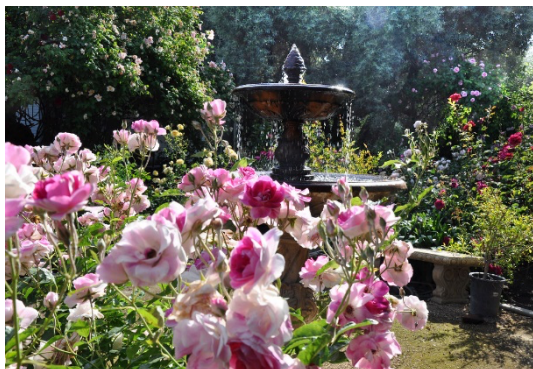




## BIRTH OF A ROSE BUSH



Did you see it in the garden? We have not forgotten this rose bush planted on August 21, 1858. After all these years, the spring that flows near it still waters the depth of its roots to make the sap flow to its leaves. This precious rose bush, preserved as a treasure, testifies to the richness of the historical, spiritual and missionary heritage of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Paris.

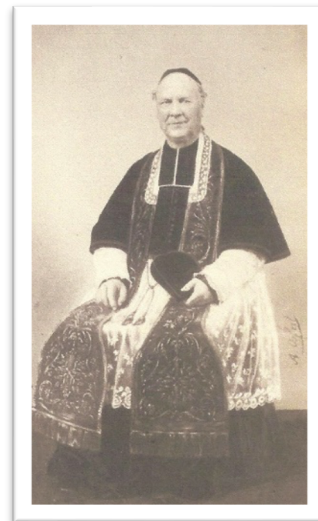
Let us sit next to it to admire its beauty and breathe its perfume that travels through the ages. Let us listen as it reveals to us this Way of Life<sup>1</sup> which offered itself as a gift of the Church to its brothers and sisters in humanity and which reaches us today.



### FATHER LARGENTIER <sup>2</sup>

Jean-Baptiste LARGENTIER was born on August 25, 1807 in Eaux-Puiseaux in the diocese of Troyes, France. Raised by his mother, who had a devotion to the souls of Purgatory, he was entrusted with this mission in the various parishes where he exercised his ministry.

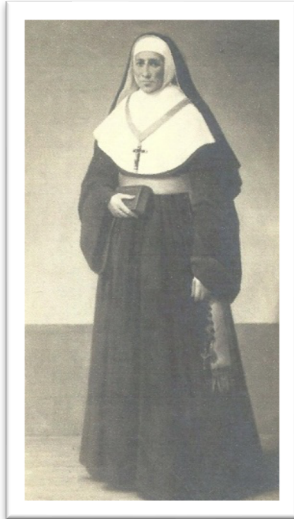
In the months following his recovery from cholera in 1854, when he was vicar of Saint-Merry in Paris, his project to found a Congregation whose "special purpose would be to pray for the dead" was presented in Rome. Born at the time of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception, it was recommended to give the future sisters the name of the Immaculate Conception. A first approval took place in 1856, but, like many other religious institutes, the Congregation experienced the precariousness of the beginnings.



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<sup>1</sup> Way of Life: Name given to the booklet of the Constitutions of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Paris, 1985

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kermaria Magazine, page 14, No 19, October 1990



Sophie JOFFROY was born on April 21, 1823 in Chivres, in the diocese of Soissons, France. After a few years of religious life with the Sisters of the Child Jesus in Soissons, she left that community. She came to Paris to follow up on the exchange of letters she had had with Father LARGENTIER. From that first interview on July 21, 1858, Father LARGENTIER knew that he could count on her to strengthen his small Congregation. Sister SAINT ANACLET thought of refusing the leadership of the community, which at the time had 34 sisters living in extreme destitution. But after entrusting herself to the Virgin Mary and expressing her anguish to a Jesuit Father, she accepted this responsibility.

Mother SAINT ANACLET became the founder of the Auxiliary Ladies of the Immaculate Conception, whose official approval was received from the Archbishop of Paris on August 25, 1858. In 1861, because of his destitution and his difficulties of existence, the same archbishop wanted to incorporate the Congregation to another institute. Faced with the reaction of MOTHER SAINT ANACLET and after reading the documents of approval, he had to abandon this idea. The Congregation of the Auxiliary Ladies of the Immaculate Conception now had a future.

*First along the way, Mary, you lead us  
To risk our "yes" to God's unforeseen events.  
And so is sown in the uncertain clay  
Of our humanity, Jesus Christ, Son of God.<sup>4</sup>*



Notre-Dame de Liesse,  
prayed by Mother Saint Anaclet

Mother SAINT ANACLET died on March 1, 1874 and Father LARGENTIER died on August 8 1883.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., page 15

<sup>4</sup> Song : "La première en chemin Marie"

*"Today we want to achieve this special goal of our foundation by accompanying every person and the whole person, where we are, being present to them through our prayer and our presence in their daily existence and beyond."*<sup>6</sup>



Animated by the spirit of their founders, the renewal of the 1985 Constitutions allowed the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Paris to update their charism in terms of solidarity with humanity even beyond death. Jesus himself stood in solidarity with a humanity cut off from God: He descended to hell. God is the God of the living and of the dead. The sisters thus continued to be servants of the Mystery of Redemption: to turn the suffering face of humanity towards the merciful face of Christ, to turn it towards the light.<sup>7</sup>

Being impassioned of Jesus Christ according to the spirit of St. Ignatius, the sisters give, at the heart of their daily life, a preference to the most destitute with whom Christ identified himself in his passion, especially to the sick, by accompanying them in their sufferings and infirmities, by bringing them comfort. Preference also goes to the neglected and oppressed, helping them to regain confidence in their human dignity and integrate into society. Their constant desire is for every person to fulfill his vocation as a child of God.

The sisters pledged to live this charism under the protection of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary.

*"The sisters will therefore have to apply themselves with particular care to imitate in their conduct the virtues of the Most Holy Virgin, their model and their Mother."*<sup>8</sup>

*Walk with us, Mary, on the paths of proclamation,  
They are paths to God, they are paths to God.*



<sup>5</sup> Cf. Kermaria Magazine, page 13

<sup>6</sup> Constitutions of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Paris, No. 3

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Kermaria Magazine, page 13

<sup>8</sup> Constitutions of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Paris, No.7

