

Czech Republic

In 1998 a house was established in Brno to facilitate a discernment process for some Czech women. They had encountered the writings of Nicolas Barre during the process for his beatification (1999) and wanted to find out more. One of these young women discovered she wished to become a Sister. Following a period of Formation in England and Ireland, she made her first commitment in 2005 and is once more in Brno with another Sister. The mission continues.

God's ways are unfathomable. How true it is that God writes straight with crooked lines!

The story of our Institute in the Czech Republic is linked to that of the Friars Minim, the order to which Nicolas Barré belonged three centuries ago. Minim monks had settled in Vranov in the 17th century as our Institute was coming to birth in France. Their presence was marked by the many vicissitudes of Czech history and they had to leave their monastery several times.

After the fall of communism in 1989, a community of Czech monks returned to live in Vranov, near Brno. In their church was a copy of Nicolas Barré's Prayer of Abandonment. Some young women saw this prayer during the time of preparation for the beatification of Nicolas Barré. Their interest in it led them to ask questions about its author.

The outcome was that the monks put these women in contact with the Infant Jesus Sisters in Italy and they were invited to visit the country to see the life and work of our sisters there. They stayed for a period of three years, during which they had the opportunity to learn Italian, studying and working with the sisters, especially in Calabria. These young women felt that our spirit had something to say to their own people. Their dream was to implant an Infant Jesus Sisters community in their own country.

Concrete steps were taken in 1998. It was decided to buy a house in Brno and to spend some time discerning where the future lay. A group of young Czech women came to live there, and members of the central team and others came to stay and support them and begin a time of deeper discernment with them.

It became evident to two of these Czech women that religious life was not their calling. One young woman, Veronika Reháková, wanted to continue and went to England, where she experienced various forms of ministry and community life. She made her first commitment in February 2005 as a member of the province of England and Ireland. She then returned to the house in Brno with a sister from Ireland, and carries on her ministry mainly as a teacher.