



PHILIPPINES

The first Canossian Auxiliaries Association (as it was formerly called) in the Philippines was formally organized in the Philippines in San Pablo City in September, 1974 by the late Sr. Marie Fugnit. The first Canossian Auxiliaries were: Belinda Cigaral, Belen Belina, Gliceria Manuyag, Amelita Mando, Teresita Barrento, Armi Macatangay, Eufemia Tan, Nancy Punzalan, Maria Benita Medrano and Tessie Baes.

They were received formally to the Association on 16 February 1975 after a two-day Spiritual Retreat held in Calamba.

While this group had a modest beginning, it became more established as time passed by sustained by regular meetings/formation sessions and monthly recollection, with a priest giving spiritual direction and talks. The members kept in touch through a newsletter "Reach Out" in which they would share experiences and news of various kinds. They participated in the apostolate of the Sisters – barrio work, fund raising, distribution of goods to Mayon Volcano eruption victims, catechesis, block rosaries, Bible studies. Some even went to Mindanao and helped out in the apostolate there.

The 1950 Statutes of the Canossian Collaborators approved by the Holy See were translated into English and some other further adaptations were made so that in 1974, these were already the "Rule of Life and the Statutes" of the Association.

On April 10, 1985, on the occasion of the 150th death anniversary of St. Magdalene of Canossa, 14 new members were formally received in the Association.

In December 1985, the First International Convention of Canossian Co-Workers was held in Singapore. The Philippines was represented by Mrs. Minda Dungao, Mrs. Conching Delfino, Mrs. Carolina Dizon and the late Sr. Norma Bacalan, Fd CC.

In 1987, Sr. Teresita Pamplona, together with Miss Norma Hidalgo and Dra. Pinky Baclig, attended the International Congress of the Canossian Lay Movement held in Rome.

Changes were introduced to the existing structure to make it more organized and better integrated into the total vision of the apostolic thrust of the Canossian Sisters in the Philippines.

With the General Chapter held in Rome in 1990, the identity of the Lay Canossians became clearer and more specific.

The General and National Statutes

On June 29, 1991, the General Statutes of the Lay Canossians were promulgated by our Mother General, Mo. Elide Testa, who presented it, on behalf of the XII General Chapter, to the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, which approved and confirmed them. In November, 1991, the Lay Canossian core group did an overview and study of the promulgated General Statutes. The drafting of the

National Statutes ensued on January 3-5, 1992. Following further studies by the Luzon and Mindanao coordinating teams, was the presentation to the rest of the Lay Canossians in the 2nd National LC Congress on 23-25 April 1993 at the Canossian Central House, Hillside, Kolambog, Lapasan, Cagayan de Oro. After some more sessions to polish the National Statutes, the ratified form was submitted to Sr. Elsa Cosico, the Provincial Superior, for final approval. Distribution of copies was made during the 4th National Congress in May, 1999. A Pilipino translation was later released in 2001.

Organizational Structure and Administration

The Association is run by the National Coordinating Team (NCT) composed of the Provincial Sister Animator, National Coordinator, Secretary for Luzon, Secretary for Mindanao, National Treasurer and National Formation Coordinator [who chairs the National Formation Team (NFT) with three other members). Each Unit is run by the Local Coordinating Team (LCT) composed of the Unit Sister Animator, Local Coordinator, Local Secretary and Local Treasurer. NCT, NFT, and LCT's meet at a frequency of six times during the year or as needed.

Annual Regional Assemblies and monthly or quarterly Unit meetings keep the members in touch – their apostolate as individuals or as groups and deepening of the vocation.

The Association also has a **Newsletter** KAWIL (maiden issue was on 21 October 1996) which comes twice a year.



Membership and Formation

Initial Formation

Candidates to be Lay Canossians are to undergo initial formation for a period of one to two years before acceptance.

Acceptance and renewal of promise

Lay Canossians make their promise upon acceptance and renew it within the month of September of every year.

Membership

The Association upon inception in 1990 has been composed of single or married persons of both genders, though nucleated by Auxiliaries (single women).

The first communities with Lay Canossians were Calamba, Lipa, San Pablo, Sta. Rosa, and Tagaytay in Luzon and Cagayan de Oro, Don Carlos and Maramag in Mindanao. These are called Units. Bulihan, Magallanes, Paco, San Juan Unit and Tondo Lay Canossians were accepted on 28 February 1993 in Tagaytay after a one-day Recollection. Every Unit has a Sister Animator who diligently attends to the formation of the members.

Malaybalay Unit followed: launching on 01 May 1999, preceding the 4th National LC Congress and acceptance of its first batch of in September of the same year; then San Jose, Nueva Ecija Unit: launching on 01 March 2000 and acceptance of the first batch on 01 March 2001. In 2002, Masimlag Unit span off from Don Carlos Unit with four married couples as members.

Today, there are over 130 members with promise in the country in 11 Units in Luzon and 5 Units in Mindanao. A slated launching is at Talibon, Bohol within the dates of the 6th National LC Congress in 2005

On-going Formation

All members go through an on-going formation. NCT, NFT and LCT's members further participate in formation on leadership, the charism and spirituality of the Institute and other seminars/workshops they echo to the members.

For further sustenance and nourishment, Lay Canossians attend to their individual growth through prayers, the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, Bible reflection, rosary, visit to the Blessed Sacrament, frequent reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, seminars within or outside the Congregation. Advent and Lenten Recollections either by Region (i.e. Luzon or Mindanao) or by Unit are held every year.

Relationship with the Sister is also enhanced, not only in working with them in apostolate, but in participation in other functions of the Institute, e.g. anniversaries and jubilee celebrations

Journey and Growth of Lay Canossians

Sharing the charism of the Institute with the Canossian Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor as seen from the vision of St. Magdalene of Canossa and background story, Lay Canossians have "marched" with the Sisters to "MAKE JESUS KNOWN AND LOVED"

in the ordinariness of daily life, beginning with the family/home. A good 75-80% of the total membership are members of the three Ministries of Charity – education, evangelization and pastoral care of the sick – while 5-8% are with the fourth and fifth Ministries – formation of the laity and spiritual exercises. The rest help out in their own parishes and are somehow engaged in similar ministries, directly or indirectly. Some even have multiple ministries.

It is quite notable that in faraway Maramag, Bukidnon, Mindanao the apostolate of the Sisters was completely turned over to the Lay Canossians on 15-16 February 1992. Since then, Lay Canossians have handled the following: kindergarten class, catechesis, parish youth, prison and hospital visitation, vocation promotion, nutrition and feeding programs, Canossian Volunteer Program, and spiritual exercises. Their Sister Animator regularly visits them for formation.

Lay Canossian Congress

National Lay Canossian congresses are held every three years and well speak of the journey of the Lay Canossians for the last decade or so. In each congress, all members with promise from Luzon and Mindanao meet to assess their journey since the last congress and make plans and resolutions for the next three years. Fraternal relationship (among the members as well as with the Sisters) is one prevalent unspoken event during such an occasion, expressed very meaningfully in various modes in all the activities – liturgy, socialization, business meetings, workshops/sharing, meals, even bedtime.

National Lay Canossian Congresses

CONGRESS	DATE	VENUE	THEME
FIRST	29-30 Sept 1990	Canossian House of Spirituality, Tagaytay City	THE FILIPINO LAY CANOSSIAN PEACEMAKERS FOR CHRIST
SECOND	23-25 April 1993	Canossian Central House Cagayan de Oro	THE LAY CANOSSIAN IN RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGE OF PCP II
THIRD	01-06 May 1996	Villa Milagrosa, Baguio City	LC FORMATION FOR A MISSION
FOURTH	02-08 May 1999	Canossian Youth Center, Malaybalay City	BABAD-MALAY SA KAPUSPUSAN NI KRISTONG NAKAPAKO SA KRUS
FIFTH	02-05 May 2002	Canossian House of Spirituality, Tagaytay City	LANDAS NG BUHAY TUNGO SA KALOOBAN NG DIYOS
SIXTH	22-23 April 2005 6-8 May 2005	Canossian House of Spirituality, Tagaytay City LUZON Canossian Youth Center, Malaybalay City MINDANAO	SEEING the WORLD through the EYES of JESUS

The Lay Canossians of the Sacred Heart Province participate in the Lay Canossian Family International Congress held every six years. The past ones were held in 1987 (Rome, Italy), 1994 (Asiago, Italy) and 2000 (Rome) – preceded by a Regional Assembly of English-speaking Provinces in July 1998 at Albuquerque, new Mexico, USA. Preparations are on the way for the Fourth one in 2006 (Verona, Italy).

Asia Regional Formation Assembly

Lay Canossians from Sacred Heart Province hosted the first Asia Regional Formation Assembly which was held in Canossa House of Spirituality, Tagaytay City on 10-13 August 2001 with the theme: The Lay Canossians of Asia Today In Creative Fidelity to Fullness of Love.



Today

The journey goes on with cheer in the heart of every Lay Canossian. The challenge gets tougher with the times but hand-in-hand with the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor, the Lay Canossian finds him/herself fully armed with the

spirit of St. Magdalene of Canossa, guided by Mary at the foot of the Cross and fired by the GREATEST LOVE.