



THE CONGREGATION OF THE BASILIAN CHOUERITE SISTERS

1. Historical Overview

Following the foundation of the Basilian Chouerite Order of Fathers, named after the village of Choueir and established at the beginning of the 18th century, the Congregation of the Basilian Chouerite Sisters was founded. In 1734, ten devout young women from the most distinguished families of Aleppo, inspired by a profound desire for consecrated monastic life, gathered their personal resources to establish the Motherhouse Convent of Our Lady of the Annunciation in Zouk Mikael, Kesrouan, Lebanon.

Through his Apostolic Bull "Demandatum" issued in 1743, Pope Benedict XIV officially confirmed the foundation of the Congregation and placed it under the Rule of Saint Basil the Great, following the Basilian tradition shared with the Basilian Chouerite Fathers.

The first Constitutions of the Congregation were drafted by Father Nicolas Sayegh and approved in 1763 by Pope Clement XI. The Sisters were encouraged to live a life of prayer, work and evangelical poverty within a cloistered community. In 1829, the Basilian Chouerite Order of Fathers was divided into two branches. This division led peacefully, on 24 February 1830, to the separation of the Sisters into two distinct Congregations:

The Congregation of the Basilian Chouerite Sisters;
The Congregation of the Basilian Aleppine Sisters.

Beginning in 1940, the Congregation entered a period of renewal in response to the evolving needs of the Church and society. This renewal opened the way for a new orientation combining the contemplative dimension of prayer with apostolic service.

On 2 June 1953, the Holy See issued two Apostolic Decrees recognizing the Basilian Chouerite Sisters as a Congregation of simple vows, replacing the former status of solemn vows.

From that date, the Congregation became autonomous and independent from the authority of the Basilian Chouerite Fathers. The first elected Superior General was Mother Macrine Chami.

Following this renewal, the Congregation developed its apostolic mission by responding to the needs of the Church and society. The Sisters extended their service among the poor, the sick, children, the elderly and vulnerable persons, particularly through educational, healthcare, social and charitable ministries.

2. Identity and Canonical Status

The Congregation of the Basilian Chouerite Sisters is a Pontifical Right Religious Congregation belonging to the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. The Congregation is governed by its own Constitutions and internal regulations and is directly subject to the authority of the Holy See. Its members live their consecrated vocation through public temporary and perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, following the spirit and teachings of Saint Basil the Great.

3. Charism and Spirituality

The spiritual heritage of the Congregation is deeply rooted in the Basilian tradition and in the Rule of Saint Basil the Great. Initially contemplative and cloistered, the Congregation gradually embraced an apostolic dimension while preserving its essential foundation: prayer, community life and dedication to God. The Basilian spiritual motto remains: “The life of a monk is a life of prayer and work.” The Sisters are called to live an ongoing conversion and a deeper union with God through: “A continuous return to the sources of Christian life.”

Their spiritual journey is expressed through the following principles:

3.1 Seeking God Above All Things

The Sister is called to seek God as the supreme purpose of life and the greatest good. God remains the center and the source of every vocation and mission.

3.2 The Pursuit of Holiness

Holiness is the fulfillment of baptismal grace. It is a gift from God that requires the personal cooperation of each person through faithfulness, prayer and the imitation of Jesus Christ.

3.3 Spiritual Growth

The spiritual journey is a gradual path of transformation. It begins with conversion of heart, continues through purification and leads toward deeper communion with God.

3.4 Living in God’s Presence

The Sisters seek to sanctify their lives by remaining constantly united with God through prayer and charity, which constitute the foundation and summit of Basilian spirituality.

3.5 The Path of Ascetic Life

Following Saint Basil's teaching, spiritual growth begins with self-knowledge and requires a continuous struggle against weaknesses and passions. Through perseverance, the soul advances toward freedom and holiness.

3.6 The Practice of Virtues

Faced with difficulties and challenges, the Sisters seek to live according to evangelical virtues, especially humility, charity, obedience and simplicity of heart.

4. Current Profile of the Congregation

Today, the Congregation of the Basilian Chouerite Sisters is composed of approximately 90 Sisters, including Sisters who have made their perpetual profession and are fully committed to consecrated life according to the charism of Saint Basil the Great.

Through prayer, community life and apostolic commitment, the Sisters continue their mission of serving the Church and society through educational, pastoral, social and charitable works.

5. Houses and Convents of the Congregation

5.1. Our Lady of the Annunciation Convent – Zouk Mikael, Lebanon

The Motherhouse of the Congregation, founded in 1734, remains the spiritual center of the Sisters. Today, it serves as a residence for elderly and retired Sisters while continuing to be a place of prayer, spiritual renewal and missionary presence.

5.2. Our Lady of the Assumption Convent – Bkaatouta, Lebanon

A house dedicated to silence, prayer, spiritual retreats and renewal.

6. Apostolic Missions and Services

The Sisters carry out their apostolic mission by serving the most vulnerable, including children, the elderly, people with disabilities, the sick and those experiencing social difficulties. Their mission is expressed through educational, healthcare, pastoral and charitable services.

6.1. Centers Belonging to the Congregation

1. Father Roberts Institute – Sehaylé, Lebanon

A specialized and free educational center serving children with hearing disabilities and children with special needs.

2. Saint Basil Oasis – Zouk Mikaël, Lebanon

A residence for elderly persons located within the Motherhouse complex of Our Lady of the Annunciation.

3. Our Lady of the Annunciation Home for Female Students – Zouk Mikaël, Lebanon

A residence providing accommodation, care and support for female university students.

4. Iconography Workshop – Zouk Mikaël, Lebanon

A workshop dedicated to the sacred art of iconography, preserving and promoting the Byzantine Christian artistic tradition.

6.2. Centers Managed by the Sisters and Belonging to Other Ecclesiastical, Governmental or Lay Institutions

1. LAU Hospital – Achrafieh, Lebanon

A healthcare ministry carried out with the contribution and service of Basilian Chouerite Sisters.

2. Child Protection Center – Zahlé, Lebanon

A center serving orphaned children and children from vulnerable social backgrounds.

3. Center for Catechesis and Pastoral Ministry – Rablé, Syria

A pastoral center dedicated to Christian formation, catechesis and spiritual activities.

4. Dispensaries and Social Services

Saint Anthony Center – Akawi, Lebanon

A dispensary, charitable association and community kitchen serving people in need.

Municipal Dispensary – Zouk Mikaël, Lebanon

A healthcare service serving the local population.

Medical-Social Dispensary for Women Religious Congregations – Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon

A healthcare and social service dedicated to religious communities in Lebanon.

7.3. Semi-Private Schools

The Congregation manages five semi-private schools, including:

School Owned by the Congregation

1. Our Lady of the Bekaa School – Qaa, Bekaa

Schools Belonging to Different Dioceses in Lebanon

1. Our Lady of Deliverance School – Cheikh Mohammad, Akkar
2. Saint Joseph Primary School – Miniara, Akkar
3. Our Lady of the Assumption School – Bteghrine, North Metn
4. Saint Maximus School – Kfarchima, South Metn

Conclusion

Throughout nearly three centuries of history, the Congregation of the Basilian Chouerite Sisters has remained faithful to its original vocation: seeking God through prayer, community life and service.

Inspired by the spirituality of Saint Basil the Great, the Sisters continue to witness to the Gospel through education, pastoral ministry, charity and service to the most vulnerable, contributing to the mission of the Church in Lebanon and abroad.



Mother Nada TANIOS

Nada Tanios
General Superior

of Basilian Shouerite Sisters

6.3. External Mission

Our Lady of the Annunciation Home – Melbourne, Australia. A pastoral mission established outside Lebanon, carried out by the Basilian Chouerite Sisters in collaboration with the local Church.

This mission does not belong to a Lebanese eparchy or archdiocese but is connected to another religious congregation. It represents the Congregation's missionary presence abroad and its commitment to serving the Church beyond its geographical boundaries.

7. Educational Mission

Education represents the principal field of the Congregation's apostolic mission.

The Basilian Chouerite Sisters administer thirteen schools in Lebanon, including five semi-private schools receiving partial government subsidies. These schools are located in different regions of Lebanon, including Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Keserwan, the Bekaa Valley, Northern Lebanon and Southern Lebanon. Through education, the Sisters seek to provide academic excellence, human formation and Christian values, while welcoming children and young people from diverse social backgrounds.

7.1. Schools Owned by the Congregation

The Congregation owns and operates the following schools:

1. Our Lady of Peace School – Dora, Beirut
2. Saint Joseph College – Miniara, Akkar
3. Saint George College – Khenchara, North Metn
4. Our Lady of the Annunciation College – Kfarchima, South Metn
5. Christ the King School – Zahlé, Bekaa
6. Our Lady of the Bekaa School – Qaa, Bekaa

7.2. Schools Administered on Behalf of Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchies

The Congregation also manages schools belonging to Melkite Greek Catholic Eparchies:

1. Saint George School – Tibnine, Tyre, South Lebanon
2. Our Lady of Nazareth College – Amman, Jordan
3. Melkite Greek Catholic College – Irbid, Jordan
4. Dar Lotf Catholic School – Aqaba, Jordan