foundation was made in Old Colwyn, Wales, in 1938.

The Second World War, 1939 - 1945

During the war years the Sisters continued in their missions, many were evacuated for safety reasons. One of our convents in Rotherhithe, in East London was badly bombed and the sisters walked with the children all the way to our convent in Lewisham. Although several convents were damaged no one was injured.

During the war another Mother and Baby Home in Kendal was opened and the Home Office asked the sisters to take charge of an approved school for girls in Sussex.

Just as the war ended in 1945 a new school for women with special needs opened in Northumberland. After 1945 there were

several new developments and schools were opened in Loughton and Harlow. In 1955 St. Theresa's School, Lewisham was officially opened.

Missions abroad

In 1953 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary the Superior General responded to a request for sisters to teach in Parish Schools in California and so this mission began.

In 1956 the first sisters went to Zambia to begin the mission work in that country. Followed in 1965 by a brief mission in Zimbabwe.

After Vatican II

After the 2nd Vatican Council there was a great deal of change in Religious Life worldwide. Many changes were for the better however there was much unrest and many sisters left the congregation and the numbers applying to become religious dropped dramatically.

This drop in numbers of sisters together with new social changes which were changing attitudes about the way to care for children and adults with disabilities resulted in a number of our larger convents being closed. Smaller communities were opened in response to present day needs. In many cases the sisters are a presence in the area where they live and many take on new missions in pastoral work and providing spiritual guidance.

The drop in vocations resulted in the large novitiate building no longer being needed. This was changed in to a retreat and conference centre which is still being well used.

The Horizon is growing

At the 1990 Chapter it was agreed that we would begin to accept Zambian women into our congregation.

Also at the 1990 Chapter in response to a request for help from a Salvadoran priest a small band of sisters set out for the war-torn country of El Salvador.

In 1994 a combined mission with our sister Congregations from France and Austria opened in Colombia.

In 2000 a mission in The Philippines was opened.

By the year 2000 the congregation had now been planted in four continents, most recently in Asia, in Cebu, the “jewel of The Philippines”. There we are engaged in urban development in the poorest sites of the city.

In 2001 our first Ugandan home-based care programme for HIV/AIDS patients was started near Kampala. A second foundation in the north of the country is bringing new hope and practical support to the thousands of displaced Acholi people who still live in fear and dire poverty despite the recent signing of the fragile peace accord.

Here in the UK and Ireland new beginnings in Belfast, Roscrea, Worksop and Sheffield witness to our readiness to go forward in hope when called upon to respond to the signs of the times and the needs of the church in a rapidly changing multi-racial and multi-cultural society.

We continue to be ‘small but mighty’.

In Austria



Convent and Church in Vienna

his Excellency Bishop Dr. Eduard Angerer. Mother Flora Nießen, she was until then the Provincial Superior, was chosen as Superior General.

Since 1873 the Sisters worked as nurses in the Rudolf - Hospital, and since 1888 in the new built "Emperor Franz Joseph Hospital". The third public hospital in which the Sisters started to serve was the "Wieden-Hospital".



Sisters in Rudolf - Hospital

In the year 1893 the Austrian Province was declared independent from the Motherhouse in Versailles by his Eminence the Cardinal and Archbishop Dr. Anton Gruscha. The Provincial House became the Motherhouse of the Austrian Congregation. On July 3rd 1893 the first General Chapter was held to choose the Superior General; the president was

In the same year - 1888 - the property in Landstraßer Hauptstr. 137 was bought and the new Provincial House was built; it was blessed and opened in December 1890.

Further areas of activities were the so-

called "Confraternität". In 1892 the public poorhouse in Scheibbs (lower-Austria) was taken over; there a school for needlework was opened.

After many difficulties, with public approval, the foundation in Königshüttte, in Upper-Silesia, could be opened on November 15th 1894. So the Sisters arrived in the East of the German Empire.

When the Sisters began to work in the prison-hospital (Inquisitenspital) of the Vienna Court, they encountered quite other surroundings.

The area of duties of the Sisters grew constantly. Many implantations were founded together with Kindergartens, sewing- and housekeeping schools, private nursing stations and old peoples' caring homes. All these institutions were established in Austria, West-Germany, Upper Silesia, and in today's Poland and the Czech Republic.

So we find the Sisters in Kühr, Niederfell since 1872, caring for people with special needs. Also on the Rhine, on the Moselle, in the mountains of Taunus, in the area of Rhön, in Swabia and on the Saar the Sisters were active. Many vocations were recorded.

Construction of the "Heart of Jesus" Church

The Sisters were happy that the Lord had blessed their work richly, and so they decided to construct next to the Motherhouse a Church which should be open also for the population in the surrounding area.

In 1904 the foundation-stone was laid and 1906 the "Heart of Jesus" Church was blessed and inaugurated by Bishop Marschall.

In the war year 1915 German Sisters were expelled from the Motherhouse in Versailles in France; they formed together a

small Community in Luzern, Switzerland, and with the permission of the Holy See and as the Superior General in Versailles wished, this little Community joined the Austrian Congregation according to the canonical law.

During the first world war the Sisters worked as nurses in the military hospital of the Parliament in Vienna.

Until the second world war Sisters worked in all Viennese public hospitals; on average 650 Sisters were active as nurses.

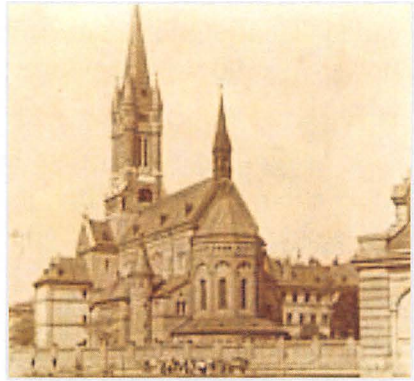
The way of the Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus led them also to Rome, the eternal city; there they cared in the "Anima" - the German Priest College - for priests in their ongoing studies.

On June 19th 1934, His Holiness Pope Pius XI accorded our Constitutions the acknowledgment of the Church. The Congregation is of Pontifical Right with simple vows under the guidance of a Superior General.

Hard Times

Until then the Congregation grew steadily; but history shows that so many flourishing works and institutions became victims of the NS(national-socialist) -time.

In July 1938 the Kindergartens and schools had to end. Parts of the Motherhouse were confiscated by the NSDAP (the national-socialist party). In the eastern part of Germany the Congregation lost several houses. The Sisters were interned in camps.



Heart of Jesus Church 1906

In 1944 air raids on Vienna started. When the "Emperor Franz Joseph Hospital" in the 10th district of Vienna was bombed five Sisters lost their lives while caring the wounded.

The Motherhouse was heavily bombed as well. Parts of the house lay in ruins and the church was heavily damaged. Two sisters and four soldiers were killed. The work in the military hospital was interrupted, but some weeks later taken up again in the intact part of the house.

1945 - at last the war ended. The damaged Motherhouse was rebuilt again. And so developed after the second world war the "Heart of Jesus Hospital"; it was enlarged in 1971 by extensions with modern operations rooms and well equipped laboratories and x-ray facilities..

Communism in the now Czech Republic and in Poland:

1950 the Sisters from our foundation in Krawarn (CZ) were handed over to the camps from Römerstadt and Bila Voda; and 1954 all Sisters from the Silesian houses - except Beuthen - were interned in a camp near Bromberg. The whole property was taken by the Polish state. 1957, after many and long negotiations, some of the Sisters who were in Polish camps could come home to the Motherhouse.

1967 we could fetch back the last Sisters from the internment camp Bila Voda in the CSSR; there they were together with members from other Congregations.

Time of Hope

The necessary enhancements of the "Heart of Jesus Hospital" came to an end in 1973. We had to give up our once flourishing activities in Viennese hospitals because of the advancing age of the Sisters. The same fate happened with our foundations in Germany. Step by step we had to hand over to employees in our own "Heart of Jesus Hospital", as well as in the Kindergarten and in the after school care centre.

Under difficult circumstances the responsible Sisters of the Polish Province succeeded in buying a plot of land in Dylaki and to build a house near to Opole. The construction was finished in 1978 and on the 6th of May in the same year the house was blessed by Bishop Wacław Wycisk. This house is dedicated to the Heart of Jesus and became the Novitiate of the Polish Province.

Because of the lack of novices the Austrian Province was disbanded on the 31st December 1978, the German Province on the 17th October 1980, and all houses became dependent from the Motherhouse in Vienne. 1996 the Polish Province became a region.

During the General Chapter in 1984 the duty of the delegates was, besides choosing the General Council, to revise afresh the Constitutions and the Directives and to send them for acknowledgement to Rome. On the 14th of July 1984, we got our Constitutions back, finally acknowledged by the Congregation for the Religious.

In August 1986 it was no longer possible for Sisters from another Congregation who held our House in Beuthen to go on with the secular institute. Three Sisters from our Polish province took the leadership of the care-home; otherwise the house would have become the property of the Polish state.

It was a great joy for all Sisters when on the 20th of July 1989 three Sisters from Poland made their first vows and two

Austrian Sisters their eternal vows; and another 13 entries followed.

Because of the political changes we had the possibility of getting back our seized houses in Poland. In 1990 it was possible to reopen a house in Krawarn - Kouty CZ. The presbytery of the filial Church became a Convent and there three Sisters serve the children and the seniors. In the Czech Republic three entries can be recorded since the reopening.

Process of Beatification

for the Founder Father Victor Braun

In the late 1980's the then Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Dr. Hans Hermann Groer, encouraged the then Superior General, Mother M. Agricola, to ask for the beatification of the Founder of our Congregation, Father Victor Braun. On the 17th of October 1991 the opening of the Diocese's investigation took place in Vienna. Many documents and historical facts were brought together and about 12 years later, on the 9th of June 2003 the closing of the investigations were celebrated again in Vienna. Although the decree of validity of these investigations was issued on the 4th of May 2007 in Rome, great administrative difficulties led to the decision of the Congregation to suspend the subject.

The Church's history shows: God can bring us forward on strange ways. The Sacred Heart of Jesus blesses all the sacrifices of the Sisters and the divine providence will continue to care for the little flock.

Steps for a New Beginning

Reopening of the Dialogue

It is above all thanks to the intervention of the great-nephew of Father Victor Braun, Mr Somers, that step by step a connection was built. There were meetings between Austria and France, between England and France and Austria and England. In 1953, in Versailles a meeting of the three Superiors General took place, followed by a second meeting in 1955 in Chigwell.

Since then there was regular correspondence, invitations were issued, and the Congregations sent delegations to the **Centenary Jubilee**. Mutual invitations were given: **1966** in Versailles, **1970** in Chigwell and **1973** in Vienna.

Other celebrations also took place: for the centenary anniversary of Father Braun's death in May **1982** in Versailles, in June of the same year in Chigwell and in June **1983** in Vienna. In 1990 the General Council in Vienna asked for the Beatification of Father Victor Braun, and all three Congregations were supportive.

The Stages of Convergence

Notwithstanding the difficulties of different languages there was a mutual understanding. In **1991**, at the occasion of the celebration of 125th jubilee of the Foundation, there was a meeting in Versailles, and some month later the Process of the Beatification was officially opened in Vienna.

1992 there was a meeting in Chigwell to think about a possible common mission. This gathering was decisive. The whole group realised the history of the separation, spontaneously a touching celebration of reconciliation took place - a sign of a true finding of each other.

Now a common project was decided and for that it was

necessary that the three General Councils meet regularly.

A common prayer was formulated. Pilgrimages were organised: to La Salette (near Grenoble) for the 150th anniversary of the apparition, and in the footsteps of Father Braun in London and in Paris. After the celebration of the Jubilee year 2000 in Versailles, there is a pilgrimage to the Moselle.

In 1997, on the initiative of the Postulator of the Beatification a conference concerning the life and work of Victor Braun was held in St. Avold. Each Congregation sent a delegation of Sisters.

The idea of a Federation appeared for the first time in 1995. In 1999 this idea became more concrete. It was decided to ask all Sisters of the three Congregations and statutes were agreed.

These were accepted and presented to the Congregation of the Consecrated Life in Rome. Very quickly a positive reply was received.



*Heart of Jesus Statue
in the Church*



1973 - 100 Years Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

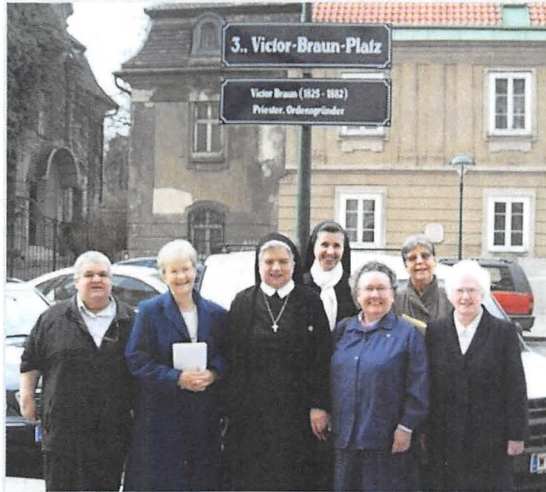
On the 4th of July 2003 the Federation gets Canonical Recognition

After the Statutes, the Federation is "an open way for a continued closer cooperation". It wants to be a source of enrichment for all, a means to "deepen our common spirituality in respecting the differences. Our experiences can be shared and an apostolic presence can be lived in today's world. The Federation wants to be a witness together and with the Church for the merciful tenderness flowing from God's Heart, and so the Federation wants to contribute to the salvation of humanity."

Since 2003 the Federation meets twice yearly. These meetings rotate between France, Austria and England.

The principal motivation for this union is our common spirituality. It is a question of faithfulness to the original intuition and a possibility to live the words of the Founder in our time:

"Since the first day of the Foundation Sisters from foreign countries were accepted; that has to continue ... They lived together in peace, they were one heart and one soul. We will not change this manner, because that would mean to destroy our Congregation."



*Inauguration of the Victor-Braun-Square
in Vienna 2011*



3rd part

PRESENT WORKS

The Federation Victor Braun today

Communities of the French Congregation



Versailles, Motherhouse

VERSAILLES - Motherhouse

In this building the Congregation with the leadership, the novitiate and the orphanage found their home. On Christmas 1884 the Sisters and the children arrived.

During many years the Sisters taught in different parishes of the city and in the surrounding area catechise, they organised holiday camps and cared for the sick ...

Today this holy place houses the mortal remains of Father Victor Braun - and is a place of gathering together and a source of strength for all. Here is also the retirement house for the elder sisters and the house of formation for the young in their internationality.

The Congregation is active in the missions of the local church, in the catechesis for several groups of children, in the spiritual motivation of the inhabitants of the "Foyer Saint Louis" and the "Houses of St. Joseph" - these homes receive people with special needs. The Sisters care also in a professional way for senior citizens in their own apartments; another Sister, a jurist,

works in a interdiocesan office.

As this building is very large, it is possible that students can be lodged during their studies and also different groups are received for days of reflection and spiritual deepening.

VERSAILLES - House Saint Louis



Versailles, House Saint Louis

Since 1930 the Congregation cared for the elder priests of the diocese in two small houses. 1981 the house "Saint Louis" was built in the area of the former senior seminary; this is a retirement house for priests, religious persons and lay

people together.

Here the Sisters have their own community - and according to their possibilities they try to help the other residents in a warm closeness. They can live their own life but can also share in the spiritual and cultural opportunities of the house.

ARGENTEUIL

Since 1869 the Congregation is present in this town. During all these years and in different quarters and in different manners the Sisters offered their services. The Sisters undertook catechesis of the young people, they worked as teachers, helped in families and looked after the sick both in their homes as well as in the public hospital as professional nurses.



Argenteuil

Today the Sisters live in one Community quite near to the Basilica. They have been called to help in the parish in many ways: to announce the gospel by the catechesis, different services in the parish, in the liturgy, they are involved in the work for the young, in the spiritual welfare in

different social institutes. ... The Congregation is sharing also in receiving the pilgrimages who are coming because of the Holy Tunic .

This quarter is in particular multicultural; so the Sisters promote a cordial dialogue and a loving presence with all, especially with the most marginalized.

SAINT - AVOLD

The first idea was to found a community in the house where Father Braun was born. Unfortunately this was not possible, so the three Congregations agreed to buy together a property which Sisters from Luxembourg wanted to leave. This property is quite near to the Basilica Notre Dame de Bon-Secours (Our Lady of Good Help) and to the Peter Victor Braun - street. In 2007 it became the Federation house.

So, the Sisters there are quite happy to receive all pilgrims in the footsteps of Father Founder in the area of the Moselle.

Besides the Sisters are engaged in the mission of the local church, in the liturgy, the choir, the catechism and in teaching and accompanying altar boys and girls. The Sisters maintain a group

for the rosary, they are visiting the sick, they care for the spiritual welfare in the hospital, in a house of retreat, they prepare the



St. Avold

celebration of funerals ...

They want to be available for all, so they organize an "afternoon for friendship" especially for lonely people; crafts are manufactured for the Christmas market ... Many persons share their sorrows and

their joys with the Sisters and they are faithful in presenting them in prayer to the Lord.

SAINT-GERVAIS-les-Bains

It was in the year 1920 that the Sisters arrived in the place; they worked in the parish and cared for the sick in their homes in the surrounding villages. Soon they tried to help in other ways as well. At first the Congregation ran a housekeeping school for the girls of that area, then a convalescent home, which was very well situated at the base of the Mont blanc ; later this institute became a rest home, a rehab clinic and now it changed to a EHPAD, i. e. a home of retreat for disabled persons.

The Sisters want to be available to the residents with an attentive presence. They provide a cultural and spiritual animation. In the parish and in the city they are engaged as well to care for lonesome, sick and destitute persons.

The Sisters can describe their mission in two short expressions: "to be there" and "to go to"; that means they are



Saint-Gervais-les-Bains

willing to create in this place an agreeable and cordial atmosphere.

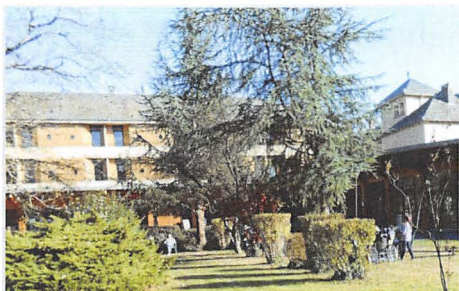
LA CLAUZE

This property is situated in Aveyron and since 1918 the Congregation has been there. At first it was a house of rest and convalescence, during the years it changed but was always in the service of the sick. Today it is a rehab clinic and a part of the house is specialized for people with cognitive trouble.

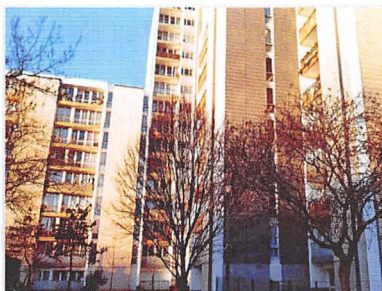
The Sisters share in the spiritual animation of this institute and are a loving presence with the population of the village.

GENNEVILLIERS

Here the Sisters arrived in 1961; they lived in a small house, were active in the parish, helped the workers' families of the area and ran a caring centre. Later, in answer to the orientation of the local church they left the little house, took an apartment in a large building complex of the city and worked also in industrial factories.



La Clauze



Gennevilliers

Today they are a loving presence with the multicultural population of this town by their pastoral engagement.

MENDE

Until 1961, the year of the amalgamation, this house was the Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Christian Union. Since this Congregation was totally engaged in catholic teaching, a school and a boarding school was accommodated there. Today, after a complete renovation, the sisters who are all of retirement age live



Mende

in an agreeable surrounding and can keep an eye on the children at the school playground.

BOUSSU-lez-MONS (Belgium)

This rather new building was constructed on the grounds which belonged since 1873 to the Comforter Sisters of the Heart of Jesus (Soeurs Consolatrices du Coeur de Jésus). Until 1974, the year of the amalgamation, there was an orphanage and the Mother house of this Congregation.



Boussu-lez-Mons

These two Communities still want to be active, according to their abilities, in serving in the schools, they are present in the parish and help in charitable organizations. But above all the Sisters maintain relations with many persons of their acquaintances and support them in prayer. Certainly, this is a hidden but fruitful mission.

COLUMBIA

This foundation in South America was a common project of the three Congregations.



Soacha, Columbia

1994 it started in Bogota in the quarter Primavera; since then the Sisters lived in different places; now their home is in **Soacha**, in the nearer surroundings.

The Sisters care in the local church, undertake catechesis, they prepare children for the sacraments, they look after the formation of the altar boys and girls. ... They care also for the sick and work in the distribution of food for the most destitute.

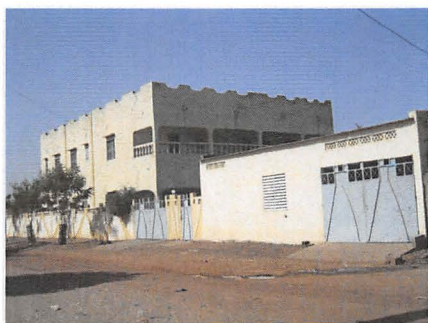
The **Foundation Victor Braun** had a mission to help children in dangerous situations, it helped young people with special needs and had a food program in two nursery schools. Today this Foundation is active in school support.

MALI

1968 the Sisters started in **Kolongotomo** to serve in a hospital and in a maternity



Kolongotomo



Pelengana

clinic. Besides this they were active in several missions such as the promotion of women and the literacy campaign.

A second foundation in **Pelengana** took place in 2001, to accommodate the formation house of the Congregation.

The Sisters, both novices and professed Sisters, are active in the parish, in teaching the catechism, in the formation of the

altar boys and girls ... There exists a catholic group: "the friends of Kisito", there is a choir ... One Sister is the head of the nursery school "Father Victor Braun". By creating a library, the Congregation helps the children - whether they go to school or not - to improve their French, and to become familiar with basic abilities.



Mali

Communities of the English Congregation

Our Communities are signs of hope to all whose lives we touch. It is through our own personal daily conversion that we make Christ present in our community and in our world. Hopefully we strive to build communities of 'gentleness, justice and peace' where Sisters love each other and experience a feeling of belonging, it is from Communities such as these that our mission will be sustained, thrive and flourish.

We are a group of women dedicated to serving Jesus Christ and the poor in the following countries - UK and Ireland, California, El Salvador, Philippines, Uganda and Zambia.

Our Congregation has its roots in the UK and Ireland and our Motherhouse is in Chigwell, Essex, England. It is here that the Leadership Team reside.

Present Mission

**Care of our elderly Sisters in Marian House, Uxbridge,
Middlesex and Sacred Heart Convent, Cork**



Marian House, Chapel

These communities are the bedrock of our missions. Both communities cater for the needs of our elderly Sisters. They are power houses of prayer and play a key role in supporting our missions through their life of prayer and presence and also where we witness to life giving community and see God's presence very much among us.

Pastoral Ministry



*Sr. Sheila Buckley,
Pastoral Ministry*

In the UK and Ireland there are 14 communities involved in Pastoral Ministry, they are Greenock in Scotland Carlisle, Worksop, Liverpool, Harlow, Lewisham, Herne Bay, Chigwell, Mile End in England and Belfast, Roscrea and Cork in Ireland.

All of our pastoral ministry is undertaken in poor areas or with the most vulnerable in society. Most of these communities have two or three Sisters in each mission. Sisters take Holy Communion to the sick and elderly and do home and hospital visits. Support in times of bereavement, RCIA, Sacred Heart Companions, individual support and spiritual accompaniment.

Houses of Prayer Colwyn Bay and Chigwell

The Ministry in these Houses of Prayer is centred on prayer and hospitality, giving those who are searching for God in their lives a deepening of their relationship with God and or a place of tranquillity, the space and support in which to rest, to slow down from the ordinary busyness of their daily life and to BE before the



Labyrinth in Chigwell

Lord. We also cater for youngsters and adults with special needs, Confirmation Groups and other parish groups either for Days of Prayer or for residential stays. In both places there is a Labyrinth to aid prayer and reflection.

Other Ministries UK

and Ireland

Education

Pield Heath House School Caters for children and young people with severe learning difficulties and complex learning needs between the ages of 7 and 19. The school offers day, residential and respite provision for children and young people with moderate to severe learning difficulties, complex learning needs. It provides a **holistic approach to education**, within a caring, spiritual environment, where every young person is of equal importance, valued for who they are and encouraged to reach their maximum potential.



School in Pield Heath



St. John's School

St John's School is a day school for children and young people aged between 5 - 19 and caters for children and young people with moderate/severe learning difficulties. The specifically caring and supportive environment helps to cater for children

who may have social and emotional needs.



*St Anne's School
„Olympic Team“*

St Anne's School, Roscrea is a modern, well equipped school with specialist services for learning, life, and leisure. The school provides individual education plans for boys and girls from 4 to 18 years of age who may present with moderate or severe learning disabilities.

Adult Education England

Harmony House works in partnership with the Local Authority, Community and Voluntary organisations in delivering a range of community based services and projects. For several years we have been at the forefront of support provision



Harmony House

for refugees and other immigrant groups and continue to do so.



Bessborough Centre

Ireland

Bessborough Centre, Cork is a registered charity with over 80 years' experience in working with

vulnerable women and children. It provides a range of supports, therapeutic care and educational opportunities to parents and families from communities all over Ireland. Their work is focused on keeping children safe and empowering parents, children & families to improve the quality of their lives.

The Centre offers:

- A residential parent & baby unit for families in crisis who have young children or who are pregnant
- A supervised child contact/ access service
- A family support service to assist families at risk in keeping their children safe and to remain together.
- A community crèche & pre-school.
- A secondary school & training centre for second-chance education.

Chigwell Justice and Peace Centre

Today, the main focus centres around three vital issues: Human Trafficking, Global Economic injustices and the Care of Creation, whereby the aim is to challenge both local and global structures and systems which maintain or contribute to the suffering of people who are denied the ‘fullness of life’ in our world today. The JPIC Centre works alongside sisters, co-workers and other organisations who share our values and goals. The JPIC Centre is also involved in the promotion of the Congregation through the website, the congregational magazine ‘Reflections’ and various other publications such as calendars, cards, newsletters, etc

Mission Development Office Ireland

The Mission Development Officer liaises between donors and our missions outside the UK and Ireland.

California

This was our Congregation's first missionary journey outside the UK and was opened in 1953. It was begun in response to a need to support Catholic Education in California. Catholic Primary Schools were opened in Atwater, Turlock, El Cerrito, Sacramento, Livingston. For many years this was the main thrust of our mission in California. As the Sisters aged, they were replaced by lay teachers, however the good foundations had been laid for these schools to continue as centers of excellence. Latterly our mission in California diversified as several Sisters went into parish ministry, working in a hospice, visiting the homes of the terminally ill and working with homeless and people with mental health issues.



Sister Kathleen Laverty, California

Currently we have only one sister on mission in California who does voluntary work in a Clinic which mostly serves an immigrant population, who work long hours for low wages.

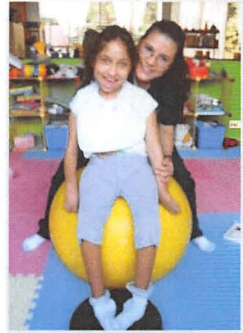
El Salvador

Our mission to El Salvador began in 1991. We were invited there at the end of the civil war. It has always been a relatively

small mission, however the missions that have been undertaken are certainly not small!

Mariona, San Salvador

Two sisters are involved in the mission in the Parish of Mariona. One sister works in a Clinic for the poor and is on the Pastoral team, while the other sister continues her studies and supports some of the children and the elderly in the parish with her physiotherapy skills at weekends.



Mariona

Arambala

We no longer have a community in El Mozote but we continue to sponsor and assist the people in the village of Mozote who are still recovering from the effects of the civil war and the biggest massacre of recent Latin American history. Approximately 1200 innocent men, women and children were killed in cold blood in a huge cleansing campaign in the early 1980's.

The exact number may never be known, given the enormous scale of destruction from bombs and grenades that followed the brutal torture, rape and executions of the villagers. Their housing village infrastructure and any form of development in the area was totally destroyed. Against this background, the Arambala community of Sisters and Associates have worked alongside the people

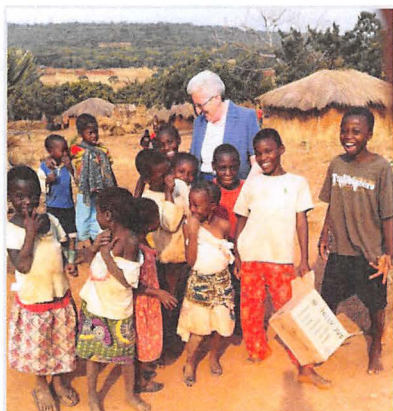


Arambala

of El Mozote in a spirit of reconciliation and healing to support this shattered community as it comes to terms with its past and moves forward to an era of peace and development.

Zambia

Our Congregation came to Zambia in 1956 our first mission being at Chilonga in the Northern Province. At present we have missions in Kasama and Mbala in the north and in Lusaka, the capital. Many of the projects which we initiated over the years have been handed over to either local Congregations or Community Groups. At present we have three communities in Zambia.



Sr. Mary Ita with children, Zambia

Mbala

Mbala Community is a formation house for the pre Novitiate. They are involved in the following ministries

Sunsuntila Day Care Centre supports Orphans and Vulnerable Children with education, nutrition, psychosocial counselling and skills including tailoring.

The Households in Distress Programme is an HIV and AIDS Prevention and Management Intervention Project. Home based Care is offered to infected people by providing palliative care and psychosocial counselling. Other projects include Village Orphan Support Groups. Supporting Orphan and Vulnerable Children and Children with Special Needs with education and skills training

Kasama

In order to live in solidarity with the poor the sisters live in a community in location which is a poor area. Their ministries include teaching children with disability at Chileshe Chipela Special Residential School, nursing and midwifery, youth ministry and vocation promotion and pastoral care of the sick and housebound.



Kasama

Lake Road Community, Lusaka

Most of the administration for the Zambian region is done from Lake Road Community. The sisters are also involved in our mission in Bauleni Special Needs Centre.

Bauleni Special Needs Project, primarily providing both School-based and Home-school Based Education for orphans and children with a variety of disabilities including those with multiple or severe disabilities previously excluded from any education programme, as well as Skills Training for 16+ students.



Children in Lusaka

The project also deals with issues such as Human Trafficking, Child Safeguarding, the support of young victims of abuse, HIV/AIDS prevention work, protection of the environment, gender-based violence, and other gender issues, as well as doing advocacy work, particularly in

regard to special needs and gender. A variety of income generating activities support the education side of the project.

Uganda

Mukono

In February 2001, a community of two Sisters and an Associate opened our first Mission in Uganda in Mukono, near the capital Kampala. The Sisters work alongside lay staff on a programme called CHIN (Children in Need) All the CHIN project activities target

the most marginalised community members amongst whom are children with disabilities and their families. CHIN works with the most poverty stricken and displaced families as these are the most marginalised groups in Uganda. To support them, Sisters are involved in various ministries including Micro Projects/ Income Generating Activities such as candle making, rug making and Rosary Beads as well as sewing and other crafts. They carry out a programme for Community Based Rehabilitation and visit homes of children with severe disabilities and a Skills Training Programme for 16+ youth with disabilities. The Sisters are very enterprising and have established many new programmes to support the clients in their care.

They have promoted many kitchen gardens and have supplied goats for income generating.

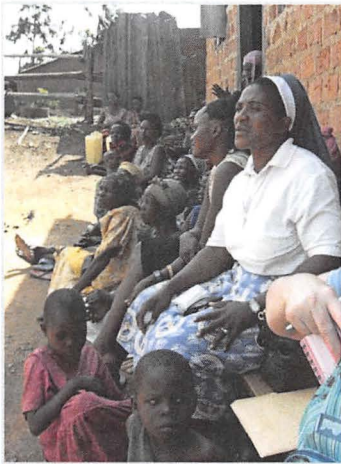


Mukono

Pabo

This mission was opened to support people living in a camp for internally displaced refugees in the north of Uganda and almost on the border of Southern Sudan. It was most certainly our most dangerous mission as the camp was guarded by soldiers to protect the people from the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) After the peace accord many of the residents of the camp were repatriated back to their own villages.

In 2009 a new purpose built convent was opened, Guadalupe House was opened at the same time. and is designed to support the most vulnerable, be these children or adults.



Sr. Rosemary, Uganda

The Victor Braun Centre caters for children with learning disabilities and there is also an outreach programme for these children.

In Pabo they have set up a community based organisation known as Women and Children First (WACFO). WACFO is totally committed to sustainable development and community empowerment. Work is done with people living with HIV/AIDS, the many young people who have not had an opportunity to receive post-primary education and also the many elderly and disabled people who are simply abandoned.

Cebu, Philippines

Our first sisters arrived in Cebu in May 2000, at the invitation of Cardinal Vidal, with the specific aim of working

with the most needy and vulnerable people in areas where the majority of people are living as squatters in makeshift accommodation. We have two communities Banawa and Basak. The major focus of the mission is to support women and children who we believe suffer most in poverty situations. The mission includes the Victor Braun Centre, which caters for the needs for young people with disabilities.

In order to make the project self sustaining they run a water bottling plant. This centre offers social and life skills as well as vocational training. The Novitiate House of Formation is in Basak.

After the typhoon in November 2013, the sisters have been involved in a huge house building project.



Water bottling in Cebu

Communities of the Austrian Congregation

Motherhouse Vienna

The foundation-stone was laid on the 4th July 1890. The first building was in Keinergasse. It was really incredible but as early as the 9th of December of the same year the inauguration and blessing of the Motherhouse took place. The building is now classified as a historical monument.

10 years later a third storey, in Keinergasse and the corner of Baumgasse, was built on. It was necessary to make space for children and young people and so a new building was established in Landstraße Hauptstraße 137. The inauguration and blessing took place in August 1904. There, it was possible to run a kindergarten, and for girls, a school for needlework was opened.

The Sisters were happy and grateful that the Lord blessed their work, but their aim was to build a church as well. On the 8th May 1904 the foundation-stone for the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was laid. The inauguration and blessing was

performed by Suffragan, Bishop Marschall on the 30th September 1906. The Sisters worked tirelessly and so a new building for the kindergarten and an after-school care centre was constructed in 1930 and 1931. The huge hall was dedicated for conferences and theatre performances.



Convent of the Sacred Heart

During the Second World War the Convent was used as a military hospital. Sisters were no longer allowed to work in the kindergarten or in any other organisations.

In 1944 the Motherhouse was heavily bombed. Parts of the house were in ruins, the church was heavily damaged. Four soldiers and two Sisters lost their lives.

Finally in 1945 the war was over and the Motherhouse could at last be rebuilt. The Sisters could continue their work, and so on the 20th April 1945, the Herz-Jesu-Krankenhaus (the Hospital of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) was established. Later on it was enlarged and extensions were added including operating theatres, a laboratory and a radiology department. Through all of this, the motto: "to serve in love" became reality for the good of children, sick and elderly people.

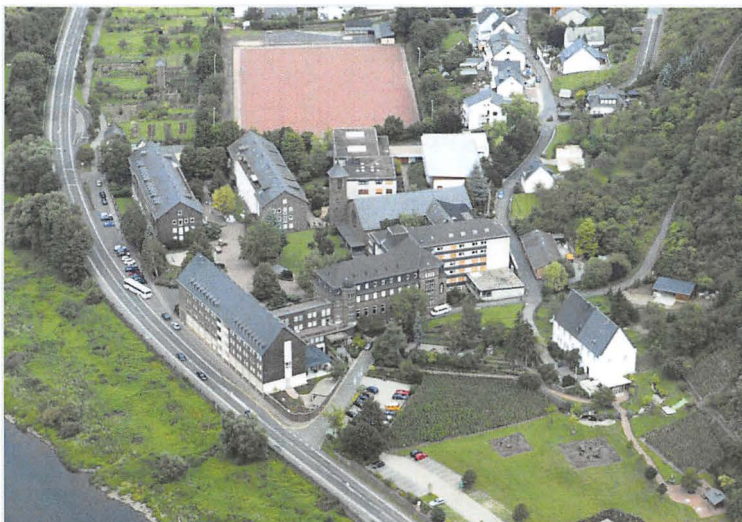
Constantly we tried to keep the facilities the' state of the art' and to enlarge the hospital. In 1971 a new extension was added, and in 1988 an apartment house for the staff was built. It is important to discern in everyday life the will of God - and to act accordingly. It was now time for us to reconsider our position, due to the strength and age of our community. Certainly this was a hard decision, but it was necessary.

In 2007 the Hospital became integrated in the Vincent Group Vienna Holding GmbH.

On the 13th of March 2011 the square in front of our Church became the Victor Braun Platz; and there a plaque honours our Founder. It is a calling to people in our time to care for the poorest, for children and for sick and old people.



House of the Sacred Heart in Kühr (Herz Jesu Haus Kühr)



House of the Sacred Heart Kühr / Germany

In 1872 two Sisters from Argenteuil began to do home nursing in Niederfell.

Father Schaubmayer from Niederfell knew our Founder, and so the Sisters came to Niederfell.

1882 we changed from "the little Convent" to Kühr, in another part of Niederfell and there, the Sisters started to care for orphans and old and weak people.

Later their main focus became the caring for girls and women with mental disabilities.

1943 was the hardest time for our institution: 150 of our inhabitants became the victims of national-socialism (The Nazi Party).

Over the years much was built and renewed in Kühr.

1959 saw the construction of the Church (until then, Mass was celebrated in a hall of the Inn).

1960 we built the kindergarten for children from the surrounding villages but also for the children of our house.

1974 the swimming pool was built, and step by step other extensions were built. Apartments and houses in the surrounding villages were bought.

Now, about 300 people with mental disabilities live in our institution.

It is our duty to serve in love and by this to carry out the order of our Founder.



Summer-party in Kühl

Gainfarn

In 1874 a mission in Gainfarn was established. Baron Brenner von Felsach handed over the house to the Sisters and he looked after its maintenance. There, three Sisters ran a kindergarten and worked in home nursing as well.



Convent in Gainfarn, Lower Austria

From January until October 1879 the Novitiate was in Gainfarn. In 1996, 100 years later, it returned to Gainfarn. In 1925 the municipal kindergarten of Lower Austria was founded. It was closed during the Second World War and reopened in 1945. In 1976 the present public

kindergarten of the city of Bad Vöslau and the country was built, where the Sisters are still working.

Also the Sisters are engaged in the parish. They do pastoral work, they lead services in the church, they give Holy Communion, they arrange church services for children and the youth and they work in pastoral care.

With great love they lead children and young people to the Heart of Jesus, for example during the preparation for First Communion in the Convent.

Gainfarn is the only Convent in the Congregation where Father Founder lived personally. From there he went to and fro to other convents and there he celebrated Holy Eucharist. When in 1974, the 100 year jubilee was celebrated, Mother Theodora Paulus said, that



Altar in Gainfarn where Father Braun celebrated Holy Eucharist

this house is like a precious relic of the Founder Victor Braun for the Congregation.

**House of St. Gertrud in Vienna,
Hietzinger Hauptstr. 78
and the House of Unter St. Veit**



House of St. Gertrud, Vienna

1882 the Care Home for very aged people, named St. Joseph, was founded in Unter St. Veit (Vienna) by the Baroness Hedwig Malfatti von Montereaggio.

1883 three Sisters of our Congregation began as nurses in this care home.

1885 the care home became the property of the Congregation. Also some houses nearby were bought.

1897 the Sisters opened a kindergarten, which was a blessing until 2007 when it was closed.

From **1914 until 1918** there was a home here for 50 to 60 poor children who with American help got education and

boarding free of charge.

Meals for 60 students and 30 elderly people were also provided..

Since 1926 the Sisters themselves needed a care home and as such the house was used until 2007.

From 1939 to 1945, during the Second World War, the Sisters sheltered 45 homeless people here.

During many decades the Sisters served in a blessed way in the kindergarten, to the elderly people and their own Sisters. Because of the lack of Sisters we had to sell the house in Unter St. Veit in 2007. Only the house on the Hietzinger Hauptstraße was kept as a convent and a vacation home for Sisters.

History of the Congregation of the Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Bytom

In 1894, in Chorzow, a Community of our Congregation was founded. In 1926 Upper-Silesia was annexed to Poland and the Sisters were forced, because of language difficulties and



House „St. Josef“ in Bytom / Poland

because of the political changes, to leave the house. The Sisters founded in December a new home in Bytom, Piekarskastr, 59. Since 1902 this house had belonged to the Sisters of Mercy of St. Vincent of

Paul. Our Sisters gave them, in exchange, two new houses in Chorzow and took another house for caring and nursing the terminally ill.

Later the following activities developed: needlework, sewing, music, caring for babies, counselling, caring and nursing for elderly people, days and weeks of retreat. In 1947 this convent got the official name of "St. Joseph's House". The duties of administration and procedural rules of this Care-Home became too much for the Sisters, and so they were forced to surrender their work to the Congregation of the Servants of Sandomierz. This happened on the 10th May 1975. The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus returned on the 1st August 1986 and again they cared for the sick in the nursing home.

To respond to the needs of our town an after-school care centre called "Noah's Ark" was opened in 2001. The main focus was on social therapy. Today four Sisters work in Bytom in the Care Home for elderly people, in the after-school centre and in pastoral care for all co-workers. They organise retreats and they promote the veneration of the Sacred Heart.

Krawarn - Kouty

In April 1902 the parish priest of **Krawarn**, Ignac Maiss, visited the Superior General Mother M. Flora Niesen in Vienna and asked her to send Sisters to Krawarn. They arrived on the 18th of July 1905. The Sisters made their home in the convent next to the presbytery. They started with a kindergarten and they founded a girls' school for home economics and embroidery and they cared for the sick. After the Second World War the Sisters opened a home for elderly people and an orphanage in their convent.

On the 14th of September 1950 the Sisters were taken to a working-camp in Ryzoviste - they shared this fate with about 10,000 other religious women. In 1951 all religious

Congregations were closed by the Communist Party. For 10 years the Sisters were kept in the camp of Bila Voda in total isolation. 1961 the first Sisters could leave the country and go to Vienna but the last ones didn't leave until 1967. Four of the Krawarn Sisters were never seen again as they died in the camp of Bila Voda.

On September 26, 1991, two years after the fall of Communism, Sisters returned to Krawarn. The Sisters bought the parish house of Krawarn-Kouty, did the restoration work and are now engaged in the municipal kindergarten, in a caring home for elderly people and in the pastoral care for children and the youth. They help in the preparation for the First Communion and in the parish and also in pastoral work.



Sisters in Krawarn / CZ

The history of the Congregation House of the Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Opole

On the 1st of May 1931 the Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus established themselves in Opole, Mickiewicza Straße 5. In this house there was a kindergarten and a school for domestic science. The Sisters were engaged also in the parish church of St. Peter and Paul and worked in homes caring of the sick. During the Second World War this convent was changed into a military hospital for German soldiers. The Sisters cared for the sick and helped wherever they were needed. During the Soviet offensive, on the 19th January 1945, the Sisters were forced to leave the

convent. They found shelter in Dlugpole (Glatzer Bergland).

In 1945, when the Sisters came back, they started to rebuild the house and they lived there until 1954. Then they had to leave again because the communist government confiscated the house



Convent in Opole / Poland

and the Sisters had to stay for two and a half years in a working-camp (Debow Laka).

In 1957 Dr. Meis emigrated to Germany. Before leaving he handed his house in Opole, Mickiewicz Street 7, over to the Sisters.

Now there are three Sisters in Opole.

They work in the parish church of St. Peter and Paul as Sexton, in youth pastoral work, as Religious Teachers and for the Marian Congregation.

Some students live in the Convent as well.

Dylaki

The Formation - House in **Dylaki** was built between 1975 - 1978. It was during the communist time in Poland. In this time it was not possible to get permission to build a convent. Thanks to Divine Providence, very much prayer and the perseverance of the Sisters, especially of the provincial Superior Sr. M. Lidoria Schulz, we finished the building. The house and the Chapel were consecrated and dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the 6th May 1978, by Bishop Wacław Wycisk in the presence of the Curate General, M. M. Symphorosa and the Provincial Superior

M. M. Agricola. From 1979 to 1992 ten girls finished their formation in this Formation-House. Seven girls did the same during the years 1992-2005.

In 2004 the first International Federation Meeting of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus took place in Dylaki. About 40 Sisters from different countries came together.

Over the 36 years in this house the Sisters organised retreats, veneration-days for children and youth-groups, also other groups could be hosted there. Once a year, there, the Congregation retreat takes place.

The Sisters participate in an active way in the life of the parish of St. Anton. They work in the sacristy, they care for the flower-decoration in the church, play the organ and organise a festive musical setting. The Sisters also maintain a group of Children of Mary, and they lead the adoration on the first Thursday and Friday of the month.

The Sisters share the joys and sufferings of the population, especially when they visit and care for the sick and elderly people and support their families. For children the Sisters organise sport activities, trips and pilgrimages.



Convent in Dylaki / Poland

Our Common Spirituality

As a Federation we are united together in the love of God and each other. We thank God for our common spirituality to serve Jesus Christ and the poor.

*Many congregations who minister to the poor
are dedicated to the Sacred Heart.*

But you are to belong entirely to the Sacred Heart.

*So be on fire with love, eager to make up for the evil
which threatens our world.*

*If ever you were to forget this Devotion to the Sacred Heart
you would no longer have any reason to exist.*

Fr Victor Braun

Fr Victor Braun promoted a spirituality of the Sacred Heart that offers another way of living out our Christian calling, one that will help bring about that civilization of love which is God's dream for his world. God has no favourites. A life rich in pastoral experience enabled Father Braun to develop a loving heart that was gentle, generous, humble, forgiving. He identified with those he encountered from all walks of life. Like his beloved patron, St. Francis de Sales, he refused no one who turned to him in their hour of need, at whatever cost to himself. The rich legacy left to us by the founder and patrons offers us rich and deep wells of spirituality to draw from.



Father Victor Braun

The spiritual values of Love, Glory, Thanksgiving and Reparation are still as relevant today as they were 150 years ago. We may express these values in a slightly

different way, but they are as meaningful as ever.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to bring the compassionate love of God to those among whom we live and work. The fire of God's love draws us into the radiant glow which Jesus gained for us in his sacrifice on the cross. God's love is never static; it is always on the move. As our outer life reaches out in the service of the poor, our inner spirit takes on a new intensity in the service of love of him who is gentle and humble of heart.

As Father Braun once said, we may not have much to offer in the way of material help but when our offering is joined to the heart of Jesus, what we have to give is inexhaustible because it comes from the ever-flowing riches of the Sacred Heart.

The example of Jesus can transform our feeble efforts in our ever changing and challenging world. Each person Jesus met with went away transformed, even after the briefest encounter. Maybe this is yet another way we can be in solidarity with those in any kind of need, simply by our patient presence.

As we move forward together as a Federation, perhaps the following quotation from Fr Arrupe SJ will encourage and inspire us all to deepen our relationship with the Heart of Christ:

Nothing is more practical than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what grips your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your week-ends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.

The international meetings

International Federation Meeting in Dylaki, 2004

The first international Federation Meeting of the Sisters took place in Dylaki, Poland, from 4th to 8th August, 2004. During these days the Sisters of the three Congregations had the



*1st International Meeting 2004
in Dylaki / Poland*

opportunity to get a deeper understanding of the spirituality and the mission of Father Founder. The Sisters treasure in their hearts especially the following words: "You are witnesses of the Heart of Jesus when you ease the suffering of the

poor", and: "For you there are only two things in this world: Jesus Christ and the poor".

In spite of the different languages, cultures and habits, we felt joy and unity in every encounter. The memories of these days live until today in the hearts of many Sisters.



Meeting in Dylaki / Poland

The International Meeting in Versailles, 2007

2007, the international Meeting in Versailles brought 25 Sisters of each Congregation together, and they really wanted - despite the different languages -to enter in a dialog. The aim was to formulate our **common spirituality**. This was a real challenge, but was overcome by the desire of each Sister to work together and by the efforts of the preparation group ... The reflections were accompanied by beautiful liturgical celebrations and some moments of relaxation and joy.



*International Meeting 2007
in Versailles*

It was the opportunity to be together on a pilgrimage **in the footsteps of Father Victor Braun**, especially in **Paris**, in Notre Dame de la Salette, in Notre Dame de Grâce and in Notre Dame des Victoires; and not to be forgotten Sacré Coeur on Montmartre. But also Argenteuil, Sèvres and Saint Cloud were visited ...



- ◆ To reflect and to celebrate the Love of our Saviour.
- ◆ To follow Christ, the Servant, in sharing his redeeming mission.
- ◆ To witness to the compassion of the Lord by a simple and kind presence
- ◆ To live in friendship with the most destitute
- ◆ To affirm the dignity of everyone we meet.
- ◆ To answer to the needs of the time joyfully.

International Federation Meeting in Chigwell 2010



International Meeting 2010 in England



The Federation Tree is planted

In August 2010 the Federation Meeting held in Chigwell took the theme of the three Vows.

There was an opportunity to look at different expressions of the Vows e.g. through the eyes of the painter Pietro

Annigoni and through our own art work. A 'Federation' Tree was planted in Chigwell Garden and is growing strong and tall!

International Federation Meeting in Kühr, Germany, 2013



*International Federation Meeting 2013
in Kühr / Germany*

The "**Charism of Father Founder Victor Braun in the 21st century**" was the theme of our International Federation Meeting in Kühr from August 4th to August 11th, 2013. 48 Sisters participated.

On the foundation of the four pillars: **GLORY, LOVE, THANKSGIVING AND RECONCILIATION** we got new insights from Father Dr. Becker and Father Peter Adamski. We enjoyed power point presentations in three languages.

We had a pilgrimage to Trier to the "Holy Tunic" and we also visited Maria Laach, where the huge Benedictine Convent is. We came closer to each other, we laughed a lot and we returned home with new ideas.



Stations of former Meetings / Kühr

Federation Meeting, Zambia 2012 **with our newer members**

In August 2012 an important event took place in the history of our Federation! Many of our newer members had the privilege of coming together for a meeting in Kassisi Retreat Centre, Lusaka, Zambia. Sisters arrived from Austria, Cameroon, Congo,



Formation House Kassisi in Lusaka / Zambia

Czech Republic, El Salvador, England, Ireland, Mali, Poland, Philippines, Scotland, Uganda and Zambia. The meeting gave the opportunity for the Sisters to get to know each other as a deeper level, be

enriched and energised by being together and be enabled to share a common united vision. French, German and English were the languages spoken and we were very blest to have a wonderful translator in Frau Schwarzinger; however language was certainly not a barrier as we were able to speak the language of love, this love actually permeated our whole time together. I'm sure that Father Victor Braun looked down upon our gathering with great joy.



‘Living Gently... a sign of **hope** in our world’ was the theme of our meeting and the topics covered included - Hope ,Sacred Heart/ love, Healing and Reconciliation, Eucharistic Communities, A new vision and Celebrating Federation

Our time of prayer together was very precious and we shared some very beautiful Eucharistic Celebrations, Morning and Evening Liturgies as well as other special prayer times. There was plenty of opportunity for private prayer and reflections and we had time to get to know each other better through our group outings and relaxing together.

We recognised that our three Congregations are living organisms and not static, they are growing and evolving and we are to be signs of hope in today's world . Our Religious life is a call to holiness, to have intimacy with God in the service of Jesus Christ and the poor and we need to be fired by the Spirit so that we have the breath of Divine Life within us.



**The following proposals were suggested
to give Life to the Federation:**

1. Praying for each other, remembering feast days and special occasions, informing the other two Congregations when a Sister dies.
2. Exchanging email addresses so that we can keep in touch, it was recognised that good communication is vital for the life of the Federation
3. Learning another language of the Federation.
4. Having a 'Federation' Prayer
5. Having the opportunity to spend three months in another community of the Federation.
6. Sisters in Formation to spend time in a community in the Federation.
7. To explore ways of establishing a new 'Federation Community'.

During our closing liturgy 'Passing on the light of Christ' a candle was given to each Congregation of the Federation. This light will unite us in prayer so that the work that was begun in us will continue.



Thoughts of the younger Sisters

The personality of Father Victor Braun is for them an example. They emphasize his simplicity, his humility, his boldness, his perseverance in difficulties, his trust in Providence and his cordiality towards everybody.

They declare that they are attracted by the way of the Gospel which he promotes by the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus. A way which manifests the divine mercy and radiates the love of God for the most vulnerable; the most destitute in every kind of poverty are seen, they are served and respected in their own dignity.

The Sisters appreciate that the three Congregations - in spite of being small - are nevertheless dynamic. They love to be at the same time Martha and Mary; different duties are supported by times of intensive prayer; the quality of life in community; the diversity of missions in order to answer the needs of the time; the opening to the internationality.

They expect a lot of the Federation, they would like more meetings and inter-congregational experiences, and, if possible, more Federation Communities, perhaps in Africa ... They hope "for the sake of Father Victor Braun", to become one day one united Congregation - as it was in the beginning. They know that it is necessary to advance slowly, but they ask to go on in that direction.



Vision for the Future

*“Look at the past with gratitude,
The present with passion,
Embrace the future with hope.”*

Pope Francis - Consecrated Life 2014

In having the opportunity to reflect, with gratitude, on the writings of Father Victor Braun, we discover our rootedness and



Pilgrimage to Maria Puchheim / Austria

celebrate our present with passion and are given rich insights into how he might want us to move forward and embrace the future with hope.

Father Braun's mission was to identify the needs of his time and to find ways to meet those needs, pioneering work that was not

already being addressed by others. Today our vision needs to mirror his. There is still much poverty, inequality and conflict which needs our attention.

150 years on, it would be good to evaluate our ministries to ensure that they are still meeting the needs of today and recognising the signs of our times.

One of the great witnesses of our times is that we have become international multi-cultural congregations, promoting

gentleness, justice and peace, in areas where there is often so much violence and unrest.

We share our Charism with the laity and those who work with us and support our various missions. There are groups of Sacred Heart Companions all over the world who share in the life and mission of our congregations at all levels and this should be further developed in each congregation.



Companions in Prayer / England



Companions in Prayer / Philippines

Federation - Prayer

Faithful to our call to an
Everlasting faithful God, we
Devote ourselves to our share in the mission of Jesus.
Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we deepen our
Relationship with God and each other.
Attentive to the needs of the world,
Trusting in God's goodness and
Inspired by the fidelity and faithfulness of Mary, we
Open ourselves to Spirit filled
Newness of life.

We the daughters of Father Victor Braun,
live in this blessed moment and move forward
in hope to serve
the living, all powerful,
Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.



Symbol of the three Congregations

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