

*Mother Marcelline Vigano*



Born in Brugherio (Milan) January 6, 1869, Mother Marcelline Vigano entered the newly founded Congregation of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Viareggio in 1895. She revealed herself to be an invaluable collaborator of the Foundress, Mother Clelia Merloni, and soon became her Vicaress.

In 1908 she was sent to the United States of America as Provincial Vicaress to consolidate and develop newly-founded apostolates. She accomplished the difficult task with rare capability. In a spirit of self-denial and tireless zeal, she extended the missionary activity of the Congregation and opened a flourishing novitiate.

In June 1911 she was recalled to Italy by the Holy See by whom she was named Superior General of the Congregation. Mother Marcelline held that difficult and delicate office for twenty-six years, manifesting great faith and vision.

Impelled by the apostolic zeal which inflamed her great missionary spirit, Mother Marcelline undertook numerous voyages, crossing the Atlantic Ocean in 1908, 1914, 1919, and 1931. She also visited the houses in the Aegean Islands in 1927 and made countless trips to all the houses of the Congregation throughout Italy.

She opened the first house in Rome in 1913 and in 1916 transferred the Generalate from Alessandria to Rome where it was first lodged in a rented building. Between 1924 and 1930 Mother Marcelline had a school building built on Via Germano Sommeiller, connected to the Chapel of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and the Sisters' residence. In 1926 she established the Brazilian Province, with the Provincialate at San Paulo, and that of Northern Italy in 1935, with the Provincial seat at Milano-Comasina.

In successive stages she obtained the Church's approbation of the Congregation which was renamed Zelatrices of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in 1912, by order of the Holy See. On July 17, 1921, His Holiness Pope Benedict XV issued the "Decree of Praise" and the title of the Congregation was changed to Missionary Zelatrices of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. On March 24, 1931, four months after the death of the beloved Mother Foundress, the Congregation received its definitive approbation. In 1937, Mother Marcelline was happy to hand over the burden of government to one of her most devoted daughters Mother Hildegarde Campodonico. She remained by her side, however, as General Councillor until her death in Rome on June 7, 1942.