



SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

Women of God at the Service of People

Our website: www.fatimasistersbangalore.org

The Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Fatima was founded by Servant of God Francis Xavier Kroot, MHM, on 8th February 1893, at Bellary in Karnataka, then under the Archdiocese of Madras. Born on 7th December 1854, in Holland, Francis Kroot joined the Mill Hill Missionary Society of St. Joseph, London was ordained a Priest on 8 June 1878, and reached India on 8 August 1878. He served in the capacity of a military chaplain in Poonamalle, Madras and Bellary.

His dream of having a Congregation of Indian women who would carry on the missionary work of caring for the less fortunate and underprivileged natives was finally realized in 1893 with the inception of the Congregation bearing the name as the “Missionary Sisters of St. Francis Xavier”. The first batch of three Postulants received their Religious habit 8 Feb 1893. On 8 September 1895 these Sisters pronounced their first vows and were moved to the first Convent, St. Francis Xavier’s, near St. Lazarus church Cowl Bazaar on 29 June 1896.

Years that followed were tumultuous and the Sisters faced upheavals from all quarters. Hoping against all hope for a better prospect, in 1951 Mother Stanislaus, the then Mother General there to take the leap into the unknown. She sort permission from Bishop John Haugan of Bellary and Bishop Andrew D, Souza of Poona to shift the Generalate and Novitiate to Poona. Accordingly new rules were framed and as per the directives of Bishop Andrew the Congregation was rechristened to “Sisters of Our Lady of Fatima” and Pune became its head quarters. The Congregation was raised to the state of Pontifical right on 18 March 1982.

Fatima Provincialate, Hoskote (1997)

At the VII General Chapter in May 1995, the decision for creating Regions was passed, hence in June 1996: two Regions were created on the basis of geographical boundaries, for better administration and for the promotion of vocations. They were the Southern Region and the Western Region. Sr Florence Fernandez was appointed the first Regional Superior of the Southern Region with Sr Stephana Chavanattu and Sr Maria Amaladoss as regional Councillors. The Regional office was temporarily based at St Francis Xavier Convent, Bellary. The Southern Region comprised of 151 Sisters and 18 communities then. The Regional Superior, the General Council members and others travelled several times to different locations to get a place suited for the purpose. After many days and months of repeated search finally the search halted at a rural area in the district of Bangalore at Hoskote, 28 kms away from Bangalore city on the National highway (NH 4). A 2 ½ acres plot was purchased on which there was also a farm house with few small rooms. After necessary repairs of the house, the pioneering community, Sr Florence, (Regional Superior), Sr Zelia Tuscano, (Superior), Sr

Anna Kalathil, and Sr Lilly Divyanathan started staying there from 21 September 1997, adjusting themselves in the available spaces. This was called Fatima Convent, Regional House. At Hoskote or in the vicinity of the area there was no parish. The people of the area were a mixed population of migrants who spoke Kannada, Tamil and Telugu. Most of them were poor, uneducated and lacked proper accommodation. For a few Catholics the Holy Eucharist was celebrated in a small house by priests coming from a good distance away.

After the Sisters occupied the farm house, arrangements were made to celebrate Holy Mass in one of the rooms used as chapel by the Sisters where the Catholics of the locality participated in the Eucharist along with Sisters. Besides administration, the Sisters were involved in various activities that - were needed for the people of the place. They visited families, instructed them on health and hygiene, taught catechism to the Catholics and prayed with them. For a few years a Sister-nurse was in charge of a project for the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of HIV/AIDs patients. Sensing the people's need for good education, kindergarten classes were begun with 11 children on 1 October 1997. In June 1999, Sr Florence was re-appointed as the Regional Superior.

The new Regional House was blessed and inaugurated on 26 March 2001 by Archbishop Ignatius Pinto of Bangalore. Since then the big convent chapel has been used for Sunday Masses in which all Catholics of the area participate especially on Sundays. The VIII General Chapter of May 2001 decided to elevate the Regions to Provinces and the Bangalore Region (the name from Southern to Bangalore was changed at the mid-term Chapter in 1998) was called Bangalore Province. The first Province Chapter was held at Hoskote in April 2002 where Sr Archangela Cheeran was elected the first Provincial, Sr Florence, Sr Cecilia P and Sr Irene T as Councillors. The community at Hoskote is engaged in the school ministry with Fatima Convent School (state syllabus) and Kroot Memorial School (ICSE) with over 1000 students. Separate building has been constructed for the school and presently with the increase in the number of students another building is under construction. The Sisters visit near-by families and conduct prayers for them in the houses and at the convent. The old farm house is now converted into one of the foster homes.