

Federation of Augustinian Canonesses of the Congregatio B.M.V.

The Federation of Augustinian Canonesses of the Congregatio B.M.V. includes our communities in Paderborn, Offenburg and Essen (Germany), Elsbethen near Salzburg (Austria) and Bratislava (Slovakia). Our convents are autonomous and are each headed by a superior who is elected every three years.

Bratislava

26 sisters live in the community of Bratislava. In 2016, they opened a branch with three sisters in Zvolen to try out life in smaller communities, but it will be closed again this year. The sisters are sheltering Ukrainian refugees. The management of the schools (primary and grammar school) is still in the hands of the sisters, 5 sisters work as teachers.

Elsbethen near Salzburg

In Elsbethen there are 3 sisters living in the convent. They are no longer independent and therefore can't elect their own superior. Since 1 October 2022, Prelate Markus Grasl CanReg, Superior of Reichersberg Abbey, has been in charge of Goldenstein Convent as Apostolic Commissioner. He visits the sisters once a week and supports them in their daily lives.

Goldenstein Convent still runs a Catholic private middle school with 250 pupils which has also been attended by boys since 2017. Due to the now small community, the Archdiocese of Salzburg and the Augustinian Monastery of Reichersberg have taken over the sponsorship. Currently, there are renovations due to fire protection regulations because of which a new staircase has to be constructed.

Essen

8 sisters live in the community of Essen. The elderly sisters are supported daily by a nursing service. As in Bratislava, the sisters are hosting a Ukrainian family who will return home at the end of the month.

The grammar school with 1450 pupils is still under the auspices of the convent; three of the sisters are still working at the school and they are also involved in the field of school pastoral care. Currently, there are considerations and negotiations on the financial security of the school – there is a contract with the city of Essen for 5 years (6% of the school budget must be financed by the sponsor itself).

Offenburg

The community in Offenburg consists of five sisters. Due to its size, the community is no longer independent. The Bishop has appointed one of the sisters as Administrator with all the rights and duties of a Higher Superior. Currently, there are considerations for the reconstruction/renovation of the convent as the building is too big for the community.

Today there is a girls' grammar school and a girls' secondary school. These are sponsored by the School Foundation of the Archdiocese of Freiburg. One of the sisters still works as a teacher.

In the course of changing church structures, the sisters are well accepted into the large circle of the pastoral care unit of St. Ursula. With church services and public events, they are involved in a lively congregational life and they can offer guests a space of silence and retreat from the hectic everyday life.

Paderborn

7 sisters live in the community of Paderborn. The convent property, which has already been completely renovated, is owned by the Archdiocese of Paderborn. The sisters have a lifelong right of residence there and are therefore well prepared for the future. In May 2022, a tornado destroyed the roof of the convent building, leaving damage to walls and windows. Fortunately, none of the sisters were harmed.

In Paderborn there is a mixed grammar school which cooperates with the secondary school which have both been under the auspices of the archdiocese since 2012. Recently, there is also a primary school with a musical focus, which was newly built by the archdiocese on the property of the convent. One of the sisters still works as a teacher.

Last year, within the Federation, we began revising our constitutions, a process that requires a lot of discussion and work. Despite all the upcoming changes, we are looking forward to the future in good spirits.