

Non- Communist Europe 90

BAVARIA

Patricia Flynn, SSND, 1990

(Box at right begins with SSND founding date in Bavaria, number of missions, number of sisters in 1990.)

The Bavarian province is the oldest and largest province of the congregation. We visited 37 missions of the Bavarian province and met almost 700 of the sisters this past November. Some characteristics of the total province became obvious: high-quality wholistic education is provided by our sisters in congregation-owned middle schools, gymnasiums (secondary schools), vocation schools; in state schools for elementary and special education, in boarding schools, day-care centers, and kindergartens. Community service and health care for our own sisters are treasured ministries as well as the conscious acceptance of the ministry of prayer and suffering of the many sick and elderly. Communities vary in size from two and three to 87. Many missions are part of (the province) and contribute to parish life. The sisters are aware of poverty in their own environment and in the world and respond generously to a variety of needs.

BY
1. 1843
2. 110
3. 1297

We visited not only many places founded by Mother Theresa, but experienced her spirit living in the sisters. The love and devotion for Blessed Theresa is found beyond her daughters, as we witnessed at the November 9th celebration, when hundreds of citizens of Munich crowded St. James' Church to participate in the evening liturgy followed by a candle light procession to Mother's tomb and through the convent garden of the Motherhouse. It was a graced event for all.

SWEDEN - MISSION EXTENSION OF THE BAVARIAN PROVINCE

School Sisters of the Bavarian province have been in Sweden since 1931; they have the only two Catholic Schools in the country and a home for elderly women who cannot take care of themselves any more. Two missions are in Stockholm and one in Goteborg, both cities in the south of Sweden known for its unique beauty.

SW
1. -
2. 3
3. 23

The challenge for the sisters is threefold:

- to assure Catholic presence in a country whose state religion is Lutheran; only 1.6% of the population is Catholic, however the church - as an immigrant church - is growing;

- to live and teach Christian values in an industrialized and secularized society, which has a highly developed welfare system, but suffers from a great loss of the meaning of life.
- To create in classrooms and retirement home an atmosphere in which the people coming from 30 or more nations feel accepted and at home.

It is with joy and dedication that the 25 sisters from Germany, Sweden and Poland minister to young and old, collaborate with the laity, other religious and the clergy and give a vivid witness of the universality of the Church to our mission of making one.

ITALY

The communities in the Italian province span the country with three missions in the northeast and two in the south. The sisters minister in the elementary and middle schools at the motherhouse, in kindergartens and parishes, and in Villa Russiz, a home for 43 boys and girls who come from difficult home situations. Other sisters also minister through prayer and suffering. In their schools one experienced a happy atmosphere and saw educators using new and creative methods in a computer equipped classroom as well as traditional teaching of needlework unique to Gorizia.

IT	
1.	1937
2.	5
3.	72

Some of the ways the sisters live out the direction statement are giving financial aid to the West African novitiate, helping to educate a seminarian from Ghana, sending packages to Poland, assisting some of the needy in their schools, and helping the needy who come to their front door. The sisters look to the future with faith and trust believing that God is in their midst.

AUSTRIA

To visit Austria is an aesthetic experience; to visit our sisters and see them in their ministries was also a beautiful experience. The sisters minister in kindergartens and in elementary and secondary schools, in boarding schools, diocesan offices and through prayer and suffering.

OR	
1.	1860
2.	6
3.	90

During visitation there was their annual province community day in Salzburg. Part of that day included sharing by the general councilors on our international congregation. The local communities had prepared the prayer and liturgy.

As a way to carry out the directional statement, each mission has chosen a mission extension to which it sends some financial assistance. In the motherhouse the sisters knit and crochet baby outfits for unwed mothers. A poster in each house serves as a reminder of the solidarity day with the poor. Their dedication to ministry speaks of the sisters as educators in the spirit of Mother Theresa.

WESTPHALIA

During our two weeks' visitation in the Westphalian province, we met most or the 129 sisters. Their main area of apostolic service is education; in the elementary, middle, and secondary schools, vocational and boarding schools, as well as in a professional school of social pedagogy, kindergartens and a day nursery. The joy of contributing to the formation of young people and thereby influencing family, society, and church, is bonded with the pain of letting go as more institutions are given over to others. The sisters are facing these situations with a realistic attitude grounded in faith and trust.

Beyond the material, intellectual and spiritual assistance the sisters give to others, we also experienced how much the Directional Statement influences them. When refugees came in masses from the DDR a house for about 20 persons was made available. Water pipes and electric lines were installed and the rooms were furnished in order to provide a real home for these refugees.

WF
1. 1862
2. 6
3. 126

