

The Houses in France and the second World War 1939-1945

Superior general : Mère Benjamine de Noual de la Billiais from 1926 à 1946

Superior general : Père Jean d'Elbée from 1938 à 1958

August 1939 : General mobilisation

1st of September, 1939: Germany invades Poland

April, 1940: Germany attacks Denmark and Norway

10th of May, 1940: Germany invades Belgium, Holland and France.

Shortly afterwards Belgium and Holland surrender.

The 22nd of June, 1940 : The French conclude an armistice and France is divided into two zones.

The resistance is established.

LAVAL

1939 : The boarding school and the classes of the Haute Follis are transformed into a barracks.

1940 : The house is invaded by a flood of refugees.

1943 : Haute Follis is declared a "danger zone". It is forbidden to receive pupils.

An ssc profession ceremony is held in the chapel of Laval.

1944 : The students regain possession of the Haute Follis playground in a joyful atmosphere.

LE MANS

1940 : Cannons are placed in the rue de Maillets , opposite the large gate, the entrance to the sisters' house.

On the 14th of May, Mother Marie Camille ssc arrives from Tongeren (Belgium) with about fifteen exhausted sisters who have nothing.

The Superior of Le Mans, Mother Catherine proposed to stop night Adoration; the sisters could not accept this, and Night Adoration continued without interruption.

1944 : All the bridges of Le Mans are breached. A fire breaks out near our farm, in a small castle that was doused with petrol by the Germans and the house is threatened. Fortunately, the wind turned and our neighbourhood was spared.

YVETOT

1940 : On the 19th January the sisters open their house, the church having been completely destroyed, they welcome the parishioners; 5 to 6 masses are celebrated every Sunday in their chapel.

On the 15th of May, the Carmelites and the Dominican Sisters of the town of Le Havre found refuge with them.

SAINT SERVAN

1940 : The novitiate leaves Paris and settles there. The sisters from Picpus bring with them the statue of Our Lady of Peace. You can well imagine how well she was received.

CHARTRES

1940 : The sisters leave for Poitiers for a month. They return on July 17.

1943 : 31 The bombardment of Chartres.

1944 : Two day students are killed.

The stained-glass windows of the choir of the chapel are completely destroyed.

The 19th of August 1944: liberation! The 3 colours of the French flag are raised on the entrance gate.

Two houses were severely damaged:

SEES

Extract from the journal of the Maison de Séés from the 14th to 19th June 1940

14 June - 4:25 pm: "The Rosary comes to an end. Many people in the chapel.

Bombardment: complete darkness, a lot of dust. A sister, Sister Maria, not being in the chapel, opens a door: there is no roof! shouting, groaning.

A second bomb falls again (a detail, the sisters of the bishopric no longer have a veil or a bonnet). The chaplain, bleeding, tries to pull the victims out. Sister Maria runs for help. There are many wounded but alas, there are also deaths. Among them were some ladies from Paris, who had taken refuge in Séés.

The 2 at adoration were killed on the spot: Sister Bénigne Drouault, sister of 5 ssc religious. Sister Mary Colman, a young, professed sister who was 20 years old, pulverised, mixed with dust and rubble.

18 dead were buried, without coffins, in the hole made by a bomb, in St Lambert (the neighbourhood where the house is located) ".

RENNES

17 June, 1940 :

The Germans moved into the ssc convent and stayed there for 4 years.

The city of Rennes suffers heavy bombardments, there are many victims.

Mother Marie Xavier Pinatel closes the boarding school.



Classes did not open in October 1943, as a bomb had fallen on the grounds of the sisters at 90 rue d'Antrain. Fear sets in.

The Chapel at the house in Rennes before and after the bombardment of 1944

12 June, 1944 : It is 12.40p.m.

The visit to the Blessed Sacrament ends. The sisters go down to the shelter as soon as the alarm sounds. A rain of bombs falls on the house and the garden. They are bombs, which in a few seconds create five fires. Nothing remains but ruins. There are 40 holes in the garden. When the sisters come out of the shelter, they have a vision of hell. 6 sisters are missing at the call of the superior, including the 2 at adoration. They were between 29 and 45 years old! We had to flee because the ammunition was still blowing up. The sisters were welcomed in a convent in the city of Rennes. This with much fraternal warmth.

A few months later life began again. Classes took place in wooden huts.

July, 1949 :

Adoration is revived. Laying of the foundation stone of a magnificent building in cut stone.

21 April, 1951 :

Blessing of the premises by Cardinal Rocques, in the presence of the Superior General, Mother Zénaïde Lorier.