

CONGREGATION OF THE  
SISTERS OF THE  
DIVINE SAVIOUR



ELISABETH EPPINGER  
FOUNDESS OF THE CONGREGATION

1814 - 1867



**ELISABETH EPPINGER**

Elisabeth Eppinger is born on 9<sup>th</sup> September in 1814 as the first child of a family of small farmers in Bad Niederbronn in Alsace, France; ten siblings follow. She grows up in modest conditions and is afflicted by all sorts of illnesses in her youth.

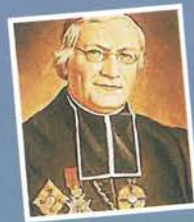
Elisabeth - of strong personality and great spiritual sensitivity – wants above all to know God, to love him and to be pleasing to him. During the years of her illness she makes intense spiritual experiences, this is also known to her surroundings.

Attracted to the contemplation of Jesus Christ, particularly in his life and in his passion, Elisabeth discovers more and more that God's love is offered to all. She wants to consecrate her life to God and thus contribute to make people know and love God. By her own experience she knows that different sorts of sufferings can be an obstacle in encountering God's love. Therefore she feels urged to help people in their spiritual and corporal sufferings. She comes to understand that with the help of her parish priest she has to found a Congregation.



**FATHER JOHANNES DAVID REICHARD,**

the parish priest of Niederbronn, is for Elisabeth an important person accompanying her from early childhood who, in his deep faith, commits himself to this new project.



**BISHOP ANDREAS RAESS OF STRASBOURG**

is interested in everything concerning Elisabeth, he examines her and her plan; in 1849 he approves of founding a new Congregation which he accompanies and supports according to his possibilities.

The first services of the new community were for the sick in their houses, for poor children, for those in all sorts of needs, irrespective of their religion, race or social status.

Elisabeth Eppinger – in the Congregation Mother Alphonse Maria – becomes the first Superior General of the young Congregation.

From 1850 onwards, communities are established on the request of parishes and municipalities – at first in Alsace, then in the interior of France, in Germany, in Austria, in Hungary.



# SPIRIT OF THE CONGREGATION

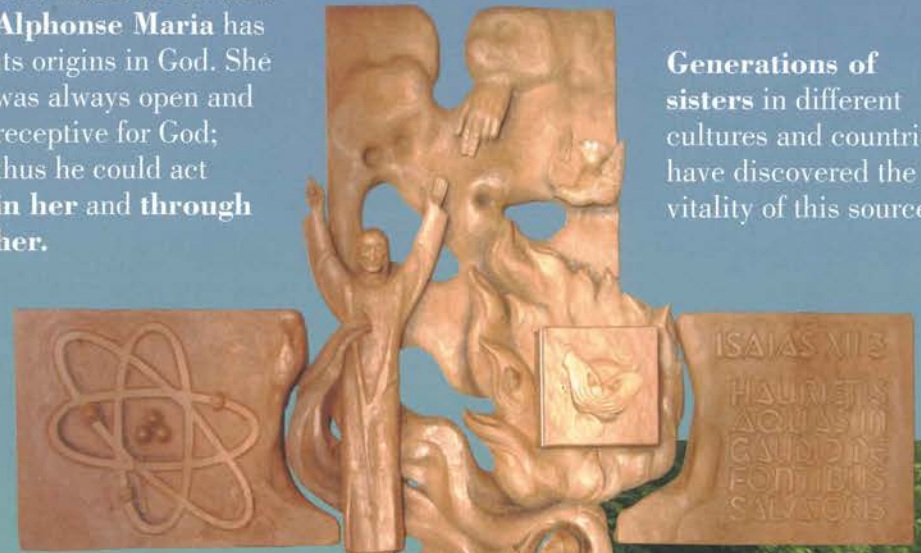


*„Draw joyfully from the springs of salvation“*  
(motto of the Congregation)

*Mother Alphonse Maria and her first sisters keep on hearing this call. They let it pervade their lives and thus pass on this gift of God, so that it may continue to be at work in the Church and in the world.*

**The work of Mother Alphonse Maria** has its origins in God. She was always open and receptive for God; thus he could act **in her and through her.**

**Generations of sisters** in different cultures and countries have discovered the vitality of this source.



Meditating on the compassion of God in the life and passion of Jesus, letting oneself be transformed by his Spirit so that people experience the love of the Saviour: this is what Sisters of the Divine Saviour see as their heritage and mission.



*The life of this Congregation is marked by the contemplation of the life and the passion of Jesus Christ. The sisters are to be orientated towards his example, to live as he lived.*

**They have to be:**

**agile and adaptable**, like Jesus, who sent his disciples into the whole world.

**turned towards and close to every one irrespective of social status, religion, nationality and race**, like Jesus who came o bring life to all.



**joyful in the involvement, receptive and kind**, like Jesus who was compassionate and merciful to all seeking his help.



**simple and open-minded regarding people and events**, like Jesus who was there for all and shared the living conditions of his contemporaries.



**devout in the spirit of prayer and in union with God**, like Jesus, turned towards God and towards people, and in union with him (Jesus Christ) fulfil the mission given by the heavenly Father for the salvation of all.

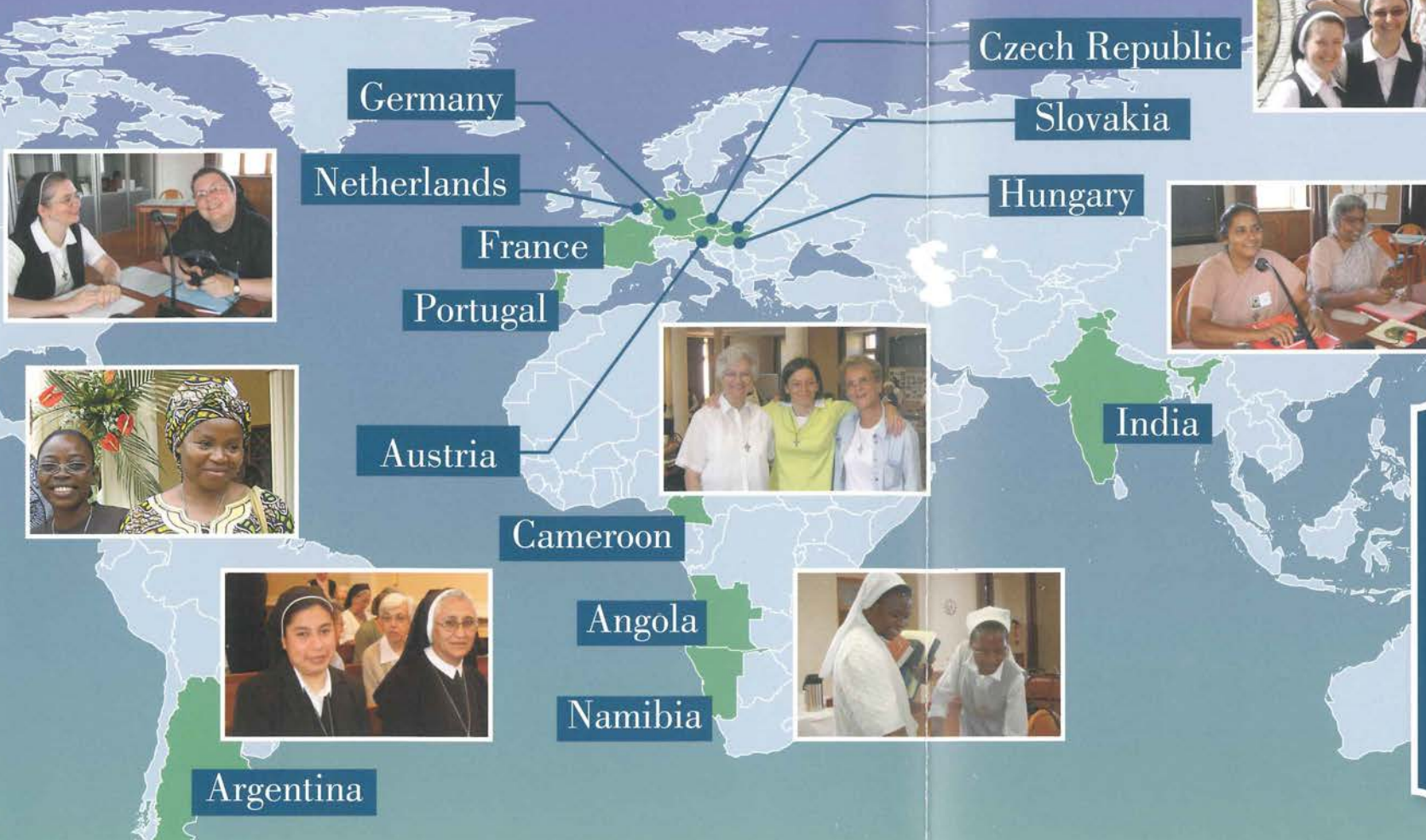


**Sisters draw strength for their commitment in contemplation and from the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist.**



They are involved in health care, in the care for the sick and elderly, in education and formation, in social and pastoral service, in diverse areas with and for people in need in four continents – mostly in co-operation with committed laity.

# PRESENCE



**Divine Saviour Associates**  
 There is also an association of catholic women and men who desire to live their baptismal vocation according to the charism and the spirituality of Mother Alphonse Maria. Together with the Sisters of the Divine Saviour, they want to bear witness to the love of God and to participate in the mission of the Congregation in fidelity to their state of life in the family, at work, in the society and in the Church.

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# COGNATE CONGREGATIONS



*Conditioned through different circumstances, new Congregations emerged from the Niederbronn Congregation already in Mother Alphonse Maria's life time in the years 1866/67 in Vienna, Wuerzburg and Sopron and in 1916 another one came from the Vienna Congregation in Bratislava. Each one of these Congregations had its own independent evolution.*

*All Congregations consider this quotation from the Original Rule as significant motto:*



*Motherhouse in Oberbronn*

*“The spirit of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour should be the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Their lives should be completely modelled on the life of Jesus Christ, the Saviour. His Spirit should so totally animate and fill them that it becomes apparent in all their words and actions. Each sister should be able to say with the Apostle: “It is no longer I, but Christ living in me”.*

(Original Rule 1849 – Chapter I § 3)

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council, the relations among Congregations of the same origin became deeper; two Congregations fused with the Niederbronn Congregation: Vienna in 1999 and Bratislava in 2009; with the other two there are different forms of co-operation.