

# Congregation of the R.J.M– A Journey from France to India

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The Religious of Jesus and Mary, abbreviated as R.J.M., form a religious congregation of women dedicated to the education and service of the poor. The congregation was founded by St. Claudine Thevenet.



Claudine was born in Lyon, France on 30 March, 1774. After a traumatic experience of witnessing the execution of her two brothers during the French Revolution, she dedicated her entire life for the care and education of destitute children. She was joined by other young ladies, and they formed the Congregation of the R.J.M in 1818, with Claudine as the Foundress. While the Constitution of the congregation was being drafted, Claudine passed away on 3 Feb 1837.

Over the decades, the work carried out by the sisters gained recognition outside of France as well. In 1841, the Bishop of Agra, Rt. Rev. Dr. J.A. Borghi requested the congregation to work in Agra for the education of young girls. His request was accepted and a group of six nuns set out for India.

They left Marseilles on 28 Jan 1842 by ship via Alexandria, Cairo and the Sinai desert, reaching Bombay on the 3 June the same year. Due to the South West Monsoons, the nuns could not come to Agra directly by the land route, and they had to set sail for Calcutta on 15 June, reaching Calcutta on 27 June. From Calcutta they went to Allahabad by steam boat up the Ganges river. Thereafter they travelled in bullock carts to Agra where they arrived on 11 Nov 1842.



India FDC 13 Nov 1992, 150 Years of Service of Sisters of Jesus and Mary in India. The map traces the route followed by the first group of sisters from Lyon to Agra. FDC with pictorial cancellation "Commitment to Education", Agra.

On reaching Agra, the nuns were officially received in "Akbar's Church" by Rev. Dr. J.A. Borghi. On 1st Dec 1842, the first English-medium School, Orphanage and Boarding Establishment St Patrick's opened in Civil Lines, Agra.



On 2 Dec 1909, Convent of Jesus Mary (CJM) was established in Ambala at the request of Fr. Julius, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Agra.

Today 1,300 Religious of Jesus and Mary serve in 28 countries around the world. (India alone has over 20 educational institutions). St. Claudine Thevenet was beatified on 4 October 1981 and was later canonized as a saint

India FDC 2 Dec 2009, Centenary of CJM Ambala Cantt. Painting of Foundress St. Claudine Thevenet.

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