

Report read in the General Chapter of September 1, 1909

Poitiers, the 31st of December, 1908

House in Poitiers

"... The exodus of our sisters began on August 2, 1904, and on September 12, we were saddened to see the departure of our late Mother Marie Henriette de Sartre, who is assured of our gratitude for the attachment she held for the Grand'Maison.

On September 30th, Very Reverend Mother advised how to go forward: to resist all injunctions, and to return through a door if we were chased away.

On October 1st the seals were affixed inside the community, on our chapel; real friends surrounded us in this painful moment, and we had to intervene to avoid a painful conflict. For us, this act was the prelude to a long series of harassments, anguishing worries, and visits by the commissioners of orders from the Prefect to evacuate the premises. We had to finish dispatching what was left, and we were about to leave Poitiers too, with our last sick sister, Sister Cécilia Bonnardet, when Doctor Petit formally forbade us to transport her, as this journey could put her life in danger. It was then that we saw the reproduction of the lived pages of our origins.

The Blessed Sacrament had been taken to the chapel of the Good Father, and every morning at 4.30 we would set up an altar with the only table left and two small candleholders, which for a long time were the only ornament. We would attend the Holy Sacrifice, after which Our Lord would enter the pious hiding place that our venerated Founders had provided for him, while the ornament, the chalice, disappeared into the attic, and a basket for books was placed on the table. The greeting was given after Mass, without singing, in a low voice. These precautions were imposed on us by prudent and devoted counsellors, exposed as we were to home visits which were fairly frequent, the Prefect wanting at all costs to achieve his sectarian goal: our departure. We were left with only our clothes, we were missing linen, footwear, wood, which is strictly necessary for cooking. But once again, divine Providence never abandoned us, and often by a charitable and delicate hand, we were given a prepared meal. Moreover, Our Lord, who had truly remained for us alone, visibly supported us in our trials, and the thought of safeguarding our dear Grand'Maison, was a comfort and a consolation to us. May the SSCC. deign to complete their work, by conserving in the Institute its Birthplace, so precious with many memories!

In October 1904, there were 7 of us in Poitiers, including 4 choir sisters: Marie Johanna Anger, Cécilia Bonnardet, Elisa Patural, Antonina Orhand; 3 converse sisters: Dolores Degasme, Pacifique Borgon, Martiale Delmas. In September, the latter left us for Picpus and was replaced by Sr Elise Quimbert. Then came successively two choir sisters and two converse sisters. Mother Marie Chantal was sent to us, along with Sister Alberte on July 26th 1908. At present there are 13 of us.

On January 4, 1905, our dear Sister Pacifique, who was taking care of our venerated Sister Cécilia with great devotion, died after a short illness.

It is very difficult for us to comply strictly with our holy Rules. For 5 years we have had no high mass, no vespers, no sermon, no religious ceremony, except the renewal of vows on November 21 and December 25, this day, a few minutes before midnight, in the chapel where our pious founders made their holy commitment themselves at that time. We can never take recreation. It was to our deep regret that, on the order of N.T.R.Mother, we had to interrupt the night adoration on September 10, 1904, after having supported it for 6 weeks with 4 or 5 sisters.

Until that date, ladies had helped us to fill it during the day. Since then, each one of us has been fulfilling this pious duty on the prie-Dieu, at a marked hour and once a week we dedicated the whole night to it, from Thursday to Friday. Getting up, the office, the 2-hour reading took place quite regularly; going to bed was dependent on work. Silence and accuracy left a lot to be desired. We wore black during the week; on Sunday only, we went back to our white costume. In general, the sisters wear the prescribed woollen clothes, except for the sheets which 4 sisters lack; 2 sleep on the mattress.

During this period, poverty was well practised in the Birthplace. There are currently 9 female boarders, 17 tenants. Father Hilaire Chauvière, who for 4 years came regularly every week to hear our confessions, has been living in the community since August 1908...".