



The FMM Institute - Foundation

«The Institute is the work of God»

Mary of the Passion

How did the Institute come into being?

The first days of the year 1877 found Mary of the Passion in Rome. After twelve years of fruitful missionary work in India as a member of the Society of Mary Reparatrice, unforeseen circumstances obliged her to change her first orientation. Loyal, she came to Rome - as did Francis before her with his first companions - seeking light from the successor of Peter, Pius IX. To take this step, she had to tear herself away from the community in Ootacamund, in the vicariate of Coimbatore.

While sixteen sisters remained in India, three of them accompanied her to Rome. They found lodgings in via Santa Chiara, a narrow street near the Pantheon. Torn between anxiety and hope, they prayed, while waiting for the situation to be clarified.

In Rome on the 6th January 1877, the Feast of the Epiphany, the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, Pope Pius IX authorized the foundation of the Missionaries of Mary specially dedicated to the missions, in the Diocese of Coimbatour. The sisters in Ootacamund like those in Rome welcomed this news with joy.



The Institute came into being in India

“Let us rejoice that our Institute came into being on this feast of the Epiphany. Let us bless St. Francis who at the same time, through his successor, gave us the promise that we would always find shelter under his mantle, and let us also recall the counsel given us at this time: ‘To find a place under this mantle, to be a ray of the Immaculate Star which calls souls to Jesus, you must be very pure and very

(Meditation of Mary of the Passion)

A few days later, during an audience, the Pope encouraged her and placed his hands upon her head as if to confirm by this gesture the mission he had just confided to her in the name of God: **«Tell them I bless them»**.



With this blessing of Pius IX and the authorisation to found a new Institute, Mary of the Passion looked for a house in France, to settle, impelled by a mysterious force. Vocations began to come. Foundations followed one after another.

At the beginning, she could not foresee its full scope. From day to day and year to year she followed the indications manifested by Providence through events; she was always attentive to the signs of the times, trusting in God in spite of the contradictions and crucifying trials which marked the life of the Institute in its first years.

« The aim of the Institute makes it universal. »

Mary of the Passion

Mary of the Passion wanted the Institute to be flexible enough that it would be able to face up to concrete situations and the varied works of the missionary life. What was important for her was « *to prepare the way of the Lord* », by bringing, as Mary did, the joy of the Good News of the Gospel to outposts. Thus, no particular activity specified the missionary identity of the Institute.

The universality of the Institute - lived in the acceptance of internationality / interculturality - committed the sisters to a complete disponibility in the service of evangelisation: they must go everywhere, in spite of risks, and wherever they are be, bear witness to the love of God for all men, while accomplishing all forms of service, responding to the needs of those around them.

**« The Institute is not the fruit of piety and of human reason;
It is an apostle sent by God. »**

Mary of the Passion

The beginnings of the new Institute were hard, difficult. Nevertheless, the life of Mary of the Passion and her first companions was characterised by joy, simplicity, poverty, family spirit and total abandonment to the will of God.

Mission to the four corners of the world opens out before them. The numbers of sisters increased. Young people of all races and continents came to join her. The communities multiplied. The young, international community spread its wings and took flight ...

Such rapid progress shows that the Institute responds to a real need and is guided by the hand of God. Mary of the Passion knew that the Institute did not come from her, that it was a gift of the love of God. A short while before her death, it was into God's hands that she placed it, saying to her sisters:

*« When I die, it will be an immense void for the Institute, however you must not be afraid:
if it were my work it would perish, but it is the work of God ».*

On the death of the Foundress, over 2.000 sisters criss-crossed the paths of the world, working and offering themselves tirelessly for the Kingdom, at the service of Evangelisation, in the four continents.

