



# PROVINCIA

## "MADONNA DELLA PROVVIDENZA"

PROVINCIAL HOUSE - BELVEDERE DI TEZZE - ITALIA

### A bit of history...



Ancient ritual of entrance to the Novitiate of new candidates



**T**he Provincial House in Belvedere di Tezze, in the province of Vicenza is a Venetian villa purchased by the Sisters of Providence in 1942 and is protected by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. It is because of this that the exterior of the building has always been maintained while the interior, in the course of the years, has undergone various transformations.

The main reason for looking for a new house had been to find a place for the novitiate which was to be here in Belvedere for 30 years, until 1973, when it was transferred to Rome.

We reproduce some of the relevant excerpts from the chronicle of the house which give us a 'taste' of the presence of Providence that has accompanied this work.

"...Since the time the General Hospital of Gorizia, after the World War I, was transferred permanently into the

*building of "Nazareno" which for so many years accommodated and formed the future Sisters of the Providence, the novitiate did not have a fixed house... It was going from one building to the other in and around the cities of Gorizia and Udine... but for different reasons, it could not fix its roots in any of these places. It was therefore an urgent need, to find a house that will answer to the needs of the young girls and thus establish a novitiate... The need was a driving force since a lot of girls came from various parts... They prayed and searched for it so much... waiting for the hour of Providence ... and this came about on January 7, 1942, when the Superior General, Mother*

*Agnes Delugan, accompanied by some of her collaborators, came to Vicenza for an important meeting which required her presence in this small centre of the peninsula, known for its simple and pure faith of al-*



most that of patriarchal times..."

We read in the same chronicle:

"...Having resolved all the big problems and after having visited all the communities of the area, we begin seeing the villas which were proposed to be bought like, Albettonne, Vivaro, Marano... all of them beautiful, spacious and some of them princely..."

We head to Bassano del Grappa. And here we are just about 20 k.m. from the destination. We are at Rosa! Providentially we meet Mons. Luigi Filippi, Vicar General and Vicar Forane of the place... He greets us affably and hearing the intention of our coming he accompanies us to the property of Lucci, assuring us all his support for the realization of the work. So much so, he visited Rome at least twice to meet General Lucci, the owner of the Villa so that the Villa is given over to a Religious Order".

And so it happens! Thanks to the staff of Bishop Filippi, the villa was sold to the Sisters of Providence, who make their first entry on April 15, 1942, joyfully welcomed by the then parish priest, Don Sante Bicego, and the people of Belvedere.

The villa is, then renovated to the needs of the Community and the Novitiate. Even the name is changed.

In fact, "... out of gratitude to Divine Providence, and in particular to honor of the saint who was a devotee of this providence, the Sisters unanimously decided to call it "Villa S. Gaetano" what was till then known by all as Villa Lucci... and indeed the name befits the novitiate in Vicenza as a tribute to the saint of the land..."

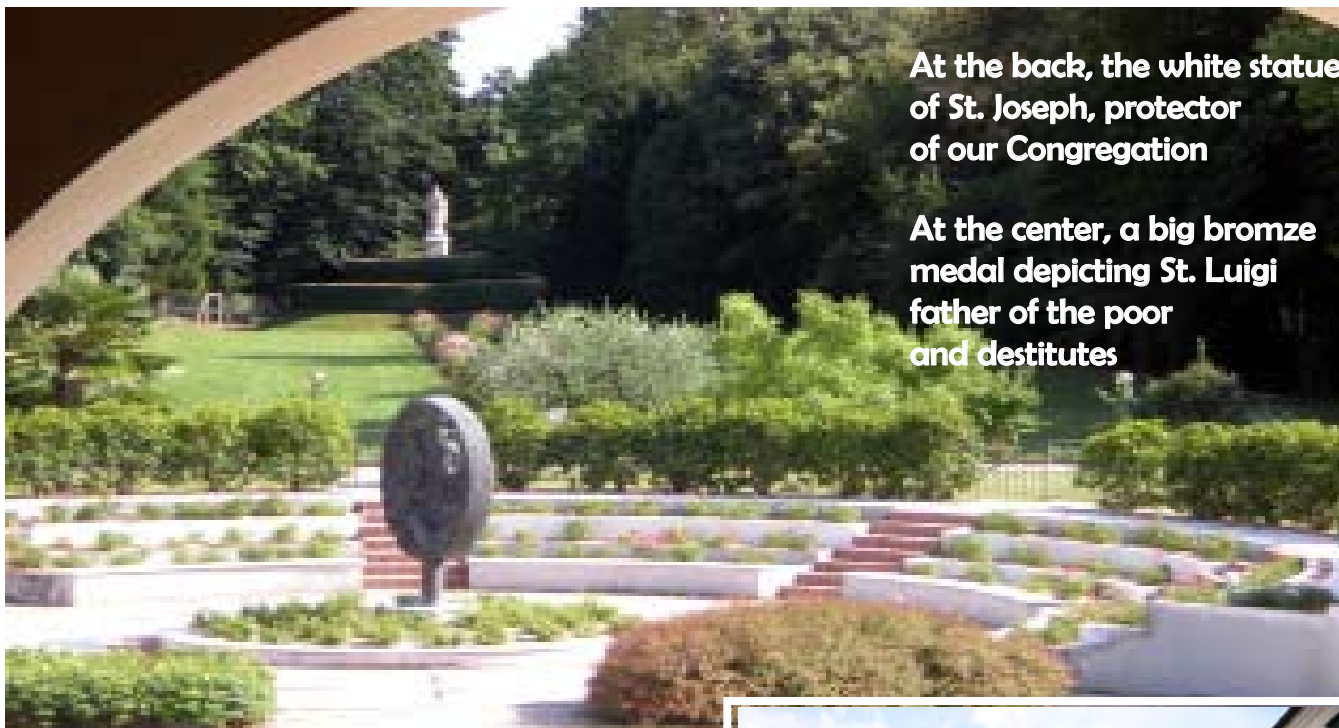


The convent thought out a plan for an immediate service to the town. Thus it is written in the chronicle:

"... Having settled down in Villa S. Gaetano, the Sisters responded to the desire of the people by accommodating the children in a room of the villa under the direct care of some sisters so that the mothers could go to work in the fields peacefully... And this was begun on 18th May 1942..."

Right from the beginning the Sisters dedicated themselves to various pastoral works in the parish.

In the parish they open a oratory, a vocational training center frequented by numerous girls who participate in the activities, receiving at the same time a solid human and Christian formation. And from these groups which followed one after the other, come many young people, who, moved by the inspiration of the sisters in charge of the training center decide to follow the Lord. Moreover, since the house was so spacious inside and outside it beca-



At the back, the white statue of St. Joseph, protector of our Congregation

At the center, a big bronze medal depicting St. Luigi father of the poor and destitutes



me a venue for spiritual retreats for Sisters as well as girls.

And the Novitiate? Once again it is the chronicle that tells us that:

*"By the decree of 12 October 1942, His Exc. Mons. Ferdinando Rodolfi, Bishop of Vicenza authorized the opening of a novitiate and postulancy which was occupied by varying number of candidates to the Religious Life. With the vestition of the last postulants in the spring of 1973 there was a period of stagnation for lack of vocations... Towards the end of 1974, even the last novices were transferred to Rome in the new house of formation and this house finally ceased to be a novitiate."*

On June 16, 1943 officially begins the activities of the nursery school that, with notable progress over time, continues. A paragraph is reserved specially here below for this activity.

In 1971, with the division of the congregation into provinces this house became a centre for one of the three Italian provinces and it is so till

1991, the year in which all the three provinces are unified into one.

## TODAY

Over time, our large building of Belvedere accommodates numerous elderly sisters who after having rendered hard work in the congregation spend their lives here in prayer and fraternal sharing.

## THE PROVINCIAL HOUSE

Having become once again the Provincial House of the Province of Italy, the house is the centre of vitality of the Province and finds in Mary, Mother of Providence, the protection and the model of a faithful follower of Jesus.



other works which the sisters do for the good of others.

## THE SCHOOL

The Nursery School, which was begun on June 16, 1943, will celebrate the 70th anniversary next year. In the community there are some sisters who were present in the early days of the school: for them and for those who have taught and continue to teach and for all of us it will be a great celebration.

It will be a very important occasion also for the town of Belvedere, to celebrate together, to praise and thank the Lord for the good done to several generations of this town and to ask Him to continue to accompany us in educating children with love and with good results, even if the people, methods, organization and management change.

In fact, since two years the school is undergoing a complicated new form of administration. In future, the administration will not be completely in the hands of the Sisters but will be shared with the teachers, parish, parents and persons of the town who will form a cooperative called, "Rosa Mistica" (Mystical Rose). We, the Sisters, will be the prima-

And it is the residence of the Provincial Superior, who, assisted by a council of four Sisters, guides the mission with fraternal love and fidelity to the charism and dedicates herself to preservation and growth of the communion among the various houses of the province and the Centre.

## THE COMMUNITY

Currently the community is composed of about forty Sisters, mostly elderly, who enjoy a peaceful and hospitable atmosphere. The community enjoys a lively spiritual life which is an aspect considered to be the availability of the Sisters for prayer.

Faithful to daily prayers on time, well-prepared liturgy, a prayer lived as a specific mission: they pray above all for the Church, congregation, the whole world, for the physical and mental health of many persons especially of the area.

During the day we see a continuous movement of mutual love. At times, due to weakness, a small thing can break it but soon the life restarts.

The life lived for the Lord and in fellowship with Him is therefore the primary mission of this community apart from various



ry members of the cooperative as a congregation and as individual members and it is to ensure the Charism of Providence in the school. The Sisters present today in the school are doing just that, not only with the presence but also with a commitment to accompany the teachers in the daily course of forma-



tion, so as to ensure a climate and educational work as willed by Fr. Luigi.

From the month of September 2006, alongside the five sections of kindergarten, the crèche is also integrated with two sections of children aged 1 to 3 years. This service is a

valuable response to an emerging need of the families of the area.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

Some Sisters are involved dedicatedly with other activities too. Their collaboration in pastoral work, albeit modest, is very precious and meaningful:

- Catechism in the Nursery School at San Pietro di Rosà
- Catechesis in the parish
- Visiting the sick
- Extraordinary ministry of Communion
- Pastoral work for youth and vocation in parish and diocesan level

The whole community is characterized by hospitality: in fact, many groups come here above all for retreats or seminars on human and Christian formation. Many sisters also come for a short or long period. The community is always available and welcomes them cordially.

We can say that the community, although composed of several elderly sisters, is young at heart. The charism of Father Luigi, in fact, encourages all to be like lighted lamps which warm up and illumine the Church with their consecrated life, so even small services show the love for the Lord and among the sisters:

THE HEART OF EVERY SISTER  
IS LIKE AN ALTAR CONSECATED TO GOD  
WHERE BURNS THE UNENDING  
FIRE OF HOLY LOVE.

*(Rules 1862)*

The community also feels to represent Mary and Martha of the gospel for it believes in the centrality of the Word in their lives and it draws the strength to put the love in practice with the Sisters and others in

the daily life.

As a community they have often the experiences of being a subject or object of the PROVIDENCE: it is an everyday experience which strengthens our trust in the Lord and our solidarity with the needy.

We are deeply convinced that it is due to Providence:



- We have the Daily celebration of Eucharist
- We are able to have monthly recollection guided by priests who are well prepared and in love with the Word of God
- We devote ourselves to the community and personal prayer peacefully being able to use the ample greenery outside the house
- We dare to leap into the future putting the building to the best use for the people of town and especially the poor
- We ensure the continuity in the Nursery School and the crèche
- We experience Providence frequently even in material things which we willingly share with those in need

### **THE ASSOCIATION "LE GIARE"**

Since a year and a half is born in our house the association "Le Giare", constituted by various people of Belvedere and surrounding area, in order to carry out some useful activities for the people and promote understanding and friendship among people, practically to promote brotherhood in the name of the Lord and the charism of Providence.

The activities at present are: extra-curricular activities for children in need, Italian Language tuition for foreign children who attend our nursery school and pet-therapy.

This therapy, also known as zoo therapy is based on human-animal interaction. It is a co-therapy which goes along with the traditional ones in order to facilitate the therapeutic approach of the various medical and rehabilitative figures especially in cases where the

patient does not cooperate freely. The presence of an animal can, in many cases, help in building an emotional relationship with the patient and, through this rapport, establish a channel of communication among patient-animal-doctor, or stimulate an active participation of the patient. This type of therapy has been slow to take off for various reasons, but now is growing, even if in small steps. For this purpose today the park has been made available.

It has undergone some improvements and it will be appreciated both for its rich plantations and for the beauty of the pond enlivened by colours and vivacity of the various types of ducks, and for the presence of other animals which will be used for the pet-therapy. Moreover there are also the dogs used for the same through the existing contract with the USL of Bassano.

## EXPERIENCES AND PROJECTS

Since more than a year we are experimenting the therapy with two holistic physiotherapists, a form of therapy which was begun in our house almost by chance.

Then over time it is continued and is now used by the Sisters and also some lay people who came to know about it. Since the method used is yielding fruitful results, it was decided to further open it for the laity. Two halls at the back of the central wing have been made available for this purpose.

It is a good opportunity to utilize some facilities of the house which is used very little.

The province is also thinking about how to make the best use of the other parts of the house which are used little: We would like to use the space also for projects of evangelization, ways of social development, collaboration and sharing among the people of the area and we would like that our place becomes a place of service for the poor.

We would like that this be a house open to the Providence where the persons can find friendship, comfort, and may be even help in their difficulties.



*Porch and central garden of the house*



We will not let ourselves be tempted  
by ambition for great works;  
we work readily and with serious commitment,  
knowing through faith that the grace of the Lord  
goes beyond our efforts and their visible results  
and that our works is never without fruit  
if done for the kingdom of Heaven.

Rule of Life n. 52

