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Newsletter of the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Randwick NSW Australia



Introducing the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Randwick, Sydney, Australia.

*Located at: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish,
193 Avoca St, PO Box 309, Randwick NSW, 2031.*

www.sacredheart.org.au

Our Mission:

To publicise the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart [OLSH] at Randwick.

To introduce the *Novena* to OLSH to others outside the Parish.

To heighten awareness of the Spirituality of the Heart, and the place of the devotion to Mary under the title of OLSH as a natural aspect of the Spirituality of the Heart.

To inform people about the Mission and Ministries of the MSC and OLSH and other Congregations.

We interrupt our history of the foundation of the OLSH Sisters in 1874, with the story of the remarkable spread of devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Mexico, beginning from around 1862—over a century before the MSC had any presence in that country.

The information comes from the **International Meeting of Chevalier Family Laity** in Brazil this year.

A few months after the Archbishop of Bourges gave permission for the devotion and image of OLSH for his archdiocese, an article appeared in the May edition of the Jesuit *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*. A few weeks later, Fr **Rafael Camacho**, a Mexican



Basilica of St Joseph and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Mexico City,

priest from Guadalajara arrived in Paris. He had been exiled, as had many other priests and religious, following the anti-religious reform laws passed by the Government.. Together with a Mexican Sister of Charity

Calendar for August: 1882 Fr Navarre and two companions arrive in Sydney on way to Melanesia; 1887 First Four OLSH Sisters arrive in Yule Island PNG; 1895 First OLSH arrive in Kiribati; 1899 First MSC sisters Community founded in Hilstrup, Germany; 1904 August 13 Baining martyrs PNG killed; 1905 MSC General Chapter at Louvain Belgium drops fourth Vow to Pope, move Generalate to Rome as France is in grip of anti religious government; 1908 First MSC from Germany to USA; 1945 Release of religious from Ramale Concentration Camp PNG; 1946, First 9 Italian MSC arrive in Brazil; 1948 Two Spanish MSC leave to begin MSC in Argentina; 1967 First MSC (Irish) to Venezuela; 1982 MSC Sisters open Novitiate in Bangalore, India; 1988 St Paul's National Seminary for Late Vocations, Kensington, Australia, begins; 3 OLSH from Kiribati arrive in Marshall Islands.

also exiled, they met Fr Chevalier who gave them, with great enthusiasm, a picture and novenas of OLSH.

Soon after, the daughter of the former Governor of the State of Jalisco financed the construction of the first Chapel dedicated to OLSH in Guadalajara City. A statue was also sculptured for the church.

Between 1871 and 1888 – Associations of OLSH were formed in four States with a school opened in her name. The Bishop of Zacatecas had the first holy cards printed in December, 1877, bearing the *Memorare*. The devotion spread throughout Mexico into the 20th Century. Neither MSC nor OLSH religious were working in the country!

In the first three decades of the 20th Century Mexico had its own revolution following three decades of dictatorship. The new constitution was rigidly anticlerical and anti-religious, outlawing all religious orders which could not own property nor profess their vows. The church was effectively outlawed.

In response, the Cristero War between Catholic rebels and the anti-religious Mexican Government ensued.

In 1923, in the midst of this war, a chapel was dedicated to OLSH and solemnly blessed on one of the most historic avenues of Mexico City. The life-sized statue had arrived from Barcelona in the midst of this violence.

Soon after the persecution ended, a Dominican nun exiled to France, returned to Mexico. She brought with her a most treasured, large picture of OLSH that had been printed on cloth and had



Fr Jules Chevalier MSC



MSC Sisters, Mexico with group outing.



Hiltrup MSC Convent, Germany,
"World Centre" - meeting place

come from Issoudun. At the time, she lived simply in a small room in Mexico City. **Upon visiting the parish church of St Joseph, she asked the priest to hang the cloth picture in a place of honour. He allowed her to place it in a corner outside in the entrance to the Church.**

On that very same evening, a nine year old boy who had been crippled with infantile paralysis, was immediately cured upon praying before the lovely image of OLSH. The youth left his crutches on the cement floor of the corner chapel and hurried home to tell his mother.

The parish priest, Fr Gomez, not surprisingly, became an advocate of the devotion.

Because of decades of suppression, very few people ventured into the few churches that were opened. However, when news of the miraculous cure of the boy spread, hundreds of the faithful began visiting the church. This cure was followed by many others, and day by day, the crowds that came to St Joseph's grew larger and larger.

Fr Gomez acquired another picture of OLSH and placed it beside the sanctuary. **Many further cures were recorded and signed by physicians in the presence of notaries were filed in the parish archives.**

In September, 1948, the Church was re-named in honour of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and St Joseph.

As was the custom in France the image was also crowned in a solemn ceremony.

Previously, in 1945, an article appeared in the *Catholic Digest* of the United States and a film called "The Miracle in Mexico" was produced. The MSC Sisters in the USA saw it, and an MSC priest from the USA travelled to Mexico City for the procession

of coronation from the Cathedral to the parish church. From that time on, many new churches were named in honour of OLSH. Presently there around 600 parishes in Mexico named Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

The Church of St Joseph and OLSH was destroyed twice in earthquakes. The last major one occurred in September, 1985. The structure was severely damaged and the archdiocese had to decide about whether or not to repair it. No priests were found to take charge of the rebuilding.

Finally Fr Alfredo Ramirez Ahumada undertook the task on July 31, 1990. The estimated cost for the rebuilding was 100 million pesos. For the rest of 1990, Fr Alfredo begged for funds but the money only trickled in. He was told by the Cardinal that if by the end of the year he did not have the required funds, the Church would have to be closed.

Fr Alfredo did what Fr Chevalier so many years before him had done, and prayed, of course, to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart for her help.

Money began to come from all over Mexico City and beyond. Providentially, a group of German Bishops were visiting the city to see where they might be able to assist after the earthquake.

As the bishops' cars moved along the Ayuntamiento Street one Bishop saw the ruined Church and requested that the car stop.

Fr Alfredo came to meet the bishops. On learning that the Church was named after St Joseph and OLSH they immediately offered to help.

They enquired about the amount of money still needed and promised to meet the necessary funds. In time, the Church was rebuilt.

The MSC were present in 1994 for the solemn rededication and elevation of the church to a minor basilica. Four MSC Sisters from the USA Province and two MSC from the Canadian Province took part in the ceremony.

The MSC Sisters from the USA Province made their first foundation in Mexico on 13 October, 1993 in the Parish of St Raymond Nonnatus, Colonnia, Esmeralda, P.F. In keeping with their wonderful history they ministered in schools and clinics, and especially to poor and abandoned elderly women. The MSC priests from the Canadian Province arrived in Mexico in the 1990s and have had some success in forming local vocations. They live also at the St Raymond Nonnatus Parish.

The Novena Prayer

Remember, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the great things the Lord has done for you. He chose you for his mother; He wanted you close to his cross. He gives you a share in his glory. He listens to your prayer. Offer him our prayers of praise and thanksgiving. Present our petitions to Him.

(Recall your petitions...)

Let us live like you in the love of your Son so that his Kingdom may come. Lead all people to the source of living water that flows from his heart, spreading over the world hope and salvation, justice and peace.

See our trust in you; answer our prayer. Show yourself always our Mother. Amen.



MSC Sisters at St Raymond Nonatus



The Novena: www.sacredheart.org.au
Post petitions to Novena, PO Box 309,
Randwick, 2031 Or email:
prayersplease@olshaustralia.org.au
The Novena is held each Thursday
11.30-midday in the Shrine, Randwick.