

Society of Servi Domini, Girls' Orphanage, India



Every wall, floor and most ceilings were blessed.



Even the roof was blessed, with the statue of Padre Pio carried in procession. The building will eventually be the convent for the sisters, but until other buildings are built, it will be used as the dormitory, chapel, refectory and study hall for the orphans and elderly too.



The beginning of the ceremony: Rev. Fr. Emmanuel du Chalard, ritual and holy water in hand, stands before the front door.

BLESSING OF NEW ORPHANAGE

Following the Solemn High Mass on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and after a hearty breakfast, a fleet of cars converged upon the new orphanage (about 4 miles from the priory). As usual on such occasions, before the ceremony began, beautifully dressed boys, girls, ladies and gentlemen flitted here and there in a state of suppressed excitement.

Eventually the altar servers and clergy were pushed and pulled into processional formation, they bowed to the cross and

then solemnly made their way towards the grandiose, almost-finished edifice. The sun shone brightly that morning and the blue sky was made more enchanting by the enormous billowing cumulus clouds – typical for the end of the monsoon season.

As soon as the procession reached the front door, it halted, the cross bearer and acolytes moved to one side and Fr. Du Chalard, the officiant, surveyed first the open doorway and then the ritual before him.

The words of benediction brought to mind our spiritual protectors who would take up their abode in this same house and make it a house of peace and prayer. At the end of the blessing Father was presented with a Holy Water and proceeded to sprinkle the porch and door way.

Then came the moment that will remain ever vivid in the mind of she whose prayers, hard work and patience have made this day possible. Sr. Maria Immaculata silently stepped forward with a pair of scissors, and cut the ribbon stretched across the front doorway. We can only guess her feelings at this moment—

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gratitude, relief and elation—her serene face of course betrayed none of these!

While Fr. Couture sang confidently (Fr. Brucciani perhaps a little less so), the procession visited every corner of the building. There was not a wall or floor or probably even a ceiling, that did not receive sanctifying drops of holy water.

Once all the rooms had been blessed, the children and faithful gathered in what will be the cloister garden for the blessing of the new statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A message from the Mother House of the Consoling Sisters of the Sacred Heart was then read in English and Tamil to those present and absent. The Mother Superior thanked all the benefactors and builders, together with the priests and volunteers.

This day was a blessed milestone in the history of the mission. There remains a school, a church, an accommodation block and a kitchen and refectory to build, but Rome was not built in a day and we



The granite statue of the Sacred Heart is the in the centre of the cloister. After the blessing, the Litany of the Sacred Heart was sung.

rejoice at what we have now.
Deo gratias. Ω



The celebratory luncheon for 150 faithful.



Sr. Maria Immaculata with her Beloved.