

Places associated with the SS.CC. presence in Rome

1. 19th Century Presences, related to the time of foundation

A. Hilarion Lucas in Rome (1814 - 1816). Hilarion came to Rome as a member of the French Government's diplomatic mission, but his personal motive was that of working toward the first approval of our Constitutions. He arrived in Rome on July 21, 1814 and stayed until June 20, 1816, that is to say, almost two years.

He came as the theological consulter to Bishop Gabriel Cortois de Pressigny, King Louis XVIII's first ambassador to the Holy See just at the beginning of the Restoration. Bishop de Pressigny stayed in Rome from 1814 to 1816.¹

Hilarion was contacted for this task by the Abbot of Sambucy, who accompanied Bishop Cortois de Pressigny in the mission to reestablish diplomatic links between France and the Vatican.² The decision to make the trip was made in less than a month's time and Hilarion stayed in Rome for the duration of the diplomatic mission.

¹ **Gabriel Cortois de Pressigny (1745-1823).** He was the Bishop of Saint-Malo from 1785 until the suppression of the diocese by the National Constituent Assembly in 1790. In 1817 King Louis XVIII appointed him Peer of France, Count de Pressigny, archbishop of Besançon. He was very close to the group "Fathers of the Faith" and to Fr. de la Clorivière s.j.

² **Jean-Baptiste-Louis de Sambucy de Saint-Estève (1771-1847),** was an ex-Oratorian who belong to the group "Fathers of the Faith". He had been a private tutor of the children of the Count of Quelen, one of whom would become archbishop of Paris in 1821. He had an active but complex role in the start-up of Mother Madeleine-Sophie Barat's religious foundation, and he ended up becoming a Canon of Notre Dame de Paris. He published many works of a religious nature. De Sambucy also recruited the Abbot **Louis-Jacques-Maurice de Bonnald (1787-1870),** the son of Louis, as attaché to this diplomatic mission, that is, as a colleague of Hilarion. He would end up becoming the Archbishop of Lyon and a Cardinal. He was also a member of the "Fathers of the Faith".

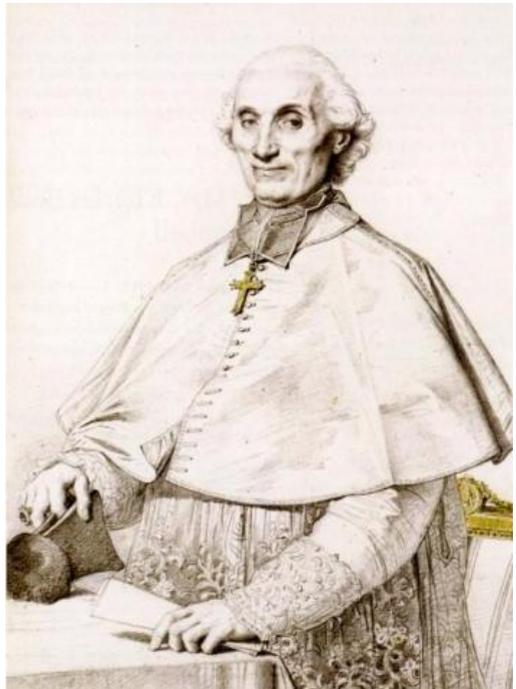


Hilarion Lucas (1782-1865) Photograph

ished. He entrusted Abbot Vidal, chaplain of San Luigi dei Francesi, with the continuation of these negotiations. Abbot Vidal rendered many and varied services to the Congregation in the following ten years.

His negotiations on behalf of the Congregation were strictly secret since they were not a part of the diplomatic mission.

During these years Hilarion lodged at the French Embassy which at the time was located in the “San Luigi dei Francesi Building”. He got his first interview with Pope Pius VII on August 4, 1814, and the last on June 10, 1816. When the diplomatic mission of Bishop Cortois de Pressigny ended, Hilarion had to leave Rome, even though his negotiations on behalf of the Congregation were not yet fin-



Mons. Cortois de Pressigny

(engraving from Ingres)

B. The Good Father's Visit to Rome in 1825. The Good Father came to Rome to celebrate the Jubilee Year announced by Leo the XII and to negotiate matters for the newly founded Congregation. He travelled with Hilarion Lucas and Brother Séverin Coulonges.³ They arrived in Rome on June 8, 1825 and stayed for 42 days that is until July 21st.⁴

After staying in a hotel for a day, through negotiations of the French ambassador the three pilgrims were put up in the “**San Luigi dei Francesi Building**”, the house of the French chaplains present in Roma located at Via di Santa Giovanna d'Arco 5.⁵ They had four well furnished rooms there and Brother Séverin was asked to do the cooking for the three of them.

The **Church of San Luigi del Francesi**, next to the building, is the main place of worship for French pilgrims in Rome and certainly for the Good Father, too. It was built in 1589. Raphaël Bonamie was ordained a bishop there on November 18, 1832, before leaving for Bagdad.

At that time, the **French Embassy** was located at Via del Corso 307 (*Palazzo de Carolis*, currently the Bank of Roma, in front of San Marcello al Corso Church).⁶ The French ambassador was Prince

³ **Séverin Coulonges** (1800-1843), was a non ordained brother who was in charge of all of the practical aspects of the trip. At the time he was 25 years old. He would die in the sinking of the *Marie-Joseph*, along with one of his brothers.

⁴ More information is found in PATERN ROUE, “Voyage du Bon Père à Rome et le Jubilé de 1825” in the *Annales des SS.CC.* 1925, pp. 13-18, 56-19 and 84-89. PATERN ROUE, *Un Pèlerinage à Rome au siècle dernier*. (A conference given in Rome on March 27, 1950 for the Holy Year, published in parts in *Le Règne des Sacrés-Coeurs de Jésus et de Marie*, of Nov.- Dec. 1950 and July-August 1951). Main source: *Voyage du P. Coudrin à Rome (May-July 1825)*, *Correspondance du Frère Severin* (General Archives, Roma).

⁵ At its origin this building received a donation from a woman from Châtaigner de la Roche-Pozay, in Poitou, in the vicinity of Coussay-le-Bois. Inside the building there is a marble plaque commemorating the donation, which made the Good feel “at home” as Brother Séverin commented.

⁶ The French Embassy was located there during some periods of the 2nd half of the 18th century and first half of the 19th century. The French Embassy has only occupied the *Farnese Palace* since 1874.

Adrien de Montmorency, Duke of Laval.⁷ The Good Father was a good friend of his brother, the Marquis Eugène de Montmorency, who had given him letters of recommendation for the embassy. The ambassador was very friendly toward the Good Father and facilitated his interview with the Pope and the links to the Vatican offices.

The Good Father came to Rome with a double purpose. First of all, he came to **celebrate the Holy Year** the first one to be held since 1775. It was an emotional **Jubilee** in the climate of the restoration. For this reason he complied with the rigorous practices that were required in order to obtain the indulgences: general confession and visits to various churches. During these visits he paid special attention to the martyrs



Palazzo de Carolis – French Embassy

who had given their lives in defending the faith. According to Br. Séverin's description, they visited the following churches: Saint Peters Basilica, Saint John Lateran, Saint Mary Major and Saint Mary in Trastevere,⁸ Saint Prassede, the Holy Stairway, Saint Peter in Chains,

⁷ **Anne Adrien Pierre de Montmorency-Laval (1768-1837)**, French ambassador in Rome from 1823 to 1828). As a young man he was in the Saint-Sulpice Seminary in Paris, but he had to quit when his older brother died. In the future he would be the ambassador in Vienna and London and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

⁸ These are the four major basilicas that are indispensable for gaining the Jubilee indulgence. They did not visit *Saint Paul outside the wall*, because it burnt to the ground in 1823.



Adrien Pierre de Montmorency-Laval
(1768-1837)

the Mamertine Prison,⁹ the Coliseum (making the *Way of the Cross* that was found in its interior in those days), the Gesù, Saint Ignatius, Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Tre Fontane (where St. Paul was martyred), San Pietro in Montorio (where St. Peter was martyrdom), Saint Sebastian, Quo Vadis, the catacombs,¹⁰ Saint Sylvester in Capite, Saint Laurence in Lucina, etc. On June 19th he participated in the beatification of Ippolito

Galantini, a Florentine, and Alonso Rodríguez, a Jesuit porter in Mallorca.

He also came to **negotiate some Congregational matters with the Holy See**. He had two interviews with Pope Leo XII, on June 18 and July 19/20, 1825, and numerous interviews with important persons in the Roman Curia. He got important results: approbation of the modifications to the 1817 Constitutions (requested by the Holy See), made by the General Chapter of 1819 and 1824; approbation of the Ceremonial of the Congregation and of the Calendar of Proper Feasts;¹¹ and

⁹ There is a small incident of an extraordinary healing of the Good Father that is linked to the water that flows from the well located inside of this place. According to tradition St. Peter miraculously made this well spring up in order to baptize his jailers who converted to Christianity: Proceso, Martiniano and 47 companions, who later suffered martyrdom. After making a novena, drinking a little of this water everyday, the Good Father was cured of a bothersome intestinal problem. As remembrance of this “miracle”, he took a certain amount of this water with him when he returned to France.

¹⁰ The catacombs of Saint Sebastian were the only ones that were always kept open. The others were forgotten, and were rediscovered, little by little, in the archeological work of Giovanni Battista de Rossi. For example, those of Saint Callisto were rediscovered in 1850.

¹¹ As soon as he returned to France, the Good Father published these texts in a widely diffused volume: *Cérémonial, Règles, Constitutions et Statuts de la*

procurement of a rescript with several indulgences in favor of the Congregation. On the contrary, he did not get the Holy See’s approbation of the “Little Offices” (Petites Offices des SSCC). In his negotiations with the Roman Curia, the Good Father received special support from two Cardinals: Bartolomeo Pacca (1756-1844), Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars;¹² and Giuseppe Morozzo Della Rocca (1758-1842), Bishop of Novara, who acted as the relater for our Constitutions.

During this visit the Good Father presented a *Memorandum* to Propanda Fide requesting a mission territory for the Congregation. He visited Bishop Pietro Caprano (1759-1834) at the **Propaganda Fide Building**, in Piazza di Spagna. He was the Secretary of the Propaganda Fide at the time and, made Cardinal Prefect of the same in 1828. A territory was given a few months later and in 1826 the first missionaries left for Hawaii.



Propaganda Fide Building – Piazza di Spagna

Two French princesses stand out as people who helped the Good Father in a special way. They were cousins of King Carlos X, and they lived at the **Palazzo Madama**.¹³ They took the initiative to go and greet

Congrégation des Sacrés Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie, et de l'Adoration Perpétuelle du Très-Saint Sacrement de l'Autel. Troyes, 1826. 60 pp.

¹² He had a long relationship with France. He was held prisoner in the fort in Fenestrelle from 1809 to 1813 by orders from Napoleon. In the 1829 Conclave, in which the Good Father participated, the King of France exercised his “right of veto” against him, preventing his election as Pope. He is buried in the church of Santa Maria in Portico in Campitelli (on the right side of the transept).

¹³ Located on Via Corso Rinascimento, it is currently the seat of the Italian Senate. It is very close to San Luigi dei Francesi and was a building linked to the French government, for a few years it was the French Embassy.



Palazzo Madama – Rome

him when he had just arrived in Rome, and were a great help to him in obtaining relics of saints, a matter of primary importance for the Good Father.¹⁴

Another place that the Good Father certainly visited during this trip was **Trinità dei Monti**, at the top of the great steps in Piazza di Spagna, on the Pincio hill. It was one of the historic French properties in Rome. From 1798 to 1816 it was abandoned and had only recently been restored through the wish of Louis XVIII. In some preliminary conversations, in 1825 the Congregation was offered the pastoral care of this place, but in the end the offer was not realized.¹⁵ Bishop Etienne Rouchoze was ordained here in 1833, before going to Oceania.



Trinità dei Monti circa 1870

¹⁴ Upon returning to France the Good Father took five complete bodies of martyrs with him, each in their own box and 24 boxes holding 13 or 14 relics each. He took them to offer to the different communities of the Congregation.

¹⁵ The church was built by the French State in the 15th century. For many years it was entrusted to the Minims Fathers (a branch of Franciscans), but in this period (1825) they were in sharp decline so there was a search for others to care for it. This is the context for the conversations with the Congregation in this regard. Finally in 1828 it was entrusted to the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus so that they could open a high school there (founded in France in 1800 by Madeleine-Sophie Barat, at this time they were called “Dames de la Foi”). In 2006 it was entrusted to the “Fraternités Monastiques de Jérusalem”. The “Académie de France” is located near the convent. It is an institution that receives artists who study in Rome founded by the French State in 1666 in Villa Medici, according to the wishes of Louis XIV.

C. The Good Father's visit to Rome in 1829: This was an unforeseen trip to accompany Cardinal Gustave Maximilien Juste de Croÿ-Solre (1773-1844), archbishop of Rouen, who was participating in the Conclave due to the death of Leo XII. At this time the Good Father was the Vicar General of Rouen. On this occasion he was not accompanied by any brother of the Congregation.

They arrived in Rome on March 11, 1829, and the Good Father returned to France at the end of August, leaving the Cardinal in Rome. We know he arrived in Troyes on September 12, 1829.

On March 13th, having just arrived in Rome, they joined in the Conclave. It had begun on February 24th in the Quirinale Palace, the Roman residence of the pope at the time.¹⁶ The Conclave ended with the election of Pius VIII (Francesco Saverio Castiglione 1761-1830), on March 31, 1829. The subject of the veto placed on Cardinal Pacca by the King of France certainly was not a pleasant moment for the Good Father.



Cardinal de Croÿ, in 1833

¹⁶ By way of anecdote, it should be noted that all participants in the conclave received the titles "Domestic Prelate of His Holiness" and "Roman Citizen" from the new pope. The Good Father received them in a document dated September 8, 1829. We should recall that since 1814 he was "Protonotary Apostolic."

The two travelers were received as guests in the **Embassy of France**, located at Vía del Corso 307 (*Palazzo de Carolis*). On this occasion the ambassador was Chateaubriand.¹⁷ Hospitality was offered to Cardinal de Croÿ, “Great Chaplain of France”, and also to his secretary.¹⁸

On this occasion the Good Father did not have any specific tasks to accomplish in Rome. The Cardinal treated him kindly and knowing the Good Father’s affection for Saint Benedict, took him



Chateaubriand as Peer of France

(Pierre Louis Delaval, circa 1828)

¹⁷ **François-René, vizconde de Chateaubriand (1768-1848)**, a distinguished politician and French Romantic writer, he was ambassador in Rome from 1829-1830.

¹⁸ Chateaubriand’s opinion of the Good Father was not good. In a letter to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs on March 15th, he wrote: “The members of the conclave who accompanied the Cardinals seemed to me to be reasonable people. Only the Abbot Coudrin, about whom you spoke to me, is one of those closed compact spirits in which nothing can enter, one of those men who are in the wrong profession and who, instead of being fierce soldiers, have become ruthless priests. Do not ignore the fact he is a monk, head of an Order that even has a Bull of Institution. This does not mix at all with our civil laws and political institutions. It is feared that he gives violent council to Cardinal Croij, who personally is an excellent Prelate, very gentle, moderate and generous. He was set on voting with his colleagues and following the line that he allowed me to draw up for him; but now, enclosed in a cell with Abbot Coudrin, will he not change his decision? I can not answer.” (Cited from JUAN VICENTE GONZÁLEZ *Servidor del amor*. Santiago: 1990, p. 383). Original text is in *Lestra v. III*, p. 202. Chateaubriand repeats this judgment in his *Mémoires d’Outre-tombe*, book XIII.



Good Father – Lithograph from 1834

to visit the principle sites of the Benedictine tradition. They traveled south from Rome to Naples, visiting Subiaco and Monte Cassino.¹⁹ During this time the Cardinal negotiated for the appointment of a Coadjutor. He also tried to have the Good Father appointed as bishop; but he did not succeed, because he did not have the approval of the French government for this appointment.

During these long months, the Good Father attended to another subject that worried him a lot: **buying a house in Rome at Via delle Quattro Fontane 104/105.**²⁰ It was the first property of the Congregation in Rome. It is not easy to find its exact location because this area underwent radical transformations in the middle of the 19th century, mainly for the construction of *Via Nazionale*, with an entirely new route. It appears that this House was located right on the current route of the *Via Nazionale*, toward the intersection where *Via Agostino Depretis* begins. Now, there is no trace of it.

¹⁹ The arrival of the Good Father will be affectionately remembered by the monks of Monte Cassino even several years later. See Hilarion Lucas *Mémoires sur la Congrégation*, Book Seven, p. 99.

²⁰ The *Via delle Quattro Fontane* is a “processional route” and as such is very straight, built by Pope Sixto V (1585-1590) to unite the Churches Trinità dei Monti and Santa Maria Maggiore. In the early centuries it was called “Via Felice” (with reference to Pope Sixtus V, Felice Peretti); currently it has three names in succession: *Via Sistina*, *Via delle Quattro Fontane* and *Via Agostino Depretis*.

The main motive for the purchase was the fear of being expelled from France, thinking that, in this eventuality, it would be good to have a place of refuge.²¹ This was not an unfounded fear because the years 1830-1831 were very violent, directly affecting the Picpus house. Another reason was the convenience of having a place in Rome for the formation of missionaries,²² and perhaps to take responsibility for the Propaganda Fide Seminary in Rome, a matter which was talked about at one time but which never was carried out.

Such preoccupations would explain the expression “*pied-à-terre*” that Hilarion gave to this house and the fact that finally it served no clear purpose or use.²³ It was a hastily made decision, a purchase without sufficient clarity about its purpose or real utility and as such inappropriate.²⁴ The purchase without an entirely clear objective and the inappropriate place explain why this house was practically never used.²⁵

²¹ In the words of the Good Father to Raphael Bonamie: “Je fais tout ce que je peux, pour obtenir ici un petit coin où mettre le pied au moment du naufrage; je n’ai encore pu y réussir; marquez-moi ce que le Conseil en pense” (April 10, 1929, *Lettre* 1,477). To his niece Eudoxie Coudrin and through her to the Good Mother, he wrote: “Marquez-moi donc si je dois rester dans de pays-ci [Rome], si je dois au moins y chercher un *abri*. Ne serait-ce que deux mots, je les demande là-dessus à la Bonne Mère” (April 8, 1829; *Lettre* 1,475. See the note in the edition of Médard Jacques, p. 183, note 2).

²² The Good Father wrote to Hippolyte Launay, Superior of Potiers: “Je crois qu’il ne serait pas difficile d’avoir ici un séminaire pour les Missions étrangères; mais il faudrait acheter la maison” (May 9, 1829, *Lettre* 1,483).

²³ Hilarion Lucas’ opinion about the acquisition: “Le 19 août, il (le BP) acheta à Rome une maison qui put servir de pied-à-terre pour les frères qui se rendraient dans la capitale du monde chrétien. Il fut trompé dans cette acquisition. Cette maison, qui lui coûtait assez cher, était située dans un quartier isolé et malsain. Je dois ajouter que notre Supérieur général avait eu en vue de former un établissement destiné spécialement à préparer pour les missions étrangères ceux qui se dévoueraient à cette œuvre importante” (*Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire de la Congrégation SS.CC.*, Book seven, p. 98).

²⁴ This is the opinion of Lestra: “Il (le BP) est obsédé par l’idée d’être banni (de la France) ... Il finira par acheter à Rome le 19 août une petite maison qui pût simplement servir d’abri à la maison-mère, mais qui ne servir jamais à rien” (ANTOINE LESTRA *Le Père Coudrin*. Roma: 1968, v. III, p. 208). Juan Vicente González is of the same opinion: “Durante esa larga permanencia en la Ciudad Eterna, sin especiales negociaciones que llevar a cabo, una preocupación lo llenaba, como puede verse en su correspondencia de ese tiempo: la inmi-

It was bought by the Good Father on August 19, 1829. It was an old house in bad condition, needing continual repairs. It had a ground floor and first and second floor that were rented out to different people, and a third floor that was kept reserved for the Congregation. This reserved space comprised seven unfurnished rooms.²⁶ The Congregation entrusted its administration to the chaplains at Saint Louis des Français (Abbots Vidal and Picard).

In 1839, during his visit to Rome to request the approval of changes that the 1838 General Chapter made to the Constitutions, Bishop Bonamie tried to establish a community of three priests in this house, but it was again a failure. Upon the decision of Bishop Raphaël Bonamie the house was sold in June of 1842. Because it was in bad

nente persecución en Francia. Las cartas que conservamos de este tiempo, muestran que preveía incluso la posibilidad de ser expulsados de Francia. A fin de tener en Roma un refugio para esa emergencia compró, poco antes de partir - el 19 de agosto de 1829 – una casa en la calle delle Quattro Fontane.” (JUAN VICENTE GONZÁLEZ *El Padre Coudrin, la Madre Aymer y su comunidad*. Roma: 1978, p. 105). Another opinion: “Le Fondateur acheta, le 19 août, une maison, malheureusement mal située et qui dut être revendue plus tard sans avoir été utilisée” (ILDEFONSE ALAZARD in the *Annales de Sacrés-Cœurs* 1929, p. 311).

²⁵ An old note, though separate from the original manuscript, gives the following indications: “Une maison fut achetée le 19 août, mais le B. P. ne put y envoyer du monde tout de suite. Elle fut administrée par les abbés Vidal et Picard; en 1839 Mgr Bonamie y envoya le P. Éphrem de Lafont avec le P. Joachim Deletang, lequel mourut à Marseille, et le P. Frobert Chaudière. La fondation ne dura pas longtemps. La maison, en mauvais état, fut revendue en 1842. Elle était située aux n° 104 et 105 Via delle Quattro Fontane.” (LEBP (*Supplément*) 2190 – Lettre du Conseil de la maison principale au R. P. Marie-Joseph, April 22, 1829).

²⁶ Ildefonse Alazard made this comment: “Quant à la maison, dont nous n’avons pas encore retrouvé l’adresse exacte, nous savons seulement qu’elle était situé *aux quatre Fontaines*, qu’elle avait trois étages, dont le premier et le deuxième étaient occupés par des locataires, tandis que le troisième restait à la disposition du propriétaire, c’est-à-dire de la Congrégation. Les Pères Éphrem de Lafont et Frobert Chaudière durent, croyons-nous, y séjourner en 1839. Elle fut revendue par Mgrs. Bonamie en 1841”. (Cf. ILDEFONSE ALAZARD “Centenaire de notre premier pied-à-terre à Rome”, in the *Annales de Sacrés-Cœurs* 1929, p. 312).

repair, it was not easy to sell it and it was sold at a very low price (2,150 *pontifical escudos*).

In the Good Father's time *Via delle Quattro Fontane* was on the outer edge of the inhabited area of the city and very few buildings remain from this period. Practically everything one sees in this area was built later. However some mention should be made of a few buildings.

At *Via Agostino Depretis* 103 there is an elegant Venetian gothic style *palazzetto* on what could be the adjoining land to the house bought by the Good Father. It housed



Via Agostino Depretis, 103 (mayo 2012)



the Hotel Luxor, and from 2010 to 2012 it underwent a complete restoration that, as of the date of this publication, is not finished.²⁷

²⁷ The period in which this House was built has not been pinned down; it could be later than the time of the Good Father. Currently it has numbers 103, 104 and 105 on different doors. But only the first number is old, etched in stone, the others have been embedded on plaques at a later date. Perhaps it is because these numbers went out of existence with the construction of *Via Nazionale*, around 1872. At the corner of this house is a remnant of land, a little more than two meters; an indication that there was a parcel of land there that practically disappeared with the construction of the street. The same can be seen at the corner on the other side of *Via Nazionale*. Could this be the land bought by the Good Father?

A little further on, in the same direction, there is the church of *San Paolo Primo Eremita*, built in 1785 with a small monastery adjoining it. The building has been preserved to the present, but it has not been used for worship since 1870.

Ten or so meters in the opposite direction, beyond *Via di San Vitale* (already there in the time of the Good Father), there was the Church of *San Dionigi alle Quattro Fontane*, of the French Trinitarians convent (founded in 1619). At the time of the Good Father it functioned as a home



San Paolo Primo Eremita, circa 1833



San Dionigi alle Quattro Fontane, circa 1833

for young girls, run by French nuns, Apostles of Saint Basil. The church was considered to be the national church of the Bretons in Rome.²⁸

²⁸ It was demolished in 1939, in order to build the “Ufficio Italiano dei Cambi”, Via Quattro Fontane 123. See: ANTONIO NIBBY *Roma nell'anno 1838. V. 3. Parte Prima Moderna*. Rome 1839, p. 208.

D. Other minor matters of the 19th Century

1. The **Superiors General** came to Rome on numerous occasions during the 19th century. Two formal attempts to establish a community in Rome are linked to these trips, both without positive results. We have already pointed out the attempt of Bonamie in 1839.²⁹ Euthyme Rouchouze tried again in 1869, but he died before succeeding. Fr. Bousquet also thought of starting a foundation in 1879 and 1894, but didn't come up with anything concrete.

2. The tomb of **Pope Pius VII** (Barnaba Gregorio Chiaramonti, 1742-1823) is found on the left hand side of Saint Peter's Basilica near the Access door to the sacristy. He is the pope who approved the Congregation in 1817, with the Bull "Pastor Aeternus".

3. The names of all of the bishops who participated in **Vatican Council I** are written in the narthex of Saint Peter's Basilica. The name of Ildefonse-René **Dordillon** (1808-1888), bishop of the Marquesas is found there. Because of the distance Florentin-Etienne (Tepano) **Jaussen** (1815-1891), of Tahiti, and Louis-Désiré **Maigret** (1804-1882), of Hawaii, did not come to the Council. The three of them were ordained as bishops in the Cathedral in Santiago, Chile.

Vatican Council II was celebrated in the same Basilica included among the participants were about ten bishops of the Congregation and the Superior General (Henri Systemans. Cf. note 74, for more Information).

4. There is a mosaic of Saint Joseph in St. Peter's Basilica that was dedicated by Pope Leo XIII, in 1883. It was a gift from Mrs.

²⁹ Bishop Bonamie sent a group of three priests for this new foundation. Fr. Joachim Deletang, who led the group, died unexpectedly in Marseille on July 20, 1839, on the way to Rome. Fr. Éphrem de Lafont replaced him in the mission and stayed in Rome as procurator until November, 1840. He came to Rome two more times, the last was in 1845. (cf. *Nouvelles SSCC* 1953, p. 211; and 1954, pp. 305-306.

Lastenia Vives, the mother of Fr. Arturo Rose-Innes Vives, of Chile.³⁰ The mosaic is found in the Chapel of the Crucified which currently is not accessible to the public because the elevator used by the pope to enter the Basilica is located there. It is the door with a grill that is located in the first part of the right nave, between the Pietà Chapel and the tomb of John Paul II.

5. Cardinal **Giovanni Filippo Gallarati Scotti** (1747-1819) is buried in the church of Santi Ambrogio e Carlo al Corso (Via del Corso 437). He is considered one of the first members of our “Exterior Association”. He played an active role in the approval process for the Constitutions in 1817. He was exiled in France from 1810-1814 for having opposed Napoleon’s marriage to Marie Louise. He was one of the “black cardinals”.



6. Cardinal **Bartolomeo Pacca** (1756-1844), Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars, who collaborated a lot with the Founder in obtaining the approbation of the Constitutions, is buried in the church of *Santa Maria in Portico in Campitelli* (on the right side of the transept).

³⁰ Born in Valparaíso in 1868, he made his profession in the Congregation in 1887, taking the name José Luis. He left the ministry in 1909. He went to live in Japan where he published a Japanese-English dictionary and a method of studying Japanese still available in the sales catalogues of publishers. He was Chilean Consul in Japan from 1931-1932. He was reconciled to the Church through Fr. Mateo Crawley-Boevey and died in Japan in 1938.

2. 20th Century Presences – Brothers:

Procura, students and General House

A. The SS.CC. Procura in Rome and students

The 19th Century ended with out the Congregation having been able to found a community in Rome. Fr. Marcellin Bousquet finally succeeded in establishing a “Procura” in Rome, and little by little the house was becoming a place that welcomed brothers of the Congregation who came to Rome to study. This new presence existed in the context of the intense difficulties experienced with the State in France, the re-organization of the Congregation (division into Provinces in 1898) and a strong growth in the number of members in the Congregation. The latter was due in a large part to the “Apostolic Schools” (begun in 1878, with the apostolic school in Sarzeau).³¹

• **Via Niccolò Macchiavelli 18 (1903-1904).** Fr. Jacques Bund, a German who was recently appointed as General Procurator of the Congregation, arrived in Rome on May 10, 1903.³² Upon arrival he settled in as chaplain of a community of Polish nuns, who had their house at the intersection of Via Macchiavelli with Via Giusti (between Piazza Vittorio Emanuele and Via Merulana).³³

³¹ The Congregation experienced a strong growth in numbers in these years. Between 1850 and 1900 there was a clear stagnation in growth, oscillating between 350 and 430; with several periods of downturn. In 1900 we were 460; in 1920 we were 638; in 1940 we were 1,302; and in 1960 around 2,000. Additionally there was an internal change: a strong growth in priests and a reduction in non-ordained brothers.

³² In *Annales des SS.CC.* 1903, pp. 171-176, is a letter of Fr. Bund, dated May 14, 1903, recounting the circumstances of his departure from France and his first steps in Rome.

³³ The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, is a congregation founded in Rome in 1875 by the Polish nun, Franciszka Siedliska (Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd, 1842-1902). They were very close to the male Congregation of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. They still have this house today. Some times the address is given as Via Giusti 19, a number that currently does not exist but which should be located in the same group of buildings.

From here Fr. Bund began negotiating the acquisition of a house of our own. In a May 26, 1904 *Memoria* he asked the Archconfraternity of Santa María dell'Orto to rent a part of their facilities. They gave him a part of the house at Via Anicia 10. With



Via Macchiavelli 18 (door with arch)

this information he asked the Holy See about the possibility of opening a house for students who came from the various provinces, and was given permission in a rescript on September 5, 1904. In addition, after his first year in Rome, Fr. Bund sat for the exam for the degree of Doctor of Theology.³⁴

The first three new students arrived in October of 1904, and began their 1904-1905 academic year with Fr. Bund lodging temporarily at *San Benedetto in Piscinula*, in a house of the Boncompagni family.³⁵

• **Via Anicia 10 (1904-1914)**, is located in Trastevere, on one side of the church, *Santa Maria dell'Orto*.³⁶ The Congregation rented the part of the building that faces the street from the Archconfraternity; the pastor and the custodian of the church lived in the back. The brothers lived there but had no pastoral responsibility at the church.

³⁴ Cf. *Annales des SS.CC.* 1904, p. 189.

³⁵ The students arrived in Rome in the final days of October, 1904. Cf. *Annales des SSCC* 1904, p. 382.

³⁶ At the rear of the basilica of Saint Cecilia, between the *Sublicio* and *Palatino* bridges.



Via Anicia 10

Fr. Bund and the three students moved to this new house on Christmas Eve, 1904.³⁷ It was a neighborhood with a glorious past, but at this time the reality was very modest.³⁸ The house had very few rooms and there was not much privacy.

In December, 1905, an apostolic visitor sent by the Holy See highly praised the brothers' quality of life but recommended an urgent change of residence, considering this one very inappropriate for a religious community. A new place was sought but with no success. Among the places given serious consideration as possible positive alternatives was *Santa Maria in Trivio* (beside the Trevi Fountain at the intersection of Via dei Crociferi and Via Poli). The change of residence did not occur until November 1, 1914; after the death of Fr. Bund (in Frascati, on June 28, 1913).

In addition to being the Procura in Rome this was also the students' house. Over a period of 10 years, 16 students passed through it.³⁹

³⁷ Cf. *Annales des SS.CC.* 1905, pp. 57-60, with a letter of one of the students dated, January 6, 1905, recounting this process.

³⁸ The street name refers to the "gens anicia" an important aristocratic Roman family which had its houses in this area (from the 2nd century BCE to the 4th century CE). Among others, it is the family of Pope Gregory the Great. Tradition recounts that during his sojourn in Rome, Saint Benedict stayed in this family's house. The church, *San Benedetto in Piscinula* would be built over the place that Saint Benedict lived. These considerations were present among the inhabitants of the modest house ...

³⁹ Specifically: 7 French, 2 Belgians, 2 Germans, 3 Dutch, 1 Irish, and 1 Spaniard. By years (at the beginning of the academic year): 1904: 3; 1905: 4; 1906: 5; 1907: 5; 1908: 4; 1909: 4; 1910: 3; 1911: 4; 1912: 4; 1913: 4.

• **Piazza di Santa Maria in Trastevere 24, Palazzo di San Callisto (1914-1927).**⁴⁰ In Fr. Flavien Prat's time the new Procurator, Adolphe Velghe, arrived in Rome on October 29, 1913. Finding a new house for the Community was a primary concern of his. He obtained one by renting the "second floor" of the *Palazzo di San Callisto*, which was property of the Benedictine monastery of *Saint Paul outside the wall* at the time.⁴¹ The "first floor" was used by the commission that was revising the Vulgate.

The Procura moved in on November 1, 1914. These were the years of the First World War (July 1914 to November 1918). During these years there were no students and the Procurator spent most of his time in Belgium (at the General House).

A new Procurator Marie-Joseph Miquel (from the first group of students at *Via Anicia*) arrived in Rome in October, 1919. Having a sufficiently large space, he organized the house better.⁴² Again students began to arrive from the



Piazza di Santa Maria in Trastevere 24

On the left is seen the Church of San Callisto

⁴⁰ Cf. *Annales des SS.CC.* 1920, p. 24; *Id.* 1928, p. 433; *Id.* 1933, p. 309.

⁴¹ This building was built for the popes but in 1608 its property was transferred to the Monastery of *San Paolo fuori le mura*, as compensation for some property that belonged to the monastery that was ceded for the construction of the *Quirinale Palace*. There had been a Benedictine monastery there for years.

⁴² It had 23 bedrooms plus all the other units. The space was large and good, but lacked any kind of garden or terrace, and it was necessary to climb 90 steps to get home.

different provinces.⁴³ Among them Blessed Teófilo Fernández de Legaria and Blessed Isidro Íñiguez, martyrs.

Around 1925 the Holy See acquired this property again. And in the *Lateran Treaties* (February 11, 1929) it acquired “extraterritorial” privilege. The Congregation’s rental contract with the Benedictines expired on November 1, 1925; it was renewed with the Holy See (the new owners) for three years, but the rent doubled, and it again doubled in October, 1927. Moreover, the Holy See wanted to move some of their offices there and renovate the whole building. The quadrupled cost of rent and the desire of the Holy See to use the whole building led to the search for a new place.

• **Piazza di San Callisto 18, Palazzetto di San Callisto (1927-1933)**. This is a small building, contiguous with the former one on its left side. It was also part of the Holy See’s properties, but at the time was in bad condition. The Congregation contributed a large sum of money to

make it inhabitable. The move took place during the summer vacation of 1927, and they began living there in November of the same year.⁴⁴ It was a smaller but sufficient space. During these years there continued to be students from



Square and church of San Callisto

⁴³ Students (at the beginning of each academic year): 1919: 6; 1920: 8; 1921: 8; 1922: 12; 1923: 14; 1924: 15; 1925: 13; 1926: 13.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Annales des SS.CC.* 1928, pp. 222-223.

abroad.⁴⁵ This building is located next to the small San Callisto Church that still exists.⁴⁶

In December of 1931 the Holy See informed the Procurator that this building, along with several others, would be demolished in July of 1932, to make room for the “Palazzo delle Sacre Congregazioni Romane” (or simply San Callisto).⁴⁷

At this time a decision was made to look for a more stable place, a property belonging to the Congregation. But the process of obtaining an inhabitable house lasted four years. (cf. San Erasmo). In the meantime they had to look for a temporary solution.⁴⁸

• **Via della Paglia 15** (1933-1936). The new property was ceded to the Holy See by the Italian government in the Lateran Treaties, and was located behind the apse of *Santa María Maggiore*, on the corner of *Via Giacomo Venezian* a place that was not touched by the new construc-



Via della Paglia 15

⁴⁵ Number of students at the beginning of each academic year: 1927: 13; 1928: 11; 1929: 12; 1930: 12; 1931: 11; 1932: 12.

⁴⁶ A very ancient building, named Cardenalicio. Tradition indicates that it was built over the home of Pope Callisto I (217-222) and the site of his martyrdom.

⁴⁷ A grandiose building designed by the architect Giuseppe Momo (1875-1940), that housed numerous offices of the Holy See. It was inaugurated by Pius XI in 1936. Almost all of the Sacred Congregations worked from here until the construction of the current offices on the *Via de la Conciliazione*, that were desired by Pius XII in 1950.

⁴⁸ This solution was proposed by the Holy See in its letter of September 10, 1932. The suggestion of the temporary place came from the architect G. Momo.

tions. The move there was made in mid-1933.

Fr. Marie-Joseph Miquel, who was still the Procurator, coordinated the construction of San Erasmo from this house; and is the real “founder” of this house. A group of students continued to live at Via della Paglia.⁴⁹

• **Via de San Erasmo 2 (1936-1968).** At the end of 1931 the decision was made to buy a house in Rome, leaving the status of being tenants subjected to continual moves.

First it was necessary to have sufficient money to do it. The Procurator went to Braine-le-Comte for a meeting of the General with the provincials of Europe on March 3rd and 4th of 1932. There a pledge was made for the financial contribution and a committee was established to look for land or acquire a house.⁵⁰ These were the last years of Fr. Flavien Prat’s term. He was aged and infirmed and unable to directly lead this process. The process concluded in opting for a 3,265 square meter piece of land at the intersection of the new *Via San Erasmo* with *Via della Navicella*; next to *Porta Metronia*.⁵¹

At the same time the Congregation had to obtain its status as a Juridical Person in Rome so that it could purchase the land. This was done in 1933.⁵²

Having obtained the land it was necessary to proceed with designing a building (1933-1934). They worked with the architect Tullio Passarelli (1869-1941), and again there was a committee of provincials

⁴⁹ Students at the beginning of the academic year: 1933: 12; 1934: 11; 1935: 8.

⁵⁰ The provincials of Belgium and Germany arrived in Rome on March 29, 1932 to look for something appropriate. They visited a property of Prince Doria in *Santa Maria in Cappella* (Trastevere, in the square of the same name); the procura of the Premostratensians at Via Urbana 157 (next to *Santa Pudenziana*); and some vacant plots, suitable for a new building. They choose the latter.

⁵¹ In June of 1932 Fr. General, Flavien Prat, gave permission to buy this property. The contract of sale was signed November 26, 1932. It was paid off on January 4, 1934. The final registration of the property was done August 10, 1934.

⁵² The May 17, 1933 Decree is signed by King Vittorio Emmanuelle III and Benito Mussolini.

to follow the work. January 4, 1934 there was an agreement on a program for financing the work. The Superior General sent Fr. Abel Paillard to Rome to assist with this task.

The construction work began in April of 1935. Bishop Stephen Alencastre (1876-1940), Bishop of Hawaii, blessed the cornerstone on June 23, 1935.⁵³ On October 5, 1936 the certificate of occupancy for the new building was received.

The move was made to the new house during the summer vacation of 1936, in order to begin the new school year there. The first mass was celebrated in the new house on October 7, 1936. It was a good house, spacious and in a tranquil and beautiful area, in a good location that was sufficiently central.⁵⁴



Via di Sant'Erasmo 2

The Procura was in this house until the end of 1958, when it was moved to the General House (Villa Senni).

In a special way the house of San Erasmo took shape as a place for students, to such an extent that it was habitually called the **Interna-**

⁵³ Cf. *Annales des SSCC* 1935, p. 213.

⁵⁴ The new house had 40 bedrooms in addition to all the other services, in a constructed surface of 2,316 square meters.

tional School.⁵⁵ Throughout the years it housed many students from all of the provinces.⁵⁶ Additionally it offered hospitality to many members of the Congregation who passed through Rome. Among them the SS.CC: Bishops who were present at the first three sessions of the Vatican Council II (more information is found in note 74).

In March-April of 1958 they spoke of the possibility of the priests at San Erasmo assuming the pastoral care of the recently restored church of *San Cesareo* (Passeggiata Archeologica), a dependency of the parish of *San Saba*. There was no great interest in this, because the church was in an isolated location and had several difficulties.

The 1958 General Chapter was celebrated in this house. At the Chapter Fr. D'Elbée, who was elected for life, presented his resignation and Fr. Henri Systemans, was elected as the first Superior General with a fixed term.⁵⁷

In the middle of 1968, the fathers and brothers who were still staying at the house moved to the General House (*Via Aurelia Antica*).⁵⁸ The house was rented to the PIME (*Pontificio Istituto Missioni Estere*) from June 1, 1968 to March 31, 1972. In January of 1971 the Enlarged General Council decided to sell it. The sale was finalized in June of 1972.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Cf. GERARD SCHLOSSER "Notre maison de Rome" in *Nouvelles SSCC* 1948, pp. 177-180; CYPRIEN VAN DEN WIJNGAART "Statistiques à l'occasion du cinquantenaire de notre Procure de Rome" (1903-1953), in *Nouvelles SSCC* 1953, pp. 183-185.

⁵⁶ Students at the beginning of the academic year: 1936: 8; 1937: 9; 1938: 9. From 1939-1946 there were no students because of the Second World War. 1947: 11; 1948: 12; 1949: 14; 1950: 13; 1951: 10; 1952: 14; 1953: 16; 1954: 17; 1955: 19; 1956: 20; 1957: 24; 1958: 25; 1959: 25; 1960: 24; 1961: 23; 1962: 21; 1963: 21; 1964: 22; 1965: ¿?; 1966: ¿?; 1967: 7.

⁵⁷ The Constitutions were revised at this Chapter and the new General, Henri Systemans, was elected for a period of six years.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Annales Congregationis SSCC* 1968, p. 160

⁵⁹ The sales contract was signed on July 8, 1972; and the notary entry of the sale, once the total price was paid, was made September 28, 1972. The house was sold for 380 million lira. It was sold to an individual. Since 1974 *Fotocinema* has worked out of there. Cf: <http://www.fotocinema.it>.

The furniture and the library of the house were sold in September of 1972. Among the few things that were kept is the picture of the Sacred Hearts that was located on the main altar, and is currently in Via Rivarone. It was done in Rome in 1950, with a design requested by the Congregation.

B. The Brothers' General House

From 1805 to 1905 the brothers' General House was in Paris on **Rue de Picpus**. Due to the anticlerical laws, in 1905 the house moved to Belgium in the small city of **Braine-le-Comte** (1905-1953). The 1938 General Chapter gave authorization to move the General House to Rome, but the process was held up because of the Second World War.

The war having ended, an active search for a house started at the beginning of 1951. They wanted a big house (*Villa*) with an ample park, which was not easy to find and very costly. The Superior General, Fr. D'Elbée, visited ten or more alternatives. As a matter of fact, the move was only able to be made in 1953, through a "last minute" solution.⁶⁰

• **"Villa Senni", Grottaferrata (1953-1964).**⁶¹ It is an old rural *Villa* on a large 22,800 square meter property and a house that was last refurbished in 1887, and which seemed a little abandoned.⁶² The property was purchased from Count Gian Andrea Senni; on November 6, 1952.

⁶⁰ A detailed description is found in: IGNACIO DE LA CRUZ BAÑOS "Translation de la Maison Généralice à Rome (démarches pour l'achat, installation de la communauté)" in *Nouvelles SSCC*, n° 45-46, November-December 1953, January-February 1954, pp. 230-236. Additionally: MONULPHE HEYSTERS "La Villa Senni (description)", id. pp. 237-243.

⁶¹ The exact address is : Via Cavona 1 (sometimes called: Via della Molla Cavona, or Via della Cavona), also Via Anagnina 561. It is at the intersection with Via Anagnina, some 17 kms from the center of Rome. It is located very near Grottaferrata and its ancient Eastern rite monastery, founded by Saint Nilo in 1004.

⁶² The building was constructed using the abundant Roman ruins in the area. It is at the 10th mile of the Via Latina (*Ad Decimum*), which crosses the property. The first known owner was Giovanni Giustino Ciampini (1633-1698). In prior centuries it was known as "Casale di Ciampino", or "Villa Sant'Andrea", named for a small church nearby.

Fr. D'Elbée signed the sales contract and the next day (first Friday) received the house keys from the hands of Countess Senni.⁶³

The work of repairing and expanding the house began at that time and for this, they turned to the architect Fausto Passarelli (1910-1998). On November 30, 1952 Fr. Ansgar Deussen moved into the house to supervise the repairs.

Little by little the Community started living in the house at the end of September, 1953.

There was an informal inauguration of the house on October 17th. Fr. General arrived at the house on November 8th and the repair work was only finished on December 12, 1953.



Villa Senni (seen from the back part)

On June 1, 1954 there was a solemn inauguration of the new house presided over by Cardinal Tedeschini, Archbishop of Frascati, the diocese in which the house is located. Numerous officials were invited.⁶⁴

Fr. Systemans requested that the Procura and the Procurator be in residence at the General House (not in San Erasmo), in order to collaborate more closely with the General Government. The move took place at the beginning of January, 1959.

⁶³ The notary entry for the property was only made on September 15, 1953. It was purchased for 32 million lira. But the deed of sale only indicated a value of 10 million, in order to reduce the tax payment. In November of 1959 the Italian State objected to the transaction, indicating the real value was 40 million, and required the payment of taxes on this amount ...

⁶⁴ Cf. MARIE-BERNARD LAVANANT "L'inauguration de la nouvelle Maison générale" en *Nouvelles SS.CC.* 1954, p. 289-294. It has good Information about the history of the property. In addition see, *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 4, 1954.

Soon they felt the need for a place that was more central and better adapted to the necessities of a General House. In April 1958 the General Council seriously considered the need to significantly enlarge the house and contacted the architect Fausto Passarelli (1910-1998). The issue was discussed at the General Chapter of 1958. Although no formal decision was made, the Chapter expressed its opposition to the Villa Senni house because of its distance from the city center. The new General quickly leaned towards changing the house to a more central location.

The house was put up for sale in June of 1963.⁶⁵ On March 26, the decision was made to sell it to the “Sisters, Hospitallers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus”, for 175 million lira. These sisters began arriving at the house on May 1st and set up a home for the elderly which as of this date they still run. The name of it is “Villa San Raffaele, già Villa Senni”.

• **Via Aurelia Antica 408 (1964-1973).**⁶⁶ In September of 1958, the recently elected Superior General, Fr. Systemans suggested that it was necessary to enlarge the house of San Erasmo and that of Villa Senni. They chose to prioritize the work at San Erasmo and began to look for some land to build a new General House.

The members of the General Government visited a great number of available properties for the General House,⁶⁷ and finally chose *Vigna Venzaghi*.⁶⁸ On June 23, 1959 the Vicariate gave the approval for es-

⁶⁵ They debated the option of keeping this house as a summer residence for the member of the General House or as a scholasticate for possible Italian vocations.

⁶⁶ Almost at the intersection of Via de Torrerossa.

⁶⁷ The main ones were: Monte Mario (*Via della Balduina*, 10,700 m²); Gianicolo (*Hermanas de Sion*, 3,000 m²); Via Aurelia (on one side of the general house of the De La Salle Brothers, 20,000 m²); “Villa Canova”, on Via della Camilluccia; printing house of the Salisians; near the *Catacombs of Domitila*; etc.

⁶⁸ This property is mentioned for the first time on June 3, 1959, as a property of 1.5 hectares “beside the *Domus Pacis*”; and next to it another of 1.3 hectares and one on *Via della Nocetta* of a little more than a hectare. The first was preferred and they requested the opinion of “experts” and the *beneplicium* from the Vicariate to set up the General House there; given that this is a “danger zone” a little later an investigation was conducted to rule out the possibility of



Via Aurelia Antica 408, Villetta Venzaghi

tablishing the General House there; and the decision was made to buy it. Fr. General, Henri Systemans, who was visiting Chile, approved the decision by cable on June 25th.⁶⁹ Construction permits for the first building project ("*piano di massima*") from the architect Fausto Passarelli

(1910-1998) were requested from the Italian State at the end of August. The sales agreement was signed on December 14, 1959.⁷⁰ The final approval of the construction plans, on the part of the Congregation, was made on August 30, 1960, although modifications continued to be made during the construction process. In June of 1962, the construction firm, SICER was chosen to begin the work.

Before taking the step to buy a new property, there had been a long reflection on the possibility of enlarging the San Erasmo house and moving the General House there. Not everyone was in agreement with the idea because the house did not seem appropriate to them. And the municipality was against the enlargement plans that were submitted to them. With these two reasons combined the idea was rejected.

archeological ruins that might complicate the construction. At the end of the month it was clearly identified as the parcel at *Via Aurelia Antica* 88, the Venzaghi property.

⁶⁹ It was a quick decision because the land seemed appropriate and the price was good; but also because the owner, Mr. Venzaghi was very old and sick and the family pushed for the sale to take place before his death (in order to avoid paying the rights of inheritance).

⁷⁰ The sales value of the land was 146 million lira. The estimated cost of the construction was 345 million; but the actual cost was around 480 million lira. In order to buy the land and specifically to build the house, financial collaboration was requested of all the provinces for several years. The amount and the way of making the contributions were agreed upon in a meeting with all of the Provincials that took place in Rome in May, 1961. The land had an area of 1.5 hectares, and the building that was built was some 28,000 m².

The Congregation bought some land with a small rural house (*Villa Venzaghi*). A new spacious “modern” house was built. The villa was preserved and smaller offices were set up there.⁷¹ The land was cleared, a large park was constructed and the water of the Bravetta ditch was channeled, for the latter a consortium was set up from among the neighboring land owners and a contract was made with the firm, Barduagni to carry out the work.

The official move to the new house was made on May 19, 1964. The 30th General Chapter was celebrated here (August 22 – October 24, 1964), which approved the new Constitutions, after the lengthy work of the “*Refonte de la Règle*”. This Chapter was celebrated concurrently with the Third Session of Vatican Council II.⁷² The council’s changes and the new Constitutions quickly and profoundly changed the way the community functioned.

For the services in this house (kitchen, cleaning and laundry) they sought a community of nuns who would live in the house. After searching for a couple of years, a contract was drawn up with the “**Tertiary Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Hearts**” at the beginning of 1964.⁷³ There were 4 or 5 sisters steadily living in the house. These sisters also



⁷¹ In March of 1961 the *Villa* was whether or not it would be convenient for one of the fathers to live there and take care of the house. The response was negative. In July of 1962 a group of sisters from Sempelveld moved in, as the needed temporary housing in Rome. They functioned as caretakers during the construction. In later years this Villa was rented to various institutions or religious communities and there was even the thought of selling it, separating it from the rest of the house.

⁷² The Brazilian bishops stayed at *Domus Pacis*, the house right next to ours, and that house was also the site of many informal meetings outside of the Council hall.

⁷³ The Congregation was founded in Antequera, Andalusia, Spain, in 1884. The nuns who came to Rome were Spaniards.

served at Via Rivarone (they lived on the “second floor”), in the early years of this house. Before the arrival of these sisters, the service of the house was done by “lay brothers” of the Congregation.

The Congregation’s bishops who participated in the Fourth Session and the closure of Vatican Council II (September to December 1965) stayed at this house.⁷⁴

In mid 1968, the Community of San Erasmo was closed and the brothers living there joined this house.⁷⁵ This matter had already been formally proposed in the 1964 General Chapter after seeing the size of the new General House. But there was a problem in uniting two groups with different rhythms of life. With the union of both communities, plus the sisters who served in the house, the “total religious” at the beginning of December, 1968 was 41 persons.

The 1970 General Chapter (September 1st to October 6th) was celebrated in this house. Fr. Jan Scheepens was elected as Superior General in it, and with him a new and different way of exercising the role of Superior General was chosen. The Chapter also made some important decisions regard the houses in Rome, asking that the principles of “modesty and simplicity” be kept in mind.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ The following 7 bishops from the Congregation stayed at the house: Teodoro Eugenín (1st – 4th sessions, Chile), Paul Mazé (1st – 4th sessions, Tahiti), Gabriel van der Westen (1st to 4th sessions, Indonesia), Hendrick J.C.M. de Cocq (3rd and 4th sessions, Cook Islands), Victor Tielbeek (1st – 4th sessions, Brazil), Luciano Metzinger (1st – 4th sessions, Peru), Dominique Desperben (2nd – 4th sessions, Hainan, China). Johann Rùth (1st – 4th sessions, Norway) and Augusto Salinas (1st – 4th sessions, Chile) stayed in other houses. Those who did not come to this session were: Johann Ubald Lehman (only 2nd session, Cook Islands), Pablo Ramírez (only 1st and 3rd sessions, Peru), Louis-Bertrand Tirilly (only 1st and 2nd sessions, Marquesas), Victor Van Beurden (only 2nd and 3rd sessions, Congo). Cf. *Annales Congregationis SS.CC.* 1965, pp. 220-221.

⁷⁵ Two Fathers came to the house from San Erasmo, and nine students to start the new academic year 1968-1969. They were: 1 from Germany, 1 from Belgium, 4 from Spain, 2 from the United States and 1 from France. Cf. *Annales SS.CC.* 1968, p. 289.

⁷⁶ “**Décision 68.** Le chapitre général 1^o désire que le gouvernement central ordinaire examine et résolve concrètement, selon les principes de modestie et de simplicité, la question des maisons de Rome; 2^o il demande la suppression de

In 1973 this house was sold to the *Colegio Pio Latino Americano* for a sum of 1,200 million lira.⁷⁷ In August of 1973 the move was made to the current house at *Via Rivarone* 85.

• **Via Rivarone 87 (since August 1973)**. From its start, at the end of 1970, the new General Government thought about this subject. Again it studied the possibility of making a change at *Via de San Erasmo*, to establish the General House there; but it was rejected. The possibility of renting part of the house at *Via Aurelia Antica*, and reserving the rest for our use was also considered. But this alternative had more disadvantages than advantages. For whichever solution, they thought that there would be very few students in Rome and that this house would probably not be appropriate for them. They felt that, in the future, with the new style of General Government there could be fewer members in the General Curia, which during these years numbered 25. Moreover all of these problems, arose in the context of several years a strong social tension in Italy (Red Brigade) as well as a lot of fear in the face of the possibility of the Church in Rome eventually losing the fiscal privileges that it enjoyed (under utilized large houses that don't pay taxes).

In July of 1971, the General Government made the decision to sell the house at *Via Aurelia Antica* and immediately communicated this decision to the Congregation. The Superior General pointed out that the reasons had to do with a concept of religious poverty and a look at the future of religious life. The decision was much debated for a time, so much so that it was necessary to have a meeting of the Major Superiors to deal with the subject.

la communauté canoniquement érigée de la via di s. Erasmo; 3° il est d'accord pour que le gouvernement central ordinaire décide de la destination des possessions temporelles de la maison de la via di s. Erasmo.”

⁷⁷ **Colegio Pío Latino Americano** is an institution that was founded in 1858 by a Chilean priest to facilitate the formation of Latin American clergy. It is under the supervision of the Company of Jesus. After having had its headquarters in the historic center of Rome, in the middle of 1962 it moved to a new, very large building at *Via Aurelia* 511 (*Villa Maffeì*). At the time, for reasons very similar to ours, it was seeking a smaller more modest house. They sold there headquarters to the “*Scuola Ufficiali dei Carabinieri*”, “*Caserma Ugo de Carolis*”, which is still there.

In March of 1972, a study of the alternatives for a new house began. The process was accelerated when in September of that year, the *Colegio Pío Latino Americano* showed an interest in buying the house. They looked at new houses on *Via Boccea*, *Torrevecchia*, *Raccordo Anulare* and *Via Cassia*. The final choice between two apartment buildings already under construction on *Via Boccea* was made at the end of January, 1973. One was “large”, with 15 apartments and a large basement and one “small” 10 apartments. The latter was chosen, which is the current one, for a price of 350 million lira. In July of 1973 the sales agreement for the house on *Via Aurelia Antica*, was signed, closing the process.⁷⁸

The new house was located at *Via Monte Carmelo* 85,⁷⁹ and the construction process was already advanced, being done by the firm PACE, together with the house of the Brothers of Christian Instruction of Ploërmel.

Additionally, in July of 1973 an apartment, that was immediately available, was purchased at *Via Monte Carmelo* 35, the Secretariat was moved there before moving the rest of the community.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ In October of 1972 the formal decision to sell the house to the Pío Latino Americano was made. The formal sales agreement was signed on July 27, 1973. There, it appears as a “donation” of the Congregation, in order to avoid paying taxes, but in effect it was sold for 1,200 million lira. As in the case of *Villa Senni*, after a few years the Italian State objected to the sales agreement, requiring the payment of taxes on an “estimated value of sale” of 1,550 million. These taxes were paid in 1980...

⁷⁹ In reality the new house at *Via Rivarone* 85 is 2,000 m², quite a bit less than the 28,000 m² at *Via Aurelia Antica*. There was a great savings of money in this process that allowed for the creation of a fund to help the General House. *San Erasmo* was sold for 380 million; *Aurelia Antica* for 1,200 million, and the new house was bought for 350 million. With the modification that were made to the house, the work done in the yard, the purchase of furniture and a price adjustment requested by the seller, the total cost of the house was 462,5 million. Given that the original use of the house changed (family apartments), the final acknowledgement of the construction by the municipality (“abitabilità”) was only obtained by the construction firm in July of 1982.

⁸⁰ *Via Rivarone* 100 - This was an apartment that was used for a few years. Then it was rented to a Community of nuns, and finally in the 90’s it was sold, during the first term of Enrique Losada.

Little by little the move to the new house was done during August of 1973: the first ones arrived at Rivarone on August 13th and the last ones on August 25th. The “Tertiary Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Hearts” stayed at this house for a few years, doing domestic service (they lived on the “second floor”). In different years the house welcomed students, but it was an intermittent flow, and not very numerous.

The 2006 General Chapter asked that a study be done about keeping the General House at this location.⁸¹ After studying the premises, the General Government decided to stay in the house and to carry out renovations and adaptations to make the house more functional for the current necessities of the Congregation. The renovation work was done from February to September 2008.



⁸¹ **Finance Document 17:** The recommendations of the Financial Advisory Commission will continue to be studied by the General Government. In particular, the members of the General Government will give serious consideration to the possible sale, rental or alternative use of the current General House. They will give a report regarding this at the next meeting of the Enlarged General Council. However, if they deem it advisable to take action regarding the disposition of the General House prior to that meeting, they should do so.”

C. Others in the 20th Century

• **Brothers' Tomb in Rome.** The Congregation has a tomb in the Roman cemetery, *Campo Verano*. They began speaking of the necessity of having one in November of 1958, and it was built in 1959. The following Fathers, who died in Rome, are buried there:⁸²



Tomb in Campo Verano

- Jacques/Jakobus Bund (1853-1913, Germany)
- Emmerich Weimer (1911-1938, Germany)
- François de Borgia Manac'h (1904-1973, France)
- Eusebius Rinkes (1889-1973, Netherlands)
- Médard Jacques (1914-1977, France)
- Francis Larkin (1903-1980, USA)
- Javier Caubet (1913-1985, Spain)

• **Architectural Note.** Many of the construction jobs carried out by the Congregation in Rome were entrusted to the same group: architect Tullio Passarelli (1869-1941) and his sons: Vincenzo (1904-1985), Fausto (1910-1998) and Lucio (1922). It is a group of architects with a certain importance for 20th century ecclesiastical construction in Rome and in the Vatican. Currently, this architectural office is in the hands of the third generation and is called *Studio Passarelli*, and recognized in the list of their works are: 12^o Year 1925: house of Tommaso Salvini;

⁸² Fr. Bruno Benati died on June 17, 2008, and was buried in the family tomb in Crevalcore in the Dioceses of Bologna.

24^o Year 1935: house of San Erasmo; 47^o Year 1952: repair of Villa Senni; 94^o Year 1963: house of Aurelia Antica.⁸³

• **Other presences of the brothers in Italy:** In addition to moving the General House to Rome, Fr. D'Elbée encouraged the establishment of an apostolic presence in Italy.⁸⁴ All of the first steps were taken by the General Government. Later, in the time of Fr. Systemans, it entrusted these presences to the Belgian Province. Basically, there were two communities:

- **Cagnola di Trento (*Villa Mira Bel*):** The house was bought on July 20, 1956, as the first apostolic presence in Italy.⁸⁵ At the beginning it was thought of as an apostolic school and novitiate. It was sold around 1980 (?).
- **Pontenure (*Villa Bellota*):** The General Government authorized the purchase of the house in the vicinity of Piacenza on August 14, 1959. The contract of sale with the Raggio family was signed on May 18, 1960.⁸⁶ In 1965 the house was designated as an "Apostolic School" and novitiate. From 1966 on it served as a middle school. Some students of the Belgian Province also went there and did their theological studies in Piacenza. Later it was used as a center for meetings. It was sold to the Diocese of Piacenza in 1997.
 - **Castell'Arquato:** Here, the pastoral needs of the parish of *Sant'Antonio di Castell'Arquato*, are being attended up to the present day.
 - **Podere Lodola:** There are several hectares of agricultural land located in the area of Pontenure, which was given to the Congregation around 1965, and sold (at least partially: 9.3 hectares) in 1981.

⁸³ Cf. <http://www.studiopassarelli.it/>. The house on Via Cassia was also designed by the Passarelli Brothers, but it doesn't appear on the listed of "recognized" works.

⁸⁴ Information about the first years of these foundations is in: LÉON BECKERS "Les Fondations d'Italie", en *Annales SS.CC.* 1967, pp. 19-24.

⁸⁵ The purchase price of 19 million lira was paid by the General Government.

⁸⁶ The General Government paid 22 million lira for it, plus the transfer tax. It had to invest around 10 million more for repairs.

The brothers' houses in Rome

- 1. Via delle Quattro Fontane, 104/105**
August 19, 1829 – June 21, 1842 13 years
- 2. Via Machiavelli, 18**
May 9, 1903 – November 1904 1.5 years
- 3. Via Anicia, 10**
November 1904 – November 1, 1914 10 years
- 4. Piazza di Santa Maria in Trastevere, 24**
November 1, 1914 – November 1927 13 years
- 5. Piazza di San Callisto, 18**
November 1927 – 1933 6 years
- 6. Via della Paglia, 15**
1933 – October 1936 3 years
- 7. Via di San Erasmo, 2**
October 1936 – September 1968 32 years
- 8. Villa Senni, Grottaferrata**
October 1953 – May 1964 10.5 years
- 9. Via Aurelia Antica, 408**
May 19, 1964 – August 1, 1973 9.5 years
- 10. Via Rivarone, 85**
August 1, 1973 to present 39 years

3. 20th Century Presences – Sisters:

School, General House and others

A. School (*Via Tommaso Salvini, 20. Parioli*): This is the first presence of the sisters in Italy. In 1926, Mother General Benjamine Le Blais bought a large property, in a good location next to the country house of the royal family (*Villa Ada*; in this epoch *Villa Savoia*); it is on a rolling hill with a beautiful view of the river; between *Via Ettore Petrolini* and *Piazza delle Muse*. Two sisters were sent to Rome to prepare the new school; during these years they were lodged at the nearby house of the Sisters of Saint Thomas of Villanueva.



View of Rome, from Piazza delle Muse

The architect Tullio Passarelli (1869-1941) was contacted for the construction. Given that the request for the construction project appears to have been made in 1925, it's possible that the architect intervened in the selection of land, in an area of the city that was undergoing urban development. The cornerstone was blessed on June 9 1929, by Fr. P. General Flavien Prat. Sr. María Margarita and the project engineer, M. Carassi were responsible for supervising the construction.⁸⁷ The construction was finished in 1932. The first mass was celebrated in the new school on February 11, 1932.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Cf. *Annales des SS.CC.* 1929, pp. 225-227, has a long note about this act.

⁸⁸ Cf. *Annales SS.CC.* 1957, p. 453.

A complete school was built with all levels from kindergarten to high school. The school was run by the sisters until 1972, the date that it was sold to the municipality of Rome. It has continued to function as a school until today. In September of 2003 it was united with the *Liceo Scientifico Manfredi Azzarita* and the *Istituto Tecnico Commerciale e per Geometri Antonio Genovesi* to form the *Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore "Via Salvini 24"* (IIS Salvini 24).⁸⁹



Via Tommaso Salvini 24, recently built

B. Summer house in Grottaferrata. The house was designated for the use of the sisters at the *Tommaso Salvini* school. At one time they thought of having the sisters' novitiate in this house. There was a group of young women from Sicily there for a time, but they did not persevere. The house was closed at the same time as the school.

⁸⁹ See history, with reference to the Congregation at <http://www.iisviasalvini.it/>

C. General House at Via Cassia 1200.⁹⁰ Pope Pius XII asked the religious congregations to have their general houses in Rome for better contact with the Holy See and to make more frequent meetings between Superiors General possible. The General House of the sisters had been at Picpus since the time of the foundation. The opportunity to make this change came with the resignation of Mother Zénaïde Lorier (elected as Superior General for life in 1948) that was presented to the General Chapter on July 7, 1964. The new General Superior, Mother Brigid Mary McSweeney, made this step aided by Fr. Henri Systemans.

The construction of the new house began in 1964. To carry out the work, they turned to the same architectural office and the same builder who had just finished the house on *Via Aurelia Antica*. At the beginning of November, 1965 a group of sisters ar-



Via Cassia 1200

rived from Paris to organize and furnish the house. On November 22, the Superior General and her councilors arrived in Rome and a large group of sisters among them 11 sisters on “probation”.⁹¹ Fr. General celebrated the first mass at the house on November 23, 1965, the anniversary of the Good Mother. The new house was blessed on November 28, 1965. All of the brothers living in Rome were present including the Council

⁹⁰ The house is located a little outside of the *Raccordo Anulare*, 13 kms from the city center, in the territory of the Parish of the Blessed Virgin, *La Giustiniana* in the dioceses of Porto and Santa Rufina.

⁹¹ One of them was Rosa María Ferreiro, Superior General 2006-2012, who was the first sister to be perpetually professed in Rome.

Fathers. Bishop Teodoro Eugénin, Military Vicar of Chile, blessed the house.⁹²

In addition to the General House, there was also a stage of formation for the young sisters here (“Probation”) and a rest home for elderly women.

In 1975, at the beginning of Mother María Paloma Aguirre’s government, the General House moved to *Via Aurelia*. A group of 15 to 20 sisters continued to live in the house accommodating the elderly and pilgrims. The house was closed in 1979 and was sold in 1980. Of the sisters still living there at the time, 9 went to the Community in *Colle Prenestino* and 6 returned to their provinces. At *Via Cassia* a house of welcome for Polish pilgrims was established.⁹³

D. General House at Via Aurelia 145. In July of 1975, the General House was moved to this new location beside the Vatican in the “Aurelia Residence” complex. Here all of the services proper to a General House and also the General Archives were set up. It is a group of seven apartments in which the General House has functioned up to the present.



“Aurelia Residence”

E. Casa del Clero (*Via della Scrofa 70*): In the 1975 General Chapter the sisters chose to accept the responsibility of running this house as a service to the Church. Mother Brigid Mary McSweeney, who finished as Superior General at the time, stayed in Rome and took over the direc-

⁹² Cf. *Annales SS.CC.* 1966, pp. 55-56.

⁹³ Cf. *Info SS.CC.* 11 (June 1980), pp. 5-6. Currently: *Dom Polski Jan Pawła II. Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studium Pontyfikatu Jana Pawła II.* (The Polish House John Paul II. Documentation and study center of the Pontificate of John Paul II).

tion of this task together with two other sisters. They maintained this service for about 10 years.

Currently this house is the *Domus Internationalis Paulus VI*, a dependency of the Vatican.⁹⁴ It is a 15th century building that, in the time of the Good Father's visits to Rome, was the residence of the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, before he moved to *Saint John Lateran*. As it is a building located next to *San Luigi dei francesi*, it was certainly on the horizon of the visitors in the early years of the Congregation.



Via della Scrofa 70

F. Community at Colle Prenestino (Via Acerra 60):⁹⁵ When the house was closed at *Via Cassia* in 1979, the Italian sisters who wanted to stay in Italy went to this new community. They were in the territory of Saint Patrick parish and actively collaborated in the parish life.⁹⁶ The presence there lasted for six years. On June 16, 1986 the house was closed and the sisters left for France..⁹⁷ The house was sold to another religious: *Istituto Suore Oblate Madonna del Rosario*, who are still there today.

⁹⁴ Cf. <http://www.domuspaulusvi.com/>

⁹⁵ It is at the intersection with *Via Nocera Inferiore*, in a popular barrio on the periphery of Rome. By the *Via Prenestina*, it is a little ways outside of the *Raccordo Anulare*, approaching Tivoli. It is an area with many springs of water collected by the *Acquedotto dell'Acqua Vergine* (from 19 C.E.), and currently used to feed five important fountains in Rome: the *Fontana della Barcaccia* (Piazza di Spagna), the *Fontana di Trevi*, the *Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi* and the *Fontana del Nicchione* (Via dei Fori Imperiali).

⁹⁶ The parish was founded November 7, 1975. The first pastor was Fr. Arnaldo. The sisters were very close to him.

⁹⁷ Cf. *INFO* 38 (September 1986), p. 124.

G. Apartments on Via Pamphili, Trastevere: In 1975, together with the moving the General House to Via Aurelia 145, the sisters bought some apartments in this area that were mainly used for the work of some committees (in particular the Committee for the new Constitutions), or as a living place for some sisters (in particular, Sr. Dolorine Pires). Later they were rented to the Sant'Egidio Community and finally they were sold.

H. Presence in Madonna de Buia (Udine, Veneto, north of Italy): It was a Community established in 1967, and dedicated to the care of small children (*Asilo Nido y Scuola Materna*). The work was done in coordination with the parish, Madonna de Buia. The house was closed after the premises fell during the earthquake in 1976.

I. Sisters' Tomb in Rome: the sisters who died in Rome are buried in the Campo Verano cemetery:

- Maria Gesuella Pianta (1944) Italian
- Dosithea Freier (1951) German
- Thomasie Soulié (1955) French
- Alfonsina Orive (1956) Spanish
- Cecilia Lázaro (1970) Spanish
- Alberte Paris (1970) French
- Lucilla Stroili (1974) Italian
- Marie Camille Lechappé (1983) French

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