

[Home](#)[Languages](#)[Visitors' Book](#)[Safety](#)[Links](#)[Site Map](#)[Search](#)[About Us](#)[Mission](#)[Young Adults](#)[Vocation](#)[News](#)[Contact Us](#)

History of the FCJ Society in Italy



In the years 1832–33, the Society of the Faithful Companions of Jesus was already present in different European lands where King Carlo Alberto of Savoy reigned. He heard people speaking highly of our Foundress and of how well educated students came out from her schools. So he invited her to come to Piedmont. In January 1836 Marie Madeleine, accompanied by one other sister, set out for Turin in the depth of winter. She took possession of the lowly accommodation offered to her by the Marquis Roberto d'Azeglio.

As a woman of the Church, **Marie Madeleine** quickly sought the wisdom of Mons. Fantini, the Parish Priest of Annunziata, about her work for the nobleman. He did not hesitate to advise her to gradually purchase large premises at the foot of 'Monte dei Cappuccini', so that she could be independent in her work of education for the youth. In her Institute, young people would be able to breathe and grow in an atmosphere of serenity and loving care for them. And for more than 150 years the FCJs have offered a high standard of cultural, human and Christian education to hundreds of students

At the beginning of 1890s a home for elderly ladies was added adjacent to the boarding school for girls. The number of Sisters living there at that time was about 90. Animated by a strong desire for the deepest good of others, the sisters worked generously to offer solid values to those who came to the Institute which was a place pervaded by the spirit of love, of freedom and of prayer.

Throughout the years the FCJ Sisters tried to respond to the most urgent and changing needs of education. So, during the twentieth century their school changed focus several times until, in the 1970s, it developed into a Primary and Infant School for day pupils.

1985, when the number of Sisters was declining and many other Catholic Schools existed in the area known as the 'Gran Madre', and also in order to respond to a specific project undertaken by the Catholic Schools, it was decided to phase out both the school and the home for elderly ladies. The big house with its lovely garden was sold to the Diocese who adapted it to become the Major Seminary. Now our Sisters were available to respond to other needs of God's people: communities in Livorno and in San Mauro were opened, while some FCJs remained in Turin and moved into a smaller house within the same property.

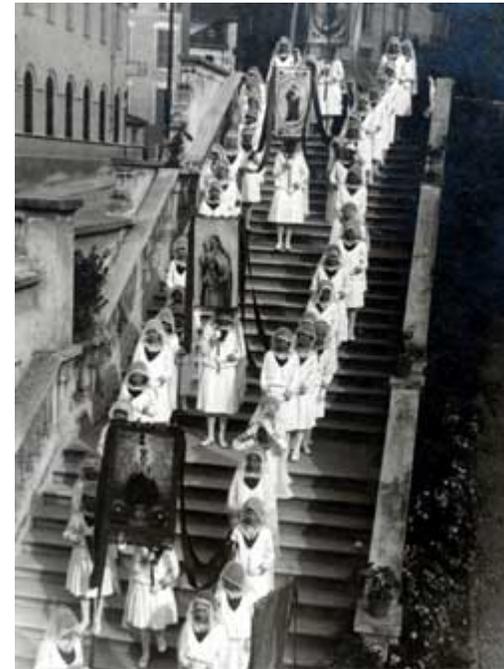


The FCJs continue their mission in Turin at Via Lanfranchi by their collaboration in the some of the work of the Major Seminary. In this way they make the life and service of consecrated apostolic women, present among the young seminarians.

They also continue their teaching in schools where they are able to bring the FCJ spirit and they have a nursing presence in caring for the sick in the clinic 'La Sapienza'.

In **Livorno**, one FCJ Sister undertook the Direction of a home for elderly people while others took on the spiritual animation of the little church of St. Giulia. They were also involved in Parish catechetics and the teaching of religious education in the Middle State School.

In **San Mauro** there are Sisters involved in the teaching of Religious Education in the Primary and Middle State Schools and in the running of the Infant Parish School of 'S. Benedetto'. Their presence is also very much sought among the children and the young people of the Parish where they offer catechism classes and pastoral care. Finally, as Ministers of the Eucharist they bring comfort and relief to many disabled local people.





History of the FCJ Society in Rome

Unlike many congregations our headquarters has never been located in the Eternal City, although many important moments in the founding of our Society happened in Rome. Our Society leaders visit Rome regularly to do the necessary business of the congregation and we have often had a *pied a terre* in Rome through our sisters, who at different times, have been missioned there for work or study. An example of this was the ARC programme – a one-year sabbatical programme - which was followed by several FCJs in the 1970s.



The Society also held several General Chapters in Rome, in 1975, 1983, 1988 and 1993.



Ruth Casey fcJ was one of a group of 8 sisters who were missioned to study in Rome In 1981 – a time which turned out to be quite memorable. On their first Wednesday in Rome, October 7th 1981, Pope John Paul came back to the Piazza San Pietro for the first time after the failed assassination attempt in the previous May. It was also on the train journey to Rome that this group met Bishop Ablondi, from Livorno, Italy, a meeting which led to our being invited to work in the Diocese of Livorno, and to a long friendship with this very pastoral bishop, only recently deceased. It was also the year of the Falklands war. 'One of our memories' says Ruth, ' is of a lovely Argentinean priest, also a student – and of our living through that experience together; five of the eight of us were from Britain, which was at war with Argentina'. Another memory is of being able to be immersed in Ignatian spirituality and visit some of the special Ignatian sites to 'spend time' with St Ignatius in his rooms or in La Storta. Our Jesuit friends were a great support to us during these years. The studies done by the sisters included spirituality, psychology, Italian, as well as sabbatical studies in the ARC programme and at Regina Mundi.



Since 2003 Christine Anderson fcJ who had been director of the Craighead Institute in Scotland was missioned to Rome where she worked first as Human Resources Officer for Jesuit Refugee Service International. Because of her work in

setting up the Congress on Apostolic Life, *Passion for Christ, Passion for Humanity*, Christine's work evolved towards work with General Councils of Apostolic Religious Congregations in Rome.



In 2005 she set up a two year International Program for Superior Generals and Councilors and is still engaged in this work. She lives in an apartment at the venerable English College where she also has office space and a living /training room: Christine always gives the warmest of welcomes to FCJ visitors to Rome.



For those who have had the opportunity to visit or live in Rome, the city will always have special memories and a particular attraction. Certainly it is a privilege to have spent time there and occasionally to have had a glimpse of the wonderful roots and history of our faith.

SHARE

© Copyright Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus 1999. All rights reserved.