



100 YEARS

From Terra Santa
to Saint Mary's School of Lemesos
1923-2023



Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous



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ADDRESSES

Address by the Representative of the Latin Religious Group at the House of Representatives

It is with great pleasure that I join you in celebrating the centenary of *Saint Mary's School* in Lemesos. In facts and figures, we celebrate 100 years of the teaching and development of 57,113 pupils from 87 different nationalities.

We are used to thinking of *Saint Mary's School* as an established educational institution. However, looking at its inception, we can appreciate that the School was a pioneer in providing a European-style curriculum for girls and young women. It provided the teaching of European languages and culture at a time Cyprus was more insular. It was able to address the academic and social needs of pupils of any religion and nationality through the School curriculum, by providing a multicultural environment and boarding facilities.

A school does not stand in isolation from the rest of society: it adapts to changing educational needs, shifting demographics, new job market requirements, evolving university entrance criteria amongst other factors. A continuous operation spanning 100 years, can only mean that *Saint Mary's School* has successfully navigated the social and political upheavals in Cyprus, adapting to the address the changing requirements in education.

The Latin Catholic Community cannot flourish without the presence of the Catholic Church and its constitutive missions and services in Cyprus, an integral part of which are the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and their *Saint Mary's School*. Multiple generations of local Latin families have attended the school. In my own family for example, my grandmother attended and now my daughter and nieces are pupils here.

Accepting pupils irrespective of ethnic background, nationality and faith, it has provided a multicultural and multilingual microcosm of an ideal co-existence based on tolerance, respect and ethical behaviour. It continues to promote these values as well as discipline, self-respect and academic endeavour from its pupils. Coupled with the academic success of its graduates, these qualities have established its timeless appeal to parents.

I must express my appreciation to Dr Salomi Papadima Sophocleous who volunteered to research and write this thorough and excellent book. I know she spent countless hours on her research, interviews and writing – not only do we enjoy the fruits of her labour today but I am sure that this book will become a valuable reference to future researchers on the history of private education in Cyprus.

I also take this opportunity to extend my thanks and appreciation to the Press and Information Office (PIO) and its Director Mrs Aliko Stylianou for supporting and sponsoring this publication. I would also like to thank the PIO editorial and publishing team for their work on this book.

Lastly, on behalf of the Latin Catholic Community and myself personally, I would like to thank the Franciscan Sisters for their dedication and service and wish *Saint Mary's School* success.

Antonella Mantovani

Address by the Director of the Press and Information Office

This publication is the outcome of an excellent collaboration of the Press and Information Office with the author, Dr Salomi Papadima, and *Saint Mary's School*, and, at the same time, it is a tribute to a school that has left its mark on contemporary educational affairs and the educational landscape in Cyprus and Lemesos, in particular.

Saint Mary's School celebrates this year its 100 years of life. From its modest beginnings to its current standing, *Saint Mary's* has been a cornerstone of education in the community of Lemesos. Over the past 100 years, the School has stood witness to a century of social and political change, adversities and war, as well as progress in all fields of life. The School has adapted to societal shifts, technological advancements and the ever-evolving needs of students.

This publication unfolds the history of this educational institution—its origins, growth, challenges, and triumphs. It also explores the people who have shaped *Saint Mary's*: the Sisters and other dedicated educators and administrators, as well as the students who have walked its halls. Through interviews, anecdotes and historical records, we delve into the day-to-day life of the School, its key moments and milestones.

Our responsibility and mission at the Press and Information Office is to preserve history and culture and to ensure the continuation of existing and past knowledge and heritage through recording, archiving, digitising and publishing. I am both proud and fortunate that we were given the opportunity, through this collaboration, to publish this book, which is a testimony of our island's recent educational history, through the history of *Saint Mary's School*.

I would like to express my thanks to the author of the book, Dr Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous, for her passion and hard work, as well as to Ms Antonella Mantovani, Representative of the Latin Religious Group at the House of Representatives for her support through this whole endeavour.

More than just an institution, *Saint Mary's School* is a community. As we turn the pages of this book, I invite you to become part of this community, part of *Saint Mary's* legacy and join us on this journey through time, as we celebrate a School's century of education, growth and impact.

Aliki Stylianou

Address by the Principal of Saint Mary's School

In book XI of Confessions, Saint Augustine, the great Bishop of Hippo, gives a profound reflection on time. He demonstrates that beyond evidence, habits and common places, the clear definition of this phenomenon is truly difficult, and the use of this word is even more challenging.

In fact, he points out that there are three types of time and each one poses different problems. The past that usually occupies a large part of our thoughts no longer lives. It has stopped, frozen. It survives only through memory. We can no longer change it. On the other hand, the future has not yet arrived. It is conceived as a promise or an expectation. The philosopher says that only the present seems to exist, but it must be recognised that it is fleeting, passing like the water that we try to hold in our hands. It flows through our fingers and our minds. Elusive, it constantly faints, while still here. Finally, of the three types of time that we think we grasp, none are completely available to us.

This strong explanation sheds light on what we experience in a school. We clearly understand that the future is, in fact, only a horizon full of possibilities. It is a vague period that we would like to seize, but that we can only dream about. It is the expression of desire and ambition, but also of fear and anguish. Every teacher and every student face the anxiousness of failure in exams or university selections. They also feel the thirst for good grades or for the letter of admission to their desired course. To limit disappointment and fulfil its positive role, the school then forgets the past, leaves the future in the shadows and focuses on the present or on what is likely to happen in the next few hours: today, tomorrow, this week. The months and years that follow seem far away.

A school, therefore, focuses on the management of the moment, on the succession of events. It is filled with tension and effort. In everyday life, we do not have time to look back, we do not have the opportunity to return.

That is one of the main reasons why this book is so valuable. It stops the clock; it pauses the pace of things. It invites us to stare not at the moment, but at the duration. It gives us a panoramic view of everything that has been done for one hundred years. It opens the lid of the memory box and makes us realise where this school comes from, where we come from. Moreover, it describes all the energy that generations of Sisters have spent to develop *Saint Mary's School* with admirable courage, determination and dedication. It presents all the strength and joy of those who have gone before us: in faith and hope, they have built this wonderful project that continues today, a century later. They certainly went through painful moments -wars, invasions, earthquakes-but they never gave up on the educational mission that is at the origin, at the foundation.

This book, therefore, retraces history, but it emphasises just as much the message that all the Sisters, students and teachers share and cherish: Beyond the daily flow of studies, the school programmes, the organisation of classes, there is a permanence-aeternitas, as Saint Augustine would say. Since its opening, the school has continually sought to transmit substantial, unalterable values that are addressed to all-values that are inscribed in the heart-which promote humanity and the presence of God in everyone. Under the gentle impulse of the Sisters' Community, *Saint Mary's* seeks above all to instil respect, sincerity, kindness and responsibility so that our students will be good, steady, sure of themselves, open to the world and to others.

We are not just trying to fill brains. We want to give everyone the opportunity to become accomplished men and women, in all the beauty of these words, relying on the universal principles of tolerance of the Gospels and the doctrine of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. This is the ultimate goal we have pursued since 1923, from the beginning to this centenary, as this book highlights.

That is why we are very grateful to those who allowed it to happen. First of all, we would like to express our gratitude to the Press and Information Office (PIO), which made this publication possible. We would then like to particularly thank Mrs Aliko Stylianou, Director of this organisation, and Mrs Antonella Mantovani, Representative of the Latin Religious Group at the House of Representatives, for their firm, effective and decisive intervention in this publication. Finally, we genuinely wish to congratulate Mrs Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous-a former student of *Saint Mary's School*, who produced this text. Tirelessly and rigorously, she plunged into history, she stripped the archives, she collected testimonies to carry out this remarkable work. She has succeeded in giving life and consistency to a century of adventures and missions. Thanks to all these people, we can discover the clear and complete way of life of the *Saint Mary's School of Lemesos*.

It is really an amazing thing.

Thank you.

François Michel Delolme

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I introduce to you the captivating biography, “100 Years - From Terra Santa to *Saint Mary's School* of Lemesos 1923-2023.” This remarkable book delves into the rich history, cherished traditions, and inspiring journey of a school that has left an indelible mark on the educational landscape of Lemesos, Cyprus. Every school holds within its walls a myriad of stories, secrets, and memories that weave together the history of its existence. *Saint Mary's School* in Lemesos is no exception. From its humble beginnings as Terra Santa to its transformation into the esteemed institution it is today, this biography invites us on a remarkable journey through time, uncovering the rich history and profound impact of *Saint Mary's School*.

In the heart of Lemesos, nestled amidst the captivating landscapes of Cyprus, *Saint Mary's School* has stood as a pillar of education for generations. Its corridors have echoed with the laughter, dreams, and aspirations of countless students who have passed through its doors. Through the ebb and flow of time, this institution has evolved, adapting to societal changes while upholding its commitment to nurturing young minds and fostering a spirit of excellence. Schools are more than mere buildings; they are living entities that breathe life into the dreams and aspirations of countless individuals. *Saint Mary's School* in Lemesos is a shining testament to this notion. This biography offers a captivating narrative that spans decades and encapsulates the spirit and essence of this remarkable educational institution.

In the pages that follow, we embark on a compelling exploration of *Saint Mary's School*, delving into the stories of its founders, the dedicated educators who have shaped young lives, and the vibrant community that has found solace and inspiration within its walls. From the early days of Terra Santa, a beacon of education in the late 19th century, to the present day, *Saint Mary's School*, the transformational journey of this educational haven unfolds before our eyes.

We witness the triumphs and challenges faced by the school, the milestones achieved, and the transformative moments that have left an indelible mark on its students and staff. We encounter the remarkable individuals who have left their imprint on *Saint Mary's*, from visionary leaders to extraordinary alumni who have gone on to make significant contributions in various fields. Their stories illustrate the enduring impact of education and the power of a nurturing environment that instils values, knowledge, and character. As we turn each page, we gain insights into the school's curriculum, traditions, and the numerous academic and extracurricular pursuits that have shaped the holistic development of generations of students. We explore the cultural events, the sports victories, the artistic endeavours, and the countless friendships forged within the *Saint Mary's School*.

Beyond the confines of its physical campus, we discover the profound influence *Saint Mary's* has had on the wider community, nurturing young minds and enriching society through various outreach initiatives and social responsibility programmes. Its commitment to instilling compassion, empathy, and a sense of social justice echoes through the anecdotes and experiences shared by those whose lives have been touched by the school. “100 Years - From Terra Santa to Saint Mary’s School of Lemesos 1923-2023” is not just a testament to the history and legacy of one educational institution; it is a celebration of the countless lives that have been transformed within its embrace. It is an ode to the educators, administrators, students, and parents who have contributed to the tapestry of Saint Mary's School, making it a beacon of inspiration and a centre for intellectual and personal growth.

I invite you to embark on this extraordinary journey, to delve into the stories of the school's past, and to be inspired by the indomitable spirit that has made *Saint Mary's School* a beacon of education and character development in Lemesos. May the biography of this school serve as a celebration of the school's rich heritage and a tribute to the countless individuals who have contributed to its legacy.

Panayiotis Angelides

*Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, Professor
School of Education, Department of Education
Member of the Council, University of Nicosia*

AUTHOR'S NOTE ON THE PUBLICATION

We experience reality every day but we rarely analyse it to see its reflection or impact on our lives in general. When the organisation of the 2nd Scientific Symposium Oral History (2006) titled “Education in Limassol” was announced by the Patticheion Municipal Museum-Historical Archives and Research Centre of Limassol, my first thought was to make a presentation about my school, the school of *Saint Mary's*.

I studied there for six years (1968-1974). I have learned four languages, and became aware of those languages' cultural background and intercultural similarities and differences. My skills, experiences, and other knowledge such as typing, book-keeping, music, cooperation and collaboration were also enriched through my participation in sporting and cultural events such as physical education classes, choir and school festivities, and national parades. During my secondary studies at *Saint Mary's*, I came in contact with students, Sisters, teachers, parents, and other members of the school community from different parts of Cyprus and different countries from all over the world, speaking different languages and practising different cultures. I subconsciously acquired tolerance and became receptive to difference. I co-existed with different people as part of my everyday life. By appreciating the other and comparing it to my language and culture, I understood and appreciated my own language and culture more.

My areas of expertise as an academic are Language Teaching and Teacher Training, Curriculum Development, Computer Assisted Language Learning, Computer Assisted Language Assessment and Testing, both onsite and online. I often thought about *Saint Mary's* contribution to my later life: My language competence in four languages, my cultural and intercultural enrichment and appreciation, my typing skills, which were truly handy when technologies entered all spheres of our lives, but particularly my teaching and academic profession. However, I have never been given the opportunity to study my school's contribution scientifically, both to society in general, and to me in particular.

I confess that, with great emotion, I visited my school again for the first time 32 years after my graduation from *Saint Mary's* and after 27 years of absence from Cyprus (four years in Athens, where I completed my undergraduate studies, and 23 years in Melbourne, Australia), to begin this research. During my first meeting with the then Principal of the school, Sister Josephine Vrahimi, the whole history of the school and the memory of the most important people who contributed to it began to unfold before the eyes of both of us. I would like to thank her warmly, as, despite her many and constant commitments, she accepted me and shared my interest to conduct research and record the history of the school.

A first recording of the history of the school was done in my presentation for the 2nd Scientific Symposium on Oral History titled "Education in Limassol", organised in 2006 by the Patischeion Municipal Museum-Historical Archives and Research Centre of Limassol. The aim of that short presentation was to give a brief overview of the history of *Saint Mary's School* and its contribution to the educational history of Lemesos. That brief overview was published in the proceedings of that Symposium (Papadima-Sophocleous, 2009). Naturally, the more I researched the more I discovered that the existing material I had slowly begun to examine went beyond the narrow confines of that brief oral report and first Oral History Symposium proceedings publication. That was only the beginning.

And our meetings then were not over. During my presentation at the 2nd Oral History Symposium, I promised Sister Josephine Vrahimi that I would write a book about the school's history and contribution. I aimed to continue and complete this research, hoping to leave behind a broader record of the multifaceted, and clearly most valuable contribution of *Saint Mary's School* in the educational affairs of Lemesos and Cyprus in general.

The opportunity to research further the history of *Saint Mary's School* came after May 2021, just when I officially retired from academic duties, and when I realised that in 2023 it would be 100 years since the establishment of the school. The time was ripe. I wanted to honour this event with the publication of the promised book. I had nearly three years to work on it. I visited the school again. Sister Josephine Vrahimi and the school staff were excited and supportive of the idea. And the research continued. The research process was long, and exciting. The book started taking shape and became the one you are currently holding in your hands.

Therefore, I would like to thank everyone who contributed in any way; those who gave me access to all the archival material, and those who accepted to be interviewed for the purposes of the study. In the context of this research, the material and the information obtained from the interviews were used in the best possible way to tell the hundred-year story of *Saint Mary's School*. Many thanks to the School Community for their continuous support and help. Special thanks to Antonella Mantovani, Representative of the Latin Religious Group at the House of Representatives, who has very warmly and strongly supported this book during all the stages of its preparation and publication; Dr Kyprianos Louis, Director of Secondary General Education, Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, Coordinator between the Ministry of Education and the Religious Groups, for his continuous support for the recording of the history of schools in Cyprus and the publication and launch of this book; Aliko Stylianos, Director of the Press and Information Office of the Ministry of Interior, for enabling this publication.

CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Researchers in the field of the history of education of Cyprus admit that, although there have been publications on the topic as early as the 1929s (e.g., Pilavakis, Ar. 1929; Heraclidou, 2017), the recording of the history of schools has not been thoroughly investigated yet. Some attempts have sporadically been made. For example, the Proceedings of the 2nd Symposium of Oral History 2006 of the Patticheion Municipal Museum-Historical Archives and Research Centre of Limassol were dedicated to education in Lemesos. Some of the papers briefly dealt with the history of schools (The History of Laniteion High School; The history of the Private School of Foreign Languages and Greek Lessons of Lemesos; An overview of *Saint Mary's School* history: A multi-formed offering to education in Lemesos, a miniature of what can be developed into a comprehensive record) and some focussed on the education of the Armenian and Turkish minorities (Papadima-Sophocleous, 2009). A book was published on the history of the first 30 years of the *Private School of Foreign Languages and Greek Lessons (1920-1950): The biography of a school in Limassol* (Papadima-Sophocleous, 2020), a school which was originally founded as a private school, and later on became a public school. After changing a few names during its history of more than 100 years (1920-2020), this school is now known as the Athenaidion Gymnasium of Catholiki.

Apart from the short proceedings paper mentioned above, the educational 100-year history of *Saint Mary's School* has not been extensively recorded and no comprehensive and focused study has been written to date. In this book, the history of the school in the totality of its hundred years of operation is examined and presented, in relation to the historical, educational, social and religious events connected to its history.

The detection of the lack of sufficient research in the history of education and schools in Cyprus, the interest in recent years in this area, the lack of a comprehensive record of the history of *Saint Mary's School* and the author's personal interest in the history of the school, as one of its former students and as an academic, focusing in language education, were the sources of inspiration of this book. The fact that 2023 marked the 100-year history of *Saint Mary's School* in Lemesos was an additional inspirational factor. It seemed the right time to record its history and thus contribute to the history of education in Cyprus in general, and that of its schools in particular.

As the title suggests, the book tells the story of the first 100 years of the school (1923-2023), from *Terra Santa Girls' School* to *Saint Mary's School*.

The book follows the form of a biography. It is a case study, the case of a particular school, with some tenets of ethnography, as students, teachers and parents tell their story of the school, and some aspects of autoethnography, when the author refers to her own memories, experiences, and impressions of the school.

Sources include books written about the history of education in Cyprus and the history of schools; local newspapers; the *Chronicles of the House of Limassol*, the school archives, which include documents such as student registration books, finance office records, letters, Statistical Service's records, foundation and inauguration documents, staff records, school photo albums, school reports, diplomas and certificates; student, teacher, and parent interviews; and student and teacher personal archives, as well as Lemesos researchers' personal archives.

The book follows a chronological order:

- ▶ the first 50 years
 - 1923-1960: From the school establishment to the proclamation of the Republic of Cyprus;
 - 1960-1974: From the proclamation of the Republic of Cyprus to the tragic events of the coup d'état and the Turkish invasion.
- ▶ the second 50 years:
 - 1974-1991: From the tragic events of the coup d'état and the Turkish invasion to the time when school records were recorded by the Government Statistical Service, and
 - 1991-2023: From the time when school records were recorded by the Government Statistical Service to the completion of the 100 years of the school's existence.

The book begins with a historical flashback to the years of the school's foundation in order for the reader to understand the historical context in which the school was established and managed: The diachronic multilingual and multicultural nature of Cyprus through its history, the periods of the Ottoman and British Rule, world historic events (Interwar and World War II), and the years of the Republic of Cyprus and how these have influenced education in Cyprus.

Another aspect which influenced education during those times was the role of the city in which the school was established. As Persianis maintained (2007, p. 15), cities play an important role in the modernisation of society and the creation of modern culture. The social and cultural environment of Lemesos city in which the school was established influenced the values of the school and the way it was run. The school adopted a progressive curriculum, comprising the learning of languages and practical courses useful for personal, social and professional needs, and focusing on the education of women and their preparation for work. The school offered alternative and not conventional education.

Although it operated in a mainly orthodox context, it attended to, not only local needs but also to the needs of the broader context of the Middle East, a very troubled area, in which the Catholic Franciscan Sisters demonstrated not only religious but also important educational and social work. As the school was established by the Catholic Franciscan Order, within the description of the historical, social and cultural context, the presence of the Catholic Franciscan Order in the Middle East was also described (Parente, 2022).

The history of *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School* was also examined within the context of multilingualism/plurilingualism and multiculturalism and interculturalism. The presence of different nationalities in Cyprus since the establishment of the school and the continuous world changes, which have been forcing people of different nationalities to settle or temporarily live in Cyprus found the school applying, albeit informally and idiosyncratically, these concepts.

An overview of the types of schools operating during the time of its establishment positions the school in the educational context. The foundation, inauguration, its first years of operation and the change of the name of the school are documented by the school archival sources and the local press.

The description of the school and convent premises, designed by prominent architects (the first buildings by Joseph Gaffiero and the current ones by Stavros Economou) is supported by documents, photographs and testimonials of students and teachers.

The information on the students is drawn from: (a) the new student registration records, (b) Finance Department records, and (c) the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth statistical services records. The records reveal a large number of students, both girls and boys, and a large diversity in student nationality and religion.

The staff chapter includes the profile of the six principals of the school during its 100 years of operation. The information on the teaching staff reveals the type of staff (sisters and non-clergy staff), the staff number, gender, national and religious diversity, subjects taught and years of teaching. The staff information also includes a brief mention to other supporting staff such as secretarial staff, gardeners, cleaners, cooks, etc., without whom the school would have not been able to exist.

The curriculum and its development from 1923 to 2023 is described and supported by documents such as curriculum descriptions, reports, certificates and diplomas, newspaper clips, photos, and testimonials from ex-students. The presentation of the curriculum reflects the changes through a whole century in the school subjects, teaching methods and materials, and assessment practices, which reflected the progressive trends in education during this time and their application at the school.

The out-of-class and out-of-school activities and events organised by *Saint Mary's School* in the Lemesos community are described and supported by archival documents, newspaper clips, photos and former student reminiscences. The school extra-curricular activities include Christmas and Easter festivities, end-of-year festivities, exhibitions, theatrical performances, student annual reunions, annual Christmas trees, bazaars and other charity events, *Saint Mary's School* 25th Anniversary Celebrations, and school excursions. The Lemesos community events include participation in Anthesteria (Flower Festival), Carnival and National Parade, sporting and music events, visits of nursing homes, orphanages, and hospitals, participation in marches such as the Peace March and Christodoula's March organised by the Cyprus Association of Cancer Patients and Friends (PASYKAF) for the support of cancer patients, participation in community organisations such as the British Girl Guide Association of Cyprus, involvement in environmental awareness activities, King George V Jubilee celebrations, film and theatrical play viewings at the Ancient Kourion Theatre and at Lemesos cinemas.

Another aspect of the school history has been its association with distinguished members of the Cypriot society, such as Benito Mantovani, Lemesos metropolitans, ambassadors, Ministry of Education inspectors, ecclesiastical leaders, such as the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Guardian Lambarelli, and the first president of the Republic of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios. The school hosted these distinguished guests in its various school events. The school has also always received donations by many of them, as well as by individuals.

Students shared the memories of their school experiences, they narrate stories and anecdotes related to their teachers, classmates, school premises, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, activities in the broader community, and events. The impressions of the schooling at *Terra Santa Girls School/Saint Mary's*, from as back as the beginnings of the school, have left an indelible mark on students; these, therefore, constitute a very special part of this book.

This book aspires to fill some of the gaps identified in the research of education in Cyprus in general, and of the history of schools in particular. As the history of this school has not been extensively recorded and no comprehensive and focused study has been prepared to date, this book presents the first 100 years of its existence and contribution within the historical, educational, social, religious, multilingual and multicultural context connected with the events during which it has been operating. It is hoped that it will prove useful, and that it will operate as a blueprint for other researchers in their endeavours to record the history of other schools in Cyprus.

CHAPTER

2

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

This book complements the literature so far written on the history of schools in the Republic of Cyprus. It focuses on the history of *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School/Nun School (Kalogries)*, 1923-2023. It comes to fill the gap that exists in the recording of the history of schools in Cyprus, the history of multicultural and multilingual schools in Cyprus and worldwide, the history of private schools in Cyprus, the history of *Saint Mary's School*.

Purposes

The main purposes of this book are to:

- contribute to the recording of the history of schools in the Republic of Cyprus in general, and in Lemesos in particular, through the recording of the biography of a particular school, that of *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School*, 1923-2023;
- provide researchers and practitioners, interested in the history of schools in the Republic of Cyprus in general, and in Lemesos in particular, the contribution of private schools in the education of Cyprus, through the recording of the particular case of *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School*;
- provide information of this particular school's contribution to the application of multilingualism and multiculturalism in education, before their official presence and study worldwide;
- preserve and make good use of the school's archives, in other words the history of the first 100 years of the school, which could constitute a resource for the teaching of the school's history through authentic documents and encourage further action such as the creation of a school museum.

Objectives

The objectives of this book are to:

- describe the historical context during which the school was established;
- give information about its premises, staff, programmes, and teaching methods;
- record school and extracurricular activities;

- inform the reader about the school’s participation in activities of the broader community of Lemesos;
- describe the support it had;
- share its achievements;
- record and share its first 100-year-old history based on different types of references such as books, book chapters, newspaper articles, scientific articles, archives, the *Chronicle of the House of Limassol*, photos, and different types of documents such as school reports, prizes, etc.;
- draw some conclusions about the contribution of this private school to multilingual and multicultural education before their time and to the education of that historical period in Cyprus.

This book follows the case study approach to research. This case focuses on the history of the first 100 years of *Saint Mary’s School of Lemesos*, and its contribution to the educational, cultural, multilingual, multicultural, social and other aspects of the life of Lemesos and Cyprus in general. Tenets of autoethnography were also utilised, a research approach “that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)” (Ellis et al., 2010, p. 1). It is a method during which the “author retroactively and selectively writes about past experiences” (Ellis et al., 2010, p. 3). Autoethnography, combination of autobiography and ethnography (Ellis et al., 2010, p. 3) was used when the authored shared personal accounts such as impressions, feelings, values, and professional advancements related to the background knowledge, skills and experiences acquired at Saint Mary’s School, in addition to information from external information from her personal school archives (photographs, school reports, certificates, prizes, etc.) (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022). Ethnographical methods (Maso, 2001; Britannica, 2023) were also utilised, where interviews were conducted with staff, students and parents, in order to support information from other sources and also present their experiences of the school.

The book follows the form of a biography. Therefore, the various stages of the history of the school, from its establishment in 1923 to 2023 are documented. The continuous development of this educational institution is being recorded and discussed: Its development in terms of housing, curricula, national, cultural, social or other activities, difficulties which marked it, as well as educational achievements, the teaching staff who staffed it, but mainly the continuous development of students who attended the school and their active integration into the local community, both during their student life, as well as after their graduation as they grew up. The recording of the history of the school covers the first 100 years of its existence.

Sources

The collection of material for the writing of the history of a hundred-year-old school is a difficult undertaking in itself. The material used was classified based on the type of the source. More specifically, all archival material was divided into six source type categories as follows:

- Books
- Newspaper articles
- The Chronicles of the House of Limassol and Saint Mary's School's Archives
- Personal Testimonies in the form of "semi-directed" interviews
- Private archives
- Other similar research

Books and newspapers

One of the sources of information for the writing of this book is a series of books and studies published from time to time, related to the history of education of Cyprus. These include: Spyridakis, (1968); Koudounaris, (2018); Myriantopoulos, (1946); Persianis, (1998, 2007); Ar. Pilavakis, (1929); Solsten, (1991); K.A. Pilavakis, (1977); Savvidis, (1999); Phtiaka, (1999); Michaelidi, (2000); Zembylas, (2002); Karoulla-Vrikki, (2004); Hadjidimitriou, (2005); Vertovec, (2007, 2016); Papadakis, (2008); Papadima-Sophocleous, (2009, 2009, 2020); Karagiorgi and Nicolaidou, (2010); Hadjilyras, (2012); Wessendorf, (2014); Weinberg, (2014); Economou, (2012); Hadjigeorgiou, (2017); Kimitris, (2017, 2018); Georgiou, (2018); Heraclidou, (2021); Parente, (2022), Kyriakoudis (to be published).

A second source of information and reporting are the various newspaper articles covering the 100 years that constitute a record of the school's activities. More specifically, newspaper announcements, articles, etc. were identified and studied in newspapers such as *Alithia*; *Phileleftheros*; *Paratiritis*; *Haravgi*; *Chronos*; *Cyprus Mail*, *Agon*; *Proini*; *Kypriakos Fylax*.

Both the books and the newspapers, which also constituted a calendar of events of the school, were studied, with due reservation, as historical sources, in terms of their objectivity. The books were accessible from the Patticheion Municipal Museum-Historical Archives and Research Centre of Limassol, and the newspapers from the Press and Information Office's (PIO) Digital Newspaper Archive available online at <https://www.pressarchive.cy>. Other material found there included photographs, illustrations, etc.



Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School archives, 1923-1945.

The Chronicles of the House of Limassol and Saint Mary's School's archives

A third detailed source was the *Chronicles of the House of Limassol and Saint Mary's School's* archives: Student registration books, finance office records, letters sent to and from the nuns, nuns' handwritten notes, statistical services forms, staff records, principles' profiles, photos of old and new school premises and all different stages of the 100-year school history, activities, students and staff records, curricula records and descriptions, examination records, diplomas and certificates.

Personal testimonies

A fourth source of information was interviews with people. For the deeper examination of *Saint Mary's School*, the submission of personal testimonies and experiences was deemed necessary. Thus, during the collection of the archival material, semi-directed interviews were conducted, with Sisters, past and present teachers, past and present students of the school and past and present parents of the students. The purpose of these interviews was a first collection of information, regarding specific aspects of the history of the school and the subsequent crossing of these elements with the primary material.

Through open-ended questions, multilingualism and multiculturalism were examined in relation to the programmes, teaching materials and, in general, the way the institution operates. The students also referred to personal incidents, describing how they felt as students and outlining the atmosphere of the school.

The positive or negative effect of the school on the emotional, social and professional development of students was also recorded, based on their self-evaluation. The main goal of these interviews was to help understand the spirit of the everyday life of the school during the first 100 years of its history, as experienced by the students and the staff of the institution who were interviewed.

Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School archives.



Private archives

Finally, some information derives from private archives of friends and Lemesos researchers, such as Pampis Anagiotos, who systematically collect whatever they believe contributes to the preservation of the historical heritage of Lemesos, and from teachers' and students' personal archives.

Other similar research

In addition to sources related directly to the history of the book, other research work which was written about the history of similar schools was studied. This includes Asimomytis-Ekkekaki article *The Greek-French School of Nuns in Halepa* (2002) and book *The French School of Nuns in Halepa Chania, (1852-1983)* (2004); Papaspyridou's dissertation (2009) *The French School of Catholic Nuns in Chania (1895-1983) Pedagogical and Historic Approach* (2009); and Lianou's doctoral dissertation *The French convent school of Saint Joseph of the Apparition in Piraeus (1859-1940): An approach to the foreign language education of girls in Greece* (2013).

Chronological classification of information

The school was founded in 1923 and it is still operating. In order to facilitate the recording and analysis of the school's first 100 years of history (1923-2023), a chronological classification approach was followed:

The first 50 years: 1923-1924 to 1973-1974

- First phase (1923-1960): From the school establishment to the proclamation of the Republic of Cyprus.
- Second phase (1960-1974): From the proclamation of the Republic of Cyprus to the tragic events of the coup d'état and the Turkish Invasion.

The second 50 years: 1974-1975 to 2022-1923

- Third phase (1974-1991): From the tragic events of the coup d'état and the Turkish Invasion to the time when school records were recorded by the Government Statistical Service.
- Fourth phase (1991-2023): From the time when school records were recorded by the Government Statistical Service to the completion of the 100 years of the school's existence.

These periods are of particular educational as well as historical interest, since they are directly connected to the wider historical context, which concerns the turbulent history of Cyprus.

The description, analysis and interpretation of the first 100 years of the history of the school, based on the study of the archival material, aimed to facilitate the understanding of the aims of the school and its pursuits. Details regarding the curriculum, the student body, the number of staff and their different specialisations, as well as school holidays and events, are mentioned in as much detail as the found data permitted and are very useful because they enrich the knowledge acquired regarding the school's history. The examination of *Saint Mary's School (1923-2023)*, through the perspective of the different periods and events of the historical context of Cyprus, can contribute in a systematic way to the composition of the long history of this educational institution.

The historical development of the school, its contribution to the education of Cyprus, and its early multilingual and multicultural nature, combined with the examination of the conditions under which it operated, was subject to certain limitations. The major one was the recording of the students and the teachers. In the case of students, for example, because different people recorded the students' details during the school's hundred-year history, these details do not follow the same systematic way: Apart from the students' names, some included their religion and nationality and some not. Some used religion and the nationality/community students belonged to interchangeably. Cypriot students from Cyprus or Great Britain were referred to as British, mainly during the British Rule and Cypriots after the proclamation of the Republic of Cyprus. Similar issues were faced during the staff recordings. The impossibility of obtaining sufficient data for all time periods of the school's operation was a methodological limitation. Therefore, the analytical presentation is based on the existing information and the way it has been found, and is treated in the best possible way.

Trying to record a 100-year-old history is not an easy task especially when important people who contributed to it are no longer alive. An additional problem, of course, which one faces when researching the history of a school, where girls mostly attended, is the difficulty in locating these people, since it was accustomed for girls to change their family name after their marriage. The 100-year-time period is long, the material that has probably accumulated during this time is definitely huge. Substantial material was saved by the school itself and the sources mentioned earlier; other information constitute part of the memories of every student who studied there.



CHAPTER

3

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS,
MULTILINGUAL AND MULTICULTURAL

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

The school was established in 1923 by the Franciscan Friars Minor of the Holy Land and run by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. They have managed it for 100 years and they will continue to do so beyond 2023.

In order to understand the context in which the School was established and managed, it would be important to give a very brief description of the historic, cultural, educational, social, multilingual and multicultural context the Sisters worked in, and the status the Order of Franciscan Friars Minor and the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart had in Cyprus.

Historical context

A historical flashback

Education in Cyprus has its own peculiarity because from ancient times until the creation of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, Cyprus was a region where every few years, different people lived as conquerors, different languages were spoken, and different cultures co-existed. In general, it was an area where fluidity was a main feature in its society because education was mainly the result of each family making use of its own space through observation, play, work and above all from the relationship between families. Education was not systematic nor based on any specific system of organised societies such as colonial empires.

At the same time, Cyprus possessed a peculiarity of its own which was due, on the one hand, to the existence of the Greek language in its various variants and, on the other, to the Orthodox religion, to which the majority of the population belonged for centuries. But at the same time, there were also various other religious groups, different languages were spoken and Cyprus was, especially in the Middle Ages and later, a multilingual and multinational region, and above all, a place that was impacted by the great changes in the Mediterranean region. The crusades, for example, greatly influenced the local society because Cyprus was the centre and base of the Crusades. The crusaders remained in Cyprus with their own camps due to the fact that it was very close to the Holy Land, which was the reason for the Crusades. So, there remained a lot of evidence from all the people who lived or conquered Cyprus, from ancient times until today, whether they were the Achaean Greeks, Phoenicians, Assyrians, Persians, Egyptians, Romans, Byzantines, raids by Arabs, English, Franks, Lusignans, Venetians, Genoese, Ottomans,

or British. The society constantly accepted fluidity because waves of different peoples settled in Cyprus, with the result that Cyprus was consistently a society that accepted others, either willingly or by force. There has always been a need for communication between people, especially when Cyprus started to become an economic base for trade; it needed people who could communicate with each other, serve and have knowledge of the respective authority. The best example is the period of the French and the Venetians in Cyprus, where there was a great need to have bilingual and multilingual people. Such examples are evident in the *Chronicle of Cyprus* of Leontios Machairas (Pieris & Nicolaou Konnari, 2003, p.148).

And because there are two natural rulers of the world, the one lay and the other spiritual, so there were in this little island: the emperor of Constantinople and the patriarch of Antioch the Great, until the Latins took the land. For this reason we were obliged to know good Greek, for sending letters to the emperor, and to be perfect in the Syrian language (for the patriarch): and thus men used to teach their sons, and thus the chancery was carried on in the Syrian language and in Greek, until the Lusignans took the land. (And the royal court was the foundation of the Greek emperor, and there the dukes lived, who used to come here.) And (when the Latin period began) men began to learn French, and their Greek became barbarous, just as it is today, when we write both French and Greek, in such a way that no one in the world can say what our language is.

(Leontios Machairas, Recital concerning the sweet land of Cyprus titled, 'chronicle', ed. Richard M. Dawkins, Oxford 1932, i. 143)

There are many such examples which show that the local society was ready to accept other languages, other cultures, and above all, to reach a synthesis of different cultural, linguistic and religious data, alongside the singularity that was due to the timeless presence of the Greek language in its various variants, that of the Orthodox religion to which the majority of the population belonged.

Historical overview of education in Cyprus

Greek education in Cyprus and the Nun School

Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School first operated during the British Rule during which education was left to the communities (Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot, Latin, etc.); and then during the Republic of Cyprus to the present day, during which it had to operate within the laws regarding private schools. As most of its students have always been of Greek Cypriot origin, the learning of Greek language constituted part of its curriculum. Therefore, this learning has always been affected by the history of Greek Cypriot education. A brief historical overview of Greek Cypriot education is presented to better understand this context.

Spyridakis (1968, pp. 3-4) gives a historical overview of education in Cyprus, focusing mainly on Greek education. He maintains that Ancient, Byzantine and Frankish times did not have a profound impact on education in Cyprus and very little information exists about them. Both the Greek and the Cypriot education have their roots in the times of the Ottoman occupation (1571-1878), particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries (Spyridakis, 1968, p. 4).

Spyridakis quotes the archbishop's description of education in Cyprus during the Ottoman Occupation of the island (speech during the foundation of the Lefkosa School on the 1st of January 1812). The archbishop describes the then state of the island of Cyprus as suffering from a great lack of education and Greek lessons, and for this reason they established a Greek School in order to eliminate the illiteracy of the inhabitants of the island. The aim was to educate children so that they become citizens with good morals, God-fearing, prudent, political, moral, just, patriotic, trade-loving, seeking the goods of life after justice.

This School evolved into the later named Pancyprian High School in 1893, which was recognised as equal to the Greek public high schools and has since been the model of secondary education schools in Cyprus. The Greek educational system since the reign of King Otto consisted of a four-year primary school, a three-year Greek school and a four-year high school. This was true until 1930, when education was divided into two, six years of elementary school and six years of high school. In Cyprus, the Pan-Cypriot High School was initially adapted to the Greek system of a four-year primary school, a three-year Greek school and a four-year high school. However, sometime from 1896, the system was changed, so that six-class primary schools and six-class high schools operated, that is, the system that was introduced in Greece, as they said, only in 1930.

(Spyridakis, 1968, p. 5)

In general, Greek Cypriot education followed that of the education system in Greece with some variations, and the educational trends in the western world (Spyridakis, 1968, p.6). The establishment of other schools followed that of the Pan-Cypriot High School (Lemesos High School; Pan-Cypriot Commercial Lyceum in Larnaka; a three-year practical section added to the Pan-Cypriot High School in Lefkosa, with emphasis on Physics and Mathematics). The two new types of more practically oriented schools that have been established to a limited degree were the only schools that deviated from the established type of the theoretical classical gymnasium, organised mainly on the basis of the German humanitarian gymnasiums of the new, six-year school type. A few years before the 1955-59 Liberation Struggle, however, the Pan-Cyprian Gymnasium carried out substantial reforms, partially deviated from the existing educational system in Greece, which the Greek Cypriot education system generally followed. In the

middle school, after the first three grades, a three-stream system was introduced: Classical, Practical or Positive sciences and Commercial, reinforced by foreign languages. However, the school was not only still recognised by the Ministry of National Education of Greece, but the educational system in Greece adopted it (Spyridakis, 1968, pp. 5-6). In 1959, the Greek Cypriot Education Council, established at the end of the Liberation Struggle, proceeded with some educational reforms in order to adapt to the ones in Greece in 1959. This entailed new types of schools which were later adopted by the Greek Cypriot Community Assembly and continued by the Ministry of Education. The Greek education in Cyprus then adopted the educational reform of Greece (1964).

During the years of both the Ottoman and British Rule, mass education was for the Greek Cypriots mainly a means of protecting their religious, national and cultural identity (Phtiaka, 1999, p. 98). Later on, it became a means of professional and social advancement (Persianis, 1994, as cited in Phtiaka, 1999, p. 98).

The broader historical context

The context in which the school was established was greatly influenced by major world and local historic events:

World historic events

- Interwar period (1918-1939): The period during which the school was established.
- World War II (1939-1945), during which the Nuns and the school had to find ways to continue their mission.

Local historic events

- Cyprus, a British colony (1878-1960).
- The Liberation Struggle (1955-1959).
- The declaration of independence of the Republic of Cyprus (1955-1960).
- Republic of Cyprus years (1960 to date).

It is, therefore, important to very briefly describe these events in order to better understand the historic context in which the school was founded and operated for 100 years.

The world historical context

Interwar period (1918-1939)

Interwar marks the 20 years between the end of First World War (1914-1918) and the beginning of the Second World War (1939-1945). World War I left both the Allies and the Central Powers with enormous national debts, resulting in a financial insecurity. Although relatively short, the Interwar period was characterised by many significant social, political, academic and economic changes worldwide.

Initially, it was a period of recovery from the devastation of the First World War and a post-war economic boom.

The first ten years were characterised by reconstruction and economic growth and a shift in women's rights (women being granted the right to vote). During the second decade, however, a world-wide depression followed. People around the world faced economic hardships, unemployment and despair. The Interwar was marked by the Great Depression, the growing nationalism and fascism and a radical change in the international order (Weinberg, 2014).

Five years after the end of the First World War and during the first ten years of the Interwar, the Franciscan Friars Minor of the Holy Land sensed the needs of those times and founded *Terra Santa Girls' School* (later named *Saint Mary's School*). They asked the Franciscan Missionary Sisters to run it in order to contribute to social, and economic changes also occurring in the British Colony of Cyprus. They supported and educated children of different religions and nationalities, and prepared young girls for their new duties in society, as members of the workforce.

World War II (1939-1945)

Then World War II, also called Second World War, followed. This War was a conflict that involved virtually every part of the world during the years 1939-45. The Allies (France, Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and China, to a lesser extent) fought against the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan). Although, after 20 years of the Interwar period, the Second World War was in many ways a continuation of the First World War. It was the bloodiest conflict and the largest war in history, resulting in 40,000,000-50,000,000 deaths (Hughes & Royde-Smith, 2023).

World War II had its impact on the British colony of Cyprus, and, of course, on *Terra Santa Girls' School*. The *Chronicle of the House of Limassol*, of 1923-1948, describe how the school community lived through this period:

- Because of the declaration of the war in Italy in 1940, many students left and went to their villages.
- In 1941, a compulsory evacuation was implemented where women and children had to leave Lemesos and go and reside in villages.
- During that time, the nuns, as all other foreigners residing on the island, had to report twice a day at the police station.
- On the 10th of June 1941, the sirens sounded and the Sisters and students had to go down to the shelters to protect themselves.
- On the 13th of June 1941, American Sisters Liduina Tasser, Anselma Venuti, Paola Kreuzer, and Francis Therese Coundouris left Cyprus and went to America because of the war.

- On the 13th/14h (from two different references) of June 1941, the Sisters were transferred to the village of Kormakitis because of the bombings. They remained there for three months. They started thinking of setting the school there, however, the Ministry of Education soon gave permission to reopen the schools.
- There were trenches in the school yard during those times.

Cyprus was not affected by world events only; it was also influenced by what was occurring locally on the island. During the Interwar and the Second World War, Cyprus was still a British colony.

The historical context in Cyprus

Cyprus, a British colony (1878-1960)

As the school was inevitably influenced by the Interwar and World War II and the events after the Wars, it was also influenced by events occurring locally in Cyprus during the British Rule. These local events included the uprising of 1931, the Liberation Struggle of 1955-1960 and the declaration of independence of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, which marked the end of the British Rule in Cyprus.

Due to previous invasions and occupations it had suffered (Phtiaka, 1999, p. 97), during the British Rule years, Cyprus was clearly a multilingual place as English, Greek and Turkish, along with the Greek and Turkish local dialects, and the languages of Latins, Armenians and Maronites were in use (*Annual Colonial Reports for the Social and Economic Progress of the People of Cyprus for 1909-1936, (1937)*, p. 4, Phtiaka, 1999, p. 96).

There were also Turkish Cypriots, Latins, Armenians and Maronites. They all entertained separate religions, languages, communities, churches and schools which they retained under the new regime due to its initial laissez-faire policy on education.

(Persianis, 1994, as cited in Phtiaka, 1999, p. 97).

These different groups retained their separate religions, languages, communities, churches and schools during the British Rule (Persianis, 1994, as cited in Phtiaka, 1999, p. 97). Moreover, “the two main ethnic [groups of the island] perceived language as a prime indicator of ethnic identity and an indispensable precondition of survival” (Karoulla-Vrikki, 2004, p. 19). During that time, “the Orthodox church held a significant influence over Greek Cypriot education, as indeed did the Muslim and the Roman Catholic dogmas over their own people” (Phtiaka, 1999, p. 97).

Although English education and language were usually imposed to the various British colonies (Education in British Colonies and former colonies. Encyclopedia Britannica. n.d.), in Cyprus, the British faced a strong resistance from the Greek

Cypriots as they felt very strongly about their long history and culture and they felt it was their duty to preserve them. For political as well as financial reasons (the British did not want to bear the cost of Cypriots' education), in Cyprus, the colonial rulers let the different communities take care of their education. They allowed the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to be responsible for their language teaching and to bring teaching materials from Greece and Turkey respectively. The Greek Orthodox schools were built and maintained by the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus and donors/philanthropists. The Turkish Muslim schools were built and maintained by the Turkish Cypriot religious endowment foundation *Evkaf*, and donors/philanthropists. Some schools were subsidised by the colonial government, for example, the *Zenon* Masonic Lodge Night School was provided with a small grant for the teaching of English. There were also foreign schools such as the *American Academy*, founded by American protestant missionaries (1890) in Larnaka. One of these schools was the catholic *Terra Santa Girls' School* of the Franciscan Sisters in Lemesos (1923). According to Georgiou (2018, p. 40), foreign schools were built and maintained from overseas funding.

In 1933, in an effort to secure their ruling, the British Administration tried to centralise and anglicise the education system through educational policies such as the introduction and dissemination of the English language and the advancement of rural education (Heraclidou, 2017, p. 428). The result of this move was to make the Greek Cypriots move even more towards the educational system of Greece and the Turkish Cypriots towards that of Turkey. This was done by each group in their effort to retain their national and cultural identity (Phtiaka, 1999, p. 97). In 1935, the British made another attempt to achieve total control of the island's education and culture by closing the respective Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot teacher training institutions and establishing the Morphou Teacher Training College (1937). Their plan did not succeed as schools retained their strong national character (Phtiaka, 1999, p. 97). The administration of education continued to be in the hands of the communities and religious authorities. In the case of the Greek Cypriots, the Orthodox Church of Cyprus continued to control education, a privilege it had already enjoyed under Ottoman Rule (Heraclidou, 2017, p. 427). For the Greek Cypriots, the struggle for the protection of their language and ethnicity concentrated in the areas of Church and education.

Republic of Cyprus years (1960 to date)

With the proclamation of the Republic of Cyprus as an independent state in 1960 a new era started for the island in all aspects: Political, social, economic, educational, etc. The population of the Republic of Cyprus consisted of 80% Greek Cypriots, 18% Turkish Cypriots, and 2% Armenians, Latins, Maronites and others (Hadjidimitriou, 2005, as cited in Kimitris, 2017, p. 4). With the declaration of

independence of the Republic of Cyprus, “the constitution of 1960 assigned responsibility for education to the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communal chambers” (Solsten, 1991, p. 74). The Latin, Armenian and Maronite communities were formally recognised as “Religious Groups”, with the right to have a Representative in the Communal Chamber and later on in the House of Representatives (Beraud, n.d.).

Unfortunately, both major “ethnic groups continued to pursue their national objectives” (Kimitris, 2017, p. 4), which were *enosis* with the cultural motherland Greece for the Greek Cypriot majority and *taksim* for the Turkish Cypriot minority (Kimitris, 2018, p. 4). This led to intercommunal conflicts in 1963, which resulted in the withdrawal of the Turkish Cypriots from all State institutions, and in 1967 when there were further intercommunal conflicts (Hadjidimitriou, 2005, as cited in Kimitris, 2017, p. 4). After the intercommunal conflicts of 1963, based on the Law of Necessity, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus established the Ministry of Education (MoEC) (1965). This was later on called the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MOEC).

However, according to Hadjidimitriou (2005), the 1967 military coup that overthrew the Government in Greece and the seven-year long military dictatorship (Junta) that followed led the Greek Cypriots to abandon the idea of *enosis*. During this time, *Saint Mary’s School* was attended by students of diverse backgrounds, consisting of students deriving from the various communities in Cyprus (Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Latins and Maronites) as well as of students from other nationalities of other backgrounds and countries. It is interesting to note that, according to Sister Monica Hannoulli (Interview, 18 January 2023), the school was not affected by the 1963 and 1967 events; although there were Turkish Cypriot students at the school, none of them left the school; instead, during that time, the need for a bigger school was felt. As a result, new school premises were built and the inauguration took place in 1966, in between the 1963 and 1967 communal conflicts.

However, the coup staged by the Athens’ junta against the elected Government of President Makarios on the 15th of July 1974, and the Turkish invasion on the 20th of July 1974 that followed resulted in the Turkish occupation of over 36% of the total territory of the Republic and the displacement of nearly 162,000 Greek Cypriots who fled their homes becoming refugees in their own country. By the end of 1975, the vast majority of Turkish-Cypriots living in areas controlled by the legitimate Government were forced to leave their homes and move, owing to Turkey’s coercive policy, to the Turkish-occupied territory of the Republic of Cyprus. (Papadakis, 2008, p. 3; Kimitris, 2018, p. 5; www.mfa.gov.cy). The 1974 Turkish

invasion resulted in the *de facto* partition of Cyprus. The situation worsened when, on the 15th of November 1983, the occupying regime unilaterally declared the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus", an act which was condemned by the international community as legally invalid (www.mfa.gov.cy). Numerous negotiations for the settlement of the Cyprus problem have been conducted since 1975 under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions as well as two High-Level Agreements, however, these have not resulted in any solution yet, despite the Cypriot Government's steadfast commitment to reaching a solution to the Cyprus problem through talks under the auspices of the United Nations. Meanwhile, the Republic of Cyprus entered the European Union in 2004 and introduced the Euro as its national currency in 2008 (Kimitris, 2018, p. 5). All these events, together with the globalisation on both economic and cultural levels prompted the need to modernise education in the Republic of Cyprus (Zembylas, 2002, p.p. 499-519). Since the entry into the European Union, education in the Republic of Cyprus has followed the European model.

The 1974 events left an indelible mark on the school, as Turkish Cypriot students had to leave Lemesos and their schooling at Saint Mary's and move to the Turkish-occupied territory of the Republic. Many Cypriot students attending the school, Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot and others left Cyprus or migrated to other countries. This had a lasting impact on the social and educational community of the school: Students suddenly experienced an abrupt and difficult to understand loss of friends, and a disruption of their everyday routines, and of their educational plurilingual and intercultural experiences and opportunities they had with those students.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the school experienced another human tragedy, that of the neighbouring Lebanese people. Because of the civil war in Lebanon, Lebanese fled to Cyprus. Many returned to Lebanon after the conflict. During that time, *Saint Mary's* had a considerable population of Lebanese students attending the school. Local and Lebanese students shared their experiences and their educational pursuits. This happened again in 2006 because of the war between Israel and Lebanon: Almost 60,000 civilians from Lebanon moved to Cyprus (Agence France-Presse News, 2021).

The political and social global events during the Interwar (1918-1940), the Second World War (1939-1945), the economic and cultural globalisation, and the political and social local events during the British Rule (1978-1960), the Republic of Cyprus years (1960 to date), the coup and the Turkish invasion (1974), the events in Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s, the entry of the Republic to the European Union

and the efforts to resolve the Cyprus question were a huge challenge in the areas of culture, economy and social cohesion (Kimitris, 2017, p. 6), education and identity. However, Cyprus managed to achieve developments in all of these areas.

These troublesome historic periods were very significant for education as they contributed to the transformation to a European state (Kimitris, 2018, p. 6). While “during the colonial period, the main educational goal was the inculcation of national ideals and the strengthening of ethnic identity, after independence, goals became more practical. A well-educated population was seen as the best way of guaranteeing a thriving economy, a rise in overall living standards, and a vigorous cultural life” (Solsten, 1991, p.73).

Education during the Republic of Cyprus years

In the Republic of Cyprus, there is provision of both public and private school education. Both types are supervised by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MOEC).

Public education is compulsory from the age of five to fifteen and it is free (*A Guide to Education in Cyprus*, n.d. p. 32 and p. 47). Compulsory education consists of the pre-primary, primary and secondary education. The attendance in the secondary section is free of charge for all classes and compulsory until the age of 15 or the completion of the first cycle, whichever comes first. Secondary education consists of the lower high school, called ‘gymnasium’ and of the upper high school called ‘Lyceum’. All planning and policy, laws and guidelines related to education are the responsibility of the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (Karagiorgi & Nicolaidou, 2010, p.p. 62–68).

According to the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth: Department of Secondary General Education website,

For the public schools, secondary education is offered through two three-year cycles - Gymnasium and Lyceum. The two cycles include cross-curricular programmes (Health Education, Environmental Education, etc.) as well as a variety of extracurricular activities. Currently, there are 64 Gymnasiums (middle schools) and 38 Lyceums (high schools) all over Cyprus.

(www.moec.gov.cy, Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth website: Department of Secondary General Education, n.d.)

At the beginning of the 1990s, “all public schools had uniform curricula; the preparation of school textbooks was the responsibility of committees of teachers and administrators, working in close cooperation with educational Authorities in Greece. Some instructional material for both primary and secondary education was donated by the Greek Government. Cypriot schools were also well provided with modern teaching equipment” (Solsten, 1991, p. 73).

According to Kimitris (2018, p. 6), the Ministry of Education supervises syllabi, curricula and school books. Regarding Greek language books, Kimitris notes that until September 2006, they had remained the same for twenty years. The gymnasium curriculum changed in order to offer a wider range of general and technical knowledge such as Greek, Mathematics, foreign languages, Art, Design and Technology and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Committee on Educational Reform, 2004 as cited in Kimitris, 2017, p. 7). Similar changes occurred in the Lyceum curriculum, offering Vocational and Technical Education (MoEC, 2018, p. 70).

Apart from the public schools, there are also private schools. Depending on their type, they have their own curriculum, syllabus and tuition fees.

According to the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth Private Primary and Secondary Education website,

Currently 173 private kindergartens, 31 private primary schools and 39 private secondary schools operate in the Republic of Cyprus and are categorised in three types according to the curriculum offered:

- *Schools of the same type: Private schools of the same type are those schools which strictly follow the existing curriculum of public schools.*
- *Schools of similar type: Private schools of a similar type are those schools in which 2/3 of the major subjects follow those in the Public Schools as to content and duration.*
- *Schools of a different type: Private schools of a different type are those schools which do not belong to any of the above mentioned categories.*

(www.moec.gov.cy, Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth website: Private Primary and Secondary Education, n.d.)

Saint Mary's School is registered as a private school. Its Junior School is registered as private school of a different type, its Elementary and High Schools are registered as private schools of similar type.

Cultural and social context

The cultural and social context in which the school was established is very well explained by Persianis (2007). According to Persianis, cities played an important role in the modernisation of society and the creation of culture as we know it. Cities contributed to the change of ways of production, distribution and consumption of goods, and in big social changes such as the emancipation of women. The cities became the centre of new political thoughts and new political institutions. New ways of employment and way of living, new morals and refined behavioural norms were developed in the cities, and cultural forms such as architecture, artistic, literal and musical, were created in the cities (Persianis, 2007, p. 15). Persianis maintains

that the social and cultural environment of cities offers the creation of urban culture. It expresses the core values of this culture such as scientific and aesthetic values, practicality and flexibility, progressiveness, rationality, philanthropic feelings, and volunteerism.

According to Persianis (2007), during the time *Saint Mary's* was founded, these values were expressed in various ways (p. 210). Progressiveness was related to education. It was very important to search for ways in which education could help women get out of the very difficult position in which they were condemned by old social institutions and old social perceptions. The great social problem of this time was the complete economic and social dependence of women on men. In order to change this situation, on the one hand, society had to let women work and, on the other hand, women had to be convinced that work was not offensive but, on the contrary, honourable. At the same time, however, schools had to prepare women for work. This had to start at the level of the primary school, since the working-class women, from whom the workforce would come, did not attend secondary schools in large numbers. It was, therefore, necessary to change the content of the curriculum of primary schools and upper girls' schools with the introduction of practical courses (sewing, cutting, weaving, housekeeping, sericulture). In the case of boys, progressiveness was expressed with the shift from traditional classical education to more practical curricula (pp. 211-212). An example of progress in the field of education, mentioned by Persianis, was the establishment in 1920 of the *Private School of Foreign Languages and Greek Courses* for girls in Lemesos, which placed great emphasis on the teaching of English and Modern Greek as well as commercial courses and Music in a Greek-speaking environment, the appointment of foreign teachers for the teaching of English and French, and the sending abroad of educational staff for training in the latest teaching methods (Persianis, 1998, p. 213).

Persianis concludes that the Cypriot cities played an important role in the creation of the modern culture of Cyprus (1878-1931) in the early 19th century.

The urban culture took two different forms in relation to education: the scholarly form, expressed mainly by the insistence on classical schools, which ensured high levels of studies, reproduction of the elite and high intellectual development, and the progressive form, expressed mainly in the popular, the practical, primary and private education.

(Persianis 2007, pp. 214-215).

As we have seen, the British Administration allowed communities to be responsible for the education of their communities. The Greek Cypriots dealt with their language teaching and culture and the Turkish Cypriots looked after theirs, and brought teaching materials from Greece and Turkey respectively. Other communities, such as the Latin and the Armenian, looked after their own communities.

The Latin community of Cyprus and *Terra Santa Girls' School* in Lemesos

As a result of the history of the island, apart from the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, there is also a Latin Community in Cyprus. In *The Latins of Cyprus* (Hadjilyras, 2012), Benito Mantovani describes the presence of this community in Cyprus through the years:

The presence of Latins (Roman Catholics of European or Levantine descent) in the area of Cyprus dates back to 1126, before the glorious periods of the Frankish and the Venetian Era. However, today's Latin community essentially comprises of the descendants of Roman Catholics who settled on the island during the Ottoman and the British Era. Since 1960, the Latin community is constitutionally recognised as a religious group and has an elected Representative in the House of Representatives. The Latin religious group is fully integrated into the Cypriot society and the common link amongst their members is their Roman Catholic creed.

(Hadjilyras, 2012, p. 7)

In the history of the education of Cyprus, catholic institutions such as *Saint Joseph of the Apparition* in Lemesos, Larnaka and Lefkosia, and the Franciscan Friars Minor *Terra Santa College* in Lefkosia have been recorded earlier than 1923. The presence and religious and educational needs of the Latin community in Cyprus also attracted the interest of the Franciscan Custody, who had already demonstrated a considerable activity in the Mediterranean and especially in the Middle East, whether it was Constantinople, Lebanon or other areas of the Mediterranean.

In 1923, the Franciscan Friars Minor of the Holy Land established *Terra Santa Girls' School* in Lemesos and asked the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart to run it. The main aim was the education of Latin girls.

Before moving on to unfold the history of the 100 years of the school, it would be useful to give a brief account of the Sisters and the historical context in which they worked in the Middle East and Cyprus.

The Catholic Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart

The history of the presence of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters in the Middle East started in 1872, 42 years before the beginning of the World War I. The Sisters worked in Constantinople and other places. They lived through wars, helped people survive and managed schools. They aimed to educate children, thus build knowledge, skills, and experiences in serving people in need.

The Franciscan Sisters lived and worked in the Middle East for many years. In fact, in November 2022, they celebrated their 150-year presence in the area. It all started back in 1872, when they arrived in Constantinople. According to Parente (2022, p.p. 14-15) their presence is divided in four stages:

Stage I. From 1871 to the end of 1900, **Stage II.** From 1900 to 1953, **Stage III.** From 1953 to 1986, **Stage IV.** From 1986 to date.

The Sisters in Cyprus

The presence of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Cyprus started during the second stage and continued during the third and fourth to date.



The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in the World.

Stage II: From 1900 to 1953

During the second stage of their presence in the Middle East, they were called to Cyprus and continue their mission there. This is how this is described by Parente (2022, p. 28):

Stage II
1900-1953

- ① 1913 - Zakynthos (Greece)
- ② 1914 - Argostoli/Kefalonia (Greece)
- ③ 1923 - Lemesos (Cyprus)
- ④ 1925 - Flers de l'Orne (France)
- ⑤ 1931 - Troodos (Cyprus)
- ⑥ 1931 - Ploviv/Filippopolis (Bulgaria)
- ⑦ 1935 - Constantinople (Turkey)
- ⑧ 1936 - Kormakitis (Cyprus)
- ⑨ 1952 - Ammochostos (Cyprus), p. 51)



In 1923, during the aftermath of World War I, the nuns founded a new community in the Mediterranean, on the island of Cyprus, actually in Lemesos, the second largest city in terms of population after Lefkosia. They were called by the Custody of the Holy Land of the Friars Minor, who had started the construction of a school and boarding school for young people. The Custos, Father Ferdinando Diotallevi, and the new Superior General, Sister Maria Joseph Metz, during their very brief generalate, agreed and sent a composite Community, with nuns from Italy, Rhodes and even from the United States, given the need to teach English. The school which was named 'Terra Santa Girls' School' was officially opened in December 1923. From the very beginning, the pupils who attended the school came from different religions. After the elementary school, came the addition of a secondary school which specialised in teaching languages: English, French, Italian and Greek. There was also no lack of commercial courses, adapted to the economic needs of the city.

(Parente, 2022, p. 28)

During the second stage, “the Nuns were involved in three war conflicts (the Italian-Libyan war and World Wars I and II). There were also several civil wars, with various combinations of political regimes (from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic, the Greek islands from the Italian dictatorship up to their liberation, and communism in Bulgaria)” (Parente, p. 14). While other places where the Nuns settled were destroyed by war, in Cyprus “they continued their

educational challenge with the appropriate means for the specific times.” (Parente, p. 36). This is how this period is described:

Lemesos, Lefkosia, and Ammochostos applied appropriate methodological advances that were adopted and put together by the Nuns. Thanks to a personal cultural development, it gave a sense of continuity of a mission based largely on cultural communication, and with it, the development of young generations. The attention to the male and female youth, the specific preparation in the linguistic sector, the intrinsic internationality of the congregational history found a way to be applied, with regularity and without surprise. Only in Cyprus and here only, during fifty years, has it been possible to record a structural and vocational advancement of the Institute.

(Parente, 2022, p. 36)

Before the outbreak of World War II, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters were active in different places: Constantinople, where they also managed Prinkipo from afar. Rhodes, which was under Italian rule, Zakynthos, Cephalonia, France, Bulgaria, and Lemesos (1923) and Troodos (1931) in Cyprus. In 1936 in Cyprus, the mission in Kormakitis was opened in the northern part of the island (Parente, 2022, p.30). Most of these communities were forced to retreat. During that time, the only place communities flourished was the island of Cyprus, where the community of Lemesos celebrated its 25th anniversary (1923-1948), and two more communities were opened, one in Lefkosia and one in Ammochostos (Parente, 2022, p. 34).

Stage III. From 1953 to 1986

The third stage (1953-1986) coincided with the Cold War. The historic changes that occurred during that time had a profound effect on the activities of the Province at different places and resulted in profound transformations. In Cyprus, their presence undertook a reformation. The provincial headquarters were relocated from Rhodes to Lemesos with Mother Arsène Fantin nominated as Provincial Superior. The Province consisted of seven Houses and 42 Sisters in all, four of which were in Cyprus. The Nuns lived through the turbulent events of the Liberation Struggle of 1955-1959 to the declaration of independence of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 and the increasing unease between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities that led to the intercommunal clashes of 1963-1964. During this time, their schools from Lemesos to Ammochostos and Kormakitis were subject to Government inspections. The Nuns “were strongly praised for the education they offered, with a particular mention to the selflessness and dedication of the Sisters, as well as of the language education that was delivered, and also of their order and cleanliness.” (Parente, 2022, p. 55). Up until then, the school was housed in school premises built in 1923. During stage III, and

because of the increased need for bigger school premises, the Nuns had new and bigger premises built, and the school was renamed *Saint Mary's School*. It was inaugurated on the 19th of June 1966 by Monsignor Alberto Gori, Order of Friars Minor (ofm), Patriarch of Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the Province also experienced the dramatic events of 1974, when Turkey invaded Cyprus and occupied 37% of the land, and many people fled their homes becoming refugees in their own country. The Nuns in the community of Kormakitis which was occupied by the Turks went through difficult times and had difficulties in communicating with their Sisters and continued their mission in isolation. *Saint Mary's School* in Lemesos lost about 200 Muslim students who were forced to leave their homes and move to the Turkish-occupied territory of the island. The Nuns in the Government-controlled areas got involved in taking care of Greek Cypriot refugees. The Nuns at *Saint Mary's* had to take care and look after another 200 children of Lebanese refugees in 1976 due to the civil war in Lebanon (Parente, 2022, p. 61).

The ageing of the members of the Congregation was also another phenomenon that the Nuns had to dedicate themselves to. The result was the foundation of the Provincial Infirmary in Lemesos in 1985.

During the British Rule, which coincided with the third stage of the history of the presence of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters in the Middle East, religious missions introduced European-style education to the colonies. The Roman Catholic Missionaries were sent to places such as Ghana (1820-1881) to open elementary schools for boys and girls, a seminary and eventually a secondary school (1909) (Encyclopaedia Britannica). A similar move was made in Cyprus by the Franciscan Friars Minor of the Holy Land who established *Terra Santa Girls' School* in Lemesos and asked the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart to run it. This not only coincided with the time when Cyprus was a British colony; it also occurred nine years after World War I had started.

Stage IV. From 1986 to date

The fourth stage (1989 to date) finds 37 Sisters of the Eastern Province in total, working in three countries, in three communities in Cyprus, one in Lebanon and two in Bulgaria. In Cyprus, the communities dedicate their time to catechesis, youth and family society, education, charitable assistance to the elderly and abandoned people of different cultures and religions. The Sisters running *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School* in Lemesos have been working within this framework.

Multilingual and multicultural context

Diversity in Practice: Contribution of a private school to multilingual/plurilingual and multicultural/intercultural education before these concepts' time.

Another context within which the history of *Terra Santa Girls School/Saint Mary's School* can be examined is that of multilingualism/plurilingualism and multiculturalism and interculturalism.

Multilingualism and plurilingualism

According to the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) (2001, p. 4) multilingualism “is the knowledge of a number of languages, or the coexistence of different languages in a given society.” Multilingualism “may be attained by simply diversifying the languages on offer in a particular school or educational system, or by encouraging pupils to learn more than one foreign language, or reducing the dominant position of English in international communication.” Based on the same source, “Plurilingualism differs from multilingualism... Beyond this, the plurilingual approach emphasises the fact that as an individual person’s experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples, he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact.” (CEFR, 2001, p. 4)

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is not a modern phenomenon. Its main characteristic, which is the blending of different cultures with their values, customs, and religious beliefs, goes back to ancient times. Its origins can be traced back to even Greek, Germanic, Roman and other historical annals, though with a different understanding of the content, development methods, levels, the extent and characteristic traits of the phenomenon. Evidence of multiculturalism can be detected during the Hellenistic cultural period under Alexander the Great of Macedon. Gražulis and Mockiene (2017) noted that “After Alexander the Great of Macedon (Mégas Aléxandros, 356–323 AD) became the ruler of Persia, Persians were recognised not as an enslaved nation, but as a society equal to the Conquerors.” According to them, some sort of multiculturalism is also found during the Roman Empire (Gražulis and Mockiene 2017, p. 35). However, “the Roman Empire, in contrast to the Hellenistic historical period, created a political system that was not confined to Latinisation of the local leaders and their relatives, but sought complete

assimilation of the conquered nations, thus making a major social and cultural impact on those territories.” (Gražulis & Mockiene, 2017, p. 35.)

The idea of multiculturalism in the era of new history was first addressed by the countries with a high level of economic development, particularly the ones of a large flow of immigrants (USA, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, Sweden, etc.) Gražulis and Mockiene (2017, p. 37). According to Parekh (1999), “Since the early 1980s the multiculturalism movement started in Canada and Australia, later on it spread to the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and other European countries.” (Gražulis & Mockiene, 2017, p. 35.) In recent times, these concepts have preoccupied modern societies further and much deeper, as people travelled more for different needs and purposes such as migration, job search, as refugees, etc. As a result, there has been great interest in these issues by educational institutions, which had to face student populations of different languages and cultures. The study of the application of such concepts in educational contexts and their contribution to children’s education and to the society in general has been the focus of research in countries such as Canada, Australia etc., where these notions had become policies and were adopted. (Plurilingual and Intercultural Education, European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe. n.d.)

Plurilingual and intercultural education

The European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (ECML) supports the developing of every individual’s language repertoire and cultural identities and highlights the social value of linguistic and cultural diversity. According to ECML, “Plurilingual education embraces all language learning, e.g., home language/s, language/s of schooling, foreign languages, and regional and minority languages. Intercultural learning supports the personal growth of learners and enhances social cohesion.” (Plurilingual and Intercultural Education, European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe. n.d.)

The following are the two major aspects of plurilingual education and a number of key concepts its practice is based on, according to ECML:

Plurilingual education’s two major aspects:

- *Education for plurilingualism – the aim of developing a learner’s plurilingual repertoire.*
- *Education through plurilingualism – making use of different languages as a resource for quality education.*

A number of key concepts its practice is based on:

- *A holistic view of languages in education – rather than considering each language as a separate entity each in its own compartment, there is a global approach to all the languages present in learning environments. Common strategies and complementary approaches can result in more effective language learning.*
- *Linguistic repertoires and partial competences – individual learners develop their own "repertoires" of the different languages they know and use. The competences acquired in one language can be of use in learning another one and there is complementarity and interplay among the languages known. Our competence in a language is always "partial" and our repertoires consist of a number of partial competences in different languages.*
- *Bi- and plurilingualism are "normal" and achievable by all – more than half the population of the world is bi- or plurilingual, so establishing education systems which promote it is a feasible aim.*
- *Cognitive benefits of plurilingual education – there is strong research evidence of the cognitive benefits in being plurilingual and from plurilingual approaches to education.*
- *Plurilingual approaches contribute to social integration – acknowledging and valuing the home languages and cultures of migrants help their integration into schools and society.*
- *Plurilingual competences are empowering for all learners – they are better prepared for employment, for further study, for effective additional language learning and for citizenship."*

(Plurilingual and Intercultural Education, European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe. n.d.)

This, of course, happened after 1970-1980, when these notions began to concern society and educational events more broadly. There have been cases, however, where, due to global and local developments, educational entities found themselves applying, albeit informally and idiosyncratically, the concepts of multilingualism and plurilingualism and multiculturalism and interculturalism.

Terra Santa Girls School/Saint Mary's School-Application of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the 1990s

One of these cases is the case of *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School*, which started being run in 1923 in Cyprus by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Based on their Christian values, their aim was to cater for the particular needs of the Latin Catholic children living in Cyprus. From the very beginning, however, the school found itself catering also not only for other students of non-Greek origin but also for Greek-background students whose families appreciated the values of the school and sent their children to have their

education there. It is, therefore, of great importance to study this case and record it as an example of the implementation of such concepts before they were more broadly applied in societies and education in more recent years.

The establishment of *Saint Mary's School* in 1923 occurred in a period of time when a number of new developments took place in the city of Lemesos:

- The movement of populations in eastern Mediterranean due to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the solution to the Anatolian issue after the Lausanne Treaty in 1923.
- The settlement of many refugees from Asia Minor in Cyprus and Lemesos. Schools such as Terra Santa already existed in Constantinople and Asia Minor.
- The development of commerce and industrial life in Lemesos which was becoming the industrial capital of Cyprus.
- The political changes in the status of Cyprus after 1914, which was up until then Britain's protectorate, and was then annexed by the British Empire. In 1925, two years after the foundation of the school, Cyprus became a Crown Colony.
- The need of Catholics to have schools in Cyprus.

The School had no alternative but to take the diversity of students into consideration and respond accordingly.

Conclusion

The examination of the historic, cultural, educational, social, religious, multilingual and multicultural context in which *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School* has been operating gives useful insights into the first 100 years of its history and provides a solid background for understanding and appreciating its contribution to the education of Cyprus.

CHAPTER

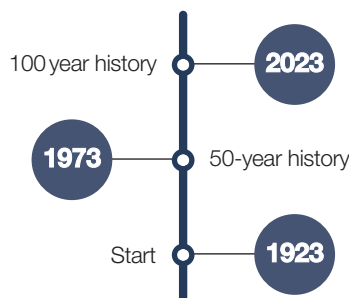
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FROM TERRA SANTA
GIRLS' SCHOOL
TO SAINT MARY'S
SCHOOL

FROM TERRA SANTA GIRLS' SCHOOL TO SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL

The Franciscan Friars Minor of the Holy Land founded the *Terra Santa Girls' School*, later on named *Saint Mary's School*. They gave the responsibility of its operation to the Franciscan Sisters. The School started accepting its first students in November 1923, during the Interwar period and during a time in which Cyprus was a British Colony and was under British administration (Pilavakis, Ar. 1929, p. 195; Myriantopoulos, 1946, p. 274). In order to understand the conditions in which the school was established and functioned, it is important to develop an awareness of the educational context which prevailed in Cyprus during those times.

Saint Mary's school timeline



School foundation

The end of World War I brought hope for a prosperous future; education was considered to be one of the main forces driving change. According to literature on education in Cyprus (Myriantopoulos, 1946; Pilavakis Ar., 1929, etc.), the decade of the 1920s was marked by a gradual increase in the number of schools; these included not only community schools, which focused on classical education, but also others, which aimed at a more progressive education, and which took into consideration the needs of the Interwar period and the particular needs of specific communities. For example, *The Private School of Foreign languages and Greek Lessons*, established in 1920, just a few years earlier than *Terra Santa Girls' School*, aimed to educate girls, teach them languages in a Greek-speaking environment (Papadima-Sophocleous, 2020, p. 12), and prepare them to enter the workforce. Another example was that of the Night School, founded in 1925 by the *Zenon* Masonic Lodge and aimed to educate working class adults (Kyriakoudis, to be published). This night school was founded just a few years after *Terra Santa Girls' School* was established (1923).

It is important to note that during those times, all schools operated with limited means and teaching staff who, very often, did not have the required qualifications. However, they were the ones who contributed to education and met the needs of the times. "All these schools, ours and foreign, with the means they had and the limited teaching staff, who very often did not have the required

qualifications, laid the foundations of education” (Michaelidi, 2000, p. 163) in Lemesos. Each of these schools had different objectives and served different needs.

The founding of the school as recorded in different research publications

A number of studies have been conducted regarding the schools of Lemesos during the time *Terra Santa Girls' School* was founded.

Pilavakis, Ar. (1929, p.p. 23-24) recorded the schools which existed in 1929:

There were nine schools catering for the Greek Cypriot community students:

- One six-grade high school, recognised by the Greek Government in 1916,
- one three-grade Higher Girls' School, also recognised;
- two Girls Schools;
- three Urban schools;
- two kindergartens.

These schools were served by 62 high school, primary school and kindergarten female and male teachers. They taught 2,280 female and male students.

There were also three Turkish Cypriot community schools;

- a Boys' school;
- a Girls' school;
- a kindergarten.

These schools were served by 13 female and male teachers who taught 470 female and male students.

There were also four private schools with 310 female and male students. In addition, there was a Night School under the patronage of the *Zenon* Masonic Lodge, to which the Government provided a small grant for the teaching of English. According to Pilavakis (1929, p. 23), *Zenon* was founded in 1924-1926. According to Kyriakoudis (to be published), *Zenon* was founded in 1925. There was also the Sunday School (20 female students) and a kindergarten (55 children) under the patronage of *Lykeio Ellinidon Lemesou* (Lyceum of Hellenides of Lemesos).

Kostas Pilavakis (1977, p. 271; 1997, p. 280) recorded the following schools which existed in Lemesos in 1930:

There were nine community schools:

- three Boys' schools (A, B and C Urban Boys' schools),
- two Girls' schools (A, B and C Girls' schools),
- two kindergartens,

- a full six-year Gymnasium, and
- one Higher three-grade Girls' School.

There were also:

- three private schools,
- three Turkish Cypriot community schools,
- a Maronite school,
- an Armenian school,
- a Night School under the patronage of the Masonic Lodge *Zenon*, a Sunday School, and
- a Sunday school (20 female students).

The nine schools mentioned by Aristodemos Pilavakis (1929, pp. 23-24), and also by Kostas Pilavakis, (1977, p. 280) as community schools, had Greek classical education as their main goal and focus. One of them also acknowledged additional needs that began to emerge. Thus, in addition to Greek education, it also offered commercial subjects.

In the recording of schools of the 1920s and 1930s, Turkish Cypriot, Maronite and Armenian Schools serving the other communities in Cyprus were also mentioned. In addition, a number of private and other schools were recorded, which served other educational purposes.

Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School

In the history of Cyprus, there have been catholic institutions such as *Saint Joseph of the Apparition* in Lemesos, Larnaka and Lefkosia), and the *Franciscan Friars Minor Terra Santa College* in Lefkosia, before the establishment of *Terra Santa Girls' School* in Lemesos by the Franciscan Sisters, later on renamed *St Mary's School*, also known and referred to as the "School of the Nuns" ("Kalogries" in Greek) (Myriantopoulos, 1946, p. 274).

School badges (from left to right): Terra Santa School (personal archives of Antonia Nikita-Loucaidou, student during the years 1959-1965), Saint Mary's School, (personal archives of Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous, student during the years 1968-1974) and Saint Mary's School, 2023 (Saint Mary's School archives).



Lemesos was a Cypriot city, which was perceived as the centre of intellectual movement. The private school of *Terra Santa Girls' School* was established in 1923 within this framework. It was an example of the progressive tendency in education, described by Persianis (2007):

Progressiveness was expressed in a variety of ways. The most important of these was the search for ways in which education could help women get out of the very difficult position in which they were condemned by old social institutions and old concepts. The great social problem of this era was the complete economic and social dependence of women on men. In order to change this situation, society had to, on the one hand, let women work and, on the other hand, convince women that work was not offensive but, on the contrary, honourable. At the same time, however, schools had to prepare women for work.

(Persianis, 2007, p. 211)

As mentioned in the Agreement between the Custody of the Holy Land and the Institute of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Gemona for the school of Lemesos (1922), the mission of the Franciscan Sisters of *Terra Santa Girls' School* was to give “the poor girls of the Latin parish free schooling, teaching them up to the fourth grade all those subjects and languages that will be determined after they become aware of the needs of the people, the catechism and the work” (1922). From the very beginning, however, they also identified the need to cater for any other girls of diverse backgrounds who were not catered for in other schools existing at the time, such as Greek Cypriot schools. They identified the needs for language learning and work-related knowledge and skills, needed for women who started entering the work field during that time. They also identified the need to cater for boys.

Although the school, through its 100-year history, proved to be of significant contribution to the educational matters of the island and beyond, the synchronic references in the Cypriot press were just a few. The foundation of *Terra Santa Girls' School* in November 1923 has been recorded in various documents such as the *The Chronicle of the House of Limassol* of the Franciscan Sisters, which is the most valid, books by authors referring to the history of education in Cyprus, and newspaper articles. Some of these records, however, are found not to agree with each other and/or are inconsistent with the facts. However, they are recorded below in an effort to record the different claims and to clarify and verify the actual facts.

Savvides maintained the following:

The School of Nuns was founded in 1918 and was housed in the house of the Franciscans of St. Joseph as "Terra Santa" and later it was housed in a new privately owned house on Agiou Andreou Street. Later, Terra Santa was renamed "Saint Mary" and was housed in a new privately-owned building on Griva Digeni Street,

(Savvides, 1999, p. 186)

It seems that Savvides confused the facts of two different schools established by two different religious orders: *Saint Joseph School* of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition, which was established in 1877 and operated for 43 years until 1921 when the Sisters left; and *Terra Santa Girls' School* of the Franciscan Sisters, which was established in 1923, operated under that name until 1965 and has been operating since then under the name of *Saint Mary's School*. Agni Michaelidi also confused the information regarding the two schools when she maintained that “from the first years of the British occupation the French School of the Sisters of Saint Joseph was housed in a house in Agiou Andreou Street, and that, for unknown reasons the school closed in 1921 and was succeeded in 1923 by the Italian *Terra Santa* (Terra Santa) school of the Franciscan Sisters (2000, p. 163).

The two catholic schools belonged to nuns of two different orders, both in spirituality and charisma, and each one's educational initiatives were separate; they had nothing to do with each other, and the one did not succeed the other (Sister Antonia Piripitsi, Interview, 17 February 2023). *Saint Joseph School* was housed in a house in the historic centre of Lemesos. *Terra Santa Girls' School* was originally housed in convent premises built specifically for the School by architect Gaffiero in Agiou Andreou Street (1923-1965) for the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, to be used by the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Gemona; when the School grew in student population, *Terra Santa Girls' School* relocated to the new building owned by the Franciscan Sisters, in Griva Digeni Street, near the new Courts of Lemesos, where it still operates under the name of *Saint Mary's School*, since 1966, unlike the claim made by Savvides (Savvides, 1999, p. 186). The above claims were also inconsistent with other references and with the records of the school itself.

In the *Cypriot Chronicles* (1929, 2nd issue, p. 181, as cited in Pilavakis, Ar. 1929, p. 195), there was a reference of a school named *School of Nuns of Saint Joseph* which was established in 1877, a date different to the date mentioned by Savvides (1918), under the name of *Soeurs de St Joseph de l'Apparition*, and operated for 43 years, until 1921, when the Nuns of this religious order left. Although the *Cypriot Chronicles* seemed to be correct regarding the date of the establishment of *Saint Joseph's School*, they were wrong in their claim that the Nuns of Saint Joseph and their school were replaced in 1923 by the nuns of Sacre Coeur. As explained, the two congregations were of two different religious Orders and the *Terra Santa Girls' School* did not replace the *Saint Joseph* one. The Franciscan Sisters were invited by the Custos of the Holy Land, of the Order of the Franciscan Friars Minor to direct a school which would cater for the Latin Catholic girls. According to Myrianthopoulos, English, French and Greek were taught at the School of Nuns (1946, p. 274).

The beginnings of *Terra Santa Girls' School* were also recorded on Maronites-live.com website in a tribute of the Maronite Press to the historical school of Lemesos, Agia Maria 2020, October 16):

The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart were invited to Cyprus in 1923 by the Most Reverend Father Ferdinando Diotallevi, then Custos of the Holy Land, of the Order of the Franciscan Friars Minor, to direct a school for its daughters and Lemesos. Over time it evolved into an ecumenical school that embraced children of all religions. On November 14, 1923, the first sisters arrived, Sister Gaudenzia Tevini from Italy and Sister Ioannes Ruchini from Rhodes; a few days later four more arrived from Constantinople and the United States of America.

(Maroniteslive.com)

Also, *All About Limassol-Official City Guide* dedicated a digital portrait of the School with the title "St. Mary's: A school with 80+ years of history in Limassol!"

The founding of the school as recorded in different school archival documents

Similar information is recorded on the official school website: "In 1923, at a time when Lemesos had very few schools, the Catholic Church decided to found a school, which would be administered by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart." The *Terra Santa School* was founded by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land (Document titled "Agreement", *Saint Mary's School* archives) and was originally housed in a stone-building at 306 Agiou Andreou Street, constructed in 1923.

The foundation of the school is well documented in sources found in the *Chronicles of the House of Limassol*. The document titled "Agreement" below, originally written in Italian, is found in the archives of *Saint Mary's School*. It is a stamped document dated on the 22nd of September 1922, signed in Jerusalem between the Father Ferdinando Diotallevi, Custos of the Holy Land and Sister Maria Filomena, Superior of the Institute of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Gemona, in Constantinople. This document is a record of the agreement between the two parties. It consists of seven points they agreed on, which describe the establishment of the school in Lemesos: The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land undertook the responsibility to build and maintain a house for the residence of the first six sisters, a church, and school rooms, dormitory for about 20 female students. The main aim of the school was to give Catholic poor girls of the Latin Parish free schooling up to the fourth grade, which included subjects and languages, catechism and work, based on their needs. The two parties agreed to also accept non-poor girls, Catholic or not. As seen in the following document, the "Agreement" also included details on the financial component of the endeavour. This agreement marked the beginning of the long history of the school.

Agreement between the Custody of the Holy Land and the Institute of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Gemona for the school of Lemesos.

Lemesos, 1914-1917 - *Agreement for the opening of a House in Lemesos*

Archives: Lemesos, Archive of the Provincial House.

Edition: unpublished.

Lemesos, Cyprus

Agreement between the Custody of the Holy Land and the Institute of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Gemona for the school of Lemesos.

1. The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land will build at its own expense in Lemesos a tenement house for the residence of six Sisters, a chapel, classrooms, and a dormitory for about twenty girls. Everything will be furnished comfortably and repaired when necessary. The building, the garden, the furniture, which will be inventoried are and will remain the property of the Custody of the Holy Land, which gives free use to the Franciscans of the Sacred Heart for their residence and school as soon as construction is completed.
2. During the first six months that the Sisters will dwell in the new building, the Custody of the Holy Land will take into consideration the complete maintenance. Throughout the first six months, the Sisters will inform the Custody of their needs, and in a common agreement, the monthly financial support of the Sisters will be decided and fixed.
3. The Sisters will give the poor girls of the Latin parish free schooling, teaching them up to the fourth grade all those subjects and languages that will be determined after they become aware of the needs of the people, the catechism and the work. School supplies for poor Catholic girls will be provided by the Custody.
4. The Sisters will have to dedicate themselves to the students, to sing in church during masses and blessings.
5. The income of the school will come from the rich students and the non-Catholics who are able to pay the school fees for the benefit of the Sisters.
6. The subsidies that may eventually be obtained for the school, both from the Government and from others, will be shared equally between the Custody and the Sisters.
7. This agreement cannot be changed without the mutual consent of the Father Custos pro tempore and the Provincial Pro tempore of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

Jerusalem 22 September 1922

(L.S.)

(Signed)

Father Ferdinando Diotallevi, Custos of the Holy Land

(signed)

Sister Maria Filomena, Superior of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Constantinople

(Chronicles of the House of Limassol)

The beginning of the School was also documented in another document.

Sainte Marie School ex Terra Santa School

The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart were called to Cyprus in 1923 by the Very Reverend Father Ferdinando Diotallevi, Custos of the Holy Land, to run a school and take care of the parish works of Lemesos. Out of the 107 Franciscan Sisters who came to Cyprus, 50 of them taught at Terra Santa, later on named Saint Mary's School.

On 14 November, the first three Sisters arrived on the island, accompanied by the Most Reverend Mother Provincial of Constantinople. The new school was able to open without too much delay and soon three other nuns from Rhodes and America were added to it and the work prospered in a very short time with the help of God and the protection of our Seraphic Father Saint-Francis.

A few years later, the school was recognised by the island's Department of Public Works (DPW) and qualified as a secondary school where young girls are prepared for government exams in English, French, Greek and Italian. To the study of languages were added, later, commercial courses and the teaching of music. [...]

(‘Sainte Marie School ex Terra Santa School’, Chronicles of the House of Limassol)

The beginning of the School was also documented and confirmed in another document originally written in Italian, a letter from the school to the Ven. Custody of the Holy Land:

Question of the Sisters Franc. Miss. of the Sacred Heart to the Ven. Custody of the Holy Land so that the works carried out in Cyprus by them are under the auspices of said Ven. Custody.

Terra Santa School
Lemesos, Cyprus, 4/6/1972,

[...] On 14 November of that year 1923 three Sisters arrived on the island accompanied with the Most Rev. Mother Aub1e Sup. Prov. of Constantinople. The parish school began to function with about sixty pupils. Soon three other nuns landed in Lemesos from Rhodes and America. The school began immediately with the name of Scuola di Terra Santa. The property belonged to the Rev. Fathers of Jerusalem and the sisters used the house and gave as a contribution the help in the parish: Catechism, singing, care of the linen of the church and the altars. [...]

(Chronicles of the House of Limassol)

A Memorandum of the House of Lemesos also documents the beginnings of the School:

Memorandum of the House of Lemesos, Cyprus, 1923

In 1923 the Most Reverend Father Diottalevi was Custos of the Holy Land who had spent several years in Constantinople and had been able to appreciate the mission of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth Province for the youth and wanted to give them a present for their work in the Parish of S. Maria in Pera and Prinkipo. In Lemesos, in the past were the Saint Joseph Sisters (Suore Giuseppine) who then abandoned the place, and Father Custos wanted to reestablish the school and entrust it to the Franciscan Sisters. He asked Mother Joseph, then General Superior, to undertake the task. There was a need for teachers of French, English, Greek and Italian.

Sister Elisabetta Missio and then Sister Claudia Witty were sent from America to Cyprus; Sister Denise was sent for French, Sister Joannes from Zante for Italian. The first Superior was Sister Elizabeth. The school took off immediately and developed especially because of the works of Sister Claudia Witty, much appreciated for her language and because she was of English nationality.

(Memorandum of the House of Lemesos (Cyprus) 1923, Chronicles of the House of Limassol)

Inauguration of Terra Santa Girls' School of Lemesos

In its issue of 16 October 2020, MaronitesLive.com, dedicated an article to “Agia Maria Limassol: The evolution of a historic school into a leading educational institution”, as a tribute of the Maronite press to the historical school of Lemesos, *Saint Mary* (Agia Maria). Amongst other information, the tribute also refers to the original inauguration of the school in its first premises in Agiou Andreou Street:

Agia Maria Limassol: The evolution of a historic school into a leading educational institution

The *Terra Santa School* for Girls, as it was originally called, in Agiou Andreou Street, was inaugurated on the 29th of December 1923 with the intervention of Father Pietro Lamparelli, representative of the Most Reverend Custos of the Order of the Holy Land, in the presence of His Excellency the Governor of Cyprus, Mr Stevenson, who praised the work of St. Francis of Assisi and the Franciscans in the Middle East, as well as the Superintendent of Schools Mr Newham and the Consular Corps. The first Superior and Director of the school was the American Sister Elisabeth Missio (1924-1931). Then followed Sister Lidouina Tasser (1931-1941), Sister Paule Descuffi (1941-1946), the Rev. Mother Arsène Fantin (1946-1982) and Sister Josephine Vrahimi (1982 to date).

(Maroniteslive.com)

We were received very warmly. We started with 80 students. Of course, we had some competition with the Private School of Foreign Languages and Greek Lessons. In 1939-40, with the war, we began teaching Greek language, Mathematics, History, Geography. From the beginning the school gained a great reputation for its discipline and foreign languages. We taught Music, Painting. A few years later we started the elementary school, which offered co-education. We had a boarding school with schoolgirls from different parts of the world, Africa, England, Greece. We started with 80 schoolgirls and reached 700 in Terra Santa; we had no more space. From 1923 to 1960 the school flourished. We did all the exams in English, French, and Italian. During the World War II, we also started commercial courses, Typing, Shorthand. In 1965 we built the school here, Saint Mary. When we arrived, we increased the number of students to 800. That is why we changed the name from Terra Santa, which belonged to the Custody of Jerusalem. Until 1940 the Principal of the school was Sister Paule Descoufi, of Italian descent, who was born and raised in Constantinople. She was a wonderful and dynamic person. From 1941 to 1982, I ran the school and then it passed into the hands of Sister Josephine. From 1984-85 we also introduced computers.

*(Phileleftheros, 24 May 1990, p. 7,
Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy*

Although the above sources have some discrepancies regarding the dates the first nuns arrived and the number of students the school originally started functioning with, they give an idea of when it all started. The most likely date the first nuns arrived seems to be the 14th of November 1923. The most likely number of students who first attended the school, according to the school archival records is 53 students (26 Orthodox, 20 Catholics, three Protestants, three Armenians and one not indicated).

Governing body and annual reports

A document found in the school archive titled “Education Regulations” (n.d.) gives an idea of how the school was run from 1956 to 1964. The document is about “The Secondary Education Regulations (Regulation 6)”. It consists of a description of the school governing body, followed by a report for each of the following school years: 1956-1957, 1957-1958, 1958-1959, 1959-1960, (1960-1961 was not included), 1961-1962, 1962-1963, and 1963-1964. According to this particular document, the members of this governing body were Mother Arsène Fantin, Mother Paula Kreuzer, Mother Claudia Witty and Sister Charles Noury. Each annual report consisted of a description of the Financial Resources, School Staff, Curriculum and School Premises.

In most of the course of the School’s history, the governing body consisted of Sisters. With the gradual development of the school, these Sisters were representatives of the different sections of the school, for example Kindergarten, Primary Junior English, Elementary Greek and Secondary Schools.

The Secondary Education Regulations
(Regulation 6)
RETURN

showing changes made at "TERRA SANTA SCHOOL" Lemesos since the last submission of such details on 31st August 1956
Where changes have not yet been made but are proposed for the ensuing school year, a note to that effect must be added.

I. Governing Body.

Full details must be given of the present Chairman and all present members of the Governing Body. If the Chairman or any Member is new, his or her name should be marked with an asterisk (*), and, in the case of new Members, the final column in the form completed.

	Name	Address	Occupation	Date of appointment	Date of expiry of appointment	Replacing
Chairman	Mother Aresine Fantin	Terra Santa School, Lim.	Head of the school/provincial	October 1945	September 1959	✓
Members	Mother Madeleine Bettio	" " " "	Superior and Mistress	August 1952	August 1958	✓
	Mother Paula Kreuzer	Kormakiti	Teacher	1953	1959	
	Mother Claudia Wilty	Terra Santa School, Lim.	Superior + Mistress	1953	1959	
	Sister Charles Houry	" " " "	Teacher	1953	1959	

Education Regulations (n.d.),
Saint Mary's School archives.

School renaming

According to the official school website, the School was first named *Terra Santa School* (Holy Land). This was also mentioned in another handwritten document titled "(1923-1975) Lemesos-Cyprus" (originally written in Italian, *Saint Mary's School* archives).

Later on, the Most Reverent Father Custos expressed his wish for the School to no longer be called *Terra Santa School* as "Terra Santa" was used by other institutions. The Prov. Superior (document "Delegation of the Holy Land", originally written in English, Letter dated 8 September 1965, *Saint Mary's School* archives) requested permission to keep using the name, as the School had been known for many years with the name of "Terra Santa". In his letter of the 8 December 1965, to Most Reverend Mother Superior General of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Father Lino V. Cappelletto confirmed the decision of the Most Reverent Father Custos who did not wish the School of *Terra Santa* in Lemesos to keep using this name (document originally written in Italian, *Saint Mary's School* archives). This was also confirmed in another document, in a letter from the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to the Ven Custody of the Holy Land. Since the School did not receive the response they wished, regarding the name of the School, in this letter they announced that "on 19 June 1966 the day of the inauguration, the change of the name of the Holy Land (*Terra Santa*) to that of *Saint Mary's School* was proclaimed with great pain" (document originally written in Italian, *Saint Mary's School* archives).

On 9 September 1973, Father Raffaele Angelisanti Custos of the Order of Friars Minor (Ofm), sent a letter from Jerusalem to the Reverend Mother of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Amongst other things he sent his best wishes on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the School in Lemesos (Custody of the Holy Land, Jerusalem, 9 June 1973, document originally written in Italian, *Saint Mary's School* archives).

Conclusion

The post-war era was a historical period during which the local community in Cyprus in general and in Lemesos in particular, was trying to find its way, nationally, within Europe and globally. During that time, the local community experienced a different development, consisting of new trends and pretentious ideas. During the first years of its foundation, *Terra Santa Girls' School*, later on named *Saint Mary's School*, also experienced the Interwar period, a historical phase which began with the best omens, as the World War I atrocities were over, and people were full of hope for a better tomorrow, in which education would play a fundamental role. In this context, the people who engaged in education tried to direct young people and prepare them with the appropriate ideals so they would succeed in emerging needs and requirements.

Since its beginnings, *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School* has been a well-known, non-profit, private school in Cyprus. Its 100-year old history evidences its contribution to the education of Cyprus, and especially that of Lemesos, where it is based.

Although, when the School was first established, it was founded as a girls' school, the kindergarten and the primary school have always been mixed. The high school became mixed in September 2000 (*Statistical Service, Annual Survey on Education*). Also, although the School was first established to cater for the girls of the Latin community of Cyprus, from the very beginning it embraced students who were characterised by ethnic and religious diversity, something that is dealt with in more detail later in the book.

ST. MARY'S
SCHOOL



CHAPTER

5

SCHOOL PREMISES

SCHOOL PREMISES



Terra Santa premises in Agiou Andreou Street.

In 2023, celebrating the centenary of *Saint Mary's School*, it may seem difficult to understand why, in 1923, a school of the Franciscan Custody that was just starting with an uncertain future would choose to build its school premises in the heart of the then small Lemesos, in Agiou Andreou Street, one of the largest and most important streets of the city; a street that housed important families, such as the Souliotis and Antonis Pilavakis family, the great Chatzipavlou theatre, workshops, and commercial offices of important companies. The most likely answer was the experience of the Franciscan Custody in organising schools in other parts of the Middle East, and above all the faith that the Order had in its mission to help people, to offer, and educate. Otherwise, it would be also difficult to explain why they chose Gaffiero, the most important architect at the time, to prepare the plans for the magnificent building complex, consisting of the School and the monastery, which is still a landmark in the city of Lemesos; knowing its importance, when people looked for an address nearby, they were told "near or next to the 'Nuns'", as the School was known.

The building of the School was announced in the local newspaper *Alithia* [Truth], on the 3rd of February 1923:

Towards the end of Agiou Andreou Street and near the Sinahori area, the building of a School of Nuns has begun, which will cost 6,000 pounds. Gaffiero, the government engineer, designed the building.

(Alithia, 1923, as cited in Andreou 2009, p. 170)

According to the architect Andreou (2009, p. 170) "with the completion of the *Terra Santa School*, a new building with gothic influences was added to the building wealth of Lemesos".

The management of the school used the same philosophy when the time came to look for new and bigger premises, serving the new and growing needs of the times, in the new area of the city of Lemesos, which today is also an important landmark next to a series of other important landmarks such as the 'Eftapato' (seven-storey building), the 'Pitta' building, the new Courts of Lemesos, and of course, the roundabout of Agios Nikolaos. Stavros Economou, a prominent architect of the 1960s', would have been chosen with the same reasoning to undertake the architectural design of the new School and convent premises in the mid-1960s.

Terra Santa Girls' School and convent premises in Agiou Andreou Street

According to the official school website, the School was originally housed in a stone-built construction at 306 Agiou Andreou Street (Saint Andrews Street). The building was designed by the architect-engineer Joseph Gaffiero.

Joseph Gaffiero (1877-1953) was from Malta (Georgiou, 2018, p. 447). In Cyprus, he worked for the Colonial Government for many years and designed many public and private buildings, such as the Lemesos Hospital. One of the private ones was *Terra Santa Girls' School* and Franciscan Sisters Convent at 306 Agiou Andreou Street in 1923. Those buildings now host the Metropolitan Diocese's Offices (Georgiou, 2018, p. 447). The School and convent were later transferred to a new building in 1966.

Terra Santa Girls' School beginnings and inauguration were recorded in the following document written in Italian, found in the School's archives:



*Joseph Gaffiero, 1921.
Photographer: J.P. Foscolo.
Andreas Bayada's
personal archives, kindly
provided by his wife Sophia
Bayada.*

New School of Terra Santa in Lemesos (Cyprus)

Lemesos. New School

New School of Terra Santa in Lemesos (Cyprus)

It was the constant desire of the population to have a girls' school responding to social needs. The Custody of the Holy Land could no longer remain deaf to the voices of the good ones of its mission, and paying no attention to sacrifices, purchased a spacious area, and on a design and diligent free direction of the valiant Mr Cav. Giuseppe Gaffiero built a school building with an internal college, entrusting its direction to the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Gemona, who have acquired such honourable fame for their educational works in the missions. For some time, Mother Filomena Provincial of the praised Sisters had arrived from Constantinople, who with her rare intelligence and spirit of charity and self-denial, which so distinguished her, organised everything and arranged for the inauguration of the school to be decent and solemn, which took place on 29 December 1923.

The British High Commissioner with his wife wanted to honour with their presence the beautiful celebration by coming expressly from Lefkosia with the Inspector of the schools and other prominent officials, who together with the local Governor, Patriarchal Vicar and other guests were greatly impressed by the order and provision of both the location and the school programme.

Father Pietro Lamparelli Guardian of Larnaka said appropriate words of circumstance in English, highlighting the merits of the civil and religious education so much advocated by the occupying power, and how providential was the thought of calling the Missionaries of Gemona, true angels of peace and excellent instructors. The High Commissioner replied, thanking him for the invitation and praising the work of St. Francis and the Franciscans. As the door opened, little girls sang the British hymn, accompanied on the piano by a Sister, and all the guests visited the classrooms and the boarding school of the pupils, who were already beginning to flock there.

A well-deserved word of praise and thanks goes to Eng. Cav. Gaffiero, to the excellent Mother Provincial with her Daughters, to Father Lamparelli, to Father Flaviano Randon President and Parish Priest of Lemesos, and many other people from the entire island of Cyprus who spared nothing to see his wish fulfilled. Sincere wishes.

(New School of Terra Santa in Lemesos (Cyprus) 1924, pp. 15-16, Saint Mary's School archives)

The British High Commissioner, the Inspector of the schools, the local Governor and other prominent officials honoured the inauguration of the school with their presence.

*Terra Santa Girls' School
Foundation, November 1923.
Saint Mary's School archives.*



*Terra Santa Girls' School
Inauguration, 29 December
1923. Saint Mary's School
archives.*





Terra Santa Girls' School in Agiou Andreou Street. Saint Mary's School archives.

Apart from the photos of the first building and some information about it found in the school archives, further information was obtained from the students who attended the School during that time. They described the building and they narrated their memories of their lives during that time.

Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussiotou remembered:

“ Most of the classrooms were on the ground floor of the old building. The boarding school and the nuns' residence were on the upper part of the school. At the entrance of the building there was a staircase on the left, leading to the boarding school, and another one on the right, leading to the residence of the nuns and the chapel. On the upper part, there were also the last three classrooms for the final-year students. In the yard there were trees and a pond. Alas if we threw stones into the

pond or if we let loquats fall into the pond and then tried to catch them with our hands.

The Home Economics' classroom was used for the teaching of Home Economics and Embroidery. It was also used as a dining room for breakfast, lunch and dinner for the boarding school girls.

It should be noted that we alternated between classrooms on the ground floor; that is, depending on the course we had, we went to the corresponding class. The courses were mainly based on languages.

(Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou, student during the 1940s, Interview, 20 September 2022)

Goris Gregoriadis attended *Terra Santa Girls' School* kindergarten. According to him, there was also a coal warehouse, where the nuns used to send the naughty students for time-out (Goris Gregoriadis, student during the 1940s, Interview, 5th September 2022). In her interview, Sara Burns-Cowan Droussioutou confirmed the existence and use of this coal warehouse as a cool-out place. She even said that she was among the naughty students who used to be sent there. Amongst them were also Steven Altenburger and Jacques, Amarante's brother. According to Sarah, the students used to play marbles while in the coal warehouse. When the time-out was up, the nuns would come to take them out. Instead of being relieved, the students protested and did not want to come out, as they had not finished their game of marbles (Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou, student during the 1940s, Interview, 20 September 2022).

Terra Santa Girls' School in Agiou Andreou Street. Sister Charles teaches students in Mère Arsène's office, due to insufficient classrooms, 1962. Katina Frangskou's personal archives.



The *Terra Santa Girls' School* housed in its first building in Agiou Andreou Street operated there for 42 years, nearly half of the period of its existence. According to the documents found in the school archives, more than 7,000 students attended the school during those years. More than 700 of those students were boys, mainly attending kindergarten and primary school.

According to document titled “Sainte Marie School ex Terra Santa School”, as the student population “increased to the point that many had to be refused”, the school faced another challenge:

In addition, the school building no longer met current requirements and infiltrations of sea water were eating away the walls and floors, while “our sister the rain” was penetrating on all sides. Buckets had to be lined up in the chapel, dormitories, classrooms and kitchen each time the residents took a shower! There was only one staircase, made of wood.

Faced with the impossibility of continuing the work in this place, it was decided to move the school a little further and to build everything since there was no way to expand and repair the damage caused by the humidity. We were starting from scratch. It was necessary to take out a loan from the Bank of Cyprus at 8,5% interest.

(‘Sainte Marie School ex Terra Santa School’ Saint Mary’s School archives)

In 1965, the school moved to a newly-built modern building. In 1986, the Diocese of Lemesos bought the original building in Agiou Andreou Street, after it became a listed building. It now houses the offices of the Limassol Diocese (*Phileleftheros*, 29 December 1989).

Saint Mary’s School and convent premises in Griva Digeni Street

Saint Mary’s School today.



As we have established, the first School's premises, which were built in Agiou Andreou Street by architect Gaffiero to house the School, at some point could not cater for the School's needs anymore. The need arose for a larger School in order to cover the growing population of students who wanted to attend the School and for better premises with more suitable facilities for educational purposes. This need was recorded in a correspondence from the School, originally handwritten in Italian, to M.R. Father Lino Cappiello:

Casa Nova

Casa Nova
Jerusalem
Franciscan Fathers
P.O.B. 4134
(Jordan)

Jerusalem 3 March 1961
M.R. Father Lino Cappiello

I Lemesos - Need to build a new school because today's demands are many.
A narrowness of the premises.
Restrict some premises.

II We need to have a building close to the parish but if it could be built outside the city centre, the land would be bought at a much better price and it could be closer to the centre of the English Catholic inhabitants. To carry this out we would require the assistance of a chaplain.

(Casa Nova, *Saint Mary's School* archives)

The new School premises were built in 1965 by architect Stavros Economou (1916-2002), of the company A. RIBA from Lefkosia, with their engineering consultants St. Ioannidis and MI Struct.

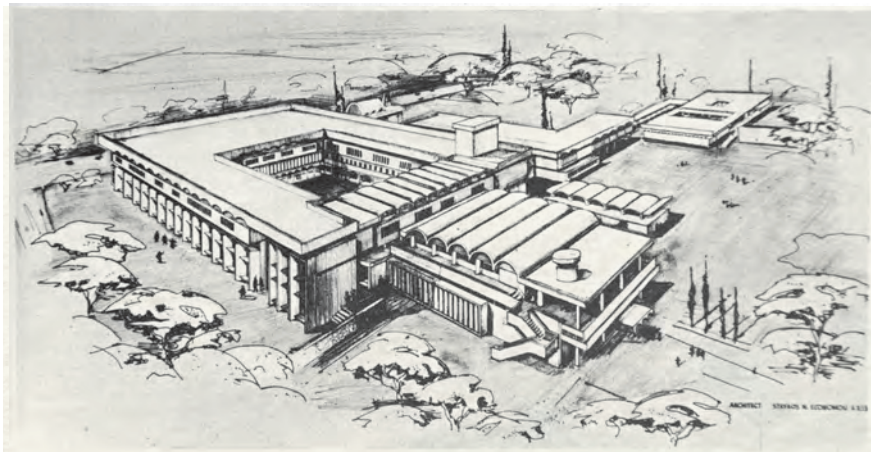
Stavros Economou was born in Kissonerga, Pafos, on the 1st of April 1917. When he finished high school, he studied Architectural Design by correspondence with a UK institution. He worked in Lefkosia until 1936 at an architect's office. Then he worked for the British Administration of Cyprus until 1945. He then worked for the Ammochostos Municipality. On the 20th of October 1946, he married Julia (Lulla) Pantelidi from Lefkosia. In the autumn of 1948, he went with his wife to London to study Architecture. He enrolled as an external student at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and at the same time worked in the Housing Department of the Council of Greater London. In 1951, he returned to Cyprus and worked as an architect for the Ammochostos

Municipality until 1955. Then he worked as a partner at the Kolakides, Economou and Hatzicostas Technical Office (1955 and 1958). Then in 1958, he opened his own architectural office in Lefkosia. Soon it developed into one of the largest offices in Cyprus dealing with various projects from small houses to large public projects (e.g., offices, kitchens, army depots, soldiers' quarters and restaurants for officers for the Ministry of Defence), commercial (e.g., Marks & Spencer's, the offices of Universal Insurance Co. Ltd in Lefkosia and the Bank of Cyprus Regional Offices's in Pafos), residential complexes (e.g., numerous private residences, apartment buildings, POED building, Olivia Development Ltd in Larnaka), public utility, industrial (e.g., Carlsberg Brewery Factories, Aphrostrom Ltd in Lefkosia) and tourist projects (e.g., Sunrise Beach Hotel in Protaras, Poseidonia Beach Hotel in Lemesos, Forest Park hotel extension in Platres), sports infrastructure (e.g., Static reinforcement of the stands and a new warm-up & upgrade of official Tsirio Stadium in Lemesos), and educational projects (e.g., Deryneia High School, Nicosia Tourism College, Kissonerga Primary School and Kindergarten and Natural History Museum for the Ph. Photiades Foundation in Lefkosia).

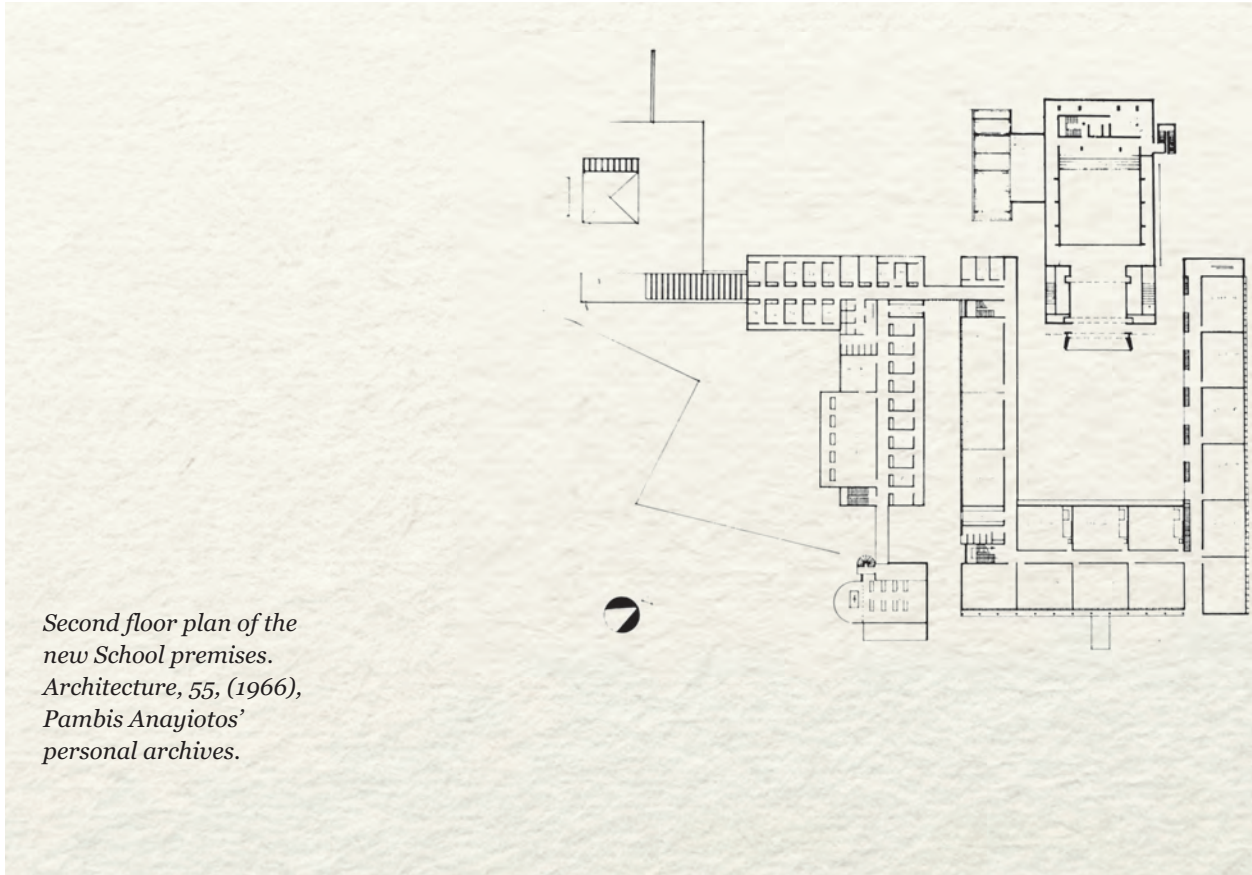
The educational projects include *Saint Mary's School* (nursery/primary/secondary) in Lemesos. The school is located at 30-35 Georgiou Griva Digeni Street, opposite the current courts of Lemesos. It now constitutes one of the most remarkable samples of modernism in Cyprus. He was considered one of the best architects in Cyprus. His son, Nicolas Economou continues to work for *Saint Mary's School* as its architect (Economou, 2014, pp. 149-154; Georgiou, 2018, p. 455).

*Stavros Economou
(1916-2002).*

*Polignosi – A cooperation
of the Bank of Cyprus and
Politis newspaper -
www.polignosi.com.*



*Perspective plan of the new
School premises' complex.
Architecture, 55, (1966),
Pambis Anayiotos' personal
archives.*

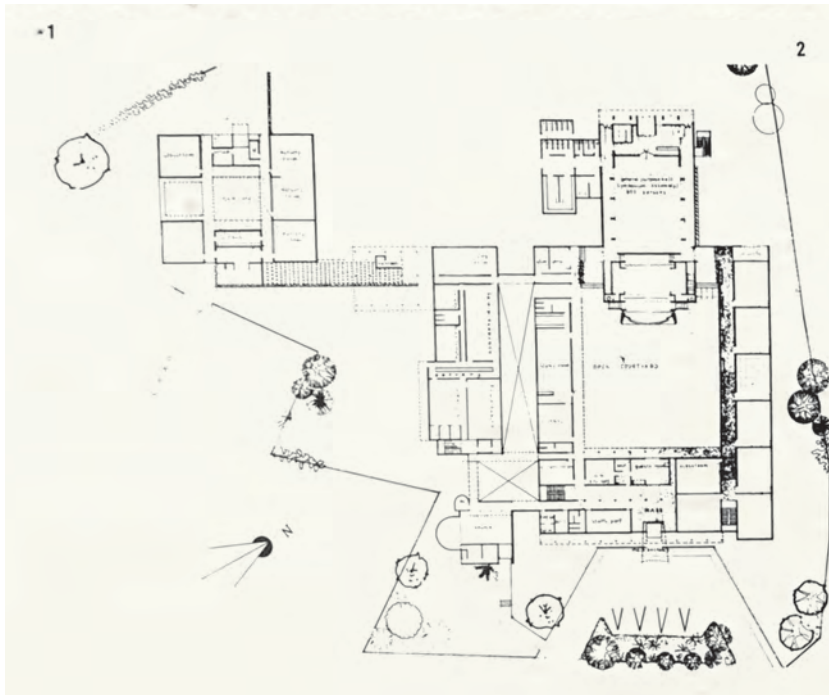


Second floor plan of the new School premises. Architecture, 55, (1966), Pambis Anayiotos' personal archives.

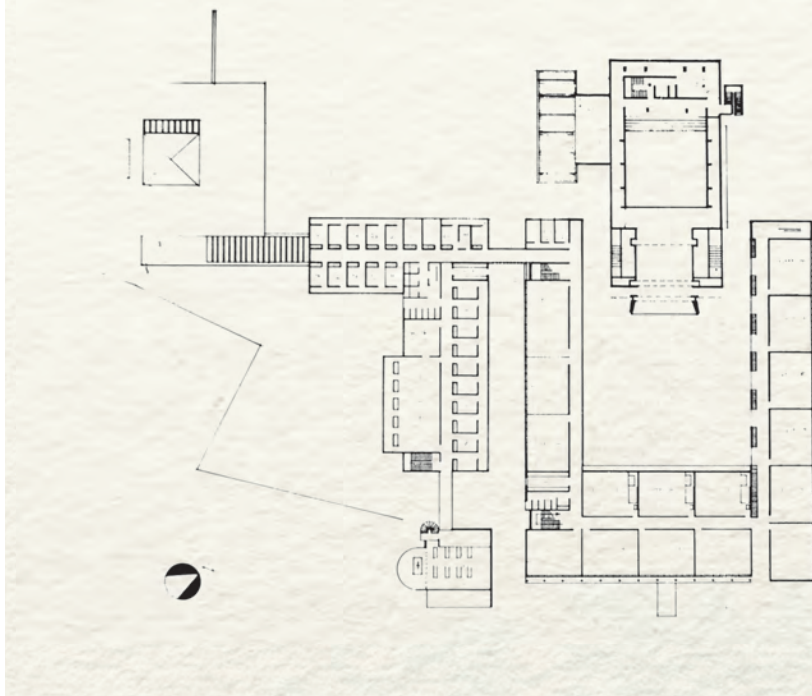
This school is owned and managed by the Franciscan sisters of the Sacred Heart in Lemesos and it is mainly a secondary education school for girls, but at the same time it comprises an independent nursery block and a section for primary education. A separate wing or block is provided in the complex as a Nunnery for the nuns with 24 cells, a community room, a work room, a kitchen, adining room etc. and a church for 150 persons.

The school comprises 30 classrooms in all, study rooms, a library, three music rooms, dining rooms for boarders and other students, an administration block, teachers' lounges, a gymnasium or assembly hall, with a stage, which can also open into the internal courtyard for open-air gatherings, dormitories for 100 boarders, baths and showers, a laundry romm, work rooms, luggage and storage rooms, a doctor's room, and isolation rooms.

Architecture, 55, (1966). p.p. 72-73, Pambis Anayiotos personal archives.



Ground floor plan of the new School premises. Architecture, 55, (1966), Pambis Anayiotos' personal archives.



First floor plan of the new School premises. Architecture, 55, (1966), Pambis Anayiotos' personal archives.

The local press and documents found in the school archives recorded this event. Here are some indicative examples:

Lemosos 5 (From our correspondent). - The management of the Terra Santa School (Nuns) Lemosos bought in a coastal area, in the east of our city, enough space for the construction of a new school building.

(Haravgi, 6 September 1962, p. 4)

In the archival document titled “Sainte Marie School ex Terra Santa School”, there is a detailed description of the new premises: the school, the student dormitories, the Sisters’ residence and the chapel:

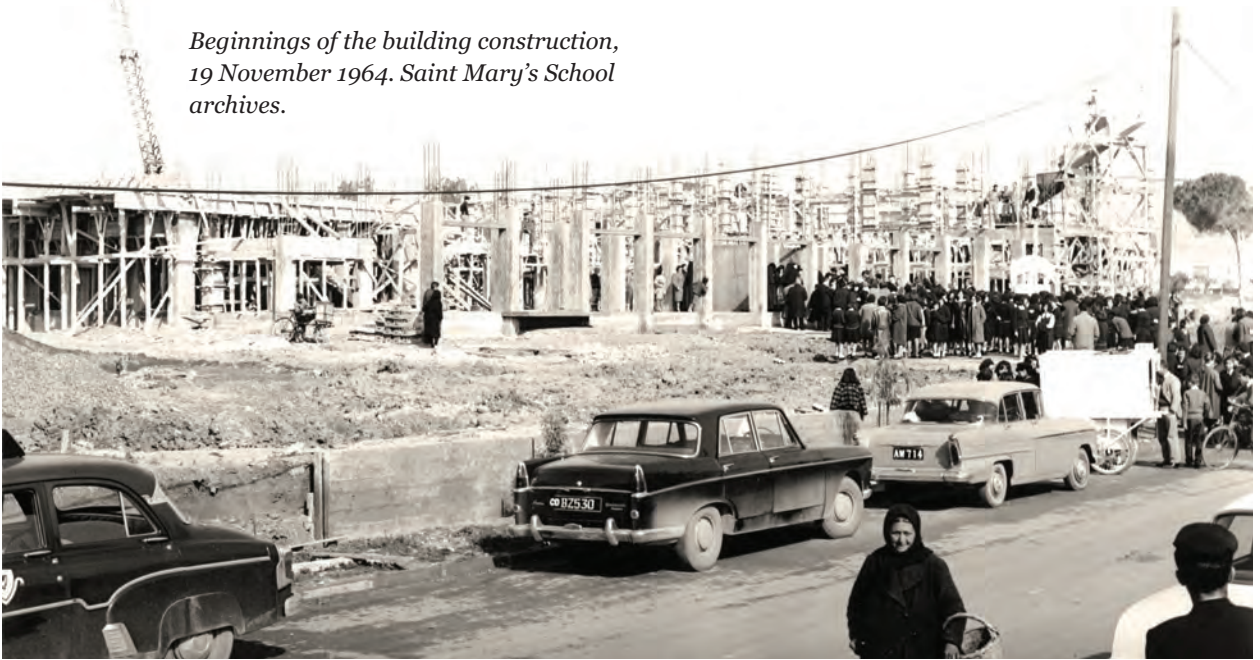
After many difficulties came the laying of the foundation stone, on 10th February 1965, under the presidency of Rev. Father Kevin Mooney, then Patriarchal Vicar in Cyprus. On 1st October of the same year, we started secondary school classes in the new building, despite the presence of the workers, and to the harmonious sound of hammer blows and machines of all kinds. This lasted the whole school year.

The building has two parlours, a room for the teachers, an infirmary and three rooms of isolation, 27 classrooms for the secondary school courses, a typewriting room, a study room, a room for manual work, the library, three piano rooms, five dormitories, showers, a laundry room, etc., a double-face stage so as to use it as an interior theatre or an open-air theatre in the courtyard, depending on the season; a kitchen, refectories for the children and the Sisters.

The Sisters' residence is separated from the boarding school but is connected by a corridor. A little further on, linked by a covered walkway, there are three elementary classrooms and three kindergarten classrooms with their respective courtyard and garden. The crowning of the work is a spacious chapel, bright and modern but not overly so. It is good to pray there! Adjoining it, the sacristy and a room for the Chaplain, with a shower and W.C. We hope to have one, one day!

(“Sainte Marie School ex Terra Santa School”, Saint Mary’s School archives)

Beginnings of the building construction, 19 November 1964. Saint Mary's School archives.



Reverent Father Kevin Moony (right) and Father Carmello (left) at the laying of the foundation stone of the new school building ceremony. Saint Mary's School archives.



The inauguration ceremony, held on the evening of the 19th of June is described in the following archival document:

His Beatitude Monsignor Gori, Patriarch of Jerusalem, deigned to come himself, to preside over the inauguration ceremony and to cut the symbolic ribbon. A group of children were making a wreath to wait for the many guests near the main entrance, while in the corridors, all around the inner courtyard and in the theatre, the rest of the students waited for the unfolding of the party.

As soon as the ribbon was cut, the guests entered the inner courtyard. Besides the presence of our venerable Patriarch Monsignor Gori, we had the honour and the joy of having among us:

1) the Ecclesiastics Mgr Kaldany, Mgr George, Mgr Radari, Maronite Vicar of Cyprus, the Rev. Father Randon, Latin Patriarchal Vicar of Cyprus, our Rev. Father Curé, Father Carmelo Mercieca, the Rev. Father Massimino and several Fathers from the island of the English Chaplains. The Protestant church was presented by the Rev. Father Mathew.

2) Among the civilians, His Excellency Mr Spyros Kyprianou, Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Dr Spyridakis, Minister of Education, who delivered the inauguration speech; their Excellencies [..], Ambassador of France, Mr Bounous, Ambassador of Italy; several Embassies Attachés, including our dear Mr Millieux who gave a moving speech; Mr Benjamin, District officer; Mr Pattichi, Mayor of Lemesos; the architect S. Economou; entrepreneur Mr Garanthoki and a large number of people.

The ceremony was simple; singing in four voices the "charity" of Rossini, followed by the blessing of gratitude Mgr Gori. His Excellency Dr Spyridakis then gave a highly applauded speech; followed on [...] the speech of Mr Millieux, Embassy Attaché, that of our dear Principal, founder of the new School, finally, singing in Greek. At the end of her speech, the Principal, Mother Arsène Fantin, officially announced that the new School would henceforth be called "Saint Mary's School".

Authorities and guests visited the premises, then refreshments were offered by the former students. Around 9 o'clock in the evening, everything returned to calm and the Community intoned the Te Deum of thanks for all the graces granted.

(Sainte Marie School ex Terra Santa School, originally handwritten in French, Saint Mary's School archives)

The laying of the foundation stone of the new school building was also recorded in the press. The following are extracts from the newspapers, *Haravgi*, *Phileleftheros* and *Alithia*:

The foundation stone of the Terra Santa School in Lemesos was laid.

Lemesos, 10 (From our correspondent). - This morning the foundation stone of the new school building of Terra Santa was laid. The building is erected next to the Public Garden. The ceremony was attended by the Governor of Lemesos Mr Benjamin, the Mayor Mr N. Pattihis, the Educational Attaché of the French Embassy Mr Roger Milliex, the Inspector General of Secondary Education Schools Mr K. Pilavakis, the Police Head Mr Chatziloizou, the High School Principal, the school teaching staff and many students.

The foundation stone was laid by Father Kevin of the Catholic Church. Relevant speeches were made by Mr Benjamin, the Superior of the school Mother Arsène and Mr Milliex. The latter, among other things, praised the educational activities of the school, and then referred to the late Greek Deputy Minister of Education L. Akritas, of whom he praised the great personality and his contribution to Greek letters and the promotion of Greek education and paid tribute to the deceased. Finally, he wished for progress in the activities of the school.

Haravgi, 1965, 11 February 1965, p. 5)



(from left to right) Roger Milliex, Directeur of the French Cultural Centre, Mère Arsène, Mother Tarcisia Braccalle General Superior, Reverent Father Kevin Moony at the laying of the foundation stone of the new school building ceremony. Saint Mary's School archives.

The inauguration ceremony of the Terra Santa School in Lemesos

Lemesos, 10 (By our correspondent). – On the 19th of the current and at 6 p.m. the newly built Lemesos Terra Santa Nun School will be inaugurated by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Mr Alberto Gori and under the high protection of the Deputy Minister of Education Dr Const. Spyridakis.

During the inauguration, Dr Spyridakis will deliver a speech. An amount of 16,000 pounds was spent for the construction of the school.

(Phileleftheros, 11 June 1966, p. 3)

The opening ceremony of the new Terra Santa School of Lemesos building

Lemesos, 17 (From our correspondent). - On Sunday (tomorrow) at 6 p.m. the opening ceremony of the new Terra Santa School building will take place. The ceremony will be attended and addressed by the Minister of Education, Mr K. Spyridakis. The programme also includes a blessing ceremony by the Latin Patriarch, a greeting by the Educational Envoy of the French Embassy Mr R. Milliex and songs by the school choir.

(Haragvi, 18 June 1966, p. 4)

The inauguration of the Terra Santa School in Lemesos

Yesterday at 6 o'clock in the afternoon, the Latin Patriarch Mr Alberto Gori inaugurated the Terra Santa School in Lemesos. Above in the photo from the inauguration ceremony which was attended by the distinguished (from left to right) N. Pattichis, Mayor of Lemesos, Superior of the Terra Santa School, Lemesos' District Administration Officer Christodoulos Veniamin, the Latin Patriarch Mons. Gori, Mrs S. Kyprianou, the Minister of Education, Dr Spyridakis, Father Flaviano Randon, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr S. Kyprianou, and the wife of the Mayor of Lemesos.

(Alithia, 20 June 1966, p. 1)

Lemesos, 20 (From our correspondent). - Yesterday afternoon, the inauguration of the new majestic building of Terra Santa School took place. The ceremony was attended by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Education, Mr Spyros Kyprianou and Dr Spyridakis, Ambassadors, the Mayor of Lemesos, Mr. Pattichis, Members of Parliament, the Educational Attaché of the French Embassy, school superintendents, teachers, and many parents of students of the school.

At the beginning, a blessing was performed by the Latin Patriarch Mons. Alberto Gori and then Dr Spyridakis addressed the gathering. The Superior of the school then greeted the officials and other attendees. Mr R. Milliex also addressed the ceremony. After the speeches, the school choir sang songs and the ceremony closed with the national anthem. A reception for all officials and other guests followed, hosted by the School Management.

The inaugurated building is a very nice and majestic building, it includes classrooms, a summer and winter theatre for artistic and other events, various other large halls and a church. In total it costed about 160,000 pounds.

(Haragvi, 21 June 1966, p. 5)

The inauguration was attended by local officials and other countries' representatives. Amongst them were the Minister of Education Konstantinos Spyridakis; the Minister of Foreign Affairs Spyros Kyprianou and his wife, Petroni, the Representative of the Latin Religious Group, and his wife; the Ambassador of Italy, the Ambassador of France, Le Baron de Saint Marie, R. Milliex, Cultural Attaché of the French Embassy, and Father Flaviano, Mons. Alberto Gori.



(from left to right) Mère Arsène, Lemesos' District Administration Officer Christodoulos Veniamin, Mons Kaldani, Mons Alberto Gori, Mimi Kyprianou, Minister of Education Konstantinos Spyridakis, P. Flaviano, Minister of Foreign Affairs Spyros Kyprianou, Despoina Pattichi and Mayor of Lemesos Nicos Pattichis at the inauguration ceremony of the new school building, 19 June 1966. Photo Varouj, Saint Mary's School archives.

Newspaper *Alithia* (20 June 1966) records the date the new school was inaugurated (19 June 1966) by the Latin Patriarch Alberto Gori. It also mentions the distinguished guests who were present to honour this event: Mayor of Lemesos Nicos Pattichis, the Superior of Terra Santa School, Lemesos' District Administration Officer Christodoulos Veniamin, the Latin Patriarch Gori, Mimi Kyprianou, Minister of Education Konstantinos Spyridakis, Father Flaviano Randon, Minister of Foreign Affairs Spyros Kyprianou, and the wife of the Mayor of Lemesos Despoina Pattichi.

The moving to the new building and its renaming was also recorded in the Maroniteslive.com website (2020).

The relocation and renaming of the School

Over time the number of students grew and the building was now small and unsuitable for the modern requirements of the time, to the point where the Sisters had to refuse to enrol many students. For this reason, the Sisters decided to build their own school since they were not able to expand the existing one. After many difficulties, on the 10th of February 1965, the foundation stone was laid in the presence of the Most Reverend Father Kevin Mooney, Vicar of the Patriarch of Jerusalem in Cyprus, the District Officer of Lemesos Christodoulos Veniamin and the Mayor of Lemesos Nicos Pattichis. On the 19th of June 1966, the new building was inaugurated by His Beatitude Mons. Alberto Gori, Patriarch of Jerusalem. Before the opening ceremony, it was announced that the new building would be called Agia Maria School [...]. Although there was still construction work under way, classes in the new building began on 1st October 1966.

(Maroniteslive.com)



*Postcard of Saint Mary's
School facade.*

Some students attended the school in both buildings. For example, Anastasia Neocleous attended the school from 1962 to 1968. She studied at *Terra Santa Girls' School* in the old premises for the first three years and then in the new premises for the rest of the three years, at *Saint Mary's School* as it was renamed when the school relocated (Anastasia Neocleous, Interview, 8 February 2023).

Vicky Christodoulou, a student who also attended the new premises of the school (1982-1988) has fond memories of school premises and its location in Lemesos:

“As my mother studied at Terra Santa School, I visited with her the premises on Griva Digeni Street as early as the mid-70s', when the school was still considered relatively recent. My early impressions were of a white, spotlessly clean building, where silence reigned, except for the breaks. With my mother I attended class reunions and walked around the corridors and played in the yard, while the nuns pulled my chubby cheeks...I remember the pristine gardens and the orchard were kept immaculately neat and I believe they still are, which is in our days a blessing given the pollution caused by the suffocating traffic and the unfortunate trend of building new high-rise buildings in the city.

The location of the school was in itself a dynamic affair and everything was within walking distance: To the south there was the municipal park - a regular outing on sunny days - and the seafront, just metres away. I think I can still remember the summer breeze flowing through the windows. To the west, there was my home, in the heart of the buzzy shopping area of Anexartisias Street with its boutiques and regular festivities as well as Agiou Andreou Street and the old part of the town, including the market, the central bus stop and lots of activities. To the west was the upcoming Enaerios area with new cheap restaurants and cafés. To the north was the exciting Arch. Makarios III Avenue with ample choices for food, of bookshops and newly emerging high-end boutiques. You can imagine, the 80s' were a very exciting time! So, the existence of the school in this crossroad of stimulation was just right for teenagers.

(Vicky Christodoulou, student during the 1980s', Interview, 20 January 2023)

I, the author of this book, attended the School in the new premises (1968-1974). I always felt proud of the buildings of my School. Comparing it with other schools of the time that I had visited, although it was built in the 1960s, it seemed so new and modern to me, and so well looked-after. I still felt the same way when I visited it for more than two years for the writing of this book (2020-2023). It still gave me the same feeling of a well-preserved and looked-after school, not only by the school administration, but by the students as well. It has always been a very welcoming building. I feel it now constitutes an architectural treasure of the city of Lemesos and a very distinctive landmark.

The School's atrium perspective: Walls with paintings featuring San Francesco.



The School's atrium perspective: Stage facing the inner courtyard.

Terra Santa was renamed Saint Mary's School after it relocated to its new building and it retains this name to this day. It has also been known as the School of the Nuns or the Nuns' School (Kalogries). The School still operates there today.



Boarding facilities

Since its establishment back in 1923, the School of Nuns also included boarding facilities to the School. This service was another important contribution to the educational needs of both the city of Lemesos and Cyprus in general, during the time it was operational. The boarding facilities operated until 1992 (*Chronicles of the House of Limassol*, 1989-1997). Schoolgirls coming from various remote areas of Cyprus (Kormakitis, Pafos, Asomatos (Keryneias), Lefkosia), as well as from abroad (African countries, England, Greece, etc.) used the boarding school facilities for many years.

This is how the press refers to the boarding school:

There was also a boarding school where girls from various districts of Cyprus came to stay, including the Maronite villages, as well as from abroad. The boarding school closed in 1992 and the bedrooms were converted into classrooms to meet the many requests of parents who wanted their children to attend this school.

(*Maroniteslive.com*).

Antonia Nikita-Loucaidou attended the school from 1959 to 1965 and then taught there for many years. Katina Frangeskou attended the school first as student and boarder, and later on, as a teacher for many years. They talked about their school years in the old school premises:

“As students, the boarding school offered us several things, first of all, the feeling of safety. We had affection and, at the same time, guidance where needed, discipline, planning in our lessons and in our lives, love, tolerance, acceptance of other religions or nationalities and, of course, also at school, teamwork through our participation in team games.

(Antonia Nikita-Loucaidou and Katina Frangeskou, students, and later on teachers of French, Interview, 9 February 2023)

Loretta Donoghue was another student who had memories of the boarding school in the old school premises:

“The boarding school for me is an experience because I spent two years there. Life for the girls in the school boarding house was different from that of the external students, we had more order, discipline and organisation. We had a dormitory with several beds and bunk beds. Every morning we had to get up and make our beds. All the girls had their own bed. A nun would pass by and check if they were laid out correctly. After we got dressed, we went to the little chapel upstairs to say the morning prayer and then we all went downstairs to the dining room for breakfast.



A group of interns at the refectory of the old building. After lunch, the refectory is turned back into a classroom. Saint Mary's School archives 1923-1966.

After a while, it was time for the bell to ring for the external students to come and we all entered together in a row at the internal entrance of the school. We said our prayer all together and each one went to her classroom where the lessons started.

There was also a class where we did needlework. The head of this class was Sister Orestina Taverna, who was a true artist in embroidery. We did all the embroidery by hand and learned to sew a lot of things: table cloths, towels and even sheets. It was something completely new for me, as before these needlework classes, I literally didn't know anything about what a needle was.

After afternoon tea, the interns had an hour or two to play a little in the yard until study time. The yard back at the beginning had gravel. Later on it was cemented and thus it was easier for us to play in the yard. There were also taps for when we wanted to drink water during our breaks and there was also a tank behind the taps and a nice garden with flowers, roses, and lilies, which we often cut thickly and put in the vases in the church.

Several interns were from various villages of Cyprus. Several of them were Maronites. There were also interns of Cypriot origin from other countries, such as from Sudan, the then Belgian Congo, Iraq, etc.

On Sundays, when we didn't have classes, we usually went for a walk to the Public Garden, to the sea, to the pier, then there wasn't the embankment that

exists today. Sometimes they took us to the cinema, if a circus came to town they took us there too, or for an excursion to Troodos, Pafos. Once they also took us to Apostolos Andreas. It was such a long journey that I thought it was on the other side of the world.

(Loretta Donoghue, student from 1956 to 1962, Interview, 8 February 2023)

Karmela Antoniou was a Maronite student at *Saint Mary's School* from 1967 to 1973, and stayed in the school's boarding facilities during that time. She gives a very detailed description of the daily life and activities of the students using these facilities.

“ I came to Lemesos in 1967 on the 30th of September, and I graduated in 1973 on the 28th of June. At that time, we started classes on the 1st of October. We did not yet celebrate Cyprus' Independence Day on 1st October.

We had classes in the morning and afternoon from 8:00 in the morning until 12:00 with a break and in the afternoon from 2:00 until 4:30. The girls staying at the boarding facilities, we would wake up at 6:30 a.m., at 7:00 a.m. we would go down to the dining room for breakfast and then pack our books and get ready for classes. The classmates from outside were coming.

Forty-two interns, most of them Maronites, and teacher Nina with a group of Sisters (1958). Saint Mary's School archives.



At 8:00 a.m. the bell would ring and we would line up by class, say the prayer and then go to our classes. When the first period ended the bell rang. Those students who had to change subjects also had to change classrooms because the teacher of each subject was most often in a certain room and it was the students who changed rooms and went to find the teachers. Then, when the second period ended, we had the long break where we went out to the yard to have something to eat, either something we prepared in the morning or something from the school canteen. Then the bell would ring and the two other periods would follow.

At noon, the external students who could go home to eat went home; those who could not, stayed in the school yard. The girls residing in the boarding facilities used to go to the dining room. There was always the Sister who was in charge of the dining room for the high school girls and another Sister who was in charge of the elementary and kindergarten kids. We would eat and then go out to the yard until it was time to resume classes at 2:00 p.m. and finish at 4:30 p.m.

All the external students left and the boarding school girls had our afternoon meal, the “merenda” as the Sisters called it in Italian, and it was usually a roll. We ate it and then at 5:15 to 7:00 p.m. we had study time.

We had to do all the homework we were given in the various lessons we had throughout the day. We had to catch up within this time, this was our study. Then we went to dinner. Only the final-year students were allowed after dinner to go back to study in another room on the first floor for another hour. The others would go to sleep.

The boarding facilities had five large dormitories. We were separated by age. Each dormitory had a Sister in charge. So after going to bed at 8:00 p.m., we would say our prayer in the corridor and then we would enter the dormitory and go to bed. Each one had a closet where she had her personal belongings. We would go to the toilet, wash, etc. and then go to bed. When we all finished, the Sister would turn off the lights and go to her room which was next to our dormitory because she was responsible for us all night.

In the school boarding facilities there were girls from Pafos, from the whole district of Pafos, from many villages. There were girls from almost all the villages of Lemesos district, Lefkosia and Ammochostos. Saint Francis School in Ammochostos did not have a boarding school, therefore those who wanted their daughters to be boarders sent them to Lemesos. There we also girls from Kormakitis, Asomatos and Lefkosia, basically from almost all of Cyprus and not only from Cyprus, there were from Kenya, from the Belgian Congo, from England, from South Africa. There were also our fellow Turkish-Cypriot citizens who were our classmates, but did not stay in the boarding school. The majority of the girls staying in the school boarding facilities were Orthodox; about 70% were Orthodox and 30% were Catholic.

(Karmella Antoniou, student from 1967 to 1973, Interview, 12 September 2022)

Helen Loucaides was born in East Africa and came to *Saint Mary's* as a boarder in 1968. Although she had difficult times as a boarder, she excelled academically and had a very rewarding professional career. She feels grateful for all the experiences she had at Saint Mary's. During her interview, she first talked about her boarding days:

“ I am of Greek and Cypriot descent and was born in East Africa. When I was 12, my parents decided it would be best for me to attend secondary school in Cyprus, so the only choices I had were, to either stay with relatives and attend a Greek Gymnasium where I would have struggled initially as my Greek was marginal or attend St Mary's All-Girls School in Lemesos as a boarder. I opted for Saint Mary's which I joined in 1968 as it was renowned for teaching French, English, Italian, and Greek.

Boarding life, however, proved an enormous struggle for me as I missed my family and friends in Africa and felt totally displaced. These intense feelings of not belonging quickly turned me against the establishment which I found oppressive and very quickly I became a rebel. If I was to describe my young self at the time, the lyrics from the Sound of Music come to mind “Many a thing you know you'd like to tell her, many a thing she ought to understand, but how do you make her stay, and listen to all you say? How do you keep a wave upon the sand? Oh, how do you solve a problem like Maria? How do you hold a moonbeam in your hand?”

I attribute my ability to work under pressure and communicate with people from all paths of life worldwide as well as the ability to travel at the drop of a hat, to my tough boarding school days in a multi-cultural environment which proved a good preparation for life. I have come to realise that much as I did not enjoy boarding life at St Mary's, it has provided me with an ability to cope with anything that life throws at me.

(Helen Loucaides, student from 1968 to 1974, Interview, 20 March 2023, see also Appendix)

Elenitsa Katsioloudi was born in Asomatos, Keryneia, which is now under Turkish occupation. Elenitsa reminisces her times in the boarding school:

“ I was born in Asomatos, Keryneia. In our family there was a tradition from my grandmother and then my mother, who had also studied at a nunnery school, at Saint Joseph in Lefkosia. Although there was Saint Joseph in Lefkosia where foreign languages were taught, there was no Italian. I went to Saint Mary's because my parents had heard that it was one of the best schools of the time and that four languages were taught at this school. I started school at the age of 6 in primary and finished at the age of 17. I went with my two sisters, the Pavlou family, and with my three cousins, the Karahanna family. So, we went to Saint Mary's as boarders. Every weekend we went back home. My late godfather Joseph Karahanna used to pick us up. I passed all the exams.

I had the opportunity to live in the boarding school for two years before the war in 1974. I have very nice memories of that time, with the older students singing after dinner, playing various group games, playing the piano taught by Sister Charles on Saturdays; she also taught savoir-vivre, good manners that is; we went on nice trips; we often had group meetings, if anyone had a problem, the older ones were always there for us like mothers, even to the girls whose parents were abroad. These were very beautiful years which I remember fondly.

(Elenitsa Katsioloudi, student during the 1970s, Interview, 28 September 2022)

The boarding facilities closed in 1992 (Chronicle of the House of Limassol, 1989-1997), when such service was no longer needed. The space in which it was housed was transformed into modern classrooms, where originally the junior and elementary schools were housed. They are now used as classrooms for all school levels. The students, now, come mainly from Lemesos. They come by bus from the surrounding areas or by family cars (Sister Angelica Hajdihanni Interview, 7 February 2023).

Troodos Sisters' Cottage

Since the 1930s, the Nuns have also been managing a cottage up in the Troodos mountains, leased for 99 years by the Government. Both Sisters and students have been using this facility during summer time. It was also used for summer classes.

Archbishop Makarios III during his visit to the Sisters Community at their cottage in Troodos, among Sisters and students who spent their summer holidays there, July 1971. Saint Mary's School archives.

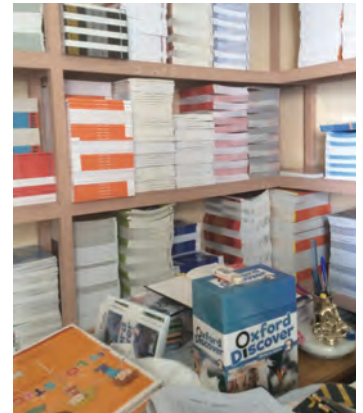




Articraft made with bamboo, present from a student from Africa.

Saint Mary's School premises today

Although built so many years ago (1965), the school's current building facilities are generally considered as one of the prominent buildings-landmarks of Lemesos. They are characterised by a modern functional design, which would be envied even today by any architect who deals with modern school facilities. The school building includes comfortable rooms, and indoor and outdoor theatre, an indoor and outdoor courtyard, sports facilities, a bookshop, and well-kept gardens. It is an example of a functional school building, with all the necessary facilities, well-designed, well-maintained and cared for, which inspires hospitality and friendliness; a second home, as some of the interviewed students referred to it.



The School's bookshop.



Saint Mary's School today.

CHAPTER

6

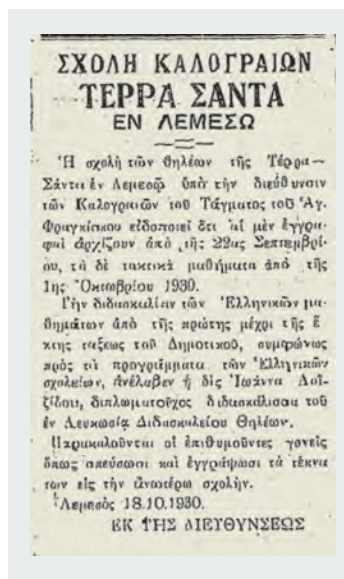
STUDENT
DIACHRONIC
MAPPING

STUDENT DIACHRONIC MAPPING

The driving force of every school, and the reason for its existence is, without a doubt, its students. The examination of the types of students who studied at *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School* during the first 100 years of its history would definitely reveal interesting information about their profile, the number of students who attended, their gender, and their religious and ethnic background. The recording of such information may be of interest to its community (students, parents, and staff), and to others, who are interested in educational matters. The recording of such information may set a systematic background knowledge of the history of the school.

Student enrolment

Every year, early in September, the school informed the community in the local press of the dates of student enrolment and the beginning of the new school year. Here are some examples of such announcements:



Terra Santa Girls' School in Lemesos

The administration of *Terra Santa Girls' School*, of the Franciscan Sisters informs parents who are interest in sending their children to *Terra Santa* that enrolments begin on the 22nd of September and classes on the 1st of October 1930.

Miss Ioanna Loizidou, graduate teacher of the Lefkosia Girls School (Διδασκαλείον) will be teaching Greek. The Greek curriculum follows that of the Greek schools.

(*Chronos*, 20 September 1930, p. 4,

Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)

Terra Santa Girls' School in Lemesos

Enrolments at *Terra Santa Girls' School* begin from the 15th of September till the 1st of October 1932. Parents who are interest in sending their children to *Terra Santa* are required to enrol them soon in order to be ready for classes which start on the 1st of October 1932.

(*Chronos*, 2 September 1932, p. 3,

Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)

Terra Santa Girls' School notification

Terra Santa Girls' School will start classes with the same programme as last year.

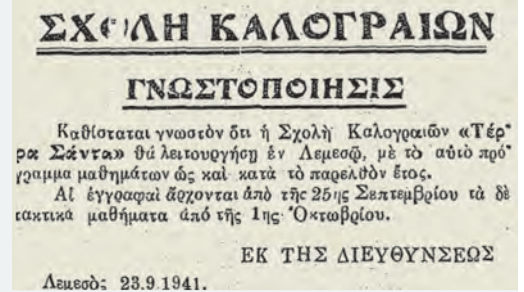
Enrolments begin from the 25th of September and classes start on the 1st of October.

From the School Administration

Lemesos, 23 September 1941

(*Chronos*, 27 September 1941,

Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper



In the *Chronicles of the House of Limassol*, 14 November 1923-14 March 1948, on the 1st of October 1942, it has been recorded that 80 new students had enrolled.

The above are examples of the content of such announcements in the local press, published annually during September. Several such examples can be found in the following newspaper article publications: *Chronos*, 16 September 1925, page 3; *Chronos*, 24 September 1925, page 3; *Chronos*, 20 September 1930, page 4, *Chronos*, 4 October 1930, page 3, *Chronos*, 11 October 1930, page 4; *Paratiritis*, 18 September 1931, page 3; *Chronos*, 2 September 1932, page 3; *Paratiritis*, 3 September 1932, page 5; *Paratiritis*, 25 September 1941, page 4.

Today the school is very popular. Parents are encouraged to enrol their children as soon as possible for pre-school and primary school levels. Often there is a waiting list. For high school, children are required to take entrance exams.

Student records in their historical context

Throughout its history, the school has maintained very good student records, both during its first phase as *Terra Santa Girls' School* and during its latest phase as *Saint Mary's School*. This proves very useful in both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as it supplies insights into a wide range of data and parameters, particularly in an area of the world, where historical and social conditions have had a direct impact on student mobility. Turkish invasion and Turkish occupation of over 36% of the total territory of the Republic in 1974, for example, affected the school in general, not so much because a significant number of students left the school since they had to move to the Turkish-occupied territory of the Republic, and others went overseas, but because it altered part of its distinct, cultural identity. The great changes in the European map and in the Middle East and the great movements of populations also had an impact, as Cyprus became a host country for immigrants, refugees, etc., resulting in the school expanding its multilingual and multicultural profile.

The school has constantly kept detailed records of all the students who attended the school. These are kept in the school archives. These consisted of originally handwritten records and then typed records. There were three types of records:

- New student registration records
- Finance Department records
- Ministry of Education Statistical Services records

Up until 1991, these records were kept in handwritten form by different Sisters and administrative staff of the school. For this reason, the categories of content are not uniform, as different individuals in different time periods kept records in a different manner. Since 1991, the same form provided by the Government Statistical Services has been used, therefore the records are of a more consistent format and content. More detailed description is given below.

In order to examine the records in a manageable manner, the information was grouped into historical phases:

- ▶ First 50 years:
 - *Historical Phase 1 - Early student records (1923-1959)*
 - *Historical Phase 2 - Student records (1960-1973)*
- ▶ Second 50 years
 - *Historical Phase 3 - Student records (1974-1990)*
 - *Historical Phase 4 - Student records (1991-2023)*

These are described below in details.

First fifty years

Historical Phase 1 - Early student records (1923-1959)

As mentioned earlier, the school, originally named *Terra Santa Girls' School*, was founded in 1923 during the British Rule and the Interwar years (1918-1939). The early student records (1923-1960), from the school foundation to the independence of Cyprus from the British Rule and the declaration of independence of the Republic of Cyprus (1960) usually included students' first and family names, place and date of birth, name of person responsible for the student, date of entry at school, date of exit from school, nationality/religion, address and telephone number. The information included the school level students attended (kindergarten to high school); however, this information was not all always fully complete for all students during all the years of this period.



First students with Sisters Denise, Gaudenzia, Mother Elisabetta, Sisters Joannes and Alessandra, 1923-1924. Saint Mary's School archives.

Some of the students had already started their schooling at the Private School of Foreign Languages and Greek Lessons, which was a secondary private school. More than 30 students decided to leave that school and attend *Terra Santa School*. From the beginning, they were taught the four languages.

Lily Houry, a prominent artist in Lemesos

One of the early students of the school was Lily Houry. Later, she became a very prominent citizen of Lemesos. She went to *Saint Mary's* after 1925. She graduated with excellent results. She taught English and French in many secondary schools. Her students described her as very clever. She taught and staged many theatrical plays. She organised school dances and Christmas concerts. All these cultural activities were received with enthusiasm by the community in Lemesos. During times when women were only accepted in society as housewives, mothers, nurses, or teachers the most, Lily Houry pioneered in cultural events (Hadjigeorgiou, 2017, p. 27-31). As Koudounaris concludes, she was “a unique artist [who] offered so much...” She left a vivid mark of “her personality through half a century of artistic creation and contribution.” (Koudounaris, 2018, v. B' pp. 913-914)



Sisters Denise and Elisabetta with the first six graduates of the school, June 1927. Saint Mary's School archives.



Lily Houry (Hadjigeorgiou, 2017).

Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti (1920-2012), one of the most prominent women and government officials in Cyprus



Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti (1920-2012)

Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti (1920-2012), at the 2nd conference of European Ministers of Justice, at the Barberini Palace in Rome, 5-7 October 1962, Patticheion Municipal Museum-Historical Archives and Research Centre of Limassol.



Another one of the early students of the school was Stella Cacoyanni. Later she became one of the most prominent women in Cyprus. Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti was born on 13 February 1920 in Lemesos. She was the daughter of the lawyer Sir Panayiotis Cacoyannnis, and the sister of the internationally renowned film director Michael Cacoyannis. After her studies in Cyprus, and Egypt, she studied at *St James's Secretarial College* in London (1938). Then she worked as a secretary at the then British Colonial Administration of Cyprus. During World War II she was the first Cypriot woman who joined the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1942 and served in Cairo. She retired in 1946 with the rank of lieutenant. She then studied Law at *Gray's Inn* in London (Barrister-at-Law), where she met her future husband, doctor Dimitrios Souliotis. After graduation, she returned to Cyprus where she practiced law at her father's office in Lemesos (1952-1960). That is when she hired Sarah Droussiotou, a *Terra Santa Girls' School* student. Stella Soulioti was the first woman barrister in Cyprus. With the declaration of independence of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, she became Minister of Justice (the first woman in the world to hold such a position) (1960-1970), under the presidency of Archbishop Makarios. (Multilateralism Multicultural Matters. European Union Delegation to the United Nations and Other International Organisations in Geneva (2022)).

After the intercommunal clashes in 1963, she concurrently served as Minister of Health (1964-1966). She then became Cyprus' first Law Commissioner (1971-1984) and Attorney-General of the Republic of Cyprus (1984-1988). She also served as adviser to all the Presidents of the Republic of Cyprus from 1968 to 2008). She contributed to the literature on the Cyprus issue. She was the President of the Cyprus Red Cross (1961-2004), vice-president of the Anti-Cancer Association (1971-1978) and member of the UNESCO Executive Board (1987-1991). Stella Soulioti died in Lemesos at the age of 92 (Koudounaris, 2018, v. B' p. 756; University of Cyprus; Wikipedia; The World Biographical Encyclopedia; Pantelides, 2012; Multicultural Matters, 2022).

In 1997, Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti wrote a 32-chapter autobiographical novel titled *Sensations and Impressions. 1920-1937*, in which she described her childhood, and which she dedicated to her family. Her fourteen-page chapter XX was dedicated to 'The Convent School' as she called *Terra Santa Girls' School*. She went to the "Nun's School" at the age of three for one year. Then she went to "Idiotiki" (the "Private School") when she was four, but she returned to *Terra Santa* a year later, where she studied for seven years. She had very fond reminiscences of the school. Extracts of this autobiography are shared in different parts of this book.

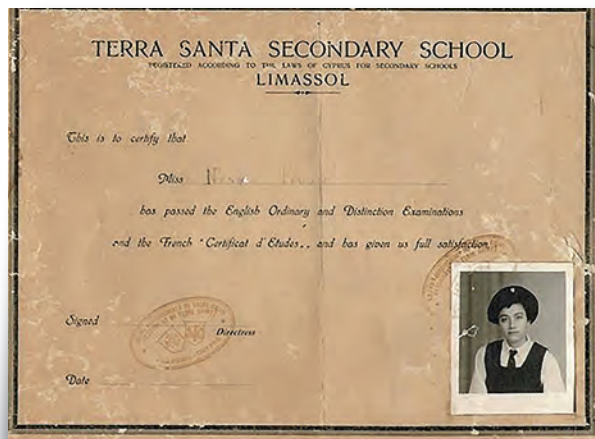
A group of students with a group of nuns and teachers: Jeannette Yiamaki, Sister Orestina, Sister Macrina, Sister Romualda, Mère Paule Descuffi, Sister Émidie, Sister Arsène, Sister Franca, Sister Zéphérine and Marguerite G. 1944-1945. Saint Mary's School archives.





Students with nuns Cecilia, Beatrice, Rosangela, Celina, Ausiliata, Maddalena, Arsène, Denise, Claudia, Charles, Silvestra, Giorgia, Adelina and two teachers Nina and Charitini, 1952, Saint Mary's School archives (photo Edward).

Yucen Rasimoglu, 1954, Certificate of English Ordinary and Distinction Examination and the French Certificat d' Études Primaires.



Historical Phase 2 - Student records (1960-1973)

The second historical phase of the school started with the independence of Cyprus from the British Rule and the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus (1960), and ended in 1973. As of this period, the school constituted part of the educational system of the Republic.

During this period, the students increased in number. Students came from different parts of Cyprus and from other countries. In the 1960s, many students started coming from countries which used to be colonies, e.g., from African countries, when colonies collapsed, and many of them went through a decolonisation period. Due to the increase in student numbers, the student records started being kept separately for each school level (Kindergarten English, Kindergarten Greek, Junior English, Elementary Greek, Secondary).

The new student registration records included the students' first and family names, place and date of birth, name of person responsible for the student, religion and nationality, date of entry at school, date of exit from school, and class attended or diploma obtained (e.g., 4th grade of Gymnasium or General Certificate).

The School Finance Department records of all enrolled students included each student's first and family name, and the school level each student was enrolled in, registration details, fee instalments of each particular year and the total number of students.

The school year 1973-1974 not only marked the end of the first 50 years of the history of the school, but it also coincided with the tragic events, which took place in July-August 1974. The coup staged by the Athens' junta against the elected Government of President Makarios gave Turkey pretext to invade Cyprus five days later (Chrysopoulos, 2022, July 2022). These events had an impact on the student numbers at the time and marked the beginning of a new phase of the school's history.



A group of students with (from left to right) Claude Servoise (French Embassy), Sister Charles, Roger Millieux, Servoise's wife, Mother Arsène, 1967-1968. Saint Mary's School archives.

Second fifty years

Historical Phase 3 - Student records (1974-1990)

During the school's history and until the tragic events of the coup and subsequent Turkish invasion in July 1974, the number of students increased to almost 1,500, including 200 Turkish Cypriots. The Turkish invasion resulted in the Turkish occupation of over 36% of the total territory of the Republic and the displacement of Greek Cypriots, Armenians and Latins who fled their homes becoming refugees in their own country. By the end of 1975, the vast majority of Turkish-Cypriots living in areas controlled by the legitimate Government were forced to leave their homes and move, owing to Turkey's coercive policy, to the Turkish-occupied territory of the Republic of Cyprus. As a result, about 200 Turkish Cypriot students of the school had to move with their families to the Turkish-occupied territory of Cyprus, thus their attendance at Saint Mary's School was terminated. At the same time, refugees who were displaced from the north started attending the School. Many students also left Cyprus due to these events. The number of students generally decreased to about 700 students (1974-1975). Maroniteslive.com describes these events:

Due to the tragic events of 1974, the number of schoolgirls decreased. About 200 Turkish Cypriots left for the north, as did other Cypriots who went abroad. But the Sisters continued with courage, prayer and trust in God. Pupils who attended the school Saint Francis which also belonged to the Franciscan Sisters in Ammochostos, came and knocked on the door of the School of Agia Maria, on Georgiou Griva Digeni Street, already knowing the level and service. So, very quickly the number increased again.

(Maroniteslive.com website)

This period is characterised by a change in the background of the students enrolling at the school.

As during the previous period, the school student records during this period were also recorded separately for each school level (Kindergarten English, Kindergarten Greek, Junior English, Elementary Greek, Secondary) in both the new student registration records and the School Finance Department records.

The new student registration records included the students' first and family names, place and date of birth, name of person responsible for the student, religion and nationality, date of entry at school, date of exit from school, and class attended or diploma obtained (e.g., 4th grade of Gymnasium or General Certificate).

The School Finance Department records of all enrolled students included each student's first and family name, and the school level each student was enrolled in, registration details, fee instalments of each particular year and the total number of students.



Historical Phase 4 - Student records (1991-2023)

The identity of the students gradually changed during this period. Students of numerous other religions and nationalities attended the school.

This period is characterised by a change in the way student records were kept. From 1991 onwards, information was required by the Government Statistical Service (GSS), so the records have been kept using the GSS's form.

This form included the school details (name, address, town, and telephone number), number of students per level, date of birth, gender, number of Cypriot students categorised according to the community/religious group they belong to, number of foreign students and their nationality, number of students per

Sister Annunciata's Class of Italian, 1971-1972. Amongst the 42 students are Greek, Turkish, Maronite and other nationality students. Salomi Papadima's personal archives.

level and section, language(s) of instruction, student data of previous school year, number of graduate students of that year.

The GSS form also included number of non-teaching staff and description of their work, number of teaching staff, their gender, working status (full or part-time) and weekly teaching load, information of technology-based instruction: Number of computers, access to the Internet, number of teaching staff using the Internet for teaching purposes, number of students using computers at school and purposes, total of teaching periods with the use of computers and purposes. This period was characterised by the uniformity of information.

Students and teachers in class, 1998-1999. Saint Mary's School archives.



Saint Mary's Graduates, 24 June 2000. Saint Mary's School archives.



Student Information

Aims of student information examination

The examination of the student records aimed to establish the following information:

- The total number of students who attended the school during the first 100 years of its history, as they were kept annually in the school records.
- The number of girls and boys who attended the school during this time.
- The school levels the students attended.
- The students' religion and nationality.

Student information examination and difficulties encountered

As described, during the different historical phases, the student information was recorded in various different ways, as they were recorded by different persons during the 100 years of the school's history. As a result, the examination of the student information posed some difficulties:

- **Total number of students in the first 100 years of the school and in every school year:** This posed some difficulty as the information was recorded in different record books and this created a difficulty in finding the information from all these different sources and recording it accurately.
- **Student gender:** Some records included this information and some did not. When the gender was not recorded, the only way to work it out was by checking the names of the students. This involved careful attention in order to identify the gender of some names such as Turkish, Armenian, etc.
- **School levels:** Some records indicated the school level the students attended, that is Kindergarten, Junior English School, Elementary Greek School, Secondary, and some did not. This made it challenging to identify the number of students in all the years in these different levels.
- **Community/religion and nationality:** The religion and nationality of the students from 1923 to 1990 were either recorded differently during different phases of this period or not recorded for all students or not recorded at all for some. The clearest and most consistent records are from 1991 to date. This is because the records were kept according to the template required by the Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus the school had to fill in and send to the Service. This clearly indicates the number of students per school year, the number of boys and girls, the school level they attended, the community/religious group they belonged to and the students' nationality.

It is also important to notice the following:

- When the school started, Cyprus was a British Colony. For this reason, the Cypriot students were referred to as British. After the declaration of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, Cypriot students' nationality was referred to as 'Cypriot'.
- Many students also referred to as students from the UK were actually children of Greek Cypriot migrants with British citizenship. This was also the case for other Cypriots such as Turkish Cypriots, Armenians, etc.

Registration records of 1923:
First 53 students, four boys
and 49 girls, Saint Mary's
School archives.

From the examination of the school student records, the following information was extracted:

	1923 - 1924			
<i>№</i>	Prenom	Nom	Paternite	Lieu de
1	Ambrotou	Olise	Nichel	Limasol
2	Ambrotou	Lily	Nichel	Limasol
3	Ambrotou	Nida	Nichel	
4	Ahla	Yvonne		
5	Andriou	Marie	Anastasio	Limasol
6	Andriou	Hecandra	Hiracles	Limasol
7	Andriou	Andronique	Hiracles	Limasol
8	Berlin	Andri		
9	Baltista	Cassula	Costa	Naxos
10	Barged	Marie	Albert	Ida
11	Chistodoulidou	Suzerete	Antoine	Limasol
12	Cocosta	Althousla	Marro	Limasol
13	Christou	Marie		
14	Davidlian	Virginie	Barabeh	Adana
15	Davidlian	Vianouche	Barabeh	Adana
16	Desmoulet	Roni	Jacques	
17	Delfinidou	Anglique	Demetri	Limasol
18	Francis	Marie	Joseph	Limasol
19	Francis	Alexandra	Joseph	Limasol
20	Fahel	Lily	Dipis	Limasol
21	Georgelidian	Skanoush	Calos	Adana
22	Georgiadou	Loulou	Gergis	Limasol
23	Georgiadou	Christine	Jean	Limasol
24	Hadjiannou	Persa	Constantin	Limasol
25	Hoti	Gene	Christos	Chios
26	Hadjiorgiou	Ermine	Kiriacos	Limasol
27	Hadjianidou	Marilia	Leon	Limasol
28	Kander	Raymond		
29	Nichailidou	Christalla	Christos	Limasol

	1923 - 1924			
<i>№</i>	Prenom	Nom	Paternite	Lieu de
30	Nikiforos	Chionita		
31	Soultan	Marie	Nichel	Limasol
32	Sichailidou	Sione	Nichel	Limasol
33	Surray	William		
34	Sudgo	Suzerete	Javre	Limasol
35	Nicolaidou	Melene	Jordanis	Nicosia
36	Takavallamb	Chonis	Gergis	Limasol
37	Tatiki	Evantzia	Antonios	Limasol
38	Tandazi	Maroula	Kiriacos	Limasol
39	Santi	Lydia		
40	Sava	Thyriacoula	Jean	Limasol
41	Stamonidou	Sine	Nichel	Alexandria
42	Silivrou	Dostina	J	Beyrot
43	Coubia	Cathoune	Jean	Limasol
44	Coubia	Sophie	Jean	Limasol
45	Coubia	Naki	Jean	Limasol
46	Coubia	Therese	Jean	Limasol
47	Coubia	Philomenie	Joseph	Limasol
48	Coubia	Siliane	Joseph	Limasol
49	Coubia	Amelie	Joseph	Limasol
50	Vassilow	Papa	Stefanos	Limasol
51	Lion	Calourene	Jean	Limasol
52	Lion	Despina	Jean	Limasol
53	Lion	Lella	Jean	Limasol
		Marie		

Student numbers and gender (1923-2023)

The school was founded by the Franciscan Sisters to cater for the particular educational needs of girls of their religion. The school first operated with 53 children (school archives) from the surrounding parish, in its first building, at 306 Agiou Andreou Street, where the offices of the Lemesos Diocese are currently housed.

This is confirmed on the website of the Maronites:

In 1923 there were 53 high school and elementary school students, while in 1928 there were already 96 and in 1938 there were 120, regardless of race, religion and social class.

(Maroniteslive.com website)

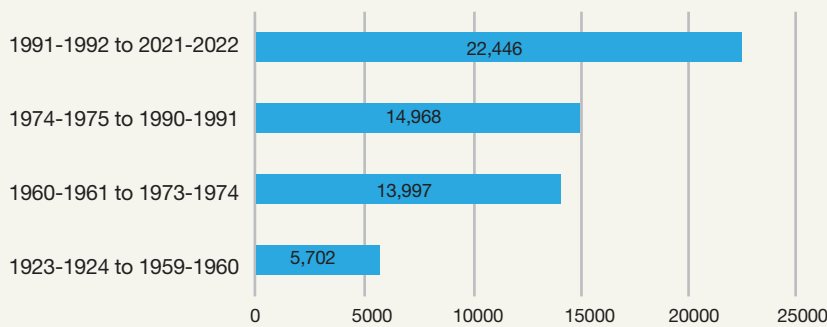
Number of students

The school started in 1923 with 53 students. Based on the school annual enrolment records examined, 57,113 students attended the school in its first 100-year history. The following chart indicates the ascending course of the school student population which marks a 1000% increase from 1923 to 2022:

1923-1924 to 1959-1960	5,702
1960-1961 to 1973-1974	13,997
1974-1975 to 1990-1991	14,968
1991-1992 to 2021-2022	22,446

TOTAL:	57,113

Graph 1: Total number of students



Number of girls and boys

According to the records, and despite peoples' impressions of Saint Mary's being a girls' school only, boys attended *Saint Mary's School* from the very beginning. The very first 53 students who enrolled in 1923 consisted of 48 girls and five boys. This mixed nature of the school continued throughout its 100-year history, despite the fact that the girls were more than the boys. The boys attended mostly the kindergarten and then elementary schools, until 2000 when boys started attending secondary school. The numbers recorded in the Student Records evidence this fact:

- 1923-1924 to 1959-1960

In the period from 1923-1924 to 1959-1960, the total number of students and student registrations in all School levels was 5,702: 5,061 girls and 641 boys (Registration Records) (Appendix: Period 1923-1960, Source: Student Registrations/Enrolments).

- 1960-1961 to 1973-1974

According to the new student registration records, in the period from 1960-1961 to 1973-1974, there were 4,345 student registrations in total (3,791 girls and 554 boys). During the same period, according to the information recorded by the Finance Department, there were 13,997 students in total attending the school: 13,077 girls and 920 boys (Appendix: Period 1960-1961 to 1973-1974, Sources: Student Registrations and School Finance Department).

- 1974-1975 to 1990-1991

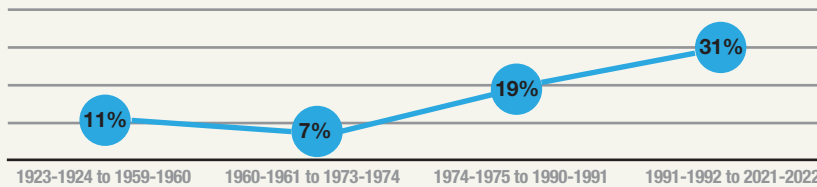
According to the new student registration records, in the period from 1974-1975 to 1990-1991, there was a total number of 1,633 student registrations (1,578 girls and 55 boys). During the same period, according to the information recorded by the Finance Department, there were 14,968 students in total attending the school: 12,193 girls and 2,775 boys (Appendix: Period 1974-1975 to 1990-1991, Sources: Student Registrations and School Finance Department).

- 1991-1992 to 2022-2023

According to the new student registration records, in the period from 1991-1992 to 2022-2023, there were 2,035 student registrations in total (1,561 girls and 474 boys). During the same period, according to the information recorded by the Finance Department for the Statistical Service, there was a total number of 22,446 students attending the school: 15,524 girls and 6,922 boys (Appendix: Period 1960-1961 to 1973-1974, Sources: Student Registrations and School Records for Government Statistical Service).

	GIRLS	BOYS	TOTAL
1923-1924 to 1959-1960:	5,061	641	5,702
1960-1961 to 1973-1974	13,077	920	13,997
1974-1975 to 1990-1991	12,193	2,775	14,968
1991-1992 to 2021-2022	15,524	6,922	22,446
	45,855	11,258	57,113

Graph 2: Percentage of boys throughout the years



These figures are based on the various records kept by the school. They give a general idea of the population of the school throughout the years. Based on the records described above, 57,113 students attended the school in its first 100 years of history: 45,855 girls and 11,258 boys.

Student religion/community and nationality (1923-2023)

Although the school was founded by the Franciscan Sisters to cater for the particular educational needs of girls of their religion, the very first 53 students who enrolled in 1923 included Orthodox (26), Catholics (20), Protestants (3), Armenians (3) and not indicated (1). This is an interesting founding because it evidences that, despite peoples' general beliefs, from its very beginning, the school has been reflecting religious and national diversity.

Diachronically, the students attending the school were of the following religion/community and nationalities, as recorded in the school's archives:

*Historical Phase 1: 1923-1959**Religion/Nationality*

During the first historical phase (1923-1960), the school ethnic and religious diversity consisted of the following:

13 religions	18 nationalities
Orthodox	Greek Cypriot, Russian, British, Arab, Armenian
Catholic	British*, Arab*, Armenian*, Italian, Jewish, Lebanese, Austrian, Polish, Iraqi, Syrian, French, Maronite
Protestant	British*, German
Gregorian	Armenian*
Schism	Cypriot, British*, Armenian*
Maronite	Catholic, Arab, British
Muslim	Cypriot Turk, British*, Arab*
Latin	Cypriot, British*, Italian*, Greek, Arab*
Jewish	Israeli, British*, Hungarian
Anglican	Hungarian*
Chaldean	Iraqi*
Church of England	British*
Greek Melkite Arab	Arab*

*Nationalities with an asterisk appear more than once.

As mentioned earlier, the school has always been characterised by ethnic and religious diversity since its foundation. During the first historical phase (1923-1959), the school population consisted of students of a diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, the majority of which were Greek Orthodox Cypriots. A total of 13 religions and 18 nationalities have been recorded. It is interesting to note the number of nationalities compared to the number of religions. It is also interesting to note that religion and nationality are recorded interchangeably (e.g., Maronite, Jewish).

*Historical Phase 2: 1960--1973**Religion/Nationality*

The diversity in religion and nationality continues to be reflected in the student population also during the second historical phase of the school.

18 religions	38 nationalities
Orthodox	Greek Cypriot, Armenian, Greek, British, American, Australian, Romanian, Swedish, Sudanese, German, Yugoslav, South African, Tanganyika, Presbyterian, Bulgarian, Jordanian, Zairian, Rhodesian, Russian
Catholic	Cypriot, British*, Arab, Austrian, Italian, Spanish, French, Congo, Lebanese, Latin Jordanian
Protestant	Cypriot*, British*, American*, South African*, Danish
Armenian	Cypriot*, British*
Maronite	Cypriot*
Muslim	Turkish Cypriot, Australian*, Arab*, Pakistani
Latin	Cypriot*, British*, Arab*, Italian*, American*,
Israeli	Jewish British*
Church of England	British*
Church of Scotland	British*
Roman Catholic	Cypriot*, British*, Congo*, Holland, Italian*, French*, Portuguese, Côte D'Ivoire, Bulgarian*, German*, Yugoslav*
Methodist	British*
Lutheran	Danish*
Baptist	British*
Church of England	British*
Orthodox Maronite	British*
Not indicated	Scottish
Israeli	
Hindu	

*Nationalities with an asterisk appear more than once.

During this period, although the majority of students were still Greek Orthodox Cypriots, the number of students of different religions and nationalities

continued to increase. A total of 18 religions and 38 nationalities have been noted. Again, the number of nationalities is bigger compared to the number of religions. Religion and nationality continue to be recorded interchangeably (e.g., Maronite, Jewish).

Historical Phase 3: 1974-1990

Religion/Nationality Religion/Nationality

During the third historical phase, the students represented the following religions and nationalities:

31 religions	52 nationalities
Orthodox African Armenian	Greek Cypriot, Holland, Greek, Australian (CY), (CY), South African, British (CY), Armenian, Armenian
nian,	Lebanese, American, Zambian, Rhodesian, Zimbabwean, Swedish, Canadian, Syrian, German, Romanian,
Catholic Catholic Roman Catholic	Yugoslav, Filipino, Ugandan, Italian, Jordanian, Lebanese, Syrian, Bulgarian, French Maronite, Armenian*, Italian, Greek*, Greek Palestinian, Greek Lebanese, Greek Moroccan Cypriot, British*, German*, Italian*, Sudanese, Polish, Filipino*, Lebanese*, Portuguese, Canadian*, Danish, Greek*, Belge, Trinidad & Tobago, Ethiopian, Jordanian*,
nian*,	Palestinian, Maronite British, French*, Yugoslav*, Austrian, Irish, American*, Iranian, Polish*, Indian
Protestant	British*, South African*, Lebanese*
Armenian	Cypriot*, Lebanese*
Maronite	Cypriot*, British*, Lebanese*, American*
Muslim	Cypriot*, Syrian*, British*, Lebanese*, Egyptian, Jordanian*, Australian*, Arab, American*, Zairian, Iranian*, Iraqi, Pakistani, Israeli, Palestinian
Latin	Cypriot*
Israeli	
Church of England	British*

Church of Scotland	
Methodist	
Lithuanian	British*
Baptist	
Church of England	
Orthodox Maronite	
Not indicated	
Israeli	
Copte-Maronite	Lebanese*
Copte-Catholic	Lebanese*
Evangelian	British*
Humanist	British*
Chalden Cat.	Iraqi*
Reformed	Hungarian
Druze	Lebanese*
New Apostolic	German*
Anglican	British*
Buddhist	
Bahai	
Jehovah	Cypriot*
Melkite	

**Nationalities with an asterisk appear more than once.*

During the third historical phase, a total of 31 religions and 52 nationalities have been noted. Again, although the majority of students were Greek Orthodox Cypriots, the number of nationalities is bigger compared to the number of religions. Religion and nationality continue to be recorded interchangeably (e.g., Maronite, Jewish).

Historical Phase 4: 1991-2023

During this period, student information was recorded on the forms provided by the Statistical Service. In these forms, the students' religious and ethnic background was recorded separately: Community/religion and Nationality.

Community/Religion 1991-2023

During the fourth historical phase students of 21 different communities/religions attended the school, the majority of which were Greek Orthodox Cypriots:

Greek Orthodox Cypriot	Muslim Lebanese	Lutheran
Greek from Greece	Roman Catholic	Christian Gregorian
Turkish Cypriot	Protestant	Gregorian
Armenian	Methodist	Martyr of Jehovah
Maronite	Church of England	Coptic
Latin	Buddhist	Baptist
Cypriot refugees	Evangelist German	
	Chaldean Iraqi	

It is evident from the number of religions represented in the school student population that, although the school is Catholic, and although the majority of students have always been Greek Orthodox Cypriots, the school has always embraced other religions. As a result, families of other faiths have been entrusting their children in the hands of this school and have chosen to give their children the education and values that this school offers.

Nationality 1991-2023

According to the school records, during the fourth historical phase students of 87 different nationalities attended the school, the majority of which were Greek Orthodox Cypriots:

Greek	Filipino	Dominican Republic
British	Polish	Spanish
Irish	Finish	Bosnian
American	Zairean	Persian
Lebanese	Bulgarian	Lithuanian
Arab	Zimbabwean	Sudanese
Egyptian	Venezuelan	Belgian
Arab Egyptian	Yugoslavian	Swedish
Jordanian		

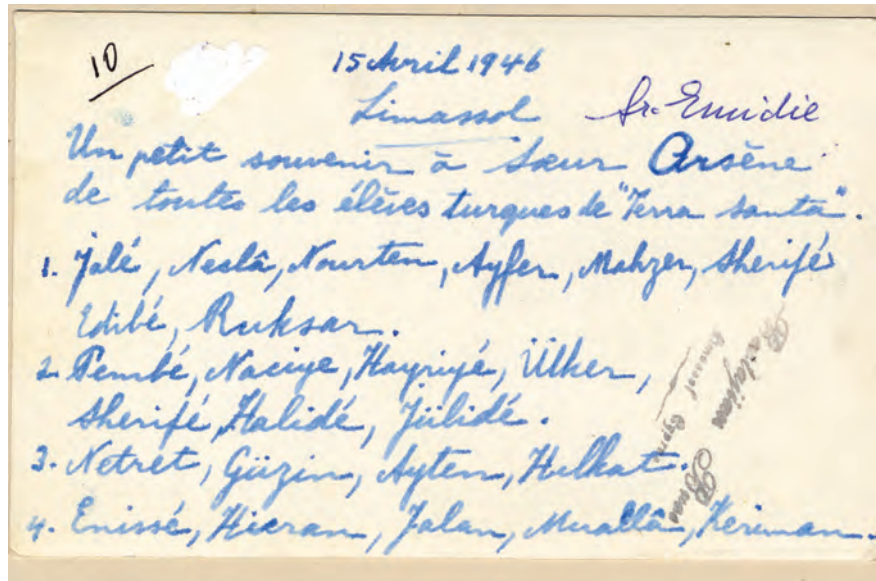
Iraqi	Hungarian	Gregorian
Syrian	Russian	Letonian
Pakistani	Mexican	Israeli
French	Georgian	Greek Pontian
Greek from Greece	Moroccan	Estonian
American	Ugandans	Luxemburg
Canadian	Serbian	Maltese
Brazilian	Armenian Egyptian	Holland
Palestinian	Ukrainian	Portugal
Kuwait	Armenian Yemeni	Slovakian
Australian	Singaporean	Slovenian
Syrian	Dutch	Czech
Romanian	Thai	Finns
Austrian	Latvian	Belarus
French	Nigerian	Türkiye
German	Croatian	Montenegro
Japanese	Moldavian	Sri Lankan
South African	Tunisian	Albanian
Indian	Bangladeshi	Sudanese
	Seychellois	Tartar

Although the majority of students have been Greek Orthodox Cypriots, the number of nationalities of the students attending *Saint Mary's school* during this period is undoubtedly phenomenal. It reflects the mosaic of the society of current Cyprus, which goes beyond the two main communities, Greeks Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot and the minorities of Cyprus, Maronites, Latins and Armenians, and embraces nationalities from the whole world, who follow the current trend of leaving their countries for various reasons (profession, war, displacement, etc.) and decide to live in Cyprus.

15 April 1946:
A small souvenir sent to Sister
Arsène from all the Turkish
students of Terra Santa Girls
School. Saint Mary's School
archives.



On the back of of the photo-
graph 1. Jale, Neclâ, Nurten,
Ayfer, Mahzer, Sherfés, Edilé,
Ruksan, 2. Pembé, Naciye,
Hayriyé, Ülker, Sherifé,
Halidé, Jülide, 3. Netret, Güzin,
Ayten, Hilkat, 4. Enissé, Hi-
cran, Jalan, Muallâ, Keriman.



I, the author of this book, remember that, when I attended the school (1968-1974), the students came from all parts of Cyprus, and from many different parts of the world. They also represented different social standing. They were of different religious and ethnic backgrounds. I had friends of Greek, Turkish, Latin, and British background. Litsa Tomazidou was of Greek Cypriot parents. Marie-Louise Mavridou was of Maronite background. Jean Longridge's father was Irish and her mother was Greek Cypriot. Marina Zamboglou's parents were Greek Cypriot.

Helen Loucaidou was of Greek background. Her parents lived in Kenya and she was sent to *Saint Mary's School* to study and live in the school boarding facilities. Catherine Tyler's father was British and her mother was Greek Cypriot. We also had many classmates of Turkish Cypriot background. Unfortunately, they had to leave school and Lemesos and were forced to move to the Turkish-occupied territory of the Republic after the tragic events of 1974. Two of them were my neighbours, of a Turkish Cypriot father and a Greek Cypriot mother. They had to choose where to stay. I also remember classmates from Pafos, Kormakitis and many other parts of Cyprus. Religious and ethnic issues never distracted our relationships. We were not aware or conscious of them, even during difficult times between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. I am still in contact with most of them. Two of my current best friends are two of my school year classmates and friends. And although I spent 27 years overseas, and some of them live in other countries such as Greece and the UK, distance is not an issue. I have life-long friendships since my *Saint Mary's School* years.

Total number of graduates in the 100 years

It was reasonable to wonder how many graduates the school had in its 100 years of operation; how many children were educated and prepared as citizens, for the local community and beyond. The numbers speak for themselves: On the year of its foundation in 1923 the school started with 53 students; however, the number of students gradually increased, reaching a point where the demand could not be met.

Although the school was originally founded to cater for Catholic girls, from the beginning and during all the periods of its history it embraced not only girls but also boys, and not only Catholic students but students of any religion and any nationality. And although there was some concern at times by certain members of the community in Lemesos and Cyprus in general that the large number of the school's student population of Orthodox Greek Cypriot background were in danger of being proselytised, this concern proved wrong. If this had been the case, a very large part of the Cypriot population would have been Catholic instead of Orthodox by now.

In total, some 57,113 students (45,855 girls and 11,258 boys) of somewhat 31 religions and 87 nationalities attended the school in its 100-year long history. It was interesting to discover that many of the school students were members of the same family. Children of different generations, for example, grandmothers, mothers, daughters and sons, like the Katsioloudis family, attended the school. The school continues to enjoy the trust of many parents, since parents of hundreds of children of different religions and nationalities have been continuing to entrust the education of their children to *Saint Mary's*, for the last 100 years.



Summer school uniform.

CHAPTER

7

STAFF DIACHRONIC
PROFILE

STAFF DIACHRONIC PROFILE

According to a tribute on the *Maronite Press* to *Saint Mary's School*, “on 14 November 1923, the first sisters, Ad. Gaudenzia Tevini from Italy and Ad. Ioannes Ruchini from Rhodes, while a few days later four more arrived from Istanbul and America”

(Maroniteslive.com website)

The first years *Terra Santa Girls' School* operated, the teaching staff consisted only of Sisters of the Franciscan Order. The first Sisters who were asked to come and lead the foundation of *Terra Santa Girls' School* in Lemesos were educated and spoke languages.

In the 1930s, the need to employ non-clerical staff was soon apparent as the Sisters were no longer enough in numbers to be able to meet the teaching needs of the school. Thus, the school began to appoint teachers from the city of Lemesos and other areas in teaching positions for different subjects. Secular staff continue to teach throughout the life of the school.

During those days, there was shortage of qualified teachers in general. Schools tried to meet their teaching needs in different ways. Greek Cypriot community schools, for example, used to ask older good students in their classes to teach the younger students. At *Terra Santa Girls' School*, some of the teachers who joined the teaching staff were former excellent students of the school who were granted scholarships and were sent to Italy and France for teacher training (*Katina Frangeskou, Interview 15 March 2023*). In that way, the school also achieved some continuity and relevance of subjects, as these teachers taught subjects they had previously been taught as students. As matters improved and more people gained teaching qualifications, these became prerequisites, not only by the schools but also by the educational Authorities, for example by the Ministry of Education, after the proclamation of the Republic of Cyprus.

School principals

From the beginning of its foundation until today, the School of Agia Maria (*Saint Mary's School*) had six principals, who also taught, and of whom the first four were also Superiors of the monastery:

- Sister M. Elisabetta Missio, 1923-1931
- Mother Liduina Tasser, 1931-1941
- Mother Paule Descuffi, 1941-1946, Principal and Superior
- Mère Arsène Fantin, 1946-1982 Principal and Superior
- Sister Josephine Vrahimi, 1982-2022, Principal
- François Michel Delolme, 2022 to the present day, Principal

Mother Elisabetta Missio of Saint Francis, Erminia Missio (1868-1947)

Mother Elizabeth (Elisabetta) of Saint Francis was born in Italy on 4 February 1868 of Italian parents. She then joined the Franciscan Sisters in Gemona of Friuli, Italy on 20 December 1882. In August 1887, she went to the USA. There, she was sent to different places to serve. Sister Elizabeth came to Cyprus from Peekskill USA on 16 January 1924 and was appointed Superior of the Community and Principal of the school until 1931. On 9 August 1933, she went back to New York. On 3 (or 4) September 1947 she died. In the *Chronicle of the House of Limassol* of the Franciscan Sisters 1923-1948, she is described as a person of rare goodness and spirit of charity and dedication who has helped tremendously in the development of the religion and the educational community.

Mother M. Liduina Tasser of St. Joseph, Filomena Tasser (1891-1965)

Mother Liduina was born on 14 February 1891 in Taufers in Austria. Mother Liduina carried out important religious and educational duties in America, Cyprus and Italy. When she came to Cyprus on October 1931, she replaced Sister Elizabeth Missio in Terra Santa School in Lemesos and served as the Superior and School Principal from 1931 to 1941. According to *The Chronicle of the House of Limassol* of the Franciscan Sisters 1923-1948, she was very well respected and her work left a mark in the religious and educational mission of her Order. She left Cyprus in 1941 and went to the USA with other American sisters because of World War II. She then went to Gemona where, according to the *Chronicle of Gemona*, for six years, she was an incomparable teacher and educator. She died on 22 August 1965 in Udine in Italy (*Pace e Bene – Periodico delle suore Francescane Miss. Del Sacro Cuore Anno XXIX No 3-July-September 1965*).



Mother Elisabetta Missio of Saint Francis. Saint Mary's School archives.



Mother M. Liduina Tasser. Saint Mary's School archives.

Mother Paula Descuffi. Saint Mary's School archives.



Mother Paula Descuffi (1879-1951)

Mother Paula Descuffi was born in Constantinople to Giorgio Descuffi and Vittoria Suggiani on 19 January 1879. She became a nun and served the church in different roles in Italy, Turkey, Cyprus, etc. In Constantinople, she worked at “Santa Elisabetta” school. She had a great rapport with students and always encouraged them to excel in their studies. She was admired for her intelligence and her education (*Sister Angelica Hajdihanni, Interview, 7 February 2023*). On 11 October 1932 she moved to Cyprus, where she replaced Liduina Tasser. She continued her work at *Terra Santa School* with enthusiasm as Principal and Superior and she courageously faced the difficulties of the war, supporting others, and attracting the sympathy of the English Governor, who developed interest in the school and protected it during those difficult times (Inter War and World War II). When she felt she could no longer carry out her duties, due to her health, she asked to be discharged. She was transferred to Rome, where she was later elected as one of the advisors of the General Superior (*Sr Paola Descuffi-Biografia. Periodico delle suore F.D.S.C. Year XV no 6, December 1951*). She died in Rome on 1 November 1951.

Mother Arsène Fantin. Saint Mary's School archives.



Mother Arsène Fantin (1909-1999)

Daughter of Giuseppe and Caterina, Mother Arsène Fantin was born on 26 April 1909 in Vallonara, in the province of Vicenza in Italy. At the age of 16, on 9 November 1925, she entered the convent at the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, in the city of Treviso. She professed on 24 October 1928 in the Mother House of Gemona, Italy. A month later, and precisely on 19 November,

Sister Arsenia began her missionary life, leaving her homeland and travelling by train to Constantinople, Turkey. After so many difficulties, and a long and tiring journey, she arrived in "an ugly house" where she lived with a community of "elderly nuns in great poverty". She began to work with the youth, in the "Saint Elizabeth" school, supervising, playing and studying and practising French. The following year she took her exams and was hired as a French teacher.

On 21 October 1937, she arrived in Lemesos in the *Terra Santa School* as a teacher of French. This is how she described her first impression:

I arrived in 1937 and found ten nuns. Lemesos had eighteen to twenty thousand inhabitants. There were no cars, only five or six in the whole city. We were travelling in carriages. The house of Pilavakis, today's municipal library, was one of the most important buildings in Lemesos. All the houses were one- or two-storey houses. Our school was one of the most beautiful buildings in the city. It was built by the excellent Maltese architect Joseph Gaffiero. The main street was Agiou Andreou. I remember in the beginning when I was looking to find the main street of the city, I felt like I was living in a village. The public garden nearby was very small, there were only fields.

(*Phileleftheros*, 24 May 1990, p. 1, Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)

Sister Arsène Fantin served *Saint Mary's School* for many years (1937-1987: Teacher of French, 1946-1982: School Principal, 1987-1996: School Treasurer) (*Community of Lemesos, Cyprus, Sister School Year Records*). Sister Arsène Fantin, also known as 'Mère Arsène', replaced Mother Paule Descuffi and became the new principal of the school. The changeover was recorded in the *Chronicle of the House of Limassol in 1946*:

November 25, 1946

Change of Superior

Sister Arsène Fantin is appointed to replace Sister Paule Descuffi whose resignation was accepted by the Most Reverent Mother General in August.

Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 14 November 1923-14 March 1948, Saint Mary's School archives

As seen earlier in the book, the school premises in Agiou Andreou Street proved inadequate for the needs of the school. Mother Arsène took the lead in pursuing the idea of building a new school. This was a big endeavour and presupposed lots of work and sacrifices. However, the whole community pursued the project and the result was the building of the new school.

Because of her work carried out with love and dedication in the school, first in the old *Terra Santa* and then in *Saint Mary's*, Sister Arsène had been honoured several times by the French and Italian Republics: On 17 February 1953 she was awarded the title with decoration of "Officier d' académie" for the service rendered to the French culture. On 15 September 1957 she was awarded the star of the second-class Italian solidarity with decorations by the President of the Italian Republic. On 31 July 1970 the French Prime Minister promoted her to 'Commandeur' to the order of Academic Palms with decorations. On 12 January 1983 she was awarded the rank of Knight of the National Order of Merit, with decoration, by the President of the Italian Republic. On 29 May 1990 she was honoured with the title of the Knight of the National Order of Merit, with decoration, by the President of the French Republic. She died on 28 September 1999 at 2 p.m. (*Saint Mary's School Archives*).

Below: Phileleftheros, 10 November 1990, p. 2, Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy

The local press covered a ceremony honouring her:

For her 60-year contribution, as a teacher of the French language and culture as well as for a series of humanitarian actions, Madeleine Fantin was recently honoured by the French Ambassador in Lefkosia, Mr Daniel Husson, with the award of a special distinction from the French Government.

Madeleine Fantin, known as "Mère Arsène", was headmistress of Saint Mary's School, Lemesos from 1946 until 1988. Fantin was born in Vicenza, Italy in 1909. Below is a snapshot from the ceremony honouring "Mère Arsène":

(Phileleftheros, 10 November 1990, p. 2, Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)



ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ 60χρονη προσφορά της, ως δασκάλας της γαλλικής γλώσσας και κουλτούρας καθώς και για μια σειρά ανθρωπιστικές πράξεις, τιμήθηκε πρόσφατα η Madeleine Fantin, από τον Γάλλο πρέσβη στη Λευκωσία κ. Daniel Husson, με την απονομή ειδικής διάκρισης της Γαλλικής κυβέρνησης. Η Madeleine Fantin, γνωστή ως «Μητέρα Αρσένη», διετέλεσε διευθύντρια του σχολείου «Σαιντ Μάρις», στη Λεμεσό από το 1946 μέχρι και το 1988. Η Fantin γεννήθηκε στη Βιεντζα, της Ιταλίας το 1909. Στη φωτογραφία στιγμιότυπο από την τελετή κατά την οποία επιμήθη η «Μητέρα Αρσένη».

She was considered by all to be the Mother. She was, in fact, always called "Mother Arsène" or "Mère Arsène", and as a former student said during the funeral, "Mère Arsène', our sweet mother... at the call of divine grace you have denied yourself and you have offered your whole being to God and to people.... We are grateful for your simple, angelic personality You are an excellent guide for generations and generations. You have directed for many years a school that is not only recognised for its high education, but an exception because it contributes to the formation of character of the youth who, tomorrow, will form society. In class, you always took a few minutes to communicate life lessons to us and with your living example you taught us love(!), respect and dignity ..."

Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou, student in the 1940s, witnessed a big change that had taken place at the school. Mère (Mother) Arsène replaced Mother Paule upon her retirement. According to

her, that was a big change to all. Mother Paule was old but open-minded. Mère Arsène was nice, young but inexperienced. However, she was a person who wanted to learn so she soon developed into a good principal of the School. She did that successfully for many years (*Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussiotou, Interview, 20 September 2022*).

Sarah also recalled her relationship with Mother Arsène:

“As I was a bit lively, I used to play billiards in the classroom. For this reason, Mère Arsène used to call me “*caractère révolutionnaire*”. Although I did not like that ‘title’, I was particularly moved by Mère Arsène when she learned I was serving in 1974 with the Red Cross on various relief missions and she let me use the theatre of the school temporarily as Red Cross warehouses. Although we disagreed about the “*caractère révolutionnaire*”, she congratulated me on my volunteering.

(*Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussiotou, student during the 1940s, Interview, 20 September 2022*)

Sister Josephine Vrahimi (1937-)

Sister Josephine was born in Assomatos in Keryneia in Cyprus on 9 February 1937. She completed primary school there and went to Lemesos at the *Terra Santa Girls’ School* to pursue part of her high school studies and the rest at *Terra Santa School* in Lefkosia. From 1952 to 1957, she followed a religious curriculum in Lemesos and Le Mans, France. She studied in Italy. From 1957 to 2006, she performed various services in Lemesos, Lebanon, Italy and the UK. These included studying, teaching, secretarial studies, Councilor and Provincial Secretary, and Provincial Vicar. She studied in the UK where she completed the Teacher’s Certificate at the School of Education of The Victoria University of Manchester, with distinction in Practice of Education and Divinity and Commendation in Principles of Education (1975). She was the Principal of the school from 1982 to 2022.

Sister Josephine has dedicated more than half a century to the school. She has been a very dynamic, dedicated, firm but at the same time caring person, always guiding the students in her own unique way and leading the school community to what it is in its 100th year of existence. During the interview with her, it was evident that she did not want to talk about herself. Instead, she kept repeating: “I am not the one who would talk about me. Others can do that. And everything I did was God’s will.” Her profile is very well described in the speech of Greek teacher Andreas Parides, during the School celebration of Sister Josephine’s name day in 2018:

*Sister Josephine Vrahimi.
Saint Mary’s School archives.*



Our beloved Sister Josephine,

In so many years of work, you gave and still give every day, in this exquisite school environment, your own catalytic mark and your own seal, creating an unprecedented, for the standards of our country, educational doctrine. A doctrine which, through the educational administrative process, focuses and foregrounds the human being and social sensitivity. You have dared and you have unhooked from the trivial old-conservative notions of what it means to be a school administrator, notions that want the principal to be distant, cold and strict, as if we are in camps, not even places where young souls and consciousnesses are formed and shaped.

Here, in this school, you have succeeded in conveying and instilling a new liberal spirit of expression and action, both among the teachers and among the students, thus creating conditions and an environment of collective assertion.

In these circumstances, all of us, teachers and students, revised our views and perceptions of what a school entails. In all these years we have you by our side, you really made us see the school as a place where stress of time and space ceases to exist. A place that gives us real joy and happiness to come, because it is filled with intense and two-way sentimentality.

In all these years of cooperation, we see you running in every corner of the school and taking on various roles, many times external to the traditional role of the principal, in your effort to create a school, worthy of the quality and aspirations of the people who make it up, your only anxiety and concern being the children and only them. After all this long journey at the school of Agia Maria (Saint Mary's), you are now entitled to boast, without any trace of redundancy, without any trace of exaggeration, that you have created a school that harmonises the space and the people; a school we are proud to be a member of.

Our beloved Sister Josephine,

On behalf of the teachers, students and staff of Saint Mary's School of Lemosos, we thank you with all the strength of our souls for the wonderful, productive and fruitful years we have spent together, serving the youth of our island every day.

It is incredible how morality, kindness, dignity, hard work, camaraderie, as well as mental attitude and humour can coexist in one person. Every day, despite so many difficulties and problems that arise, you continue to give vitality and strength with your catalytic humour, which succeeds in changing our mood, tireless, hardworking, and always willing to take on and complete any task related to the school.

Your presence is low-voiced, small-talking, yet strong at the same time. You give yourself to everything you do with all your soul, as a result of which we have the confidence of an excellent result in everything you undertake.

Your presence adorns our school and gives true meaning to the word ‘teacher’!! We are proud to have had the opportunity to meet you and work with you every day! Proud and complete with everything you have taught us and continue to pass on to us.

We feel proud that we were given the opportunity to meet and work so close to a truly charismatic leader who, always as “the first among equals”, gives us that tender sense of interest that differentiates the professional from the human being.

Our beloved Sister Josephine,

We thank you very much and, on your name day, we wish wholeheartedly that God gives you health and strength for a creative continuation in the difficult task you have undertaken for so many years.

Andreas Parides, Teacher of Greek, Philologist, 19 March 2018.

François Michel Delolme

François Michel Delolme was born in Lyon on 22 November 1970. He was raised in the Catholic faith in l' École Sainte Marie. He studied at the University Lyon II and at the Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris III. He is a “Professeur agrégé” (Associate Professor) of Classical Studies (French, Latin and Ancient Greek). He holds a PhD in French literature. He is a teacher of classical studies since 1993. He has taught in French high schools, and since 2015 he has been teaching at *Saint Mary’s School* in Lemesos. He became the principal of the school in 2022.



François Michel Delolme

Teaching staff

The school archives included rigorous records of the school staff. At first, all teachers were Franciscan Sisters. Then, more and more teachers were non-clerical staff.

Franciscan Sisters

The following is a list of the Franciscan Sisters who taught at *Terra Santa Girls’ School/Saint Mary’s School* since the school’s foundation:

Fifty-six nuns taught at Saint Mary’s from 1923 to 2023. They were Catholics of different nationalities:

- 32 Italian
- 15 Cypriot
- 2 French
- 2 Americans
- 1 Greek American
- 2 Indian
- 1 Filipino
- 1 Bulgarian

	Name and surname	Nationality	Subject(s) taught	Date of beginning-ending	School
1	Mother Elisabetta Missio; first Superior	Italian	English	1923-1933	Secondary
2	Sister Denise Macrionidou	Born in Greece, Italian nationality	French Music	1923-1932 1947-1952	Secondary
3	Sister Joannes Rucchini	Italian	Italian	1923-1936	Secondary
4	Sister Alessandra Cornello	Italian	Needlework	1923-1937	Secondary
5	Sister Emidie Barasciutti	Italian	French	1927- 1946	Secondary
6	Sister Claudia Witty	American	English	1924-1939 1947-1952	Secondary
7	Sister Giulia Stringari	Italian	Italian Singing	1928-1934 1946-1950	Secondary
8	Mother Liduina Tasser, Superior	Italian	Principal	1931 -1941	All schools
9	Mother Paula Descuffi	Italian	French	1932-1946	Secondary
10	Mother Paula Kreuzer	American	English	1935-1936	Secondary
11	Sister Macrina Morao	Italian	Italian Music	1935-1948	Secondary
12	Sister Franca Franzato	Italian	Italian	1935-1951	Secondary
13	Sister Orestina Taverna	Italian	Embroidery Needlework	1935-1936 1939-1950 1957-1965 Died in 1975.	Secondary
14	Mother Arsène Fantin, Superior Principal: 1946-1982 Treasurer: 1987-1996 Died in 1999.	Italian	French Singing Principal	1937-1987 (teaching)	Secondary
15	Sister Francis Therese Coundouris	Greek American	Italian, English	1938-1941	Secondary
16	Sister Anselma Venuti	Italian	English	1939-1941	Secondary
17	Sister Ausiliata Minisini	Italian	Greek	1947-1966	Kindergarten
18	Mother Madeleine Bettio Ex student	Italian	English	1932-1938 1947-1958	Secondary
19	Sister Rosangela Paroni	Italian	Italian	1948-1958 1959-1961 1966-1978	Secondary
20	Sister Charles Noury	French	French Music Secretary	1950-1994 Died in 2002.	Secondary

	Name and surname	Nationality	Subject(s) taught	Date of beginning-ending	School
21	Sister Emilienne Sineux	French	French Music Secretary	1950-1952 1954-1959 1960-1985 Died in 1999.	Secondary
22	Sister Beatrice De Lucca	Italian	Needlework	1950-1955	Secondary
23	Sister Georgia Scattolon	Italian	English Typewriting	1950-1955 1957-1960 1961-1989	Secondary
24	Sister Celina Plazzotta	Italian	Italian	1951-1954	Secondary
25	Sister Piera Katsioloudi	Cypriot	Kindergarten	1982-1988	Kindergarten
26	Sister Rosanna Tonin	Italian	Italian	1953-1956	Secondary
27	Sister Antoinette Joseph	Cypriot	English	1953-1956 1968-1973	Secondary
28	Sister Rosemilia Ferracin	Italian	Italian	1974-1993	Secondary
29	Sister Gabriella Lorenza Giroto	Italian	Italian	1957-1969 1974-1981	Secondary
30	Sister Véronique Hadjijoseph	Cypriot	Greek	1960 1970	Kindergarten
31	Sister Patrick Frantjia	Cypriot	All Primary	1974-1975 1983-2018	Elementary
32	Sister Fotini Stephani	Cypriot	Kindergarten	1978-1981 1985-1989 1991-1992	Kindergarten
33	Sister Joséphine Vrahimi, Principal	Cypriot	English Greek	1957-1964 1966-1970 1975- ? 1982-2023	Secondary
34	Sister Annunziata Stringari	Italian	Italian	1957-1958 1966-1980	Secondary
35	Sister Bernadetta Visentin	Italian	Kindergarten	1979-1985	Kindergarten
36	Sister Françoise Aletrari	Cypriot	French	1961-1964 1975-1981 1982-1992	Secondary
37	Sister Monique Hannoulli	Cypriot	Domestic Science Embroidery	1963-1976 1978-1988	Secondary Kindergarten
38	Sister Emilia Branco	Italian	Italian	1966-1975	Secondary
39	Sister Annita Orphanou	Cypriot	Kindergarten	1980-2021	Kindergarten
40	Sister Armelle Antoniou	Cypriot	French	1966-1967	Secondary
41	Sister Annapia De Lazzeri	Italian	Greek	1967-1969	Kindergarten

	Name and surname	Nationality	Subject(s) taught	Date of beginning-ending	School
42	Sister Flora Ceron	Italian	Italian	1965-1966 1969-1992	Secondary
43	Sister Umberta Gnocato	Italian	Kindergarten	1969-1975	Kindergarten
44	Sister Isabelle Diola	Cypriot	French	1970-1972	Secondary
45	Sister Angelica Hadjihanni	Cypriot	Italian English	1971-1975 1981-2023	Secondary
46	Sister Bernadette Skorti	Cypriot	Greek	1974-1980	Elementary
47	Sister Beatrice Skorti	Cypriot	English language Literature Commercial courses	1974-1988	Secondary
48	Sister Gianna Maria Solari	Italian	Italian French	1983-1994 1998-2006	Secondary
49	Sister Antonia Piripitsi	Cypriot	Typewriting Shorthand Religion	1989-2001	Secondary
50	Sister Clelia Nuzzo	Italian	Kindergarten	1979-1981 1983-2005	Kindergarten
51	Sister Ilaria Rizzante	Italian	Italian	1962-1971	Secondary
52	Sister Annakutty Palamthattel	Indian	Geography	1992-2004	Secondary
53	Sister Emanuela Antonello	Italian	Italian	1994-1996	Secondary
54	Sister Roly Thomas Kaithakulath	Indian	Religious Knowledge	2004-2023	English Junior
55	Sister Aurora Castardo	Filipino	English	2011-2023	Greek Elementary Kindergarten
56	Sister Krasimira Govedarska	Bulgarian	Religion	2020-2023	Greek Elementary

Many Sisters came in and out of the School during its first 100-year history. They all offered their services and expertise, and many acted as role models to the students. As evidenced by the information found in the school archives, they first started with the teaching of Italian, French, English and Greek. Then they added other subjects. The table above indicates the subjects the nuns taught (Italian, French, English, Greek, Needlework, Embroidery, Domestic Science, English Literature, Commercial Courses, Typewriting, Shorthand, Religious Knowledge and Geography) and the levels they taught, in a chronological order. Apart from teaching, they also organised extra-curricular activities for the students, they accompanied them to excursions, visits and

encouraged them and helped them in their participation in community activities. All these Sisters dedicated many years of their lives to the school and the education of the students attending this school. They served in different posts as teachers, administrators, carers, etc.

A tribute to the Sisters

Below is a tribute to some of these Sisters who have dedicated not only all their life to their faith but also most of their life to the Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School. The selection was based on the number of years they worked at the school (30 years and above, according to the records found) and/or the legacy they have left behind.

Sister Denise Macrionitis

Sister Denise Macrionitis was born in Athens in Greece in 1898. She was a teacher of French and Piano. She was one of the very first nuns who came to Cyprus in 1923. She was an incomparable teacher and her pupils always had excellent results. Although Greek-speaking, for all the years she had been teaching (Lemesos and Ammochostos) none of the students realised she was Greek. She never spoke Greek because this was her method of helping students learn foreign languages. She was practicing her religious duties very conscientiously and she was strict, not only with herself but also with others. She died in 1987 in Lemesos.

Sister Claudia Witty

Another one of the first sisters of Terra Santa Girls' School was Sister Claudia Witty. Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti, a student, had very fond memories of the school: "I loved the school and the nuns", and was particularly fond of Sister Claudia:

“*Sister Claudia, the only English nun, was in a class apart. She dominated the school and the Mother Superior. Her strong, lively personality and the fact that she was English in a British colony gave her a special standing. Sister Claudia was obviously a social cut above the other nuns and a snob. She loved being asked to tea in the "high society" homes of Lemesos, where her charm, breeding and open-mindedness made her a favourite [...]. (p. 83). Sister Claudia was highly intelligent, she had an exquisite sense of humour, a talent for mimicry, charisma and instinct [...]. (p. 83).*

Sister Claudia was a born teacher. Never have I known anyone who was so delighted in imparting knowledge. Her method of teaching English grammar was unique. Only a moron could fail to understand. Her illustrations were so imaginative that the dullest rule became a living story. Her beautiful black eyes would flash and sparkle, her hands, her whole body, would become part of the lesson. (p. 84).

Sister Claudia had a good contralto voice and was a creditable piano player. Her aptitude for designing costumes and choosing fabrics and colours was almost professional. Her finest hour was the annual School Day when her talents combined in the production of plays, tableaux and dances which soon became the highlight of Lemesos sunnier events. (p. 87).

(Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti, unpublished manuscript, written in 1997)

Sister Claudia encouraged her to read literature, and inspired her with her liberal ideas and beliefs. Many years after, Stella remembers visiting Sister Claudia in the USA, just before she died:

“ She was then eighty-seven and as lively and alert as ever. She confessed that she had not slept the night before in anticipation of our spending the day together. Nor had I. She was thrilled when I told her that all the higher institutions I had attended after leaving the convent were amazed at my exceptional knowledge of English grammar.

(Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti, unpublished manuscript, written in 1997, p. 84)

Sister Orestina

Sister Orestina of Italian nationality was born in San Giorgio di Nogaro of the Province of Udine in Italy in 1909. She entered the convent in 1933 and came to Cyprus in 1935 and to Lemesos in 1958. Many generations of students learned from her, as well as from Sister Beatrice de Lucca and Sister Monique, to hold a needle and create masterpieces of embroidery. Students used to say: “How many times have we not undone our embroideries until we did them perfectly!” Her embroideries and those she made together with the boarders still decorate the school chapel. Sister Orestina was an industrious nun but above all a woman of prayer. She gave to all the Sisters an example of a true dedicated nun.

Sister Charles

Sister Charles was born on 12 January 1914 in Douarnenez in Rouen, France, to Paul Noury and Lylia Dénéchaud. She joined the church on 28 October 1930 in Gemona. In 1933-1936, in Rome she taught music and French at Saint Elisabetta. In 1936-1950 she returned to France and taught French and Italian in Flers de l’Orne. Then she was sent to Cyprus where she spent 52 years. She worked for 33 years. She taught French. She was also very dedicated in keeping handwritten records of the school. She took pride in preparing each student’s school-leaving certificate by writing their name in a very calligraphic and artistic way. She died on 27 February 2002.



*Sister Émilienne on the left
and Sister Charles on the right.*

According to student Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou, Sister Charles' arrival from Paris gave a new air to the French language and a new way of communication between the teachers and the students. She had a good rapport with students even if they were not hers. She used to communicate with students during break-time, and that brought teachers and students closer; she got down to the student's level. She also improved the book and stationary distribution. She made sure students received them on time so that they would not be late with the start of a new school year. She was very open-minded and always tried to keep the communication between students and teachers friendly. According to Sarah Droussioutou, although she was not taught by Sister Charles, she knew from other students that she was also a very good teacher with an excellent French accent (*Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutis, Interview, 20 September 2022*)

Sister Émilienne

The following is a tribute to Sister Émilienne, found in the School's archives:

Sister Émilienne Sineux of the Sacred Heart

She was born in "La Haute Chapelle" (L'Orne) in France on the 14th of March 1918 and was baptised two days later with the name of Suzanne Geneviève.

Very early, at the age of 15, she felt the call to religious life and was welcomed in Gemona, in the Mother House. Being still too young, she had spent some time in aspirancy and, then, moved on to novitiate.

On 3 April 1936 she made her first religious profession and, the following year, she was sent to Rome, to the community of Santa Elisabetta, as a teacher of French.

The following year she was recalled to France, to the Flers seminary, where she carried out her mission as a nurse for 13 years and where she made her Perpetual Profession on 8 September 1942.

In 1950, obedience asked her to leave her homeland for the second time. Sister Émilienne, together with Sister Charles, arrived in Lemesos, on the beautiful island of Cyprus, where a vast field of apostolate awaited her.

Her great availability, the needs of the moment, "or rather the design of divine Providence which calls us, many times, in unknown ways", called her, two years later, to Rhodes, as head of the school. Not having a diploma, as a teacher, she had to overcome great difficulties, as she herself confided to some sister. But God, the merciful Father, "who never asks us for anything beyond our strength", came to meet her in the person of the Fathers who taught on that island, who not only helped her to overcome the trials mentioned, but they also supported her in obtaining a French language teaching permit.

After only one year of stay on this island, she had to return to Lemesos because the Government did not give her a residence permit. In Lemesos, where she returned in 1953, she had a varied field of scholastic and extra apostolate. She was much loved by the students who came frequently, especially in these last periods of illness, to visit her and express their gratitude.

In addition to teaching, Sister Émilienne possessed marked manual labour skills: She knew how to be a shoemaker, an electrician, a carpenter, a watchmaker. It was the "factotum" of the Community and of the school. There wasn't anyone who didn't turn to her and there was never a refusal. She went out of her way to please everyone and to economise as much as possible. Indeed, in this regard, it must be added that she carried out, on various occasions, the activity of local treasurer with great precision and competence.

In 1959, she was sent to Paris as a nurse for a year. But since the missionary is only a pilgrim on this Earth, in 1960, here she was again in Lemesos where she alternately exercised the office of teacher and that of concierge. Many times, during recess at 11.00, you would see her surrounded by a cloud of little children who came to be treated...more to receive a smile, a caress, a candy...

From 1985 she could no longer devote herself to teaching, but this did not stop her from continuing to offer her services. She took the responsibility of the reception with great tact, and, when she was free from this commitment, she continued the activities mentioned above. Gradually, the fatigue and the thousand aches and pains from which she suffered also due to age, allowed her to occasionally work as a concierge, and to devote more time to her spiritual life. Being a nun who loved regular life, she never failed in community prayer, at family celebrations which she enjoyed immensely and, on the occasion of which, she knew how to prepare, with her golden hands, a small gift to offer to each sister.

Finally, she retired to the infirmary where suffering and loneliness were the two companions who brought her closer to her beloved Spouse. Who can measure the suffering of another? Only the Crucified Christ whom Sister Émilienne often looked at and to whom she confided her every pain.

In these last summer months, she has suffered a lot also due to a particularly hot summer. After a week of immobility, caused by a cerebral ictus, she prepared us for her definitive departure, for her return to the Father's house.

The whole community accompanied her with great love, trying to make her understand, with prayer, with small gestures, their appreciation for her affection and gratefulness. On 26 September 1999, at 21.40, she passed away peacefully, surrounded by her Superior and sisters.

Sister Émilienne spent her life on the missions; she knew how to love, suffer and live her consecration to the Lord to the full. Sister Émilienne we only say 'goodbye' and while we pray for you, we ask you to help us "know how to give without measure, as you were able to do..."

(Tribute to Sister Émilienne, Saint Mary's School archives)

Sister Veronica Hadjjoseph

Sister Veronica Hadjjoseph was born in Asomatos, Keryneia in Cyprus in 1938. At a young age, she entered the convent in France in 1954. In 1957, she returned to Cyprus. She was very fond of the little ones, so she worked with Sister Ausiliata in the kindergarten. She was always a very active, sociable and affectionate nun. She always participated in all events. She easily became friends with both children and adults, with whom she still keeps in touch and gives precious advice. How many children has she not consoled and how many tears has she not wiped away in the many years of teaching both at the Lemesos nursery school and at the Terra Santa College in Lefkosia, where she moved in 1970. Sister Veronica also acted as Local Superior for many years.

Sister Flora Ceron

The following is a tribute to Sister Flora, found in the School archives:

Daughter of Vigilio and Genoveffa Ceron, she was born on 23 January 1924 in Trebaseleghe, in the province of Padua. At the age of 18, on 2 July 1942, she began her pre-novitiate at the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, in the Mother House in Gemona, where she also did her novitiate and where on 5 October 1946 made for the first time her Holy Vows of obedience, poverty and chastity.

Still in Gemona, she did her studies and in 1948 she taught rhythmic gymnastics in the elementary school of Santa Elisabetta in Rome for two years. In 1950 she was transferred to the middle school in Gemona. She made her perpetual profession in 1951 and in 1965 she arrived as a missionary and Italian teacher in Cyprus. She taught in the schools of Lemesos and Ammochostos where she also served as Local Superior, in Ammochostos from 1966 to 1969 and in Lemesos from 1972 to 1976. In these same years, Sister Flora also served as councilor and provincial secretary.

During the Turkish invasion, in 1974, Sister Flora from her position as Local Superior, together with the Provincial Superior Sister Emilia Branco, opened the doors of the school in Lemesos to welcome, for a few months, many refugees who had fled from the horror of war, offering them lodging, food and all that was necessary for them, having left their homes empty-handed.

From 1976 to 1992 she held the mandate of Provincial Treasurer, after which she was transferred to Ankara-Turkey for two years and then to the Holy Land Rest Home in Larnaka for another four years; in 1998 she returned to the

community of Lemesos, where she spent the last years of her life.

Sister Flora, a calm and patient person, worked a lot for the missions and helped the poor. Furthermore, she encouraged the community to pray.

Many of her former students remember her always smiling and welcoming, singing with them her favourite song in Greek "Ypomoni" (patience). And she really needed this patience when in the last six years of her life, due to paralysis she had to lie still in bed, accepting suffering from the hands of God as a means for her purification and offering it for vocations.

Sister Flora left us poor without her presence, but rich and fortunate to have known her and lived next to her.

We thank you, Sister Flora, for your example of humility, simplicity and patience and we ask you to continue to pray for us, so that the Lord may protect us and enrich us with many good and holy vocations as you have always done.

(Tribute to Sister Flora, Saint Mary's School archives)

Sister Ausiliata Minisini

Sister Ausiliata Minisini born in Caporiacco in Italy in 1904, professed in 1929. She came to Lemesos in 1946. She was one of the first kindergarten teachers. She had a great love for the little ones. She taught them with much love and enthusiasm. In addition to nursery school, she devoted herself to many other duties. For years, she was Local Superior and Finance Officer. She always made constant effort to keep the running cost as low as possible so that the school could be run smoothly and efficiently and at the same time support the poor who knocked on the school door, something that has always been a priority and an aim of the Franciscan Sisters' Mission.

Sister George Scattolon

Sister George Scattolon was born in Cavasagra in Italy in 1927. She became a nun in France in 1950. She came to Cyprus during the same year. She studied English and Typewriting. After that, she started teaching both subjects. She was also responsible for the boarding students who respected her and were very fond of her. She died in 1991 at the hospital of Kyperounta in the Troodos mountains of Cyprus.

Sister Lorenza Girotto

Sister Lorenza was born in Paese in Italy in 1935, she made her profession in 1957, and after a few months she was sent to Cyprus. She was a very good Italian teacher; with her sweet voice and her songs she taught to the students, made them all love the Italian language. Even today her students, grateful for what they have received, come to visit her and sing their favourite songs together: *Santa Lucia*, *Mamma son tanto felice*, etc. The following testimony is indicative of this:



I was fortunate and blessed to have as my Italian teacher Sister Gabriella and now Sister Lorenza who had just come from Treviso, Italy. When we first met this young nun, she seemed serious to us, so we were shy and did not dare talk to her at first. When we got to know her better, and that happened very soon, we talked to her comfortably and very friendly, but always with respect and love.

She was my teacher for three years, that was how long it took to finish Italian then. I liked Italian and Sister Lorenza's teaching so much that I asked the then Principal Mother Arsène if I could repeat the third year, but unfortunately my request was not accepted.

My beloved teacher was a beacon of education for us but at the same time our support and advisor. Her advices were priceless, I cherish them to the present day. She always lovingly advised us to respect, help and be an example for our school and our family.

Sister Lorenza has been a mother and a sister to me and I will love and appreciate her forever!

Filitsa Constantinou, student of Terra Santa School (1957-1962)

A theatre lover, she was among those who organised theatrical play and choir performances for Christmas and the end of the year festivities. Her love for the poor and the missions that she supported financially brought her among the poor of Lebanon in 1988 and Bulgaria in 1992. Sister Lorenza was Local Superior in Ammochostos, Provincial Councilor and for 12 years Provincial Superior.

Sister Anita Orfanou

Sister Anita Orfanou was responsible for the nursery school for forty years. She also taught at the kindergarten. She loved children, for this reason she pursued studies in primary education and received recognised diplomas. After studying in Italy, she returned to Cyprus where she began teaching with a lot of enthusiasm. She kept herself abreast to keep the school up to date. She always found someone to help her make her dreams come true. For example, one of her dreams was to paint the nursery school walls, so she found someone to do it for her, and her dream came true.

Sister Monique Hannouli

Sister Monica, was born in 1939 in Asomatos, Keryneia. Sister Monique, as the older students knew her, made her profession in France and then returned to Cyprus. In addition to the diploma in Home Economics, she also received that of Infant School Teacher. She taught sewing. She taught for many years and she had a very good rapport with her students. She was also supervising students during study (homework) time; she was also in charge of the boarders who required people of a strong will that could impose discipline and demand good manners.

Sister Monique was Provincial Superior for two semesters, and a Councilor. Her capacity in understanding and dialogue, the sense of responsibility and duty towards the sisters meant that she was elected Superior several times. Sister Monica also served in Lebanon and Larnaka.

She was very good in accounting, therefore, for some years, she was also responsible for the Province and the House Finances.

Sister Patrick Franjia

Sister Patrick Franjia was born in Asomatos, Keryneia, in 1936. She professed in France in 1957 and returned to Cyprus during the same year. Together with Sister Bernadette Skordi, she attended the Pedagogical Academy for Teachers. They both worked in Kormakitis, a Catholic village. With their great talents in many fields, they have contributed to raising the social and educational level of the inhabitants of Kormakitis and particularly of the youth to whom they had dedicated themselves with great love. Sister Patrick, enclosed in Kormakitis, together with Father Antoun were the refuge and encouragement of the population in the sad times of the Turkish invasion.

In 1985, after the Kormakitis school closed, she moved to Lemesos where she continued to teach Greek as a teacher and principal of the elementary school. With her long experience as a Government teacher, she was able to give great impetus and make changes in the elementary school curriculum. Sister Patrick gave great help to the teachers who came to this school without experience. One of them, Georgia shared gratitude to her:

“According to the French writer Victor Hugo “the greatest happiness in life is to find that you are loved for who you are.” And for us teachers and students of Saint Mary’s Primary School this is exactly right. We love Sister Patrick for who she is, for the many wonderful things she did in her life, for her simplicity, her inexhaustible and boundless love. This is Sister Patrick Franjia, a giving person, full of positive emotions and an open embrace to everyone. With love first and foremost to God to whom she dedicated her life, she set out to sculpt the souls of children from her position as an educator. As her primary goal she set the education but also the all-round development of the personality of the children for whom she feels as proud in every achievement, as if they were her own children. We feel that in every difficulty we may have, she will always be there, to support and advise us and strengthen our every initiative. A great person who never puts her personal interest above the well-being of others. My beloved Sister, may God bless you, always.

Georgia Panayidou, Interview, 6 May, 2023

Sister Beatrice Skorti

Sister Beatrice started as a student at the school and, then, she entered the convent. After completing her studies at the University of Manchester (Bachelor of Education with Honours and Teacher Certificate), she returned to Cyprus and started teaching. She shared her memories of her life at the school. These give insights into the long history of the school:



I arrived alone in 1954 in Lemesos. It was the first time I travelled outside Kormakitis, my village; my parents could not afford to accompany me (to the entrance gate). I met Sister Émilienne Sineux who greeted me. I asked for Marina Skorti, my sister who went to Terra Santa five years earlier. Soon she left me and went to France, where she became a nun with the name of Sister Bernadette.

My aim, however, is to talk about Terra Santa Girls' School, where I stayed for six years as a student, before following my sister and becoming Sister Beatrice Skorti. What do I remember of Terra Santa? Here I received my academic and human formation. At the beginning, I could not study four languages because I had to help the sisters with work. My family could not pay the fees, so the sisters accepted me without paying. It was during this time of work that my relationship with nuns started. Working with them I understood their self-sacrifice, their humility, their charity, their love for everybody. At the time, there were no cleaners, no servants, no helpers. The sisters filled all the jobs and they did everything happily. I remember every afternoon, I had to clean the classrooms and then go to study with the others. One day, the sister responsible said to me: "Ioanna fetch your books and sit there to study, I'll clean the classrooms myself". That day I couldn't hold my tears, and therefore I understood that if these sisters did not exist, no nun teacher could give her lesson the way our teacher in Terra Santa did.

I learned what it means to be in the kitchen all day, what it means to wash the dishes, to clean, iron, distribute the clothes to all the boarders so that they could follow their lessons in peace. From the sisters, I experienced their understanding, their help, their instructions, their explanations not only of French, English, Italian and Greek, but also of our growth in faith, in prayer, in gratitude and so many other virtues that are necessary in life. In one word, they were able to form the whole person in us, even if many of them had no diplomas and no teaching skills at the time. To me, Terra Santa will remain as an awakening of the meaning of love in my life, the key for my future life. In fact, six years later, I travelled to France, Le Mans, where I did my novitiate and became Sister Beatrice Skorti. In my memories, the second stage of my life comes after my absence and six years of studies in Manchester, England. I returned to Saint Mary's School in 1974 exactly on the night before the coup d'état. I was not a pupil anymore but a teacher. This time, I was inside the convent looking straight into the eyes of those nuns who helped me become what I am. They were still working to improve

to the utmost of their powers Saint Mary's School, our new school, to meet all the demands of our students. I arrived at a time of war and distress in Cyprus. Saint Mary's School had its own problems. The classes were full of refugees. Every sister was busy helping people, distributing clothes and food to all those who fled their villages with nothing.

Then, came October and time for school. Saint Mary's School was facing one of its worst years. Turkish Cypriot students left Lemesos. Many of our students from Ammochostos asked to be admitted to Saint Mary's. Many refugees from the Turkish-occupied part of Cyprus registered as well and Saint Mary's succeeded. I would rather say the nuns succeeded; nothing would stop Mère Arsène to accept and help those in need. Nothing would stop those nuns already old in age. There are so many names which I remember from those I worked with, those who have helped me as a nun and as a teacher to overcome the difficulties in those first years of my teaching.

I see Sister Émilienne Sineux copying on a rudimentary copier a whole book for the G.C.E. Secretary classes. I see Sister Émilienne preparing their diplomas. Sister Giorgia helping with boarders, Sister Pierpaola cooking all day long, sisters cleaning, sisters washing the clothes, new nuns arriving for the teaching, Sister Françoise Aletrari, Sister Armele Costa, Sister Josephine Vrahimi, Sister Gianna Maria Solari for secondary students. New teachers, also for kindergarten, sent by Sister Bernadette Skorti to Italy where they obtained a diploma. Sister Monica Hannoulli, Sister Beranrdetta Visentin, Sister Anita Orphanou, Sister Fotini Stefani, Sister Anetta. Saint Mary's School is enjoying a continuous transformation, Soon, Sister Patrick Frandjia and Sister Bernadette Skorti arrived as the responsible for elementary classes. Ever since, the number of students at Saint Mary's School never stopped increasing. New classes needed new teachers, new programmes. Post-war Saint Mary's School was taking a new face. Here, Sister Josephine Vrahimi replaced Sister Arsène. I am sure she can speak of the difficulties she had to go through so that St. Mary's could take the place it has today.

Saint Mary's School celebrates its 100-year anniversary. For me it is an occasion to express my gratitude to all those nuns who in many different ways were and are the protagonists of the human, religious and academic formation of the hundreds and thousands of students rich and poor, Christians and non-Christians of different races and colours who entered our school.

Sister Beatrice Skorti, Interview, 6 May 2023

Sister Bernadette Skordi

Sister Bernadette Skordi was born in Kormakitis 1939 and professed in 1959 in France. Immediately after she returned to Cyprus and after completing her academic studies together with Sister Patrick, she began teaching. They both looked after young children, with motherly care. As a teacher, Sister Bernadette

tried to give the children a complete human and spiritual education. She soon distinguished herself for her marked intellectual and human abilities and was called to lead the Province for many years, both as local Superior and as Provincial Councilor and Provincial Superior. In 1981, she went to Rome where she was Vicar General. For these tasks entrusted to her she had to leave teaching at the Kormakitis school and move to Lemesos, where she was able to combine the two commitments, that of Superior and teacher.

Sister Angelica Hadjihanni

Angelica was born in 1945 in Karpasia, near the village of Myrtou. Since she was young she wanted to become a nun. In 1955, she went to *Terra Santa Girls' School* in Lemesos. She stayed there for two years. After that, she went to Larnaka where she finished the Pancyprian Lyceum of Larnaka. Then, she went to Italy where she became a nun. In 1972, she returned to Cyprus. For a while, she was assistant in *Saint Mary's* boarding school and was involved in various other duties. In 1976, she went back to Italy at the University of Maria Assunta where she studied languages. After receiving her diploma, she went back to *Saint Mary's School* where she started teaching English and Religion, and later on Italian. She also acted as Vice Principal. While performing these duties, she also undertook various duties such as nun trainer, Provincial Treasurer, Provincial Superior, and Local Superior.

Sister Antonia Piripitsi

Sister Antonia Piripitsi was born in Kormakitis in 1964. She went to *Saint Mary's School* in Lemesos to study. Then she went to Italy where she became a nun. She studied at the University of London and received a Bachelor of Divinity. She also received, among other diplomas, a diploma of Spirituality, a diploma in Secretarial Studies (Pitman Central College, School of Business & Secretarial Education) and a postgraduate degree in Educational Leadership and Administration (Cyprus International Institute of Management). She taught Typewriting and Religion. For many years she was Provincial Secretary, School Secretary and Vice Principal. She also acted as a student councilor. She is now the Provincial Superior. Her duties include the responsibility of all Nuns and their Missions in the Middle East in general and in Cyprus in particular, and that of *Saint Mary's School*.

Non-teaching Sisters

It needs to be strongly noted that behind the teaching nuns, there were many other nuns, working in the background, supporting the school activities, e.g., housekeeping, yard duty, study-time supervision, extracurricular activities; in the boarding school (cooking for many boarders, doing laundry, ironing, supervising at night, even giving a bath to the very young ones); at the Troodos summer

holiday cottage (walks, feeding, etc.). The sisters in the kitchen, for example, Sister Annateresa Liatsou, Sister Pierpaola Koumettou, Sister Piera Zanon, Sister Anita Orphanou, Sister Minima Bacargieva, in addition to cooking lunches for 150 residents, prepared popcorn, chips, sandwiches, etc. to sell at the canteen and in that way contribute to paying off school debts. Without their work, the school running would have been impossible.

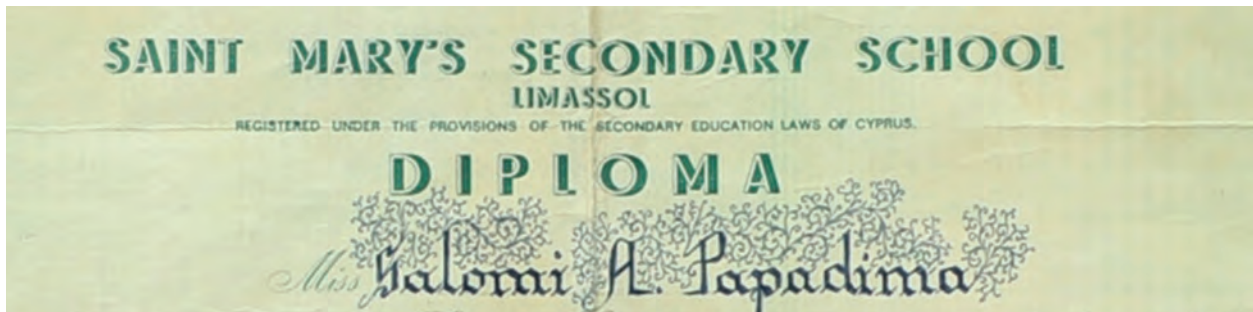
Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti, who attended the school for eight years back in the 1920s, made tribute to one of these Sisters:

Despite the heavy curriculum, the convent had a happy atmosphere. A perennial source of amusement and exasperation was Soeur (Sister) Jeanne, an Italian nun who acted as doorman-usher and ringer of bells. She also kept the stationary store. Soeur Jeanne could not bear untidiness and would go round picking up bits of paper and fluff from the floor.

(Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti, unpublished manuscript, written in 1997, p. 88)

I, the author of this book, remember many of the nuns who taught me: Mother Arsène, Sister Charles, Sister Emilienne, Sister George, Sister Annunziata, Sister Rosangela. I remember how proud I was when, after only one year of French with Sister Emilienne, I was able to read *Chaperon Rouge (Red Riding Hood)* in French. I often think of Sister Charles and her lessons of French culture. She was the first to introduce technology such as slides to introduce us to the world of French painters, and French art in general. I remember, my first acquaintance with the slides (diapositive) were in the French language during those sessions. I still admire her art when I look at my school-leaving certificate, decorated patiently by her.

Salomi Papadima's School-leaving Certificate, 1974. Salomi Papadima's personal archive.



She used to do that for every school-leaving certificate for every student. I also remember she was sometimes strict to us. In later years, I was more able to understand the reasons and appreciated her concern about us. Unfortunately, because of my long absence overseas, I never got to see her again.

There is no doubt that the first 100-year success of *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School* is due firstly to all the work of not only the 56 sisters who have taught at the school, but also of all the others Sisters who have worked in different capacities and have contributed in many ways to its presence and its contribution to the education of many students. Today, together with the rest of the staff of the school, the sisters continue their mission with dedication, hard work and passion. And this they do in challenging times, when the future is much more difficult to foresee and one needs to be extra alert in order to meet the needs of young people in this ever-changing world.

Non-clerical teaching staff

Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's was also supported by non-clerical teaching staff. As years went by, less Franciscan Sisters were teaching, therefore, more secular staff joined the teaching staff.

Number of non-clerical teaching staff

According to the school records, 477 such teachers taught from 1950 to 2023, 360 female and 117 male teachers.

Teacher gender

Female 360

Male 117

TOTAL 477

Terra Santa Girls School/Saint Mary's School archives

Although it was a Sisters' School, it employed male staff as well, acknowledging in this way the importance of their presence.

Religion of non-clerical teaching staff

These teachers derived from different religions/communities such as Orthodox, Catholic, Maronite and Roman Catholic.

Although a Catholic school, the majority of the non-clerical teaching staff has been Orthodox. This is understandable, given that the school operated in Cyprus, in a mainly Greek-speaking, Orthodox populated country. This also evidences the harmonious co-existence of these different denominations.

Nationality/Community of non-clerical teaching staff

The non-clerical teaching staff were of the following nationalities/communities: Cypriot, British, Maronite, French, Irish, Egyptian, Arab Cypriot and Greek.

The variety in nationality background of the non-clerical staff also indicates a harmonious co-existence of both the Sisters and the non-clerical staff of the school.

School-levels taught

Secular staff taught school subjects at all levels, depending on their qualifications: Kindergarten (Greek and English), Primary/Elementary Greek, Junior English and Secondary).

Subjects taught:

Kindergarten	English Literature	Physical Education
All Primary subjects	Maths	Typewriting
Junior English	Science	Shorthand
Elementary Arithmetic	Biology	Computers
English	Chemistry	Music
Greek	Book-keeping	Religious Education
French	Geography	Accounting
French Literature	History	

Non-clerical teaching staff started teaching at Saint Mary's as early as 1937. Some were very well-known educators in Lemesos at the time. These include, for example, Socratis Myrianthopoulos and Eleni Aftonomou:

Socratis Myrianthopoulos (1870-1954)

Socratis Myrianthopoulos was born in the village of Prodromos in Marathasa. He had an active life in educational and cultural affairs of his time. There is evidence in the *Chronicle of the House of Limassol*, that Socratis Myrianthopoulos taught at the school: There is a reference that he awarded prizes to students during prize-award ceremonies. In the school album of 1923-1948 there is also a class photograph of students, with him and another teacher, Honskins. Koudounaris (2018, V. A' p. 537) also mentioned that Myrianthopoulos taught in A' and B' Urban Schools, in the Greek Gymnasium of Lemesos, in the Private School of Lemesos and in the Nuns School (1898-1946).

The 'Arsakeian' Eleni Nicolaidou Aftonomou (1894-1986)

Eleni Aftonomou was born in Kellaki village of Lemesos. She studied at Arsakeio School of Athens and she received the Rallis Prize (1911). She taught at the Girls' School of Lemesos (1911-1923), at the Higher Girls' School until 1938. She later worked at the Greek Gymnasium of Lemesos (1946-1948), at the Athinaidion Gymnasium (1948-1949) and at the Nuns' School (1949-1950). She was very active in the cultural life of Lemesos (Koudounaris, 2018, V. A', p. 53).

One of her students, Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussiotou, who was of mixed-marriage (English father and Greek mother), remembers that she owed her learning of Greek and passing her exams with distinction to Aftonomou and her flexible, student-centred approach in teaching:

“Two years before my graduation, there was another big change in the school, this time in the Greek classes. It was the arrival of the ‘Arsakeian’ Eleni Aftonomou. The way she taught was really different from what we were used to in the Greek classes. Aftonomou was interested in helping her students learn and not ‘parrot’ what they were presented. For me, she was a lifesaver. Greek-origin students were asked to sit for a translation exam. This involved translation of two paragraphs of about 40 lines each from Greek to English and from English to Greek. Because I was considered British, as my father was British and my mother was Greek-Cypriot, I was asked to sit an exam for English-origin students. This included four grammar double worksheets which also involved rules of English grammar. I rebelled against this school decision and asked to sit the translation exam. Sister Claudia referred me to Teacher Aftonomou. She tried different teaching methods with me until she identified the method that would best serve my case. The result was that I passed the translation exam with distinction.

Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou, student during the 1940s, Interview, 20 September 2022

As with the sisters, non-clerical teaching staff came in and out of the school during its first 100-year history. They all offered their expertise, and many acted as role models for the students. They taught, they organised extra-curricular activities for the students, they accompanied them to excursions, visits and encouraged them and helped them in their participation in community activities. For many years, before teachers were appointed by the Ministry of Education to public schools, Saint Mary’s offered unappointed teachers’ employment and opportunities to gain teaching experience.

Prominent non-clerical teachers

Amongst the 457 teachers who taught at *Terra Santa Girls’ School/Saint Mary’s School*, some dedicated more than 30 years of their lives to the education of the students attending this School; they earned students’ and parents’ respect, left a mark in their students’ heart, and left their legacy in the community of Lemesos. Here are some examples of these teachers:

Nina Ioannou

Nina Ioannou was from Kormakitis. She was born on 6 July 1930 and died on 12 July 2009. She graduated from Saint Mary’s and then started teaching at the school. According to Antonia Loucaidou and Katina Frangeskou, (Interview, 9 February 2023), who were first her students and then her colleagues, Nina was a very intelligent and charismatic person, she was serious and very good at her work, and although a low-key person, she had the gift of transmitting knowledge to her students.

Nitsa Varnava-Zachariou

Nitsa Varnava-Zachariou was born in Lefkosia on 24 February 1932. In 1936, her father migrated to England. Sometime later, she also went to England with her mother and brother. She did her schooling there. During her stay there she lived through the experience of World War II. She got married to Artemakis Zachariou in July 1956 and had two sons. She started teaching English at Saint Mary's on 1 October 1959. Mrs Nitsa Zachariou described her teaching career:

“*My first students had excellent results (14 out of 15 students passed with excellent marks). This was much appreciated and gave me freedom to manage my teaching on my own. I never stopped studying, choosing my teaching materials and generally keeping myself professionally abreast. I was never satisfied with what I did, I always wanted to learn more.*

Nitsa Zachariou, English Teacher, Interview, 5 May 2022

Nitsa Zachariou was respected from the beginning. Her English competence was very much appreciated. She was one of those teachers who loved what she did and that was always much appreciated by all, nuns, colleagues, students, parents and the general community. All her students have the fondest memories of her friendly approach and her excellent teaching and they still demonstrate their respect to her on numerous occasions.

She completed her teaching career on 31 October 1995. She is one of the teachers who taught for many years at this school. Amongst her students were Katina Frangeskou, Antonia Loucaidou, Mary Aniftos, Elpiniki Damianou, Christina McBride and Sylvia Jones Georgiou, who later on became teachers at Saint Mary's, and her colleagues, and left their legacy there too.

Christina Singassi Francis

Christina Francis was born in 1940 in Kormakitis. She studied at *Saint Mary's School* in Ammochostos. In 1958, she went to Saint Mary's School in Lemesos, where at first, she worked as an assistant. Then she was sent to the University of Perugia in Italy to obtain teaching qualifications. She taught Italian, French English, Typewriting and other subjects. She worked at Saint Mary's School for 28 years. Because she was from a poor family, she had an understanding of difficulties in life and was very supportive of her students. For the same reason, she encouraged them strongly in their learning, so they could have a good life. She died on 22 April 2011.

Katina Frangeskou, mostly known to all as 'Miss Katina'

Born in Kormakitis, she attended school in 1957 as a secondary school student and graduated in 1962. She started teaching in 1963. At the beginning she taught a

variety of subjects such as Italian, and mostly French. In French she taught French language, History, Geography and Science. She taught until 2007 (for 44 years). Katina was also a boarding school teacher. At the boarding school, she supervised the study of the boarding students. She is still invited at students' gatherings and enjoys their friendship and respect.

Antonia Nikita-Loucaidou, known as 'Madame Antonia'

Antonia Nikita-Loucaidou attended the school first as a student and boarder, and later on, for many years as a teacher. Madame Antonia taught at *Saint Mary's School* for 43 years (1966-2010). She taught French to both Elementary Greek and Junior and Senior secondary school students. She had students taking the earlier exams such as the 'Certificat d' Études Primaires' and GCE Ordinary level in French, and later on the 'Diplôme d' Études en Langue Française' exams (DELFF). In all her years, apart from teaching, she used to organise a lot of extracurricular activities with her students. For many years, she organised the annual student reunions. She wrote school theatrical plays, which she produced with her students. She used to organise carnival balls. She was involved in school bazaars. As part of these bazaars' activities, she also organised games such as bag races, raffles, etc., for charity purposes. She organised a multicultural exhibition of the first countries which entered the European Union. She also accompanied students in school parades for many years. Many of her students still meet her and express their fond sentiments to her.

Thomas Michaelides

Thomas Michaelides completed his schooling at Laniteio Gymnasium in 1960. He worked at a factory for a few years, when the intercommunal violence broke out, and he had to do his two-year military service. When he completed his military service, Michaelides studied by correspondence and passed all the Book-keeping and other Commerce subjects and examinations. He then applied for a teaching position at *Saint Mary's School*. That is where he met Mother Arsène. He reminisces with fondness his years at the school:

“ There I met Mother Arsène. She was an extraordinary woman. I consider her my second mother; she helped me beyond imagination. I taught Accounting, and some other Business courses, and some Arithmetic. I worked at the School of Nuns from 1967 to 1974.

I am proud of my passing from Saint Mary's School. All its students can stand in European countries speaking three languages comfortably, English, French and Italian; the education they receive from this school is of a very good level.

I recall my old colleagues, Nitsa Zachariou, an excellent person and English teacher; Cleo Kyriakidou, Teacher of English, Popi Ioannidis, 'Miss Katina', Thrasos

Makrygiannis, Nikos Georgiou, Thymios Christodoulou, Antonia Nikita, Popi Korai, Chloe Rodosthenous, Mikis Michaelides, and many more.

Every summer Mother Arsène asked me to close the accounting books. I would make a final balance and take them to the auditors for review.

During the 6-7 years that I was at the School of Nuns, our relations with the nuns were perfect, we had a great time, we had no complaints; of course, the salaries were quite low back then; I remember that during the first and second years they did not pay us during the summer period; I had to work elsewhere during summer to have an income. Nonetheless, I always say that we were successful in our professional life later because we passed through the Nuns' School, it was like a university for us.

Thomas Michaelides, Accounting teacher, Interview, 6 March 2023

After that, Thomas Michaelides worked for many years at his own afterschool institute, which he opened in 1972. Although he stopped teaching at Saint Mary's, he spoke with appreciation of the years he spent there and how those years helped him with his own school:

“ *I did very well, of course, all this I owe to the great support I had from the Superior Mother Arsène; I owe the school the beginning of my entire career.*

Thomas Michaelides, Accounting teacher, Interview, 6 March 2023

Although Thomas Michaelides taught at Saint Mary's for only a few years, he left his legacy at the school, and his students always express their admiration and respect when they meet him during former student reunions or in Lemesos community cultural events.

Thrasos Makrygiannis

Thrasos Makrygiannis is well remembered, not only by his students and colleagues in the public-school sector, where he worked until his retirement, but also by his students and colleagues at *Saint Mary's School*, where he went to work after that. His colleague Thomas Michailides remembered the time they taught together at *Saint Mary's*:

“ *He was an excellent gymnast at the Laniteio Gymnasium; I remember him there when I was a student. He was also an excellent humourist; he wrote a lot of humouristic sketches which were presented at school festivities.*

Upon his retirement in 1965, Thrasos Makrygiannis went to teach at Saint Mary's School, together with two-three other teachers, and continued to work there. He taught Modern Greek and Physical Education. He was an excellent person with whom we had a great time. His plays were also broadcasted on the radio and staged by amateur actors of the Aris Limassol Musical and Sports Club.

Thomas Michaelides, Accounting teacher, Interview, 6 March 2023

Goris Gregoriadis also remembered Thrasos Makrygiannis' theatrical staging at *Saint Mary's*. Although Goris Gregoriadis attended *Saint Mary's* kindergarten in 1944-1945, in later years, sometime before 1974, he was invited by Thrasos Makrygiannis to work on the theatrical scenery of the theatre he was staging with the students. (*Goris Gregoriadis interview, 5 September 2022*).

I, the author of this book, remember many of the non-clerical teachers who taught me: Together with my grandmother Salomi Zachariadou, my English teacher Nitsa Zachariou was one of my inspiring mentors. For this reason, I dedicated my doctorate thesis to both of them. Nitsa Zachariou was an inspiring teacher and instilled in me the love for English language and literature and the love of studying. Thomas Mihaelides was also an inspiring teacher who has left a mark on his students' memories. He had a very friendly rapport with his students and he always used innovative teaching methods. I also remember Thrasos Makrygiannis very fondly. He was the person who influenced me with his teaching and passion for Modern Greek and Theatre and made me develop an interest in the area. I always enjoyed participating in school plays he was producing; I was proud to be part of these activities and honoured for being given the opportunity to do so. English teacher O'Keefe also encouraged us to participate in cultural events. He conducted the student choir.

Nitsa Kattami

Nitsa Kattami worked at *Saint Mary's* for 27 years. She also shared her memories of teaching at the school.

“ I worked at *Saint Mary's School* from 1985 to 2012. I had the best experiences at this school and the fondest memories. We were all so connected, teachers, students and sisters. We had a lot of help with what we needed. They helped us in everything. I was a teacher of Greek and English typewriting and English shorthand for 27 consecutive years.

I really loved this school; it was like my second home and my second family. Even now and then, when I remember it, I get incredibly emotional. It was more than a university, because it helped me a lot in my professional development and in my teaching. I loved my students very much as they loved me. I helped them with whatever they needed and for this reason they really loved my course and we always had very good results in the LCCI (London Chamber of Commerce and Industry) exams, and the students passed both their English and Greek exams with distinction. In English typewriting, we won 34 gold medals and many silver medals from 1966 until 2005 when the medals were abolished. We also had very good results in the Greek government exams, since most of the students passed them with distinction.

In 2000, our school also accepted boys in secondary education. Since then, we have had many successes and distinctions from boys as well.

The presence of boys was a big change for the school; it resulted in the female students becoming livelier, and dealing with both male and female students was a bigger challenge for the teachers. Nevertheless, we loved our male students as our female students and they returned their love to us.

Nitsa Kattami, Shorthand teacher, Interview, 3 March 2023

Nitsa Kattami is also a teacher who enjoys the respect of her former students. Although she was a teacher many years after I graduated from *Saint Mary's School*, I often hear about her from former students and colleagues of her, always commenting how talented she was as a teacher and how approachable she always was to her students.

Theodoros Psiras

Theodoros Psiras has been working at *Saint Mary's* from 1998 to 2023. He has also shared his experiences of the last 25 years of the 100-year history of the school.

“*My name is Psiras Theodoros. I have been teaching Italian at Saint Mary's School for 25 years. I can say that Saint Mary's School is not just a school for me, it is a family. I spend so many hours there. I can say that I spend more hours there than in my own house. Because of that, for me, it is a family. I can only say positive things about this school, because, many times I have found myself in difficulty and the sisters, in their own way, have supported me.*

I first came to this school in 1998. The first two or three years it was an all-girls school and then it became a co-ed school. As a school, it expresses a sense of safety to the students and also to the parents, because neither students or anybody else is allowed to enter the school premises without the approval of the management and the school in general. Parents, prefer this school as it offers safety in difficult times of nowadays, and not only for this but also because of the very high quality of the courses it offers.

Our school is a language school. The children who choose to attend this school do so because now, with globalisation, languages are necessary to advance in our society. Another element that characterises the school is that, while it is a Catholic school, this does not affect the school community relations. In our school, in addition to Catholics, there are also Orthodox students, Maronites and Muslims. What does this mean? It means that the nuns may be Catholic, yet they accept the existence of other religions and there has never been any attempt on their part to influence people in that.

Over the years, as I said before, since the day I first came to this school, I have developed excellent rapport with the sisters, especially with Sister Josephine, who is also the Principal of the School; with Sister Angelica Hajdihanni, who was also a colleague during the first few years, we taught Italian together, as you understood I teach Italian; with Sister Antonia who I always consult about the books we have to choose for school; with Sister Monica; with Sister Pat, who is in

the Accounting department; with Sister Patrick in the elementary school; and with so many other sisters. For me, all these people are family.

Theodoros Psiras, Teacher of Italian from 1998 to 2023, Interview, 30 March 2023

Theodoros Psiras is one of *Saint Mary's School* teachers who has dedicated many years of his life serving the school community and is still contributing to the students' education.

Maria Kalorkoti, studied at *Saint Mary's School* from 1985 to 1999 (pre-primary, primary and secondary school). She also remembered her teachers with admiration and gratitude:

“*Andreas Christodoulou has been a Gymnasium and Lyceum English teacher throughout the 1990s for over six years. Now I have the honour of working in the same school with him at Tsireio Gymnasium, from where he will retire this year (2023) as Assistant Principal A. His female students had him as their father, because he advised us on various issues that concerned us.*

This was true for many teachers, with whom we connected, we considered them our second family and the school our second home; it was a place, not only for learning and education, but also a familiar, friendly, family, caring and human environment.

Another teacher who played an important role in our education was French teacher 'Monsieur Cadid'. For four years, he imparted his love of French culture to us as he taught us, not only French language and literature, but also French history and geography.

We even had the opportunity to be taught the Italian language by both Italian nuns and non-clerical staff; they enriched the Italian lesson with original texts from Dante's Divine Comedy, passages from Petrarch, while at the same time we studied Art History of the Italian Renaissance; those were unique experiences, considering that these were taught during times when no Internet or any other source of information was available to us.

Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999, Interview, 6 March 2023

It has been noted so far that some teachers taught students who later became teachers and colleagues of their teachers at *Saint Mary's* or in other schools, such as the case of Andreas Christodoulou and Maria Kalorkoti who later taught together at the Tsireio Gymnasium public school. There were also times when students taught their teachers' siblings at a later stage. Such an example is that of the teacher Nitsa Kattami and her student Maria Kalorkoti: Nitsa Kattami taught typing to Maria Kalorkoti at *Saint Mary's*. Maria Kalorkoti taught Nitsa Kattami's grandson in the 3rd grade of Gymnasium during the school year 2021-2022.

Students and teachers. Teacher Honskins on the left and Socratis Myrianthopoulos on the right. Between them from left to right: Sisters Orestina, Macrina, Romualda, Mother Paola Descuffi, Sisters Emidie, Arsene, Franca and Zepherine. Among students, all Turkish Cypriot students. 4 March 1942. Saint Mary's School archives.



From top left to bottom right: Teachers Christina Francis, Nina Ioannou, students Charitini and Antonietta, Nitsa Zachariou, Sisters Josehine, Veronica, Ateliana, Lorenza, Emilienne, Bernadette, Piera, Teacher Mikis Michaelides, Sisters Romualda, Charles, Arsene, Mother Tarcisia, Sisters Ausiliata, Joannes, Orestina. February 1961. Saint Mary's School archives.





Saint Mary's School teaching staff, 1982-1983. Saint Mary's School archives.

Saint Mary's School staff, 1994-1995. Saint Mary's School archives.



*Saint Mary's School staff.
Saint Mary's School archives.*



*Saint Mary's English Junior
School staff, 1998-1999. Saint
Mary's School archives.*





Above: Saint Mary's Greek Elementary School staff and students, 1998-1999. Saint Mary's School archives.



Saint Mary's Elementary School staff, 2021-2022. Saint Mary's School archives.

Saint Mary's Kindergarten staff, Christmas 2013. Saint Mary's School archives.



Non-clerical teaching staff strike

During the first 100 years of the school history, the school administration, the sisters and the non-clerical staff had a very good rapport with each other. This has been strongly expressed and demonstrated in the interviews of, for example, Sister Josephine (15 February 2023), Sister Antonia Piripitsi (17 February 2023) and Sister Angelica Hadjihanni (7 February 2023), Katina Frangeskou (15 March 2023), Antonia Nikita-Loucaidou (15 March 2023), and Thomas Michaelides (6 March 2023). This relationship was only once shortly challenged in 1993 (May-June), when the non-clerical teaching staff went on strike aiming to improve their work conditions. The issue was soon resolved, and the amicable cooperation of the school administration, the sisters and the non-clerical staff continued, and the harmonious operation of the school carried on.

Administrative and other supporting staff

In addition to the teaching staff, *Terra Santa Girl's School/Saint Mary's School* has been providing employment to many other citizens, in fields beyond teaching, such as secretarial staff, gardeners, cleaners, bus drivers, architects (the current architect, Nicholas, is the son of Stavros Economou, the architect of the current school facilities), painters, etc. This has also contributed to employment and the local economy. Sister Angelica Hadjihanni talked with fondness about these people:

“Many people contribute to the success of a play, not only the actors but also those who help behind the scenes. The same happens with the life and successes of this School. Many women and men worked hard for its successes. Many sisters from the position of janitor, cook, laundress, dedicated their lives for this holy cause. Many workers worked tirelessly to clean the yards, tend the garden, supervise the children. We cannot forget Mr Christoforos, the doorman and gardener, who spent

whole hours at the entrance; and his faithful wife Amalia, who helped to clean the classrooms; and many others who silently and humbly supported the education of the children who chose to come to our school.

Sister Angelica Hajdihanni, Interview, 7 February 2023

I, the author of this book, have been visiting the school for the last three years on a regular basis, most weeks every day, in order to use the school's archives and conduct interviews for the writing of this book. There was no one day during which there was not some work being done in the school towards its functioning, its administration and its maintenance. The school is always clean, well-maintained and well-painted. It looks as good as new. Its architectural design is still exemplary as a school building. The gardens are full of plants and blossoms and the yards are clean and proper. This creates a pleasant feeling to anyone who steps in the school.

Conclusion

The Franciscan Sisters have been teaching generations of students since the establishment of the school. However, the number of teaching Sisters keep diminishing.

During the early days, former students of the school also taught at the school, after some training overseas. In addition, the school has been employing many teachers from the community during its history. Many of these teachers taught at the school for a long time and have contributed to its development. Others, for many years, passed by on their way to secure teaching-positions in public schools. For them, the school has served as an intermediary employer, as, while waiting to obtain a teaching position in the government system, they were not only given the opportunity to work during this interim period, and gain valuable teaching experience in an exemplary educational environment and strive as teachers; they were also given the opportunity to contribute to the success of the school, the development and education of thousands of children in Cyprus and beyond, and to the educational events and achievements of Cyprus. As teachers of *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School*, they had the opportunity to gain teaching experience in a multilingual and multicultural school environment, something that was not common in other schools until recent years.

All the teachers (56 sisters and 477 non-clerical staff) and the supporting staff have contributed to the education of 57.113 students during the first 100-year history of *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School*.

In the school today, there are 13 sisters, 60 non-clerical teachers and ten other employees (administration and caretakers).

CHAPTER

8

THE SCHOOL
CURRICULUM

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The school curriculum defines every school. The content, the variety, the depth of the curriculum, determines the genre of the school curriculum. It is clear that, from the beginning of its establishment, *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School* chose, not the classical education, which was the wide choice broadly preferred by the Greek-language schools of Cyprus at the time, but a progressive education; this was modeled on the school as it was known mainly in Constantinople, which was the capital of the world's first multi-ethnic state; a curriculum in which the knowledge of languages was of the utmost importance.

Thus, the choice of four languages, English, French, Italian, and Greek, the language of the area where the school was founded, constituted the chorus of its curriculum ever since. While all schools in Cyprus have offered the so-called practical subjects such as Chemistry, Geography but also History and Mathematics in the Greek language, for more than 50 years, these subjects were taught in the *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School* in different languages so that the curriculum enriched the students linguistically, having knowledge of the subject they were studying in another language, apart from their mother tongue.

This was the quintessence of the *Terra Santa Girls' School* programme, and Saint Mary's School, as it evolved. At the same time, the curriculum offered subjects that could be used by female students immediately after graduation, such as Accounting, Typewriting, Shorthand; for the first 50 years of the school's history, these were the basis of a city's economic development, as was Lemesos, but also Cyprus more broadly.

However, another feature of the school's curriculum was constant reform. It constantly followed educational developments in the world and the new educational needs of society and chose to update its programme accordingly. The aim has always been to better prepare and equip its graduates, girls and boys, both for their personal and social lives, as well as for their academic training and professional endeavours.

A closer look unravels this progressive curriculum development.

The school's curriculum through the years

In the 1920s and 1930s

From the *Chronicles of the House of Limassol*, of the first years (1923-1948), it appears that, in the school, following the Constantinople programme, four languages were taught: English, French, Italian, and Greek, which continue to be taught to this day. History, Geography, Mathematics and Science were taught in French and Greek. Typing, Shorthand, Science, and Handicrafts such as Needlework were also taught. The lessons were also held in the afternoon and the girls also studied in the school. At first the majority of teachers were nuns.

A Memorandum of the *House of Limassol* documents the subjects taught at the beginning of the school:

There was a need for teachers of French, English, Greek and Italian. Sister Elisabetta Missio and then Sister Claudia were sent from America to Cyprus, Sister Denise was sent for French, Sister Joannes from Zante for Italian. The first Superior was Sister Elizabeth. The school took off immediately and developed especially thanks to the work of Sister Claudia, much appreciated for her language and because she was of English nationality.

(Memorandum of The House of Limassol (Cyprus) 1923, Saint Mary's School archives)

Another source documenting the subjects originally introduced at the school is the *Maronites Live* website:

It was a language school from the beginning, where the four languages were taught: English, French, Italian and Greek. The Sisters also taught Music, Handicrafts, Typing and Shorthand.

(Maroniteslive.com website)

The curriculum during this period was described by one of its first students Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti in her unpublished novel written in 1997:



I stayed at the convent for seven years. I loved the school and the nuns. I defended them with passion against all criticism from rival schools. Yet my years at the convent were not easy. The curriculum was overburdened. The week was divided into two English days, two French and two Italian, when we had to speak the language of the day. Each day was divided into two hours of English, two of French and two of Italian. In each we were taught not only the language but also History, Geography, and Mathematics. Each teacher 'forgot' that hers was not the only lesson and each plied us with homework that would have been too much on its own. Our target was the public examinations: "Ordinary" and "Distinction" in English set by the Cyprus Education Department, "Certificat d' Études" in

French and "Certificato Italiano" in Italian set by the French and Italian Governments and conducted by examining boards which visited Cyprus at the end of the school year.

In addition, I had private lessons in Greek every other afternoon and piano lessons twice a week.

(Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti, unpublished manuscript, written in 1997, pp. 81-82).



The entrance to the School transformed into a Typewriting and Shorthand class and examination room. Teachers: Mother Paule Descuffi and Jeannete Yiamaki. Saint Mary's School archives.

Cacoyanni Soulioti describes the school daily routine of the time:

“ On arriving at the school in the morning, we left our books in our classroom and went out into the yard at the back. The yard was square, strewn with pebbles, enclosed on three sides by the school building. On the fourth there was a wall painted green, inset with a Madonna and Child and a fountain with drinking water. A creeping rose tree formed a bower with a bench underneath. At the top end of the yard adjoining the central part of the building, there was a wide cement stage for gymnastics, dancing, school plays and other functions.

At the first ring of the bell, we froze in our tracks and stopped talking. The sudden stillness of four hundred feet moving about on the pebbles and the silencing of two hundred young voices was dramatic. At the second ring, we ran to the place allotted to our class in front of the cement stage. Each class formed, vertically to the stage, a line of one abreast, one girl standing behind the other in strict order of height. The top class formed the first line, the other classes forming consecutive lines, ending with the kindergarten.

At the third ring of the bell and the simultaneous first chord of a march on the piano, the first line marched into the big hall, followed by the second line and so on to the last, each class arranging itself in rows as if for a photograph, the oldest at the back, the youngest at the front. We then sang a song, a different one each day: French on Monday and Tuesday, English on Wednesday and Thursday, Italian on Friday and Saturday. Because the school was Roman Catholic in a non-Catholic country, there was no prayer. At the end of the song, we turned about to face the classroom area and each form marched to its classroom, the top class again leading the procession.

(Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti, unpublished manuscript, written in 1997, pp. 89-90)

According to a document titled “Ecole Saint Marie ex Terra Santa School” from Saint Mary’s School archives, a few years after its opening in 1923, the school was recognised by the island’s British Administration. “It was qualified as a secondary school where young girls were prepared for government exams in English, French, Greek and Italian. To the study of languages were later added Commercial Courses and the teaching of Music.” (Document titled “Saint Mary’s School ex Terra Santa School”, Saint Mary’s School archives).

In the 1940s

The curriculum during this period was described by Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou, who went to *Saint Mary’s School* first building in Agiou Andreou Street in 1941 at the age of five, and studied there for ten years. She graduated in 1951-1952 at the age of 14. She remembered that the subjects that were taught back in the 40s were French, History, Geography, Mathematics, and Calligraphy. In the French class students were taught Grammar, Syntax, Pronunciation, Calligraphy, Literature, Geography, History, Mathematics, Science, and History of Art. In the English and Italian classes, students were taught Grammar, Syntax, Pronunciation and Literature. In the Greek class students were taught Grammar, Syntax and Literature. Students were also taught Shorthand, Typewriting, Book-keeping, Secretarial Studies and Physical Education (Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou, Interview, 20 September 2022).

Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou also described the teaching methods of those times. According to Sarah, traditional teaching changed when Sister Claudia Witty came from America and brought substantial changes in the teaching of English. She introduced new practices. She enriched the lessons with daily debates and research projects. Students had to find their topic and support it depending on the case. This was a big change for the students. Sarah confessed that, even though she was an English speaker and they spoke English at home, her knowledge, her education in English was due to Sister Claudia and her open mindedness. She amazed the students by telling them about “this box in America which is similar to the radio only with it you do not only hear but you also see people.” She was talking about TV. That was about the early 1940s in Cyprus (Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou Interview, 20 September 2022).

Two years before Sarah's graduation, there was another big change in the school, this time it was related to the learning of Greek. It was the arrival of the ‘Arsakeian’ Eleni Aftonomou. The way she taught was really different from what students were used to in the Greek classes. Eleni Aftonomou was interested in helping her students learn and not parrot what they were presented with. For Sarah, she was a lifesaver. This is what she remembered:

“*Greek-origin students were asked to sit for a translation exam. This involved translation of two paragraphs of about 40 lines each from Greek to English and from English to Greek. Because I was considered British, I was asked to sit for an exam for English-origin students. This included four grammar double worksheets which also involved rules of English grammar. I rebelled against this school decision and asked to sit for the translation exam. Sister Claudia angrily referred me to Mrs Aftonomou. She tried different teaching methods with me until she identified the method that would best serve my case. The result was that I passed the translation exam with distinction.*

(Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou, student during the 1940s, Interview, 20 September 2022)

Sarah also remembers the friendly rapport of nuns with the students. Sarah remembers Sisters George Scattolon and Beatrice De Luca. They were the youngest nuns who came to the School at that time. They quickly and easily became friends with the students during the breaks (Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou Interview, 20 September 2022).

Other testimonials of that time come from the *Chronicle of the House of Limassol*:

21 March 1935

Mr Showman, Secondary School Inspector visited the school

Chronicle of the House of Limassol, 1923-1948

14 March 1948

Today the weather is good, but how cold! The school has resumed its usual appearance. Yesterday, for the first time since the departure of the American Sisters, we received a visit from Inspector Fleming. Minute inspection, in every class. He has praiseworthy words for the teaching and the school method.

Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 14 November 1923-14 March 1948

1950's and 1960s

From 1956 to 1964, the school curriculum for the secondary level was taught in four languages, English, French, Greek and Italian in all classes (1-2, 3-4, 5, Lower, Higher, G.C.). Language, Mathematics, History, Geography and Calligraphy were taught in English, French and Greek and Language and Calligraphy in Italian (1956-1957). In 1957-1958, the same subjects were more or less covered in each language in all Forms: 1st Form, 2nd Form, 3rd Form, 4th Form, 5th Form, 6th Form Lit., 6th Form Sc. and 7th Form A level:

The following table sums up what was taught from 1956 to 1964:

1956-1957						
English	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography		Calligraphy
French	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	Calligraphy
Greek	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	Calligraphy
Italian	Language					Calligraphy

1957-1958						
English	Language	Mathematics	History			Calligraphy
French	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	Calligraphy
Greek	Language	Arithmetic	History	Geography	Science	Calligraphy
Italian	Language		History	Geography		Calligraphy

1958-1959						
English	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography		Calligraphy
French	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	Calligraphy
Greek	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	Calligraphy
Italian	Language		History	Geography		Calligraphy

1959-1960						
English	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography		Calligraphy
French	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	Calligraphy
Greek	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	Calligraphy
Italian	Language		History	Geography		Calligraphy

1961-1962						
English	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography		
French	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	
Greek	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	
Italian	Language		History	Geography		

1962-1963						
English	Literature	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	
French	Language	Literature	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science
Greek	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	
Italian	Language			History	Geography	

1957-1958						
English	Literature	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	
French	Language	Literature	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science
Greek	Language	Mathematics	History	Geography	Science	Needlework
Italian	Language			History	Geography	

Education Regulations (n.d.)

The following is the original document of the 1956-1957 curriculum, found in the Education Regulations (n.d.):

4. Curriculum

The curriculum for the ensuing school year 1956-1957 is as follows: -

Subject	Class	N ^o OF LESSONS PER WEEK							Total
		I-2 ^o	III-4 ^o	III 5 ^o	Lower	Higher	G.C		
Language	English	15	20	10	10	10	10	10	75
Mathematics	"		8				3		6
History	"		2				2		4
Geography	"		2				2		4
Caligraphy	"	2							2
	French	1 st -2 nd	3 rd	IV	V	VI	VII		
Language	"	20	5	10	10	10	10		65
Mathematics	"	1	1	2	2	2	2		10
History	"			1	1	1	1		4
Geography	"		1	1	1	1	1		5
Science	"			1	1	1	1		4
Caligraphy	"	2							2
	Greek	1 st 2 ^o	3 ^o 4 ^o	5 ^o 6 ^o	1 st Gym.	2 nd Gym.	3 rd Gym.		
Language	"	20	5	5	5	5	5		45
Mathematics	"	2	1	1					4
History	"		1	1					2
Geography	"		1	1					2
Science	"		1	1					2
Caligraphy	"	2							2
	Italian	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 ^o -5 ^o				
Language	"	15	5	10	5				35
Caligraphy	"	1							1
									274

Education
Regulations (n.d.)
St Mary's School archives.

Anastasia Neocleous, student from 1962 to 1968, shared her memories of her schooling, her acceptance at the school, the curriculum, and the school books:

“ I am the third out of ten children in my family and the second out of six girls. My parents were poor and worked really hard for their children. Their priority was to educate them. In 1962, when I finished primary school with the highest mark, ten (A), Excellent, they decided to send me to the private Saint Mary's School to learn foreign languages so that I could have a good job in my life with a good salary. When both of my parents went to enrol me in the school, there were no places left. However, when Mother Arsène saw my grade from primary school, which was 10, Excellent, and she heard about my parents' wish to educate their ten children, despite their poverty, she immediately accepted me and I was, thus, given the opportunity to be educated at Saint Mary's School.

My school was first called Terra Santa Girls' School. From 1962 to 1965, I attended school at the old school premises. Then the new school premises were built and the school was called Saint Mary's School. I studied there for another three years. I finished school in 1968.

Attendance at this school was both morning and afternoon from 8:00 to 12:00 and from 13:00 to 16:00. At first it was difficult for me because all the teachers were nuns, and we had to speak only in the language of each nun/teacher. At breaks they would come out and wait to hear us speak English, French, and Italian. Mother Arsène taught me English. She was very strict. Sister Charles taught me French. She also did yard duty. When boys approached the schoolyard, she would come out and tell them to keep their distance from school. Only these three languages were taught at the school. Then, when I was in the third grade, Modern Greek was introduced with external Cypriot teachers. The first one who taught me Greek was a lady called Maria, known as 'Mariou'. Then other Greek teachers joined the school, such as Charalambos Papachristodoulou. In the new school premises, Greek was taught by Charalambos Papachristodoulou, English was taught by Nitsa Zachariou and Panayiotis Papaioannou. Thomas Michaelidis taught Accounting, and Thrasos Makrygiannis taught us Gymnastics; Shorthand was taught by Mikis Michaelidis.

The school books seemed difficult to us. They were books used in France, Italy and England. We learned the Geography, History, Literature and generally the culture of each language. It was very difficult for me at the beginning at the age of 12, but then in the remaining five years, with a lot of study I managed.

In general, it was a strict and demanding school. That's why we learned.

(Anastasia Neocleous, student from 1962 to 1968, Interview, 8 February 2023)

1970s

According to a school announcement in the local press in 1973, the school offered classes in Kindergarten, Greek Elementary School and Junior English and Secondary School. Secondary school students were taught four languages and commercial courses and sat for GCE Ordinary and Advanced levels, Typewriting in English and Greek (Elementary, Intermediate and Higher), and Shorthand and Book-keeping (Elementary and Intermediate).

According to Sister Josephine Vrahimi, principal of *Saint Mary's School* for many years before the current principal, the lessons were held both in the morning and in the afternoon. Students also had time allocated for study at school. According to their abilities, the girls could advance from first to third grade in one language and be in the second grade in another language, at the same time. This system changed after many years, around 1982 (Sister Josephine, Interview, 15 February 2023).

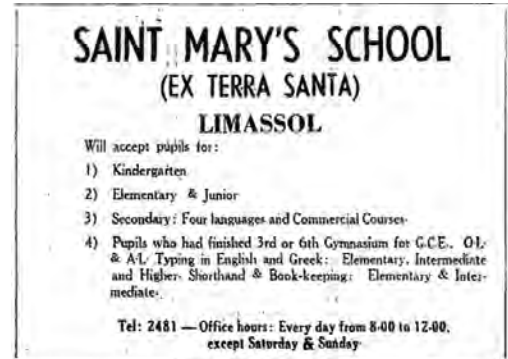
Karmella Antoniou was a student at *Saint Mary's School* from 1967 to 1973. During her interview, she gave a comprehensive description of the curriculum during that time and the opportunities it offered her for professional alternatives.

“ In our school we had a wide range of subjects. At first, we had the opportunity to learn four languages: Greek, English, French, and Italian. We also had the opportunity, if we wanted, to study Typing, Shorthand and Accounting. I did it all. Commercial classes were given before or after high school hours.

When I came to the school, I had already attended one year at Kykkos high school in Lefkosia, so I entered the second grade in Greek and English and the first grade in French and Italian. In the second year I was in third grade in Greek, English and French and second grade in Italian. In the fourth grade I was in all the subjects in the fourth grade. I passed all the exams that the school had prepared us for. I passed the ‘Certificat d' Études Primaires’, Brevet Littéraire, Alliance Française, Sorbonne, in French, G.C.E ‘O’ Level Greek, English, French and Italian, English Literature and Lower Cambridge in English.

In Italian I passed the ‘Certificato di Lingua Italiana’ and received a scholarship from the University of Foreigners of Perugia (Università di Perugia per Stranieri) in the summer of 1971. I also passed the Elementary and Intermediate Accounting exams, Elementary Shorthand, as well as Elementary, Intermediate and Higher Typing of the London Chamber of Commerce (LCC).

With all these provisions and the grace of God, in 1973 after I finished school, I prepared myself and passed the GCE Advanced level exams in French and Greek, so I could be admitted to the University of Paris and continue my studies. I studied French literature.



Cyprus Mail, 7 June 1973, p. 3 and *Cyprus Mail*, 8 June 1973, p. 4, Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy.

When I returned to Cyprus, I signed up at the Ministry of Education to teach French and was subsequently appointed. But I turned down the appointment because I had already been working at the Bank of Cyprus for ten years and I did not want to leave my position there to become a teacher, as I would have to start over. It was a difficult decision which I did not regret. With the above qualifications, I had the opportunity to either teach or follow the commercial sector. I joined the Bank of Cyprus.

(Karmella Antoniou, student from 1967 to 1973, Interview, 12 September 2022)

Elenitsa Katsioloudi who attended the school around the period of the tragic events of 1974, also refers to the learning beyond the curriculum:

““ *We learned in school to treat each other the way we would like others to treat us. With politeness and respect. When they evaluate me at work, my superiors as well as the staff they all say that this is a very special trait of mine. I believe that I owe this not only to my family, but also to my school where we were taught ‘savoir vivre.*

(Elenitsa Katsioloudi, student during the 1970s, Interview, 28 September 2022)

1980s

Vicky Christodoulou remembers the curriculum in the 1980s and how it has affected her later life and her interest in different types of arts:

““ *With my mother I attended class reunions... It came naturally that I attended the school myself for my secondary education, from 1982 to 1988. Soon, the microcosmos of the school became my world and everything evolved around it. With the discovery of languages, notably French, Italian, together with English and finally Greek, to a lesser extent, I mentally travelled to countries where there were cultural explosions of art, philosophy, architecture – a renaissance era that my own country under Ottoman rule did not experience. As early as eleven years old, I discovered poetry, history and geography of what, at the time, seemed like a far-fetched dream: Europe! In the later years, I learned about art and civilisation and became fascinated by the great works of art and architecture in cities like Paris and Rome. I had a preference for some lessons, like for example the class of Sœur (Sister) Charles, where her wealth of knowledge on just about everything never ceased to amaze me. Years later, whether I visited the Louvre or the Sistine Chapel, did I finally fully grasp the fascination she had been trying to convey.*

(Vicky Christodoulou, student during the 1980s, Interview, 20 January 2023)

Vicki also described the school life within and beyond the set curriculum as she experienced it and remembered it during her time there:

“ *The myth has it that the school was considered strict and God knows what people thought was going on inside its walls. The fact is, none of it was true. Of course, we had to adhere to the rules and be respectful, like in any other school. Many of the nuns and other teachers I had the pleasure of having – with only very few exceptions – were in fact fun to talk to, like Suor (Sister) Flora, who carried around a portable vinyl disc player and played us songs like the legendary ‘Ypomoni’ from Manos Hatzidakis – a favourite to sing and dance to at the end of our Italian lesson. Many of the posters on the walls of my bedroom came from the Italian magazine ‘Primavera’, sold at the school and Suor Rosemilia learned from the students all about Eros Ramazotti and the 80s Italian football stars.*

(Vicky Christodoulou, student during the 1980s, Interview, 20 January 2023)

1990s

In the 1990s, subjects such as Science and Computers were added. In the 2000s, Chemistry, Accounting and Physics followed.

Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999 (pre-primary, primary and secondary school) received her school-leaving certificate along with a number of certificates of world recognised examinations she passed, such as A level (Mathematics, Greek language, French), and O Level diplomas in Italian, French, English, Greek languages and English Literature as well as Mathematics, and Accounting, as well as Intermediate LCCI in Book-keeping, Higher LCCI in Typewriting. She also passed the Pan-Cyprian exams.

“ *I remember, during the school year 1998-1999, the school curriculum did not only prepare us for English exams such as A level examinations, which would lead us to English university entries; it also included preparation courses for entry to universities in France, Cyprus and Greece.*

(Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999, Interview, 6 March 2023)

With these qualifications, she was accepted and studied at the University of Athens in the Department of Greek History and Archaeology, focusing on History.

“ *Even though I had secured a place at a French university for French Philology, I preferred to study Greek History, which I loved so much.*

(Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999, Interview, 6 March 2023)

*Students and Sister Roseilia
in class studying Italian. Saint
Mary's School archives.*



*Kindergarten students in
action in class, 1994-1995.
Saint Mary's School archives.*





*Computers class, 1998-1999.
Saint Mary's School archives*

2000s

In the 2000s, Chemistry, Accounting and Physics followed.

2010s and 2020s

From 2010 to 2022, the school curriculum more or less covered the same subjects in all Forms: 1st Form, 2nd Form, 3rd Form, 4th Form, 5th Form, 6th Form Literature, 6th Form Science and 7th Form A level:

- Religious Knowledge
- English Language/Literature A level
- French Language/A level
- Greek/Ancient Greek/A level
- Italian Language/A level
- Mathematics/A level
- History
- Geography
- Science
- Physics/A level
- Chemistry/A level
- Music
- Physical Education
- Book-keeping/Accounting (2021-2022)
- Computer Studies/ Typewriting (2010-2011)

The number of periods per week for each subject from Form 1 to Form 7 sometimes varies for each subject for each school year (Religious Knowledge from 1-2 periods; for English, French, Greek and Italian mostly 5 periods; Mathematics 4-5 and 7 for Form 6 and 8 for Form 7; History and Geography mainly 1 period each per week, Science 3 for Forms 1-3, Physics 2 periods for Forms 4 and 5 and 5 for Form 6 and 8 for Form 7; Chemistry 1 period for Forms 4 and 5 and 5 for Form 6 and 8 for Form 7; Music 1 period for Forms 1-3. Physical Education 1

period for Forms 1-5; Book-keeping 3 periods for Forms 4 and 5 and 5 periods for Forms 6 and 7. Computers/Typewriting 2 periods for Forms 1-6 and 3 for Form 7.

During the academic year 2021-2022 the 7th class curriculum included common core subjects, which are compulsory for all the students and orientation subjects from which the students choose three:

Common core subjects:

Religious Education, Good knowledge of Greek (C1), English Language, Computer Studies.

Orientation subjects:

English Literature-A Level, French-A Level/C1, Italian-A Level, Modern Greek (Pancyprian), Chemistry-A Level, Physics-A Level, Mathematics-A Level, Accounting.

The following are some samples of the above:

CLASS	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
SUBJECTS	Periods per week	Periods per week	Periods per week	Periods per week	Periods per week	Periods per week	-
Religion	1	1	1	1	1	1	-
English	7	7	7	6	6	10	-
French	7	7	7	5	5	8	-
Greek	5	5	5	4	4	5 A.L.	A Level
Italian	5	5	5	5	10	5 A.L.	-
Mathematics	4	4	4	4	4	4	A Level
History	1	1	1	2	2	1	-
Geography	1	1	1	1	1	1	-
Science	2	2	2	1	1	-	-
Music	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Physical Training	1	1	1	1	-	--	
Book-keeping	-	-	-	5	4	5	-
Typewriting	-	-	-	4	4	5	-
Shorthand	-	-	-	-	-	5	-
Computers	-	-	-	4	4	4	-

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL
ACADEMIC YEAR
1991-1992
CURRICULUM

CLASS	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
SUBJECTS	Periods per week	Periods per week	Periods per week	Periods per week	Periods per week	Periods per week	A.L. Choice
Religion	2	2	2	1	1	1	
English	5	5	5	5	6	6	6
French	5	5	5	5	5	5	6
Greek	5	5	5	4	4	6	6
Italian	5	5	5	5	5	3	6
Mathematics	4	4	4	5	5	5	8
History	1	1	1	1	1	2	4
Geography	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
Science	4	4	4	2	1	-	-
Music	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Physical Training	1	1	1	-	--		
Book-keeping	-	-	-	3	3	4	5
Typewriting & Computers	1	1	1	2	2	2	3
Shorthand	-	-	-	-	-	-	5

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL
ACADEMIC YEAR
2004-2005
CURRICULUM

SUBJECTS	CLASSES							
	Number of periods per week							
	1 st Form	2 nd Form	3 rd Form	4 th Form	5 th Form	6 th Form	6 th Lit.	7 th A Level
Religion Knowledge	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	-
English Language/ Literature-A Level	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	8
French-A Level	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	8
Greek/Ancient Greek/ A Level	5	5	5	4	4	6	5	8
Italian-A Level	5	5	5	5	5	6	2	8
Mathematics-A Level	4	4	4	5	5	2	7	8
History	1	1	1	1	1	2	-	-
Geography	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
Science	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	-

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL
ACADEMIC YEAR
2011-2012
CURRICULUM

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL
ACADEMIC YEAR
2011-2012
CURRICULUM
(continued)

SUBJECTS	CLASSES Number of periods per week							
	1 st Form	2 nd Form	3 rd Form	4 th Form	5 th Form	6 th Form	6 th Lit.	7 th A Level
Physics-A Level	-	-	-	2	2	-	5	8
Chemistry-A Level	-	-	-	1	1	-	5	8
Music	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Physical Education	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-
Book-keeping	-	-	-	3	3	5	5	5
Computers/Typewriting	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
TOTAL	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	65

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL
ACADEMIC YEAR
2021-2022
CURRICULUM

SUBJECTS	CLASSES Number of periods per week						
	1 st Form	2 nd Form	3 rd Form	4 th Form	5 th Form	6 th Lit.	6 th Sc.
Religion Knowledge	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
English	5	5	5	5	5	5	1
French	5	5	5	5	5	6	2
Greek	5	5	5	4	4	6	5
Italian	5	5	5	4	4	6	2
Mathematics	4	4	4	5	5	2	7
History	1	1	1	1	1	2	-
Geography	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Science	3	3	3	-	-	-	-
Physics	-	-	1	2	2	-	5
Chemistry	-	-	-	2	2	-	5
Music	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Physical Education	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
Book-keeping / Accounting	-	-	-	3	3	5	5
Computer Studies	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
TOTAL	35	35	35	35	35	35	35

7th CLASS

The curriculum of the 7th class has common core subjects, which are compulsory for all students and orientation subjects from which the students must choose three.

COMMON CORE SUBJECTS (Compulsory for all students)	Periods per week
Religion Knowledge	1
Good knowledge of Greek Language (C1)	5
English Language	2
Computer Studies	2
ORIENTATION SUBJECTS (Must choose three of them)	
English Literature-A Level	8
French-A Level/C1	8
Italian-A Level	8
Modern Greek (Pancyprian)	6
History (Pancyprian)	6
Chemistry-A Level	8
Physics-A Level	8
Mathematics-A Level	8
Accounting	8

ECDL/ DELF/ CELI/ IGCSE/ LCCI/ A Level EXAMS		
1st class: ECDL (Computers) 2nd class: DELF A1 (French) CELI A1 Impatto (Italian) ECDL (Computers) 3rd class: DELF A2 (French) CELI 1 (Italian) ECDL (Computers) 4th class: IGCSE Italian French Modern Greek Biology	5th class: IGCSE English Language English Literature Mathematics Chemistry Physics DELF B1 (French) CELI 2 (Italian) LCCI Book-keeping Elementary	6th and 7th classes: A Level Greek Physics Chemistry Biology Mathematics English Literature French Italian Accounting DELF B2/C1 (French) CELI 3 (Italian) LCCI Book-keeping Intermediate (6 th class)

Religion Knowledge

As already established, Saint Mary's has been run by the Franciscan Sisters; it is a private catholic school. Throughout its 100-year history, it has been attended by some 57,113 students (45,855 girls and 11,258 boys) of somewhat 31 religions and 87 nationalities. Religious studies have always been one of the subjects taught. Students felt comfortable with the teaching of this subject, regardless of their religious background.

The following are extracts from interviews of two of them:

“Born in the early 70s into a family where both the Christian Orthodox and Catholic religions were practised, I grew up attending mass in both worlds... Religion was taught in a subtle way. In fact, it should have been called philosophy, as the subjects went beyond those typically included in classic religion classes. Students were free to choose whether they wanted to attend mass in the chapel next to the school, or go to Saint Catherine's church on the seafront, on special occasions. I was lucky enough to have the late Sister Bernadette for my religion class, with whom we felt we could discuss just about anything, boy issues included...

(Vicky Christodoulou, student during the 1980s, Interview, 20 January 2023)

Antonia attended the School as a student, she lived in the School boarding house and later she taught French there for 43 years:

“In all the years I was at the School, both as a student, as a resident in the boarding school and as a teacher, no Sister ever tried to proselytise, nor did they criticise anyone's religion.

(Antonia Nikita-Loucaidou, student/teacher, Interview, 9 February 2023)

This is something that other students also mentioned, for example Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussiotou (1940s), Elenitsa Katsioloudi (1970s) and Marilena Panteli (2020s).

From the various documents, it is clear that the curriculum of the school has constantly been having two goals: The general education of students and the occupational special knowledge that graduates need to thrive in the professional environment that awaits them after school, a combination that even today many education systems and schools in many countries are still trying to balance.

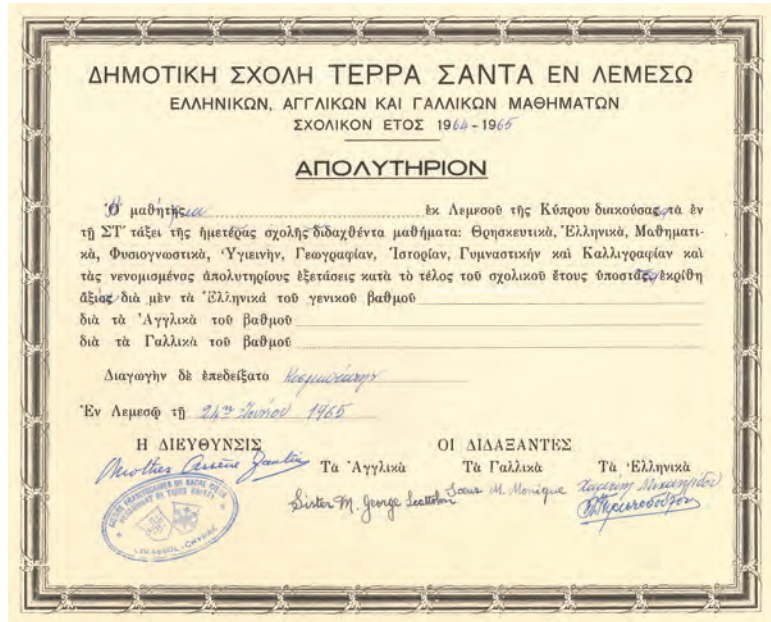
School Certificates

Kindergarten

Primary School

The following are indicative examples of the primary school reports and leaving certificates:

Below left: Marios Katsioloudis Kindergarten-Leaving Certificate, 2000-2001, Saint Mary's School Lemesos, Marios Katsioloudis personal archives.



I ΣΧΟΛΙΚΑ ΕΠΙΤΥΓΜΑΤΑ ΘΕΜΑΤΑ	ΕΠΙΔΟΣΗ	
	A' ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟ	B' ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟ
1. ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ: α) Ανάγνωση β) Ορθογραφία - Γραμματική γ) Έκφραση (σπορ. - γραμ.) δ) Γραφή		
2. ΜΑΘΗΜΑΤΙΚΑ: α) Προφορικά β) Γραπτά		
3. ΚΟΙΝ. ΘΕΜΑΤΑ: α) Σπουδή Περιβάλλοντος β) Ιστορία γ) Γεωγραφία δ) Θρησκευτικά		
4. ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗ:		
5. ΤΕΧΝΙΚΑ: α) Μουσική β) Γυμναστική γ) Τέχνη		
6. ΑΓΓΛΙΚΑ: α) Προφορικά β) Γραπτά		
7. ΓΑΛΛΙΚΑ: α) Προφορικά β) Γραπτά		

II ΓΕΝΙΚΕΣ ΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΗΣΕΙΣ - ΕΙΣΗΓΗΣΕΙΣ		
A' ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟ:		
B' ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟ:		
ΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΗ A' ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟΥ: Δασκάλ... Γονέα Διευθύντριας Ημερομηνία:		
ΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΗ B' ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟΥ: Δασκάλ... Γονέα Διευθύντριας Ημερομηνία:		
ΥΠΟΜΟΝΗΜΑ ΒΑΘΜΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ: A=19-20 B=16-17 Γ=13 Δ=0-15 A=18 B=15 Γ=12 Δ=0-11		

Above: Primary School Terra Santa in Lemesos of Greek, English and French Lessons, Leaving Certificate 1964-1965, Saint Mary's School archives.

Left: Terra Santa Elementary Greek School Progress Report, 1999, Saint Mary's School archives.

The curriculum included: **Greek:** Reading, Orthography, Grammar, Oral and Written Expression and Writing. **Mathematics:** Oral, Written. **Common subjects:** Environmental Studies, History, Geography, Religion. Science **Technical:** Music, Physical Education, Art. **English:** Oral and Written. **French:** Oral and Written.

Above: St Mary's Junior School Leaving certificate, Saint Mary's School archives.

Above right: Saint Mary's School of Lemesos, Elementary, School Leaving Certificate, Saint Mary's School archives.

Secondary School

The following are three indicative examples of subjects from records of three students from three different historical periods. The comparison is made through indications and diplomas of:

- Elli Michaelidou, one of the students of the school, who studied from 1929 to 1932;
- Salomi Papadima, who studied in the 1970s (half way through the 100-history of the school, from 1968 to 1974);
- Marios Katsioloudis, a more recent one who studied during the last 10 years of the last 100 years of the school's history (graduated in 2014) and Michaella Scordi (graduated in 2021-2022).

School Reports

At first, the School reports were handwritten. Elli Michaelidou was a student in the 1930s.

Tessa Santa School
Miss Elli Michaelides

	Conduct	Application	Comprehension	Explanation	Composition	Grammar Book	Reading	Translation	Geography	History	Dictation	Poetry
October												
November												
1 st Quarterly Exam.	A	A	A	A	A	B A	A	A	A	A	A	A
January												
February												
2 nd Quarterly Exam.	A	A	A	A	A	A A	A	A	A	A	A	A
April												
May												
3 rd Quarterly Exam.												

A - Excellent 10. B - Good 8½. D - Fair 6. B+ - Very Good 9. C - Very Fair 7½. E - Failure.

Parents will kindly sign Report cards on reverse side.

One of Elli's reports was handwritten and it included the following subjects:

- Conduct
- Application
- Understanding
- Explanation
- Report
- Reading
- Translation
- Geography
- History
- Spelling
- Poetry

Elli Michaelidou's handwritten School Report, page 1 (1930s). Elli Michaelidou's personal archives.

This first Quarter, Elly comes first in a tie with
 Aura Karaclos.

Elly is a pupil whose Parents and Teachers may be
 justly proud.

General Average 97/100

Elly comes first this Quarter. I cannot
 speak too highly of this pupil. Her conduct,
 application and diligence are a source of
 continual pleasure to me.
 Sister.

Elli Michaelidou's
 handwritten School Report,
 page 2 (1930s). Elli
 Michaelidou's personal
 archives.

Other reports included printed and handwritten information:

Right: Elli's Bulletin École-
 Pensionnat de Terre Sainte
 1928-1929, signed by Sister
 Elisabetta Missio, the first
 Principal of the School. Elli
 Michaelidou's personal archives.

ÉCOLE - PENSIONNAT DE TERRE SAINTE
 BULLETIN DE M^{lle} Elli Michaelides
 COURS Élémentaire 2^e année
 1^{er} TRIMESTRE 1928-29

RÉSULTAT DES EXAMENS			
Conducte	10	Écriture	7
Religion	-	Sciences	3½
Lectures Français	10	Talents Latins	-
Langues	9	Traçons manuels	10
Dictée	7½	Arts	8
Composition	8	Musique	10
Poésie	8½	Anglais	9½
Histoire	10	Maths	8
Géographie	8½	Gymnastique	9
Arithmétique	8½		

Observations: *2^{ème} en Français*
1^{ère} en Français
4^{ème} en Anglais
 LA DIRECTRICE: *S. M. Elisabetta*

Far right: Elli's Bulletin École-
 Pensionnat de Terre Sainte
 1930, signed by Sister Elisabetta
 Missio, the first Principal of the
 School. Elli Michaelidou's
 personal archives.

ÉCOLE - PENSIONNAT DE TERRE SAINTE
 BULLETIN DE M^{lle} Elli Michaelides
 COURS Moyen 2^e année
 1^{er} TRIMESTRE 1930

RÉSULTAT DES EXAMENS			
Conducte	10	Écriture	8½
Religion	-	Sciences	10
Lectures Français	10	Talents Latins	-
Grammaire	9½	Traçons manuels	-
Dictée	10	Arts	7
Composition	9½	Peinture	-
Poésie	-	Musique	10
Histoire	10	Anglais	-
Géographie	10	Maths	8
Arithmétique	9	Grec	-
		Gymnastique	10

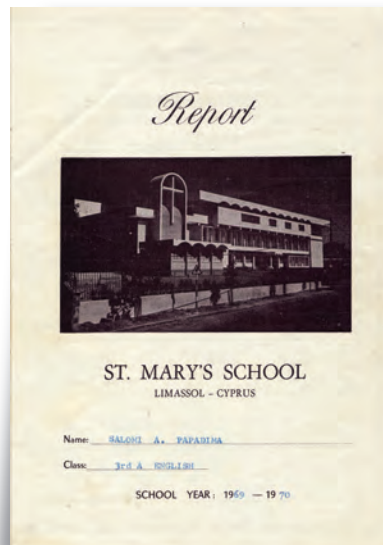
Observations: *1^{ère} en Français*
 LA DIRECTRICE: *S. M. Elisabetta*
 1229 Décembre 1930

CLASSES	1st TERM			2nd TERM			3rd TERM			1st TERM			2nd TERM			3rd TERM		
	ENGL	FR	GR	ENGL	FR	GR	ENGL	FR	GR	ENGL	FR	GR	ENGL	FR	GR	ENGL	FR	GR
Religious Knowledge Επισκοπία	10			10			10											
Conduct Αγωγή	10			10			10											
Mathematics Μαθηματικά	10	9		9½	10		9½	10		9½	10		9½	10		9½	10	
History Ιστορία	9½	9		10	10		9½	10		9½	10		9½	10		9½	10	
Geography Γεωγραφία	10	10		10	9		10	9		9½	9½		9½	9½		9½	9½	
Science Επιστήμη	10			10			10			10			10			10		
Grammar Γραμματική	9½	9½	9	9	9	8	9½	9	8	9½	9	9	9½	9	9	9½	9	9
Dictation Ορθογραφία	9½	9½	9	8½	9½	9	9	9	9	9½	10	9½	9½	9	9	9½	9	9
Writing Καλλιγραφία	8½	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Composition Επιστολή	8½	8½	10	8½	8½	10	9	8½	8½	9	10	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Recitation Ανάμνηση	9½	9½	9	10	10	9	9½	10	10	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Reading Ανάγνωση	8	8½	9	8½	8½	9	8½	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Conversation Συνάλλαξη	8½	8½	9	8½	8½	9	8½	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Set Book Βιβλίου Διορθώσεως	7½		9				9½			9½			9½			9½		
Comprehension Αντίληψη	9		9½				9½			9½			9½			9½		
Literature Λογοτεχνία																		
Precis Περίληψη																		
Translation Μετάφραση																		
Ancient Greek Αρχαία Ελληνικά																		
Mathematics Μαθηματικά	10	9		9½	10		9½	10		9½	10		9½	10		9½	10	
History Ιστορία	9½	9		10	10		9½	10		9½	10		9½	10		9½	10	
Geography Γεωγραφία	10	10		10	9		10	9		9½	9½		9½	9½		9½	9½	
Science Επιστήμη	10			10			10			10			10			10		
Newspaper Εφημερίδα																		
Typewriting Στυλογραφία																		
Shortband Συνοψισμός																		
Book-keeping Λογιστική																		
Music Μουσική																		
Physical Training Φυσική Αγωγή																		
Promoted to Προβιβάθηκε κ.α.	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½	8½
Repeat Σημειώνεται																		
Pass Mark Βαθμολογία	5																	
SIGNATURE Διευκρίνηση	Mother Sophia Zambou																	
PARENTS Γονείς	Papadima																	
Re-opening	7-1-70			2-4-70			1-10-70											

Salomi Papadima's School Report, third year of secondary studies, inside content. Salomi Papadima- Sophocleous' personal archives.

Salomi Papadima was a student in the late 1960s-early 1970s. Salomi's report was printed; marks were added by hand; grades were given out of 10; this report included the following subjects:

- Religious Knowledge;
- Grammar, Dictation, Calligraphy, Composition, Recitation, Reading, Conversation in English, French, Greek and Italian;
- Set book, Comprehension in English;
- Mathematics, History, Geography in French and Greek;



Salomi Papadima's School Report front cover, third year of secondary studies (late 1960s- early 1970s). Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archives.

Marios Katsioloudis was a student from 1999 to 2014.

SUBJECTS	ΘΕΜΑΤΑ	First Term Πρώτο Τρίμηνο	Second Term Δεύτερο Τρίμηνο	Third Term Τρίτο Τρίμηνο	Final Exams Τελικές Εξετάσεις
Religious Education	Θρησκευτικά	20	20	20	
Modern Greek	Νέα Ελληνικά	20	20	20	19
Classical Greek	Αρχαίολογία	20	20	20	
English	Αγγλικά	20	20	20	19
French	Γαλλικά	20	19	19	19
Italian	Ιταλικά	20	19	19	17
Mathematics	Μαθηματικά	20	20	20	20
Science	Επιστήμη	20	20	20	19
Chemistry	Χημεία				
Physics	Φυσική	18	17	20	
History	Ιστορία	20	20	20	
Geography	Γεωγραφία				
Music	Μουσική	20	20	20	
Physical Education	Γυμναστική	20	20	20	
Book-Keeping & Accounting	Λογιστική				
Typewriting	Διπλολογγραφία	20	20	20	
Computer Studies	Παρουσίαση	20	20	20	
G. AVERAGE	ΓΕΝΙΚΟΣ	19.86	19.64	19.86	18.83
Pass Mark	Προβ. Βαθμίες	10	10	10	10
Maximum of Marks	Μεγ. Βαθολογία	20	20	20	20

	First Term Πρώτο Τρίμηνο	Second Term Δεύτερο Τρίμηνο	Third Term Τρίτο Τρίμηνο
Discipline	Πειθαρχία	20	20
Absences	Απουσίες	Just. Unj.	Just. Unj.
Re-opening	Επιστροφή	07.01.2010	12.04.2010 13.09.2010

REMARKS **ΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΗΣΕΙΣ**

First Term
Πρώτο Τρίμηνο

Second Term
Δεύτερο Τρίμηνο

Third Term
Τρίτο Τρίμηνο

Promoted to
Προβιβάζεται στην **FOURTH CLASS**

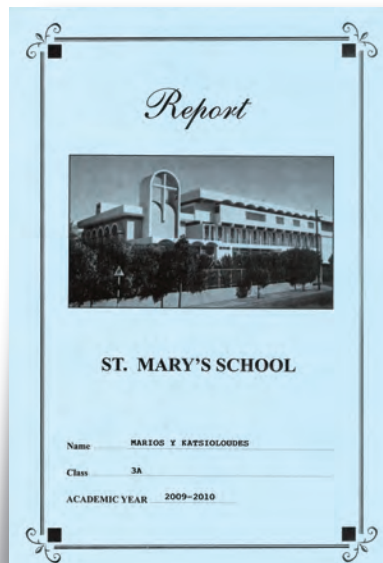
Repeat
Στάση-ος

Re-examined in
Ανέξιστος-ος



Signatures Υπογραφή	First Term Πρώτο Τρίμηνο	Second Term Δεύτερο Τρίμηνο	Third Term Τρίτο Τρίμηνο
Headmistress Διευθύντρια			
Parents Γονείς			

Above: Marios' Katsioloudis Report, inside content, 3A class, 2009-2010. Marios Katsioloudis' personal archives.

Marios' 2009-2010 Report was printed; it was graded out of 20; it included the following subjects:



- Religious Education
- Modern Greek
- Classical Greek
- English
- French
- Italian
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physics
- History
- Geography
- Music
- Physical Education
- Accounting
- Typewriting
- Computer Studies

SAINT MARY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL LIMASSOL - CYPRUS			SCHOOL REPORT			
			Academic Year: 2012-2013			
First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Class			
Marios	Y	KATSILOUIDIS	6B			
Subjects - Θέματα			First Term	Second Term	Final Exams	
Religious Education - Θρησκευτικά			20	20		
Modern Greek - Νέα Ελληνικά			20	20	19	
Classical Greek - Αρχαίον Γραμματική						
English - Αγγλικά			19	19		
French - Γαλλικά			16	16		
Italian - Ιταλικά			18	20		
Mathematics - Μαθηματικά			20	20	20	
Physics - Φυσική			20	20	19	
Chemistry - Χημεία			19	18	19	
Science - Επιστήμη						
History - Ιστορία						
Geography - Γεωγραφία						
Music - Μουσική						
Physical Education - Γυμναστική						
Book keeping & Accounting - Λογιστική			20	20	19	
Typewriting - Δακτυλογραφία						
Computer Studies - Πληροφορική			20	20		
G. AVERAGE - ΓΕΝΙΚΟΣ			19.20	19.30	19.20	
DISCIPLINE - ΠΕΙΘΑΡΧΙΑ			20	20		
Absences - Απουσίες			First Term	Second Term	Total	Remarks-Παρατηρήσεις
Justified - Δικαιολογημένες			12	18	30	
Unjustified - Αδικαιολόγητες			0	0	0	
Promoted to - Προβιβάζεται στην:			7 TH CLASS			
Re-examined in - Ανεξαστάτος:						
Repeat - Στάση/ος:						
The Headmistress Η Διευθύντρια  						

Marios Katsioloudis, Saint Mary's Secondary School Report, inside content, 6B class, 2012-2013. Marios Katsioloudis' personal archives.

Marios' 2012-2013 Report was printed; it was graded out of 20; it included the following subjects (additional subjects in bold):

- Religious Education
- Modern Greek
- Classical Greek
- English
- French
- Italian
- Mathematics
- Physics
- **Chemistry**
- Science
- History
- Geography
- Music
- Physical Education
- **Book keeping & Accounting**,
- Typewriting
- Computer Studies

The comparison of Elli's, Salomi's and Marios' reports and of the subjects they studied establishes the following development and progression:

- The school reports moved from handwritten to printed.
- The grading system moved from the 10 to the 20-grading system, as practised in the government schools.
- The number of subjects increased, reflecting the educational trends and social needs.
- The variety of subjects increased, reflecting the educational trends and social needs.
- The passing of methodology from the traditional, to the immersed, to the most current one.

The comparison of the examples of the three indicative cases described above correspond to the different historical periods of the 100-year history of the school (start, middle, current); the comparison revealed the evolution of the content of the curriculum, its continuous enrichment, and the constant effort to update it in order to reflect the educational and social needs of each historical period, and meet the expected aims which are none other than: (a) to equip students with the knowledge, skills and experiences that would prepare them in the best possible way for further studies and their professional endeavours; (b) give them general education and (c) give them the necessary knowledge, skills, ethical background and awareness which would prepare them to be good citizens.

Examinations and Certificates

Examinations

Throughout its history, the school took into account the global context of education and work. From a very early stage, it integrated in its curriculum world-renowned examinations in languages and other subjects, from the United Kingdom and from France, Italy, and Europe in general. In that way, apart from the school-leaving certificate, it made sure it provided its students with appropriate world recognised educational credentials. The student participation in such examinations was for many years recorded in the Chronicles of the House of Limassol, every year. The following are indicative examples of such entries:

On the first of June 1937, it was recorded that all students who sat for the French Certificate passed.

The Italian exams were taken on the 26th of June 1937, in the presence of the Royal Consulate of Italy.

In March 1938, students sat for the English Ordinary and Distinction examinations.

In 1939, Nelly Mavrantoni came second in the whole of Cyprus in the Exams for the French Certificate.

The local press often announced the results of examinations for the attainment of certificates in the French language. On Friday, 9 June 1961, for example, the newspaper *Phileleftheros* announced the results of the annual official French Brevet Littéraire and Certificat d' Études examinations held on Friday and Saturday the 2nd and 3rd of June 1961 at the French Cultural Centre of Lefkosia. The examination panel consisted of Roger Milliex, Cultural attaché of the French Embassy in Cyprus and three French examiners from the French Delegation of Lebanon, Dumon and Leonard. As announced, the success of the candidates from the schools of Saint Joseph of Lefkosia and Larnaka and Terra Santa of Lemesos reached 100%. Katerina Pavlou from Terra Santa School of Lemesos received the Brevet Littéraire, Chloe Egglezaki, Louise Lamari, Vera Malactou and Marie Michaelidou, Martha Petridou, Katerina Rotsithi, Rea Tsouti and Ioanna Vasiliadou received the Certificat d' Études. The examiners from Beirut congratulated the principals, teachers and students of the three schools for their excellent results.

Similar announcements were regularly announced in the local press. Indicative information of newspapers issues is cited, in which the results of student examinations of the School were published: *Chronos*, 13 June 1930, page 3; *Paratiritis*, 8 July 1932, page 2; *Paratiritis*, 5 June 1938, page 6; *Haravgi*, 17 June 1960, page 4; *Phileleftheros*, 26 October 1960, page 2; *Phileleftheros*, 9 June 1961, page 6; *Haravgi*, 5 April 1969, page 4; *Phileleftheros*, 11 August 1970, page 4; *Haravgi*, 21 October 1971, page 7; *Haravgi*, 12 August 1972, page 4; *Phileleftheros*, 13 August 1972, page 9; *Haravgi*, 13 October 1973, page 4; *Phileleftheros*, 17 September 1976, page 7; *Simerini*, 23 August 1977, page 7.

Students have continued to take exams and attain certificates throughout the whole 100-year history of the School, to the present day.

A comparison of examinations, certificates and diplomas of the first, the middle and the current years of the School gives an idea of the development of school curricula, based on the educational and societal developments, and the students' learning and achievement. The certificates, diplomas and awards of three students representing the three periods are presented:

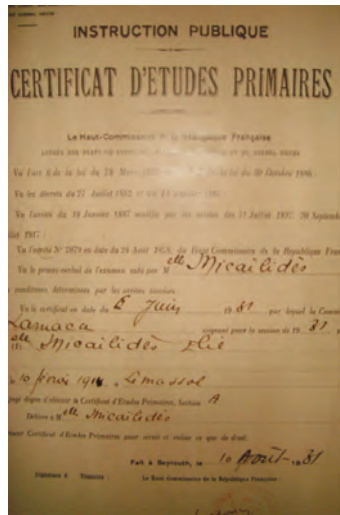
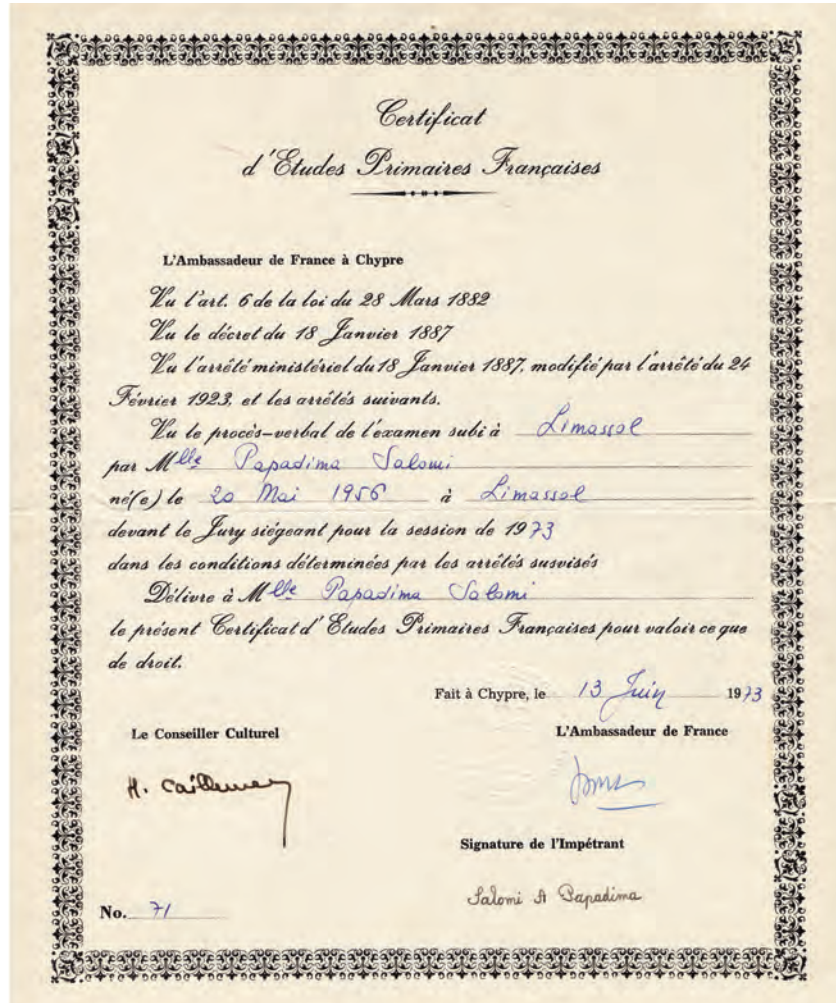
- Elli Michaelidou (after completing The Private School of Foreign Languages and Greek Schools in 1928) attended the school in the late 1920s and early 1930s and graduated in 1932;
- Salomi Papadima attended the school from 1968 to 1974 when she graduated;
- Marios Katsioloudis attended the school from 1999 to 2014 when he graduated.

Certificates and Diplomas

French

Certificat d' Études Primaires Françaises, L'Ambassade de France à Chypre, Salomi Papadima, 1973. Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archives.

Certificat d'Etudes Primaires Françaises, L'Ambassade de France à Chypre, Elli Michaelidou: 1931. Elli Michaelidou's personal archives.



From the example of Elli Michaelidou, it is established that students received a certificate for French as early as 1931.

Salomi's 1970s examples (around half of the School's history), indicate that the students sat for more examinations and attained more certificates in French than in the 1930s:

- Brevet Littéraire, Ambassade de France à Chypre;
- Diplôme de Langue Française, Alliance Française, École Internationale de Langue et de Civilisation Françaises, Salomi Papadima, 1973, Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous'personal archives;

- Certificat Pratique de Langue Française, 1er degré, Universités de Paris;
- General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level French;

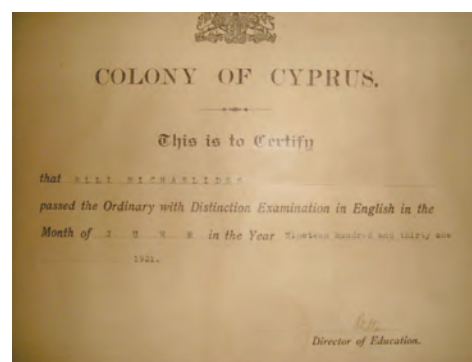
The 2020s examples for French indicate that the type of examinations have changed. The students now take:

- DELF examinations and diplomas (Diplôme d'études en langue française) (French Studies Diploma): A1, A2, B1, B2.
- DALF (Diplôme approfondi de langue française) (Advanced French Studies Diploma): C1 The DELF and DALF (DELF/DALF, <https://delf-dalf.ambafrance-ca.org/>) are six separate diplomas issued by the French Ministry for National Education to certify the competency of candidates from outside France in the French language. These diplomas are valid for life. DELF and DALF certificates are developed by the Centre International d' Etudes Pédagogiques (CIEP) and reflect the six levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In 2019, the DELF and DALF examinations are available in 175 countries. In Cyprus, the examinations are organised by the French Institute of Cyprus, which is the only approved examination centre in Cyprus and an official institution of the French Ministry of National Education (Institut Français de Chypre website).
- IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education), Examination.
- Certificate for French equivalent to the GCSE qualification taken by students in Year 10-11 in the UK to prepare them for further pre-university level study, such as A-levels: French.

English

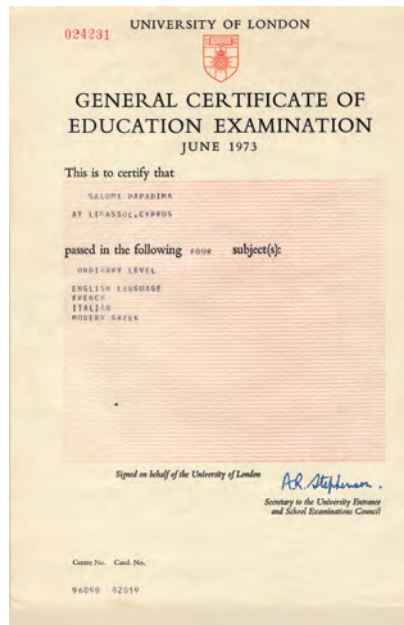
The examples of the examinations and certificates attained by the students in the 1970s were no longer administered and offered by the British Colony of Cyprus as in the 1930s, as, meanwhile, Cyprus had become a Republic (1960). Instead, students took examinations of the University of London and attained the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination.

The 2020s examples (around the School's 100-year history) for English indicate that the type of examinations continued to change.



English Examination. Elli Michaelidou, O level English, 1931. Elli Michaelidou's personal archives.

English Examination. Lower Certificate of Education Examinations, Lower Level, University of Cambridge: English Literature, French, Italian, Modern Greek. Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archives.



In the 2020s, around the schools' centenary, students sit for the examinations and attain the following:

- IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education), now known as Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (Pearson Qualifications website), equivalent to the GCSE qualification taken by students in Year 10-11 in the UK to prepare them for further pre-university level study, such as A-levels:
- English Language
- English Literature

Italian

Italian Certificate, Elli Michaelidou, Certificato di Promozione, 1932. Elli Michaelidou's personal archives.



Salomi Papadima, Certificato di Lingua Italiana, 1973. Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archives.



The 1970s examples for Italian indicate that the curriculum, examinations and certifications also evolved since the 1930s, when students received the Certificato di Promozione. The responsibility was transferred from the Italian Foreign Ministry to the Consulate Commission in Cyprus for the Certificato di Lingua Italiana. Students also took examinations of the University of London and attained the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination.

Students, therefore, received:

- The Certificate of the Italian Language by the Italian Consulate;
- GCE Italian.

The 2020s examples for Italian indicate that the type of examinations continued to change. Students sit for the examinations and attain the IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education), now known as Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (Pearson Qualifications website), equivalent to the GCSE qualification taken by students in Year 10-11 in the UK to prepare them for further pre-university level study, such as A-levels:

- GCSE Italian;
- Università per Stranieri di Perugia, Centro Valutazione Certificazioni Linguistiche, Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana, Level B1, CELI 2;
- Università per Stranieri di Perugia, Centro Valutazione Certificazioni Linguistiche, Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana, Level A2, CELI 1.

Greek

Students have been taking examinations and certifications for Greek.

In the 1970s, students took the examinations of the University of London and they attained the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination in Greek Ordinary Level. Very few took the examinations and attained the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination in Greek Advanced Level.

In the recent decades, students have been sitting for the examinations and attaining the IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) certificate, now known as Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (Pearson Qualifications website), equivalent to the GCSE qualification taken by students in Year 10-11 in the UK to prepare them for further pre-university level study, such as A-level in different subjects, including Greek. Students have also been taking the Pancyprrian Examination.

Students therefore receive the following:

- Edexcel General Certificate of Secondary Education, Greek;
- Pearson Edexcel General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level, Greek;
- The Pancyprian Examination Certificate.

Other Disciplines

In the photo album of the early days found in the School's archives, there are photos of students at Terra Santa Girls' School building, taking Typewriting and Shorthand classes and exams in the entrance of the school, which was also used as a classroom, supervised by Mother Paule Descuffi and the teacher Jeannette Yiamaki. Another such early evidence was found in the Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 1923-1948, where there was a mention of students studying Shorthand and receiving prizes. Also, in Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 1948-1954, it was mentioned that, during two consecutive days (29-30 July 1952), Teacher Nina accompanied students to Typewriting and Shorthand exams. In addition, it was recorded that students took Typewriting (higher) and Shorthand (elementary) exams (7 May 1952).

In the 1970s students took examinations and attained certificates in other subjects:

- Typewriting, The London Chamber of Commerce;
- Book-keeping, The London Chamber of Commerce;
- Shorthand.

In the 2020s, students also sit for examinations and attain the IGCSE at A-level in other subjects such as Mathematics, Accounting, Chemistry, Physics, and Biology.

School Leaving Certificate

In all the archives examined, there was no school-leaving certificate found from the early days. In Elli Michaelidou's personal archives, no school-leaving certificate was found amongst her other certificates, and during her interview (Elli Michaelidou, student from 1929 to 1933, Interview, 2005), she said she did not receive any. However, it seems that school-leaving certificates were provided at least as early as during the 1940s, if not earlier.

The following are examples of school-leaving certificates of the 1970s (around half of the School's history) and the 2020s (end of 100 years of its history):

In the 1970s the Leaving Certificate was presented horizontally, in a decorative frame. It included the school registration details, the student's name, handwritten in a calligraphic way, the student's results, the subjects and the examinations



passed (English: Cambridge Lower and GCE; French: Brevet Littéraire, Alliance and Sorbonne; Italian: Language Certificate; Greek: Five Gymnasium classes and GCE Modern Geek and Commercial subjects (Typewriting, Stenography and Book-keeping), a photo of the student, signatures of the teachers and the principal, and the date the diploma was issued.

In the 2020s, the Leaving Certificate is presented vertically, in the same decorative frame. It includes the school registration details, the academic year, the student's name, the student's results in the common core subjects (Religious Education, Very Good Knowledge of Geek C1, English Language and Computer Studies), orientation subjects (Mathematics, AL Physics AL and Chemistry AL) and conduct, the principal's signature and the date the leaving certificate is issued.

The two leaving certificates mirror the school curriculum and the changes that occurred through the years.

Awards and scholarships

From the very beginning, students have been awarded with prizes, awards and scholarships.

Evidence of this was recorded in the Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 1923-1948. For example, the distribution of prizes for the various languages and commercial courses in 1943 was recorded: "Mr Honskings distributed those of Shorthand and Mr Myrianthopoulos those of the sixth class."

Occasionally, competition results were published in the local press:



Above left: Salomi Papadima, Saint Mary's School Leaving Certificate, 1974. Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archives.

Above: Michaella Skordi, Saint Mary's Secondary School Leaving Certificate, 2021-2022. Michaella Skordi's personal archives.

Results of the Pan-European competition in France

In the pan-European competition, recently organised by the Alliance Française in Paris, the two best winners are Mr. Andreas Tsaousis of the Central Pancyprian Gymnasium and Miss Pierre Farmer of the Terra Santa Girls' School.

(Agon, 1966, May 18, 1966, p. 6)

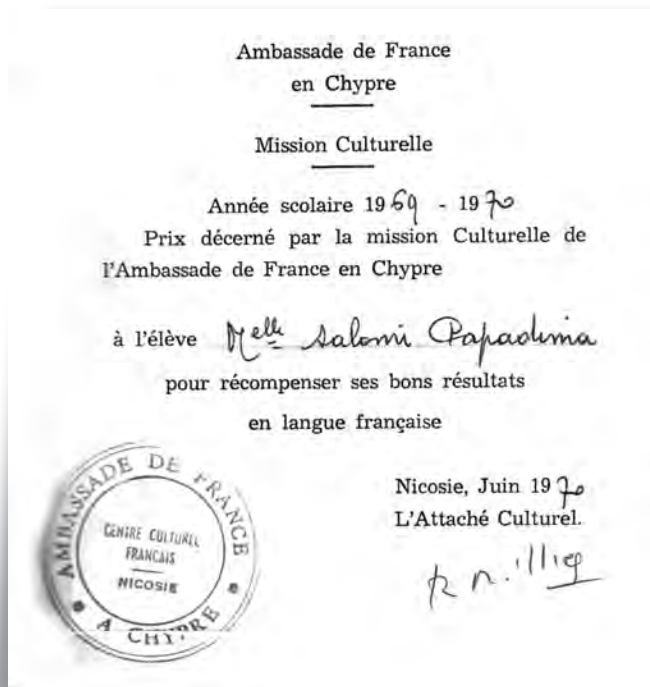


Elli Michaelidou, Menzione D'Onore, 1932. Elli Michaelidou's personal archives.

The following documents are examples from the early days, the period around the 50-year, and the 100-year history of the School:

Students were awarded awards and prizes as early as during the very first years of the school operation. One of these was found in the personal archives of Elli Michaelidou, who, after completing the *Private School of Foreign Languages and Greek Lessons* (1928), attended *Terra Santa Girls' School* (1928-1932). It was an honourable mention awarded to Elli Michaelidou in 1932 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Italy.

As the curriculum developed through the years, students took more examinations, and as a result, received more certificates to evidence their learning, and more awards and prizes. Students were given awards and prizes for excelling in the different subjects they were taught. These included the languages and the commercial and other subjects in their curriculum.



Prize, 1970. Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archives.

Salomi Papadima, who was a student from 1968 to 1974, half-way through the history of the school, received awards and prizes for excelling in the different subjects she was taught. This is evidenced by photos in her photo album and by books, which she received as prizes.

During the academic year 1969-1970, for example, she was awarded a prize by the cultural mission of the French Embassy in Cyprus for her good results in the French language.

Another example was the book *Le Père Goriot*, of Honoré de Balzac, she received in 1974, as a prize for her achievement in French.

The development in the curriculum and the award of certificates and prizes reflecting that development and the performance of the students continued through the first hundred years of the history of the school to the present day. The next example, reflects the presence of boys in high school, which started in 2000. It is the example of a student who attended *Saint Mary's School* in more recent times.

Marios Katsioloudis, who was a student since kindergarten, from 1999 to 2014, was awarded many certificates. These are indicative of certificates students can currently obtain at *Saint Mary's School*. They are presented in chronological order, starting from the most current:

- Pearson Edexcel International GCSE, English language, Grade A, 2014;
- High Achiever Award Cyprus Gold Medallion LCCI Level 3 Accounting 2014;
- High Achiever Award Cyprus Silver Medallion LCCI Level 3 Accounting 2014;
- High Achiever Award Saint Mary's School, Highest International Subject Mark, Edexcel, International Advanced Level Accounting 2014;
- Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level, Accounting, Grade A, 2014;
- Pearson LCCI Certificate, Level 3 Certificate of Accounting, Pass with Distinction, 2014;
- Pearson Edexcel General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level, Greek, Grade A, 2013;
- Pearson Edexcel General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level, Greek, Grade A, Accounting A, Core Maths 2, A, Core Maths 3, A, 2013;
- Edexcel General Certificate of Secondary Education, French, Grade A, English Language, grade C, 2012;
- République Française, Ministère de L'Éducation Nationale, Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française, DELF B1, 2012;
- Edexcel General Certificate of Secondary Education, Higher International Subject Mark, Italian 2012;

- Edexcel General Certificate of Secondary Education, Italian, Grade A, 2012;
- Università per Stranieri di Perugia, Centro Valutazione Certificazioni Linguistiche, Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana, Level B1, CELI 2, 2012;
- University of Cambridge International Examinations, GCE, British Council Limassol, Computing, Advanced Level, Grade B, 2012;
- LCCI International Qualifications from EDI, Level 2 Certificate in Book-keeping and Accounts, Pass with Distinction, 2012;
- London Chamber of Commerce and Industry International Qualifications Pearson Education Limited, LCCI International Qualifications from EDI, Level 3 Ward in Text Production, pass with Distinction, 2012;
- London Chamber of Commerce and Industry from EDI, Keyboarding Speed Test 52wpm, Accuracy 98.5%, 2012;
- Edexcel General Certificate of Secondary Education, Greek, Grade A, 2011;
- University of Cambridge International Examinations, GCE, British Council Lemesos, Computing, Advanced Subsidiary Grade B, 2011;
- London Chamber of Commerce and Industry International Qualifications Pearson Education Limited, LCCI International Qualifications from EDI, Level 1 Certificate in Book-keeping and Level 2 Certificate in Text Production, Pass with Distinction, 2011
- Edexcel International General Certificate of Secondary Education, Physics, Grade A, 2011;
- République Française, Ministère de L'Éducation Nationale, Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française, DELF A2, 2010;
- Università per Stranieri di Perugia, Centro Valutazione Certificazioni Linguistiche, Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana, Level A2, CELI 1, 2010;
- Edexcel International General Certificate of Secondary Education, Mathematics, Grade A, 2010;
- European Computer Driving License (ECDL), Syllabus Version: 4.0 (Concepts of Information Technology, Using the Computer and Managing Files, Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Database, Presentation, Information and Communication), 2009;
- European Computer Driving License (ECDL), M1 – Concepts of Information Technology, 2009;
- European Computer Driving License (ECDL), Databases and Filing Systems, 2008;
- European Computer Driving License (ECDL), Information and Communication, 2008;

- *Saint Mary's School* Elementary French Certificate, 2007;
- *Saint Mary's School* Primary School English Certificate, 2007;
- *Saint Mary's* Private Primary School Leaving Certificate, 2007;
- European Computer Driving License (ECDL), Word Processing, 2007;
- European Computer Driving License (ECDL), Spreadsheets, 2007;
- European Computer Driving License (ECDL), Using the Computer and Managing Files, 2006;
- European Computer Driving License (ECDL), Presentation and Graphics, 2006;



GreenTeam Participation Certificate

- The Cyprus Association of Cancer Patients & Friends (PASYCAF) Certificate of Appreciation, 2013;
- 9th Pancyprian Book-keeping Olympiad Certificate, 2013;
- 8th Pancyprian Book-keeping Olympiad Certificate, 2012;
- *Saint Mary's School*, School Scholarship, 2011-2012;
- *Saint Mary's School*, Certificate of Excellence, Teacher's Association, 5th class, 2011-2012;
- *Saint Mary's School*, First Prize in Greek, 2011-2012;
- *Saint Mary's School*, Fifth year, First Prize in Mathematics, 2011-2012;
- *Saint Mary's School*, Fifth year, First Prize in Typewriting, 2011-2012;
- *Saint Mary's School*, Second year, First Prize in Book-keeping and Accounting, 2011-2012;

- *Saint Mary's School*, Second Prize in Italian, 2011-2012;
- *Saint Mary's School*, Second Prize in French, 2011-2012;
- *Saint Mary's School*, Second Prize in Computers, 2011-2012;
- *Saint Mary's School*, Certificate of Excellence, 4th year, 2011;
- Rotary Club of Limassol-Berengaria Cosmopolitan, Annual Schools Speaking Competition 2011 Senior Event Winner Award, 2011;
- Prize 1st Maronite Student of Gymnasium, offered in memory of Ioannis Foradaris, offered by the Institution of I. Foradaris, academic years 2009-2010;
- *Saint Mary's School*, Certificate of Excellence, Teacher's Association, 3rd class, 2010;
- *Saint Mary's School*, Certificate of Excellence, Teacher's Association, 2nd class, 2009;
- *Saint Mary's School*, Certificate of Excellence, Teacher's Association, 1st class, 2008;

Many of the School patrons such as the French and Italian embassies and individuals such as Joseph Georgi have been supporting the school for years, in various ways, such as, for example, by offering awards and scholarships to students who excel.

Benito Mantovani, born in Larnaka, was elected Representative of the Latin Religious Group at the House of Representatives, as a member of Parliament in 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006, and a Member of the House Standing Committee on Educational Affairs and Culture. As an honorary Consul of Italy in Cyprus from 1967 to 2004 (Elevated to the rank of Honorary Consul, 1983), he has had a long connection with *Saint Mary's School*. He shared some of his memories during his interview:

“ I came to Lemesos in 1967 to work in the AG office Mantovani and Sons Ltd. Soon after my uncle Victor Mantovani, who was Consul of Italy in Lemesos and Pafos, said that it was time for him to give his resignation exactly at the age of 70, because Consuls of Italy must resign at that age, and he recommended me. The Italian Embassy appointed me Consul of Italy in Lemesos and Pafos in 1967. I automatically found myself associated with *Saint Mary's School* as well. I was asked by the Italian Embassy to monitor what is happening with the Italian courses and to help and be in a way a link between the School and the Italian Embassy. Then the Principal of the school was Mère Arsène and the Secretary was Soeur Charles. I had close contact with Mère Arsène who, in my opinion was an excellent principal.

Every year I had to make sure that the awards for the Italian courses would arrive on time. The prizes were books that the Italian Embassy brought from Italy, gave them to the school and the School Management gave them to the best Italian

students. Both the School and I were always anxious that they would arrive on time because they were coming on the last few days. Every year I went and gave awards and said a few words.

One day, I was told by the Italian Embassy that they wanted the Italian Embassy to administer examinations of the Italian language for students. I admit that I was not an expert in this field. I found myself in a difficult situation. On the given day of the Italian language exams, I was sitting with an Italian Sister and the students came one by one and sat in front of us to be examined. I was given the examination material and I chose from it and examined the students. My goal was to make the students feel comfortable, not afraid, not worried, and succeed in the exams. The students' Italian was very good, for the level being tested. Only once did a student fail because she could not answer anything at all. I participated in this examination programme every year for seven to eight years. Then I asked the assistance of a certain Rene Berot, who was the Secretary of the Italian Consulate in Larnaka, who was also very good at Italian, and sometimes he came and replaced me when I had to be away abroad or I had to attend to other duties.

Long before my two daughters and my three granddaughters went to this school, Saint Mary's School was a very disciplined, very good school; it offered an excellent education, the fees were very low, just like Terra Santa in Lefkosia, compared to other private schools. These two schools offer a service but they are not profit-making schools, they just have to cover their costs, so maybe that is the reason they are cheaper. But parents always prefer them. And I noticed that there always was and still is a demand from parents to send their children to these schools, partly because of the cost, and because of the education, but also because Saint Mary's School is disciplined compared to other schools. I believe that the school is still doing a very good social work.

(Benito Mantovani, Interview, 18 April 2023)



Award Day. Audience in the atrium (from the left to right: Representative of Maronite Religious Group at the House of Representatives Antonis Hadjiroussos with his wife, Representative of Latin Religious Group at the House of Representatives Benito Mantovani, Italian Ambassador Francesco Bascone, Padre Umberto Barato, Sister Bernadette Skorti and Michèle Jansen, Linguistic Attaché of the French Cultural Centre), 25 June 1999. Saint Mary's School archives.



Above: Italian Award, 1972-1973. Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archive.

Right: George Papadopoulos, Inspector of Elementary Education awards a prize to an excellent student, 25 June 1999. Saint Mary's School archives.





Joseph Georgi offers prizes to graduates every year, 24 June 2000. Saint Mary's School archives.



Representative of the Latin Religious at the House of Benito Mantovani offers prizes to graduates every year, 2004. Saint Mary's School archives.

Sister Bernadette Scordi offers a prize to an excellent student, 2004. Saint Mary's School archives.



Third Pancyprian Book-keeping Olympiad 2007 Awards. Sister Josephine Vrahimi, then School Principal with awarded students.

Students also excelled in Book-keeping Olympiads.

From the early days of student Elli Michaelidou to the 2020s, the Saint Mary's School curriculum has continuously developed and improved in order to cater for the students' needs through its 100-year history. It currently offers opportunities for both Humanities and Science subjects, and preparation for world recognised examinations which can lead them to university studies, training, or work.

Pioneering multilingual and multicultural education

In an earlier chapter, the historical, cultural, educational, social, religious, multilingual and multicultural context in which the school was established and has

been operating was established in order to better understand and appreciate its contribution in the education of Cyprus and establish whether its activities reflected the needs of that context.

It has been established that, although the original aim of its foundation was to cater for Latin Catholic girls, from the beginning the School indicated its sensitivity to the needs of those times and accepted from the very beginning the diversity of

students who wanted to study at the School, diversity in gender, religion, linguistic and cultural background.

According to The Glossary of Education Reform (2013), multicultural education is predicated on the principle of educational equity for all students, regardless of culture, and it strives to remove barriers to educational opportunities and success for students from different cultural backgrounds.

Since its foundation, Saint Mary's School has embraced the whole school community of different languages, nationalities, religions and cultures, deriving not only from local communities but from countries all over the world with an approach of acceptance and promotion of the student population diversity. The school community members background, curriculum and extracurricular activities and Lemosos community involvement evidenced this approach throughout the whole history of the School. The following are some aspects where this is reflected:

- Although founded and administered by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, this has not prevented the School from accepting, since its foundation (1923) the diversity of its students (nationality, language, religion, cultural and linguistic diversity).
- The Sisters who run and manage the School also come from different nationalities, cultures and languages.
- These Sisters have been hosting and supporting a School community (students, parents and teachers), which is characterised by its multinational, multilingual and religious character and diversity for a whole century.
- The School has been employing teachers of different nationalities, who, in turn, have been contributing to an environment of harmonious coexistence.
- The School has been offering, as an integral part of its unified curriculum not one, not two, but four languages, and these are taught to all students, not as foreign languages, but through a type of multilingualism, plurilingualism, CLIL, where students are taught as many courses as possible in all four languages in appropriate contextualised communicative contexts, and become able to pass recognised exams from the respective countries.
- The School has been preparing students for a modern society and a modern professional environment, characterised by multicultural aspects: It has been cultivating respect and understanding regardless of culture, religion, race and language and has been offering equal opportunities for students to participate in all events aimed at educating, cultivating, and preparing them for the world of work.
- The School has been preparing students for a global, interplanetary state, where understanding and cooperation, both locally and globally, in areas such as trade, economy, work, politics and communication are essential assets for citizens of tomorrow.

Some of the students who attended the School commented on the diversity of its students (nationality, language, religion, cultural and linguistic diversity), and the multilingual and multicultural atmosphere depicting the school.

Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti attended the school in 1923 at the age of three and she studied at the School for seven years. In her autobiographical novel she described the Sisters: “The nuns were of various nationalities and all walks of life.” (Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti, unpublished manuscript, written in 1997, p.83, unpublished).

Goris Georgiadis attended the School of Nuns at the age of four in kindergarten. He stayed there for about two years (1944-1945).

“There were quite a few kids my age that I also hung out with. A characteristic of this School was that children from many nationalities studied there. There were Lebanese Cypriots, children from English families living in Lemesos as well as Turkish Cypriots.

The nuns were also of various nationalities and spoke Greek with a somewhat different accent. However, there were also some, who were our own girls, perhaps from Catholic families, who could speak Greek directly with us. I remember the name of one of them, Mrs. Janet, who was a Franco-Levantine.

Somewhere all this gave a different image and experience to all of us. There was some nice approach in the school. In the morning, the entire student population would gather in the large sunroom where prayers were held before classes. We also learned some foreign songs, Italian and French, which of course I don't remember today, only the Frère Jacques song, but that was a very special experience back then.

(Goris Georgiadis, student during the 1940s, Interview, 5 September 2022)

Anastasia Neocleous and Marios Katsioloudis also referred to the diversity of the School:

“I attended Saint Mary's from 1962 to 1968. Apart from Greek Cypriots, in my School, there were also Maronite and Turkish Cypriot students with whom we got along very well together. There were also students from other nationalities.

(Anastasia Neocleous, student from 1962 to 1968, Interview, 8 February 2023)

“I remember when I was young and I was attending school, there were Turkish Cypriot girls, Maronite, Armenians, South African girls, and generally students from various nationalities. I was impressed that we all communicated and got along. It was a European, multicultural school, as we say now in modern times.

This School stood out precisely for the acceptance and joy that everyone felt there and I believe it was the principles, universal values and principles of faith that were primarily taught apart from the lessons that made it stand out. As for religion, no one ever felt that the nuns would convert them or change their beliefs. On the contrary, the nuns gave these universal values to emphasise the beliefs of each student and strengthen them with respect for each one's religion.

(Elenitsa Katsioloudi, student during the 1970s, Interview, 28 September 2022)

Vicky Christodoulou describes how she experienced these concepts during her time at the School:

“ Interacting with students of different nationalities, abilities and interests, helped me learn about respect, integrity, acceptance and solidarity. Its multilingual and multicultural nature shaped my character and personality as I learnt to think beyond Cyprus' borders which was key to adapt quickly to the life in London, a city with millions of people from different nationalities and cultures. Nowadays organisations focus on diversity and inclusion. After university, when I started my career, I was part of a very diverse environment. My experience from Saint Mary's and knowledge of different languages facilitated my transition.’

(Marios Katsioloudis, student from 1999 to 2014, Interview, 24 February 2023)

Maria Kalorkoti, who studied at *Saint Mary's* School from 1985 to 1999 (pre-primary, primary and secondary school) expressed her appreciation about the diverse education she received at the School, not only as part of the curriculum but also from the general atmosphere:

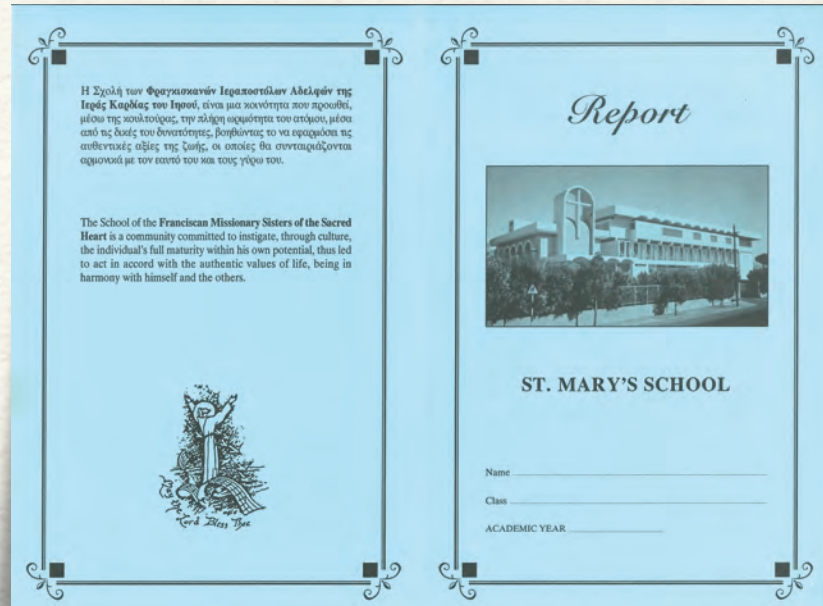
“ Above all, we got to know the interaction of cultures and languages in the Mediterranean area, and as we learned to translate from one language to another, we realised that the Greek language was the mother of many words used in European languages. The School itself was a multicultural environment, as we had students of Latin, Lebanese, Maronite, English, Cypriot, Filipino origin and English, Italian, French teachers.

Our morning prayer was said every day in a different language. We participated in the religious celebrations all together, Orthodox and Catholic. We studied the Bible, the Old and New Testaments in the Religious Studies class.

(Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999, Interview, 6 March 2023)

The following excerpt comes from the back cover of the School report:

School Report, front and back covers. Saint Mary's School archives.



*The School of the **Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart** is a community committed to instigate, through culture, the individual's full maturity withing his own potential, thus led to act in accord with the authentic values of life, being in harmony with himself and the others.*

All of this is the practical implementation of a kind of multilingual and multicultural policy, a policy of tolerance and secularism, and an exposure of students to other cultures not only through their own diversity but also through the diversity offered through the school curriculum, the diversity of their teachers, and that of the school and the broader community.

Saint Mary's School today

As we have seen, at the beginning of its foundation, according to The Chronicle of the House of Limassol of the first years (1923-1948), the then called *Terra Santa Girls' School* followed the Constantinopolitan programme according to which four languages were taught: English, French, Italian and Greek and which continue to be taught to this day. History, Geography, Mathematics and Science were taught in French and Greek. Typewriting, Shorthand, Science and Handicrafts such as Needlework were also taught.

The School curriculum was supervised by the British Administration. Students took official and recognised language exams of the respective countries and were supervised and administered by their representative authorities in Cyprus. Students have continued to take such and more examinations since the proclamation of independence of the Republic of Cyprus to the present day. During this time, the school also gained recognition from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic.

In his publication on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the presence of the Franciscan Sisters in the Middle East, Parente (2022, p. 68) describes the Nuns' activities in the 2020s in Cyprus:

In Lemesos the Nuns offer parish service in two Parishes, Saint Catherine and Saint Charbel. In addition, they run Saint Mary's School. One thousand students aged from three to eighteen years old, of different languages, cultures, religions and nations attend the school. For convenience, the school offers an English and a Greek section from kindergarten to secondary school. The latter is divided into a scientific and a literary section. The aims of the school are to educate students in human and Christian values and principles which would prove useful to students in their lives. School graduates continue their studies in universities worldwide. The Nuns in the Turkish-occupied Kormakitis continue to support children and families in their everyday lives and in Larnaka they look after the elderly and abandoned people of different cultures and religions at the retirement home they manage.

(Parente, 2022, p. 68).

Saint Mary's School has been developing in the local society with special and changing characteristics, meeting the educational needs of specific social groups in Lemesos, Cyprus and many other countries in general, and has been meeting their learning expectations. The long-term presence of the School in this educational, cultural and social context indicates that it has been succeeding more adequately from other similar educational ventures to fulfil its role and contribute to the development of girls' as well as boys' education.

The current context in Lemesos reflects multiculturalism and superdiversity. Its urban diversity is characterised not only by a multiplicity of ethnic minorities but also by differentiations in terms of migration histories, religions and educational and economic backgrounds, both among long-term residents and newcomers (Wessendorf, 2014, p. 393). The mosaic of the city of Lemesos consists of people who come from everywhere. There are people who migrate, who are refugees who illegally entered the country, who come for professional purposes, etc. Even people of the same backgrounds come from different parts, at different times, etc. This is the new challenge the School is called to identify and manage and cater for in its second century, in an inclusive and diverse environment which celebrates the multicultural character and superdiversity of its students.



CHAPTER

9

EXTRACURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES

IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

A school is a place where children spend a large part of their life. Every child has a different personality. Children's personalities need to be cultivated positively. It is, therefore, important to help them develop other skills and interests outside the classroom as well. This can be done through extracurricular activities. They constitute an essential part of a child's development and learning.

While extracurricular activities often take up a lot of time outside of regular school hours, require a consistent time commitment, and a degree of responsibility and initiative, they provide students with opportunities to gain life skills, crucial for their future success. These activities are a great way to keep children engaged and allow them to learn something new. The activities allow them to learn about themselves and their interests, to get involved and have fun while acquiring new knowledge and new skills. Participating in extracurricular activities increases students' academic performance and confidence; develops their time management skills and talents; allows them to make friends, improves their social skills; enhances teamwork experience; cultivates leadership skills, promotes networking skills, accommodates experience in how to give back to others, allowing to meet new people and gain real life/work experience through volunteering; promotes tolerance and acceptance of the other; can positively impact students' mental health and well-being; gives the opportunity to find their passion in life. In general, out-of-class and out-of-school extra-curricular activities provide students with opportunities to get involved in new activities that might not otherwise be accessible to them.

Extracurricular activities have been proven to have a positive effect on children's development. Students who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to succeed academically and socially. These benefits help prepare them for future success in school and life. Extracurricular activities help to develop knowledgeable and competent students who possess high moral standards and are responsible and capable of contributing significantly to their own and society's welfare. It also helps reduce peer pressure issues and enriches students' lives, their families, and communities. Moreover, extracurricular activities influence how a person develops within themselves, in the school, and the community.

There are many extracurricular, out-of-class and out-of-school, activities that children can participate in. These include music, arts, dance, drama, sports, voluntary work, and many more.

Apart from its curriculum, *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School* has always been encouraging its students to participate in different extracurricular activities. The School has not only been bringing the society of Cyprus and other countries into the daily life of the School, through its educational programmes. It has also been making sure that its students take part in out-of-class school events, such as participation in the choir, in dancing performances, school festivities, exhibitions, etc., and out-of-school activities of Lemesos and Cyprus, such as national parades, fairs, flower festivals, prominent peoples' visits, etc. The following are examples of such involvement.

Out-of-class activities

Since the very beginning of the operation of the school, back in the 1920s, the School complemented the education offered to its students through its curriculum with out-of-class extracurricular activities. These events have been recorded in the school photo albums.

Students have always been given to opportunity to participate in cultural events and develop their talents. These include dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, etc.

*June 1951, Students dancing,
Photo Edwards. Saint Mary's
School archives.*





Above: May 1961, Cultural event in the old school yard. Photo Varouj. Saint Mary's School archives.



Right: School year 2014-2015. Student playing the piano. Saint Mary's School archives.



School year 2014-2015. 28th of October 1940, The day of the Flag. School choir performance. Saint Mary's School archives.

1964. Terra Santa. Embroidery by student Antonia Nikita, later teacher of French at the School. Antonia Nikita-Loucaidou's personal archives.

School exhibitions

Embroidery was being taught as a subject for many years. The students' work was often put on display in exhibitions organised by the school as part of school festivities. Examples of such work has been recorded in the School archives (Exhibitions organised on 30 April 1942, and 25 June 1953, Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 1923-1948) and photo albums.

Some students have kept the memorabilia of their participation in such events.



1966, School work exhibition during the new school premises inauguration. Saint Mary's School archives.



Theatrical performances

Students have always loved to participate in theatrical performances. They loved to create, participate, collaborate and perform. Many of their teachers led the way in this artistic extracurricular in-school activity.

Thrasos Makrygiannis, for example, who used to teach Greek at Saint Mary's School supported many of these performances. Apart from being a teacher, in Cyprus he was also a well-known author of plays, many of which were presented during the radio broadcast "Cypriot Sketch" (a type of Cypriot theatrical play, based on the Greek Cypriot tradition and performed in the Greek Cypriot dialect). His presence in the School gave the opportunity to the students to have direct contact with the best that the city had at the time in that area, and in the cultural life of the city. He used to write and stage plays with his students. These performances and the participation in them have remained indelibly marked in the memory of his students.

Madame Antonia Nikita-Loucaidou, teacher of French was also very active in play-writing and staging. Such performances involved many students in many ways and constituted a great part of student life.

Vicky Christodoulou, a student who attended the School (1982-1988) remembers such theatrical performances: "On special occasions, like Christmas or during Carnival we were busy preparing theatre plays and dressing up."

Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999 remembered:

“ It would be remiss of me not to mention that during our student years at Saint Mary's School we had staged many plays and participated in intramural events for national anniversaries and religious holidays, either as members of the choir or the dance group, under the guidance of two important teachers, the Music teacher, Fanis Potamitou and the Physical Education teacher Eria (Eleftheria) Xenophontos, singing and dancing to the tunes of important Greek and Cypriot composers such as Manos Hatzidakis, Mikis Theodorakis, and Marios Tokas. My classmate Andri Ioannou studied Greek Philology at the University of Cyprus. Today, she is teaching at Geri High School in Lefkosia district, where she excels as she is involved in theatrical activities and prepares her students for the Pan-Cypriot School Theatre Games. Last year (2022), her school's theatre group was awarded the first prize in the Lefkosia District.

(Maria Kalorkoti, student from, 1985 to 1999, Interview, 6 March 2023)



End of school year festivities and graduations

At the end of every school year, the school organises the end of year festivity, during which the students are given their results, the ones excelling are awarded their prizes, and the students participate in cultural presentations. Such events have been recorded in the *Chronicle of the House of Limassol* and in the local press. Here are some examples:

June 1951: Theatrical performance. Photo Edwards. Saint Mary's School archives.

June 20, 1942

End of the exams: The closing will take place on the 25th Meanwhile, the School is upside down: dances, songs, dialogue tests in English, French and Greek, and a lot of secrets!

Chronicle of the House of Limassol, 14 November 1923-14 March 1948

June 25, 1942

The big day everyone wanted: Father Simi and Father Nicholl, the teachers Hoskins and Myriantopoulos were present. The programme unfolds cheerfully; bouquets of flowers – or the bouquet offered at various times – follow one another with the gifts of the students, because the School wanted to celebrate June 29; San Paolo.

Later there was the distribution of bulletins and crowns to the most deserving.

Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 14 November 1923-14 March 1948

23 June 1943

Distribution of Reports, Certificates of various degrees and languages and of the Commercial School. The girls left feeling sorry because they could not go back to School for the whole period of the holidays. For the first time, the teachers attended this distribution; Mr Hoskins who gave the Shorthand and Typewriting Certificates and Mr Myrianthopoulos, who gave the 6th class Certificates of the Greek language.

Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 14 Novembre 1923-14 March 1948

Last Sunday afternoon, the School ceremony of the Sisters' School took place. The students recited poems, sang songs and participated in School comedies in the four language classes they have been learning, English, French, Italian and Greek; the students left best impressions to the crowd, both for the work being done at the School and for the order and politeness of the teachers and the students. The works of painting and embroidery which were exhibited impressed everyone.

Chronos, 2 June 1926, p. 2, Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy



2006-2007, Student dance performance. Music: Italian song 'Con te partirò'. Saint Mary's School archives.

School celebrations were also recorded in the media of the time. Here are some extracts from the local press:

The school feast of the Nuns

In front of a large crowd, the feast of the School of the Nuns was held yesterday afternoon, Wednesday afternoon.

The programme richly included piano performances, dances, comedy (English and French) which were performed with great grace and skill. Misses D. Skoulou, A. Georgiadou, A. Kevorkian and S. Katsikidi were distinguished on the piano.

The Ha-tiha-tilia ballet dance was extremely overwhelming when it was applauded. Also, the Cypriot dance "syrtos" which was danced amateurishly by Misses E. Antoniadou and A. Dimopoulos, and the Greek comedy "The Teacher of French", in which Miss Z. Ioannidou showed rich stage talent. The celebration closed with a Cypriot sketch, by Miss Avramidou and Thymopoulou.

(Proini, 26 June 1936, p. 2, Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)

Terra Santa Lemesos School Holiday

Last Sunday afternoon at the end of the school year a celebration took place at the Terra Santa School in Lemesos. In the beginning, the awards and prizes were awarded. For the French Language the students received special awards offered by the French Consulate and awarded by the Educational Assistant Mr. Milliex.

An artistic programme followed with a difference of thoughts and comedy in French, Italian, English and Greek. Mr. Milliex warmly congratulates the students, who successfully played a French comedy.

(Phileleftheros, 29 June 1960, p. 6, Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)

Lemesos, 26 (from our correspondent). – The day before yesterday afternoon, a special ceremony was held at the building of the Terra Santa Nun School on the occasion of the end of classes. The Educational Attaché of the French Embassy Mr. Roger Milliex, the Consul of Italy Mr. Victor Mantovani, the Consular Agent of France Mr. Takis Solomonidis, the Superior of St. Catherine Roman Catholic Church, Father Carmelo, and several parents were present.

At the beginning, Mr. R. de Milliex spoke about the educational activity of the School during the last year. Then songs were sung and poems were recited by schoolgirls in English, French and Italian. Eventually leaving certificates were given to the graduates for French, English and Italian. Mr. Takis Solomonidis offered a sum of £20 to the best graduate in French, the company Fanouriou allocated £10 to the best graduate in Shorthand and Mr. Victor Mantovani awarded a transistor to the first graduate in Italian.

(Haragvi, 27 June 1965, p. 6, Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)

Lemesos, 28 (From our correspondent) – On the afternoon of last Thursday the end of year celebration took place at the Nuns' School Terra Santa Girls in Lemesos. Present were the Educational Attaché of the French Embassy Mr. Roger Milliex, the Consul of Italy in Lemesos Mr. Victor Mantovani, the Consular Agent of France Mr. Takis Solomonides, the Superior of Saint Catherine Roman Catholic Father Carmelo and several parents. Mr. Roger Milliex spoke at the beginning about the educational activity of the School year about to end; then songs were sung and poems were recited by students in foreign languages. The graduates were eventually awarded French, English and Italian diplomas.

(Phileleftheros, 29 June 1965, p. 3, Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)

26 June 1995, English Junior School students. Saint Mary's School archives.



23 June 2001, English Junior School students. Saint Mary's School archives



Maria Kalorkoti remembers her graduation in 1999:



I will always remember the last artistic event for the Graduation Ceremony. It was very emotional for all the students, the time had come to say goodbye after so many years of living in this School.

(Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999, Interview, 6 March 2023)

Student annual reunions

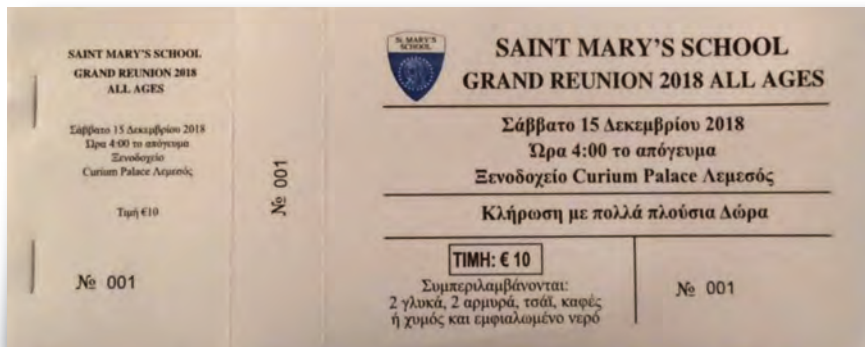
For many years, on the 2nd Sunday of June, the former students gathered at the School with their teachers and organised a little party with songs, dances and short performances. They drank their tea and had fun with each other. An invitation of such an event was published in the local press:

Meeting of graduates of the School of Nuns

The Committee of Old Schoolgirls of the School of Nuns (Terra Santa) and Agia Maria Lemesos invites all graduates of the School to the established annual meeting that takes place this year, 11 June 1995, at 5 p.m.

The year 1964 -1965 is especially invited, which this year celebrates its 30th anniversary of graduation.

(Phileleftheros, 10 June 1995, p. 20, Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)



Grand reunion 2018. Saint Mary's School archives.

Caring and helping people in need

Another type of extracurricular activity the students were involved in has been that of caring and helping people, not only in the School community, but in the community of Lemesos in general. Examples of such involvement are the Annual Christmas Tree School party, and charity events.

Annual Christmas tree party and Christmas festivities

Since the beginning of the School, a Christmas tree has been decorated every year. Gifts were prepared for the poor children. Each girl had to accompany one to the party. This party was attended by many people and often the High Commissioner sent the tree. Records of these events were recorded in the *Chronicle of the House of Limassol*:

21 December 1942

Christmas tree for 35 poor. The Commissioner has sent the tree but apologises at the last moment for not being able to attend the party. There's a lot more order than last year and a lot more stuff, despite the wartime famine. The tree lottery excites the keenest interest; the buffet attracts a large number of customers and occupying them pleasantly makes them spend the time more peaceful and quieter. The big one is that of distributing clothes and that every boy has a pair of shoes!

(Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 14 November 1923-14 March 1948)

22 December 1943

Christmas tree for 40 poor people. Many wanted to contribute with their generous offer and the snack was abundant and tasty: chicken pate, jam, pastries, fruit and sugared almonds, bread, burger, faggioli, figs. The clothes were sufficient despite the difficulty of obtaining the fabric and the tree bearing the famous lots was the object of ovations and the centre of the gathering, while the "buffet" attracted for its sodas, pastries, fruit and candies. A raffle was also organised for the bottles of wine offered by the producers of the city.

Thanks to Antonio Bleibel, the invasion of mothers was prevented and distribution was very calm. At 5 o'clock the party broke up while the bells rang the Christmas Novena.

(Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 14 November 1923-14 March 1948)

1988-1999 Christmas festivities. Saint Mary's School archives.



Anastasia Neocleous attended the School from 1962 to 1968, in the old premises for the first three years, and in the new premises for the rest of the three years. She remembers her participation in the annual Christmas festivities:

“*At the new School, from 1965 to 1968, at Christmas I was always given the role of the Virgin because I was blue-eyed and blonde. I was also in the School choir because they found my voice to be good for a choir.*”

(Anastasia Neocleous, student during the 1970s, Interview, 8 February 2023)

Charity events

Elenitsa Katsioloudi talked about the charity events students were encouraged to organise and participate in during her time as a student at the School:

“*We organised charity markets. We even took our clothes to School to be given to children in need by classmates because the School had several such students. The Sisters made sure that they had a quality of life, not only of studies.*

We were also encouraged to take part in community and charity fundraisers, for example the Cancer Society fundraisers. Whatever little or big money we raised was always for a charitable cause.

(Elenitsa Katsioloudi, student during the 1970s, Interview, 28 September 2022)

As Sister Angelica mentioned, these activities are carried out to the present day: “*Today, almost every year we imitate the first Sisters by organising bazaars for the poor*” (Sister Angelica, Interview, 18 January 2023).



Bazaar. Saint Mary's School archives.

Saint Mary's School 25th anniversary celebrations

In 1948, the School celebrated its 25th anniversary. This information was recorded in the *Chronicles of the House of Limassol 1948-1954*):

In 1948, the 25th anniversary of the opening of the School was celebrated, announced by the Cyprus Mail. On that day, the first student and boarding student of the School vividly represented 1923 and Perilin Tashsin personified 1948. The anniversary celebrations left the best impressions.

1923-1948. Nuns of Lemesos and Kormakitis celebrate the 25th anniversary of their presence in Lemesos. Saint Mary's School archives.



School excursions

The School has also been organising excursions.

School excursion to Coral Bay, Pafos, 1971. Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archives.





School excursion to the ancient theatre of Salamina, Famagusta, 1971. Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archives.

This excursion has left a mark in the students' memories. This was not only because of its significance, as it has given the opportunity to a great number of students to visit these places during a period of a couple of days, but also because it occurred just before the tragic events of July and August 1974, the coup d'etat and the Turkish invasion which resulted in the *de facto* partition of the island, after which, any free movement on the island, namely to the Turkish-occupied territory of the Republic was no longer possible for many years.

For me, student of *Saint Mary's* and author of this book, this excursion constitutes one of my most vivid memories. We visited distinct landmarks of the now Turkish-occupied territory of Cyprus, such as the ancient theatre of Salamina, the Monastery of Apostolos Andreas, Kantara, and Keryneia. I had lived with those memories until many years after, until my return from overseas, during the 2010s, when I had the opportunity to revisit these places; this time with mixed-feelings, as they are still occupied by the Turkish army.

Out of school activities

Participation in Lemesos community events

Saint Mary's has not only been bringing the society of Cyprus and other countries, in the daily life of the School, through its programmes, events, etc. It has also made

sure students take part in the various events of the city. In its long history, it has been participating in events, such as sports events of all the schools of Lemesos, national parades, flower festivals, etc.

Anthesteria (Flower Festivals) and carnival parades

The School participated in flower festivals with a float (*Sister Angelica, Interview, 18 January 2023*).

1960 Flower Festival (Lemesos Anthesteria). Saint Mary's School archives.



The School has also been participating in carnival celebrations and parades.

Carnival at the School, 1970-1971. Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archives.



National parades

The School has also been participating in the parades for national days.



1960 National Parade, Saint Mary's School archives.

Maria Kalorkoti referred to the participation of the School in national parades:

“ Like all schools in Lemesos, we also honoured with our presence the anniversary parades of 28 October and 25 March.

(Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999, Interview, 6 March 2023)



National Parade, 28 October 1972, School year 1972-1973. Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous' personal archives.

Sporting events

The School also took part in sporting events in which students from all schools of Lemesos participated. The Sisters accompanied the students to such sporting events. These events were recorded in the *Chronicles of the House of Limassol*:

20 March 1941

Gymnastic competition in the stadium between all schools in Lemesos. Hanka wins the race. Marie Polackiewicz is second; Gabriella Rossos is first in throwing the javelin. The newspaper talks about their agility. Some are Polish girls who are in Cyprus because of the war.

(Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 14 November 1923-14 March, 1948)

31 March 1942

The Sisters accompany the students there. Gabriella wins the first prize for throwing the javelin.

(Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 14 November 1923-14 March 1948)

Music events

Students have been studying Music since the early days of the School. The School gave every opportunity to its students to showcase their talents to the School and the Lemesos community.

29 November 1998, School choir performance. Teacher Phani plays the piano during the celebrations of the visits of his Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Monsignor Michel Sabbah. Saint Mary's School archives.





10 January 2002, 5th Class students perform a Cypriot dance in honour of the Italian Ambassador Gherardo La Francesca. Saint Mary's School archives.

Attending music performances

The School took every opportunity to also take students to music activities organised in the Lemesos school community. On 4 June 1944, the girls were taken to one such event, that of a concert of Solon Michaelides, a prominent musician in the cultural history of Cyprus.

Watching theatrical plays and movies

Literal and cultural aspects of the curriculum such as English and French literature, and the story of Saint Francis, patron of the Franciscan Sisters and prominent Italian cultural figure were often complemented by watching related theatrical plays, and movies. Teacher Zachariou and Sister Beatrice Skorti, for example, accompanied their students at Ancient Curium Amphitheatre, where they watched Shakespeare's plays.

Goris Gregoriadis, who attended School as a kindergarten student (1944-1945) remembers that the whole School, including kindergarten, was taken to Giordamli cinema to watch the movie "Our Lady of Paris", by Victor Hugo, with Charles Laughton, Cedric Hardwicke, Thomas Mitchell, and Maureen O'Hara. Four-year old Goris was horrified by the presence of Quasimodo (Charles Laughton). As he said, reminiscing and smiling, it took him many years to overcome that fear (*Goris Gregoriadis, Saint Mary's kindergarten student in 1944-1945, and prominent painter of Lemesos, Interview, 5 September 2022*).

As Goris Gregoriadis, I, the author of this book, also remember, in the early 1970s, that the whole School population was taken to the movies to watch the film *Brother Son Sister Moon*, directed by Franco Zeffirelli, a dramatisation of events in the life of Saint Francis of Assisi from before his conversion experience through his audience with the Pope, including his friendship with St Clare.

Nursing homes, orphanages, and hospitals visits

Students were also encouraged to care for the sick and the needy in the broader community. During Christmas and Easter, for example, students visit nursing homes, orphanages, and hospitals, accompanied by their teachers.

Marches

The school also encouraged its students to participate in marches which were organised to support social or world issues such as world peace and cancer patients.

Participation in Christodoula's March

As mentioned in the archive material of the Cyprus Anti-Cancer Association, the first March of Love was decided in 1973 with the aim of raising money for the construction of the "Arodafnousa" Cancer Care Centre. In 1976, at the suggestion of doctor Dimitris Souliotis, the Procession was renamed to Christodoula's March, in memory of the cancer patient Christodoula from Saint Memnon of Famagusta (Sigma Live, 2017). *Saint Mary's School* has been participating in this event since its beginning. At the Christodoula's March, the School encourages the students to be always present and help, where needed, both in Cyprus and abroad, with bazaars organised by nuns and students (*Interview, Sister Angelica, 18 January 2023*).

Peace March

“ At School we were encouraged to participate in marches as well. For example, in the Peace March organised by the women of Cyprus for the liberation of our occupied territories and especially Famagusta. The Sisters themselves took part in this march.

(Elenitsa Katsioloudi, student during the 1970s, Interview, 28 September 2022)

Role of women in society: Participating in community organisations

Students have also been encouraged to develop awareness of the role of women in society and to participate in community organisations such as the Red Cross and St Johns Ambulance.

Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussiotou, student in the 1940s, remembered that the students were, even as early as then, made conscious of the role of women, and encouraged to participate in community organisations. Sister Claudia, for example, taught her students the importance of the role of women in society. In addition, Sister Claudia introduced them to volunteering: She signed them up as voluntary members in the Red Cross. The students took turns going once a week and helping out, taking part in Red Cross fundraising, etc. Sarah continued this volunteering during her later life. Sister Claudia also encouraged students to learn first aid at St John's Ambulance. The students also pioneered when they joined from the first moments of the establishment of Guiding in Lemesos, the well-known British Girl Guides Association of Cyprus as soon as it was founded as the 1st Lemesos Guides' Company, led by Sisters Claudia and Hermine, of Armenian origin, who also taught at the School. Hermine continued as a scout guide teacher later at the School of Armenians in Lefkosia (*Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussiotis, Interview, 20 September 2022*).

Involvement in environmental awareness activities

The School has also tried to instil in the students a love of nature and ecology. For example, some groups of students have taken part in cleaning up the beach and every year they have a tree party and plant trees (Sister Angelica, Interview, 18 January 2023). Others have been involved in tree planting.

*23 January 1998, Tree Day.
Saint Mary's School archives.*



Elenitsa Katsioloudi remembers such activities back in the 1970s:

“ They cared about the environment. All our teachers, and later my children, I remember, were pioneers in recycling, first inside the School then outside. In general, we took part in every activity, for example, in the competition contests, *Concours Européen de Langue*.

(Elenitsa Katsioloudi, student during the 1970s, Interview, 28 September 2022)

Participation in spontaneous city events

Proclamation of the so-called “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”

Although, as student Vicky Christodoulou mentioned, students had to adhere to the rules and be respectful, like in any other school, despite a belief that the School was strict, they were quite flexible at different times, when maybe they were the least expected to do so. Vicky shared one of these occasions:

“*The incident that marked my early teenage years, while attending school at Saint Mary’s, is undeniably the day of the proclamation of the so-called “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”, on the 15th of November 1983. When the news broke out that Tuesday morning at School, we saw the faces of our teachers turn sombre. That morning, we felt our blood boil and the whole School became one. Irrelevant of beliefs, origins or political orientation, there was an outcry and a feeling of injustice. My generation, who grew up with the motto ‘I do not forget’, in reference to the occupied part of the island after the Turkish invasion of 1974, could not accept it. The reaction started in the School yard but soon escalated to shouts of anger. It is still unknown how, at an age where there were no mobile phones and no viral news going around, we somehow knew that students from other schools were also taking to the streets. Nobody tried to stop us from our impulsive decision to leave the School and head to Anexartisias Street to demonstrate against what we considered at the time, a violation of our right to claim back the part of our island under occupation. I remember standing in the square in front of the District Office, while cameras filmed the students’ peaceful but powerful descent to the streets. We joined our voices in opposing the declaration, while our blue and white uniforms stood out in the crowd. In the end, we returned to the School, with groggy voices, sweaty and tired, asking our teachers: “Now what?”. It was the only time that our teachers did not know the answer. We had hoped at the time that this was just one big mistake, that the great powers, the United Nations, somebody, surely will come to the rescue. Alas, here we are, forty years later, facing the result of that day that had dire, historical consequences.*

(Vicky Christodoulou, student during the 1980s, Interview, 20 January 2023)

Educational overseas excursions

Students were also given the opportunity to merge in the languages and cultures they learned at school by complementing curriculum and extra-curricular activities in and out of school with educational overseas excursions in countries where the languages they studied were spoken. Nitsa Kattami, a Shorthand teacher recalled her participation in two such trips, one in Greece in 1994, and the other one in Italy in 1995:

“Every year in the summer, one of the teachers accompanied the students on school trips abroad. In 1994, I accompanied the schoolgirls on the excursion to Greece, during which we went around Greece. It was a very nice trip that I will never forget. We had gone with Sister Josephine and Sister Antonia. The students were excited by this trip and the following year we organised a trip to Italy, this time with teachers, students, Sisters and parents, which gave a different character to the whole trip. We visited wonderful sites in Italy. The students were excited and gained a lot of knowledge about a country that until then they had only known through books and Italian classes at school.

(Nitsa Kattami, Shorthand teacher, Interview, 3 March 2023)

Maria also remembered the School excursion in Greece in 2016:

“During the summer of 2016, we had the pleasure of living the experience of an educational excursion to Greece, starting from Thessaloniki, and moving on to Edessa, Kavala, and Meteora, we arrived in Athens and took a one-day cruise to the islands of the Argosaronic; Hydra, Poros and Aegina. We were accompanied by the Principal of the School, Sister Josephine, teachers and parents. For me, it was a unique experience, as I was not used to traveling outside of Cyprus. Then, I made it my life’s goal to study in the historic city of Athens; and I succeeded.

(Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999, Interview, 6 March 2023)

Terra Santa Girls’ School/Saint Mary’s School has always complemented its curricula with extra-curricular activities. A close examination of its out-of-class and out-of-school activity repertoire reveals that these school activities have been meeting the aims and reflect the different types of extra-curricular activities, as described in the introduction of this chapter. One can appreciate the extra effort this entails, on behalf of all parties concerned, staff, students and parents, on top of the requirements and demands of the School curriculum, and the value this extra-curricular involvement has in the preparation of good, and educated citizens.

CHAPTER

10

VISITORS AND
SPONSORS

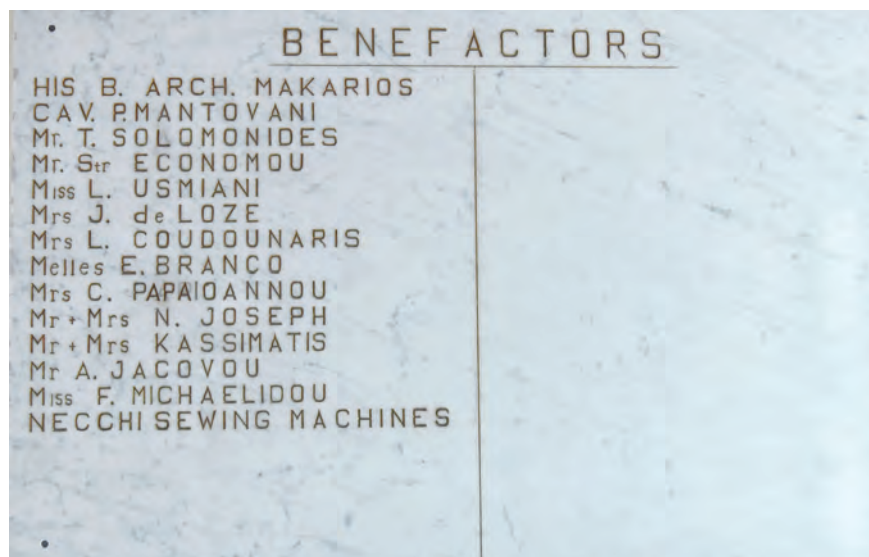
VISITORS AND SPONSORS

Saint Mary's School has always been associated with, and hosted in its various School events distinguished members of the Cypriot society, such as Benito Mantovani, Metropolitans of Lemesos, Ambassadors of other countries, whose language was taught by the School (e.g., France and Italy), inspectors of the Ministry of Education, ecclesiastical leaders, such as the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Guardian Lambarelli.

Benefactors

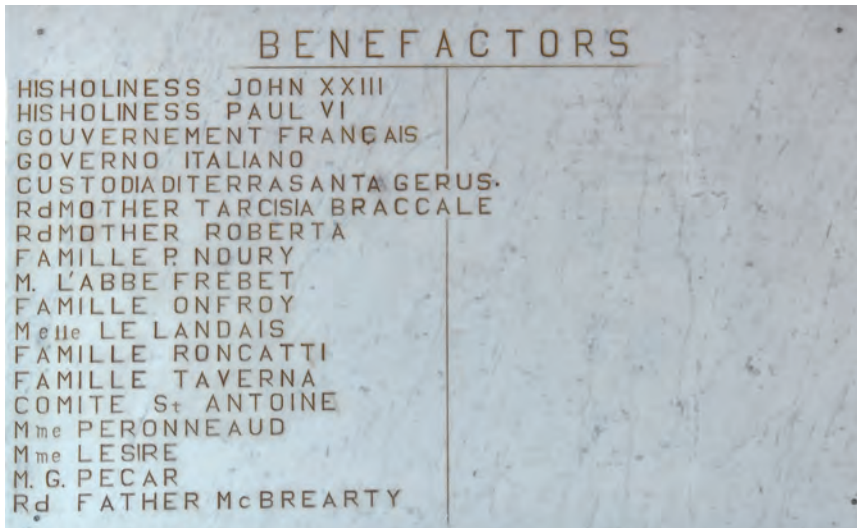
The School had distinguished benefactors such as the first President of the Republic, Archbishop Makarios. Their names are displayed at the entrance of the School:

Saint Mary's School
benefactors.



The School has also always been a recipient of donations of different types by Inspectors of Education of the Republic of Cyprus, Ambassadors, even individuals. In this chapter, the aspect will be supported mainly by photographs.

On 21 March 1935, for example, Cullen, the Director of Education for India and Counselor for Education for the Colonies visited the School (*Chronicles of the House of Limassol 1923-1948*).



In the *Chronicles of the House of Limassol 1923-1948* the visit of inspector Fleming in 1939 and his donation of books to the School was also recorded and that of the Maronite Bishop Ayoub on 12 November 1944.

Visit of the Governor of Lemesos to the Terra Santa School

Lemesos, 21 (From our correspondent). – The Governor of Lemesos, Mr. Benjamin, paid a courtesy visit to the Terra Santa School yesterday and attended a gathering of students.

Mr. Benjamin was addressed by a student of the School and he answered appropriately. On the occasion, the Headmistress of the School announced to Mr. Benjamin that plans had been prepared for the construction of a large school building which would include Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary Education departments. The new premises would also include a school garden, stadium, etc.

The house will be built in an area located near the Public Garden, and will cost around 150,000 pounds. We understand that the School Management is somewhat hesitant to start work due to the political anomaly. The District Officer, however, encouraged the Management to proceed with the execution of the project, given, as he said, that the situation is going for the better in our city. As an encouraging example, the District Officer cited the case of the commencement of works on the building of the Polemidia dam.

(Haravgi, 1964, 22 April, p. 3. Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)

The French Ambassador and R. Milliex at the Terra Santa School in Lemesos

Limassol, 26 (From our correspondent). – The Ambassador of France to Cyprus, Christian de Saint-Marie, accompanied by Educational Attaché of the French Embassy, Roger Milliex, visited the new building of the Terra Santa Nun School yesterday morning. They were welcomed at the entrance of the School by the Abbess Mother Arsène and the other nuns/teachers of the School.

The Ambassador Christian de Saint-Marie and the Educational Attaché Roger Milliex attended a French class in the upper class of the School and visited all the halls and sections of the newly-built building, accompanied by the Superior. Schoolgirls sang various French songs.

Leaving the school, the French Ambassador thanked the Superior and the staff of the School for the reception which was organised for him and congratulated both the Superior Mother Arsène and the other teachers as well as the teaching staff of the School for the work done at the School and the progress made as well as the good administration.

At noon, the French Ambassador hosted a dinner for the members of the Alliance Française Lemesos Committee at the "Kourion Palace" hotel, which was also attended by the Educational Attaché of the French Embassy, Roger Millieux.

(Phileleftheros, 27 February 1966, p. 2. Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)

10 January 2002. The Italian Ambassador Gherardo La Francesca, accompanied by Consulate Benito Mantovani attend a School function, Saint Mary's School archives.



Grants to non-governmental inter-community schools

The Council of Ministers decided that the following grants to the following non-governmental inter-community schools should continue for the school year 1961-1962:

Primary Schools: *Terra Santa School for Girls* of Lemesos 980, *Terra Santa College* of Lefkosia 2,480, *Terra Santa School* of Famagusta 462, *Saint Joseph School* of Lefkosia 1462.

Secondary schools: *American Academy* of Lefkosia 1,000, *American Academy* of Larnaka, 1,500.

Examination of the Melkonian Sponsorship Institution was postponed to provide further information.

The above decision of the Council of Ministers was published in yesterday's Government Gazette.

(Neos Kyriakos Fylax, 30 September 1961, p. 4)

A few days after the inauguration of the new School premises in 1966, Archbishop Makarios, President of the Republic, invited His Beatitude Alberto Gori, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem with all the Directors of the Religious Schools, the Ambassadors, the Parish priests, Ministers, deputies, more than 70 guests for lunch at the Presidential Palace. During this visit, he gave Sister Arsène a donation for the new School.



1961, at the Presidential Palace, Sister Arsène holds the cheque donated by President Makarios for the new School. Saint Mary's School archives.

Visitors

The School often received visits from inspectors. One of these was recorded in the *Chronicle of the House of Limassol*, of the period 14 November 1923-14 March 1948:

6 March 1943

Today the weather is good, but how cold! The School has resumed its usual appearance.

Yesterday, for the first time since the departure of the American Sisters, we received a visit from Inspector Fleming. Minute inspection, in every class. He has praiseworthy words for the teaching and the School method.

(Chronicles of the House of Limassol, 14 November 1923-14 March 1948)

The former King Umberto of Savoia also visited the School on 19 March 1971.



Above: The King's visit at Saint Mary's School. Saint Mary's School archives.

The Metropolitan of Lemesos Chrysanthos visited the School in 1983:



Right: 23 April 1983. Metropolitan Chrysanthos accompanied by Archimandrite Nicolaos Sideras visits the School. Saint Mary's School archives.



The Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah visited the School in 1988.

Above: The Patriarch of Jerusalem Monsignor Jacques Joseph Beltritti visited the School in 1987, Saint Mary's School archives.



Left: 29 November 1988. Visit of his Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah. Saint Mary's School archives.

According to the School records, the Metropolitan of Lemesos Athanasios had been visiting the School for many years. These visits had temporarily ceased during the pandemic of Covid-19.

27 March 2009. The Metropolitan of Lemesos Athanasios at a School performance. Saint Mary's School archives.



Presidential Commissioners also often visited the School. Presidential Commissioner Manolis Christophides visited the School in 2001.

23 January 2001. Visit of Presidential Commissioner Manolis Christophides. Saint Mary's School Archives.





Benito Mantovani, Kyprianos Louis, Photis Photiou and Sister Angelica Hajdihanni during one of the School festivities. Saint Mary's School archives.

In June 2010, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI paid an official three-day visit to Cyprus (Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 1 December 2021). The School participated in the celebration held in honour of the Holy Father Benedict XVI at Saint Maronas School in Anthoupoli, Lefkosia, with dances and songs which he enjoyed very much.



2010. His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and the President of the Republic Demetris Christofias. Saint Mary's School archives.

Cyprus welcomed Pope Francis (Hazboun, 2021; Euronews, 2021) with the due honours of a Head of State. Students from *Saint Mary's School* of Lemesos, Saint Maronas and *Terra Santa* of Lefkosia participated in the Holy Mass at GSP Stadium in Lefkosia.

2021. Welcoming Pope Francis to Cyprus. Saint Mary's School archives.



Such visits were also remembered by students who attended the School. Elenitsa Katsioloudi remembers:

“ I remember that the former King of Italy had visited the School and we dressed in the traditional uniform of Cyprus to welcome him; the School always had high-ranking visitors, Ambassadors, Archbishops, Metropolitans. I even remember President Makarios when I was young. All of them showed respect for the School, for the Sisters, for the work and mission they had in education but also in forming and educating people.

(Elenitsa Katsioloudi, student from 1999 to 1914, Interview, 28 September 2022)

The School always had close relationships with the Maronite community as many of its students were members of its community. Their representatives often visited the school. One of these occasions was covered by the local Maronite press, *Maroniteslive.com*, on the 31 August 2020:

At Saint Mary's School

The Representative of the Maronites Religious Group to the House of Representatives Giannakis Mousas paid a working visit to the School of Saint Mary in Lemesos today. During the visit he had a long meeting with the Principal of the School, Sister Josephine Vrahimi.

Sister Vrahimi informed the Representative at length about the general course of the School with special reference to the issues and difficulties that arose due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, Representative Giannakis Mousas and Principal Josephine Vrahimi, accompanied by Sister Antonia Piripitsi, had the opportunity to discuss issues concerning the children of the Maronite community attending the School of Saint Mary as well as issues of admission of young children from the community.

Mr. Mousas expressed his joy for the brilliant course of the historic School and stated that the Maronite community is very proud of the work and contribution of the School of Saint Mary. He added that he stands by the Sisters and undertook the promotion of a series of issues related to the educational institution.

It should be noted that today a total of 53 Maronite children attend the School of Saint Mary at all levels, while the School has always been an educational home for dozens of children of the community from all over Cyprus.

(Maroniteslive.com website)



2020. Sister Antonia Piripitsi, Representative of the Maronites Religious Group at the House of Representatives Mr Giannakis Mousas and Sister Josephine Vrahimi. Saint Mary's School archives.

It is not surprising that the School has been having so many visitors and so many types of visitors. Its long history, its valuable contribution to education and to society justifies the interest of prominent figures in the School.

CHAPTER

11

VOX ALUMNI

VOX ALUMNI

When people meet in different gatherings, they often talk about their school years. When people happen to have attended the same school, they reminisce about their experiences there, they narrate stories and anecdotes related to their teachers, classmates, school premises, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and activities in the broader community, and events.

This book could not have been written without the valuable input of its students, the heart and soul of the School. Bringing the different aspects of the School to light contributes to the formation of the big puzzle which constitutes its long history. This, however, would not have been complete without the thoughts, impressions and feelings of its students. An effort was made to randomly find students representing the different stages of the history of the School to share their memories. The students demonstrated vivid interest in this project and offered to share their memories. Some of their memories have been recorded in earlier chapters. In this chapter, the students describe the impressions their schooling at Saint Mary's has left on them and the impact it had on their lives.

One of the first students of the School was Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti who recorded her schooling years in her unpublished novel. She recalled:

“*My earliest memories of school are of the Nuns' School, "Terra Santa". I first went to the convent for a year when I was three... I stayed at the convent for seven years. I loved the School and the nuns. I defended them with passion against all criticism from rival schools.*

(Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti, unpublished manuscript, written in 1997, p. 81)

Cacoyanni Soulioti appreciated deeply the education she received at Terra Santa Girls School, as described in her autobiographical unpublished novel and the time she spent at the School. She also appreciated another aspect of the education she received. She described the day she received lessons of politeness as “the best day of the week”. (Stella Cacoyanni Soulioti, unpublished manuscript, written in 1997, p. 88).

Elli Michaelidou was also one of the first students of the School. She passed the Ordinary with Distinction Examination in English in June 1931. She described the role the Nuns played in her life:

“ I learned a lot, they explained everything to us. I liked the way they taught and their approach towards the students, all love and care. I learned languages and piano. I was often asked to play the piano during the School morning gatherings. When I finished School, I became a piano teacher.

(Elli Michaelidou, student during the 1930s, Interview, 2006)

Nitsa Christodoulou was another one of the first students who attended Saint Mary's School. Her daughter, Mary Gregoriadis talked about her mother.

“ My mother, Nitsa Christodoulou, was born in Lemesos in 1922. Soon after, her family moved to Alexandria in Egypt where her father found employment. When Nitsa was five years old, as there was no school near where her family lived, she was sent to live with her grandmother in Lemesos and go to school. Their house was behind the Terra Santa School. Nitsa finished elementary school at the Private School of Foreign Languages and Greek Lessons. She then attended the Lemesos High School, where most students were boys and only four were girls. Her family wanted her to have further education. Therefore, they sent her to the School of Nuns. She studied there for another three years. I remember the fond Terra Santa School memories my mother narrated to me later on.

(Mary Gregoriadis, student during the 1930s, Interview, 5 September 2022)

Although Mary Gregoriadis did not attend the School, she also had very fond memories of it as a young girl living behind *Terra Santa Girls' School* premises.

“ We had the pleasure and the honour of living right across the street from Terra Santa School, at 15 Solonos Street. Every evening we used to hear the little bell that rang for the boarding school girls to take a break from their studies. The break lasted about an hour. I was a young child then (1948). I listened to their songs all in Italian, French, and Greek. I used to repeat them in a very funny way because it was impossible to memorise them. When the break was over, I vividly remember the disgruntled voices of the boarding school girls who wanted to continue the songs and not go to sleep.

Over the years, one morning my mother showed me a letter and said excitedly: "Look at this letter, the headmistress of the School sent it to me and to all the old students who graduated from the Nun's School to inform us that they are building a new school and they would very much like us to give our contribution. With all our hearts we contributed what we each could.

(Mary Gregoriadis, Terra Santa Girls' School neighbour during the 1940s, Interview, 5 September 2022)

Mary's husband, Goris Gregoriadis, on the other hand, attended the School of Nuns at the age of four in kindergarten. He stayed there for about two years (1944-1945). Goris shared a school photo and gave a very detailed description of all the students in the photo and the general impression of that time during that description:



Terra Santa Girls' School 1944. Goris Gregoriadis' personal archives.

“Looking at this particular school photo, many memories come to me and I remember many faces. In the photo, the first rows where the students are not wearing uniforms are kindergarten children. The Nuns mediate and above them is the rest of the School. Among my classmates was the son of the Mayor Ploutis Servas, Vladis (Vladimiros). He was a different kind of child (for us), and definitely gave us the impression that he was a famous child of our age whom we also saw as somewhat special. The Nuns also had a somewhat different attitude towards him. He was the Mayor's son and stood out among all the other little kids. In the row above Vladis, Iroula Pantelidou, niece of Grivas, stands out. Fourth to the right after Iroula is Konstantia, sister of the actor Christos Papadopoulos (Solomos). In the second row from the top, the third child, a girl after three boys, is Aloe Koralli (Kolakkidou). In the top second row on the right, fourth from right to left is Athinoula Pieri, wife of Pieris who built apartment buildings.

In the last bottom row in the middle, Miranda Kontopoulou (living) can be seen below the boy standing in front of the nuns. In front of her is Jean Altebourgen (Frankolevantinos) and on the far right is Panikos Lamaris (third from the end). His brother Stephen is third from top left. In the series below Steven, Sarah Drousiotou is fourth. I remember being shocked by the death of Mary's sister, Jean. He died of a childhood illness. I remember that the whole School and the Nuns accompanied her coffin on foot to the church of the Franks. I watched from the balcony of my house. To the right of the Nuns in the photo, the group of female students are all of Armenian descent, including Varoush's wife. In the second row from the bottom of the kindergarten children is me, Goris Gregoriadis, third to the right.

(Goris Gregoriadis, student during the 1940s, Interview, 5 September 2022)

Goris later became a painter. His relationship with the School did not end in his childhood. Years later, before 1974, he recalled that Thrasos Makrygiannis, teacher of Greek at Saint Mary's, invited Goris to take over the theatre props for the theatre he staged. *(Goris Georgiadis, student 1944-1945, Interview, 5 September 2022).*

Goris Gregoriadis met many children at Terra Santa. He still sees many of them during social and cultural events of Lemesos. When they meet, as he himself said, they talk about those wonderful childhood school days at the Nuns' School *(Goris Georgiadis, Interview, 5 September 2022).*

Sarah Burns-Cowan Drousiotou talks about the impact the school had on her career:

“*I started my professional life due to my secretarial studies and knowledge of languages. After I finished school, I applied for a job at different places. None would accept me because of my age. The only one who accepted me when I was 15 was Stella Soulioti, the Attorney General of the Republic and first female Minister of the Republic of Cyprus.*

Stella Soulioti was herself a student at Terra Santa and had a good rapport with Sister Claudia. She contacted her and asked her to recommend one of the girls who finished that year and who would be good at English, Shorthand and Typewriting, and would be smart and willing to engage in lifelong learning. Sister Claudia recommended me. I was notified to go to the Cacoyannis' Law Firm. There, Stella Soulioti, the Attorney General of the Republic and first female Minister of the Republic, offered me a job at her father's law firm, which was among the most prominent law firms of the time. When I was still at school and was learning how to type, I was always afraid that I would end up at a workplace such as a law firm, where mistakes and the use of an eraser was not allowed. My worst fears came true.

When Stella met me, she remembered that our fathers were friends. She informed her father about this. When he saw me, he said to Stella: “Are you sure she is suitable for the job? We are not a kindergarten you know...”

I worked there with Stella for 7 years and then continued to work with the firm. Stella always encouraged me to involve myself with lifelong learning. I studied Law by correspondence for two years.

(Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou, student during the 1940s, Interview, 20 September 2022)

Sarah also shares the two vivid memories of the School, which marked her whole life:

“ I have two things to remember vividly from the School which marked me for life. One was the education it offered and the other one was the cultivation of tolerance and acceptance of the other, no matter of their religion, nationality and social class. The education was progressive. It aimed to prepare girls for the workplace through mainly the study of languages and commercial subjects, not only in Cyprus but also overseas. However, culture, history, geography, literature and the arts were interwoven in the curricula and the extra-curricular activities. I can easily survive in any multilingual and multicultural context without any problem, because, let's not forget that, the main languages we learned, English, French, and Greek, give me the possibility to expand to other languages such as German, Spanish and so on. The School catered for all those students who were in need of an education that would prepare them for the needs of the society, but, unlike the government system which mainly focused on classic education of students of Greek-Orthodox descent, Terra Santa embraced all students of different religions and nationalities, promoting acceptance of difference in linguistic and cultural backgrounds. We did not care what nationality the person next to us was. In our final year, for example, we had a Catholic Sister in our English class as a student with us; we had two Armenian girls; we had Turkish girls, Greek girls, Orthodox girls from Egypt, two Scottish girls, one Swahili girl, and students from Beirut. The school operated in an environment which prepared me to be used to being with a lot of people of different religions and different nationalities and not feeling out of place. I learned to respect other people's religions and beliefs and generally not be one-sided. After all these years, I still come across students I went to school with. I came across Turkish students in the occupied area, I came across students in my professional life, I still come across students of my time in my social life.

(Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussioutou, student during the 1940s, Interview, 20 September 2022)

A number of students were interviewed in 1990 and their responses were published in *Philelefttheros* newspaper:

"I studied several years ago at Terra Santa. [...] By the end you were in demand for work. We were highly qualified to find a job. It seems that even today the opinions of the students who study at Saint Mary's have not changed much."

"I came to this School to learn foreign languages well. I will need them in my later life."

"I came here to pass my G.C.E.s without private lessons, so that I don't have the hustle and bustle of high schools, their troubles and all-nighters."

"My mother was also a student of the Nuns. We have nothing to envy from our friends in high school [...]. If we had boys in the class too, it would be better."

"I am learning Shorthand, Typewriting,, foreign languages, and when I leave, I will find a job very easily [...]. We get tired in the lessons, but the reward we get later is worth it."

"My parents wanted me to study from elementary school and then to high school at the Nuns School. It is a very good school. You learn many languages."

(Phileleftheros, 24 May 1990, p. 1. Press and Information Office's Digital Newspaper Archive, www.pressarchive.cy)

Vassiliki Stylianou attended Terra Santa Girls' School in 1962 when she was five years old and completed high school there in 1974. She remembers when, in 1965, the School moved to the new school premises and was since then named *Saint Mary's School*.

“*What I have to say is a big 'thank you' from the bottom of my heart; I have spent many beautiful years there. I never stopped visiting my School from 1974 till today. I have also created a Facebook group for our School with many photos. The group is called Saint Mary's School Limassol All Ages, is dedicated to the Nuns, to the teachers and to our classmates of all ages. The group encourages all those who want to participate with their own posts and photographic material.*

(Vassiliki Stylianou, student from 1962 to 1974, Interview, 9 May 2023)

Vassiliki also remembered her classmates from her *Terra Santa Girl's School* kindergarten days, who later became well-known citizens: George Sykopetritis, Achilleas Spyrou Kyprianou, Dinos Siamtanis, Maria Onisiforou, Francis Karseras, Mary Papadopoulou and Antigoni Sykopetritou.

Helen Loucaides attended *Saint Mary's School* in the late 1960s and early 1970s. She had difficult times as a boarder and was rebellious, as she put it herself, as she missed her family she left behind in East Africa. She expressed her gratitude to everything *Saint Mary's* has offered her in the long run, both the difficulties she encountered as a boarder and the good moments she had at the School:

“Academically, I did not struggle and I attribute this not only to the way languages were taught at Saint Mary’s but also to the fact that my brain had learnt from an early age to switch between three languages: English which, at the time, was the official language in Kenya, Swahili which was their native language, and Greek which was widely spoken at home as well as the large Greek community in East Africa. Therefore, adding two extra languages did not present me with any major challenges and I managed to acquire a few impressive certificates at the end of my schooling. I was then able to join a bilingual secretarial college in Kenya where apart from shorthand and typewriting skills, I acquired certificates in Advanced French, Commercial French, Correspondence & Report Writing and Sociology, none of which would have been possible had it not been for the ground preparation I had received at Saint Mary’s.

I will not dwell on what became a tug-of-war between the establishment and myself but rather express my gratitude to everything Saint Mary’s offered me in the long run.

Firstly, I made friends for life who have stuck with me through thick and thin... Secondly, I had a very inspiring English teacher, Sylvia Jones, who never challenged my rebellious nature but treated me as an intelligent and capable student in class. I was lucky enough to meet up with Sylvia a few years ago and thank her in person for influencing my learning, not just my English, in a general positive way. Thirdly, being surrounded by students from many different countries taught me to be diverse, open-minded and forward thinking. This helped me assimilate in all the jobs I successfully held in my adult life. Lastly, being a religious school, Saint Mary’s instilled in me excellent moral values and taught me compassion, all of which I hope I have been able to pass on to my children.

(Helen Loucaides, student from 1968 to 1974, Interview, 20 March 2023, see also Appendix)

Elenitsa Katsioloudi attended the School in the 1970s. During her interview on 28 September 2022, she stated: *“The School defined the way I think, the way I act, the way I treat others, that I accept others.”*

Elenitsa’s three sons also attended *Saint Mary’s School*. Her third son, Marios Katsioloudis attended the School from kindergarten to high school. He graduated in 2014. He is now working in the UK. He thought back of his school years:

“*Saint Mary’s School serves the children not only by providing valuable education with high academic achievements, but by also giving more individual attention and training to a better discipline. Schoolchildren feel from a very young age that they are part of a community with a strong purpose and values.*

My schooling had a huge impact on me, on my character building and values and on my well-rounded development. It helped me realise the importance of making

an impact to the wider society from a young age. Via the various non-academic extra-curricular activities and charity work, it gave me the opportunity to make a meaningful difference.

It provided me with all necessary qualifications and skills for a successful career and a dynamic future. It was the stepping stone that enabled me to get an offer from one of the most renowned universities in the world and to study abroad.

It was the path to develop and improve knowledge and skills, to acquire critical thinking and be highly competitive. Its broader curriculum lay a strong foundation for my academic potential and achievements, as well as for my future goals and aspirations.

(Marios Katsioloudis, student from 1999 to 1914, Interview, 24 February 2023)

Vicky Christodoulou with her memories gives a different perspective of the impressions left to students of their schooling years. Although she attended the School in the 1980s, her testimony links her School experiences with her professional life today:

“ At the 1988 graduation ceremony, I was honoured to give a speech on behalf of the students. I remember thanking our teachers and telling them that we, the students, would forever hold dearly in our hearts our time at the School. Little did I know that many years later, I would return to stand again in front of an audience. However, this time, it was not as a representative of students but as an ambassador of the European Union (EU). You see, the studies at Saint Mary’s School propelled me to finding good jobs in the private sector in Lemesos but later allowed me to take part in open competitions to work for the European Union, a job I proudly hold since 2004. From my position as a European civil servant in Brussels, I was humbled, on two occasions, in 2012 and 2014, to return to School in order to present to the students their opportunities to study, work and live in the EU, an opportunity for which I am forever grateful to Sister Josephine and the School teachers and students, who accepted to have me and to hear me. I gave special emphasis to languages, when I discussed with the students. I explained to them that I managed to build on my language experience, going on to learn German and Spanish. I know for a fact that one of the students who was at the School at the time now works at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. Other Saint Mary’s students, I happen to know, have gone on to assume important roles, either in society, in business or in the arts. One of those is my old school companion, who is today the Hegumen and one of the founders of the Monastery of Solan, one of the four Christian Orthodox Monasteries in France.

On my part, I held numerous positions in the EU as Assistant Policy Officer, also working in the Cabinet of two European Commissioners and also regularly attending the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. During

this time, I also went on to study Humanities in Dublin City University, by correspondence. Moving to Brussels was made easier by the fact that I could speak French. And although I had not practised for many years after finishing school, miraculously, it was all there, lurking in the back of my brain, deeply rooted from the tender age of eleven. Living in a multicultural city like Brussels is a heaven for polyglots, I am therefore blessed with using all the languages I know to interact with people, forge new relationships and make new friends.

(Vicky Christodoulou, student during the 1980s, Interview, 20 January 2023)

Anastasia Neocleous attended the School from 1962 to 1968. She felt very fortunate to have studied at *Saint Mary's* as she believed it equipped her with the necessary educational, professional and social knowledge and skills needed for her professional pursuit:

“*When I finished high school, I had a variety of job opportunities. Because I also knew three languages, I was asked to become a tour guide; I had also passed as a flight attendant, but my father wouldn't let me go. Because I had finished this School, I also passed the Charter Bank exams but again I didn't go because it meant changing employers and because I was only 18 years old, my father and my elder brother didn't let me work there as I was young. I was offered another job in an English insurance company because I knew English very well. I accepted this job and worked there for many years.*

I studied for six years at Saint Mary's. At this School, we were also taught discipline, obedience and to be good in society. I acquired knowledge and skills which enabled me to find a good job, earn good money and have a good living. These were the strengths of this School. For that we should be grateful that there are such schools in Cyprus.

(Anastasia Neocleous, student from 1962 to 1968, Interview, 8 February 2023)

Anastasia also commented on the family's decision to send their daughter to *Saint Mary's* too:

“*When the time came for my daughter to go to school, we wanted her to go where I went to school. She had seen that I was well prepared to be able to work and get a good salary. Although she also passed exams to attend another school, we felt that Saint Mary's was better, had more security, discipline and could help her to be a good student who could continue her studies abroad and thrive in society. This was the reason my daughter Christina Ionela Neokleous went to the Nuns' School. She also saw that I had a good knowledge of English, Italian and French and she wanted this same education, and she also did well and has now a successful academic career in the UK.*

(Anastasia Neocleous, student from 1962 to 1968, Interview, 8 February 2023)

Anastasia's daughter, Christina Ionella Neokleous attended *Saint Mary's School* from 2001 to 2008. As she said in her interview, she went to *Saint Mary's* because it was a family tradition as her mother and her aunts also attended this School:

“*The first thing I gained was discipline because I believe it is important; it helped me learn how to study and be methodical in my study plans; these skills helped later on in my university studies, and in my personal and professional development and life. Second, the School curriculum gave me the opportunity to learn four languages which helped in my future career prospects, and broadened my horizons.*

I liked the variety of subject areas as they gave me choices, from languages, to Science, Mathematics and Accounting. I remember that during the sixth class, we had the opportunity to choose two disciplines, the Scientific, which included Accounting, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, and reduced language learning periods, and the Literary discipline which consisted of Modern Greek, extensive hours of Italian, French and English and Literature and History. I chose the Scientific discipline because I wanted to study Accounting and Finance subjects. During the sixth and the seventh years of study, we had the opportunity to sit for the GCE Ordinary and Advanced level exams that were offered by the British Council. I sat for Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Accounting, and Modern Greek (Advanced level), and English Language and English Literature, Italian and French (Ordinary level). Apart from the GCEs, I had the opportunity to sit for the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) examinations on the subjects of Accounting, and Typewriting. I also sat for the ECDL (European Computer Driving License). These gave me the background knowledge and skills to pursue my undergraduate studies in Accounting and Finance in the UK, which led me to studies at Master level (Master in International Accounting and Finance and Master in Research: Accounting, Finance and Management), and at Doctorate level in Accounting. This opened my career prospects and horizons in Academia. I am now working as a lecturer in Accounting at Aston University Birmingham, focusing on teaching, learning and research.

Based on the education they had at Saint Mary's, my classmates were also given the opportunities to pursue their tertiary academic paths of interest in other countries such as the UK, Italy and France.

The curriculum had its international orientation and at the same time it followed the Greek curriculum of the Ministry of Education and Culture, which included Modern and Ancient Greek, History and Geography.

One thing I remember during the study of French Geography, Madame Katina also talked about the recipe from a specific region, the well-known ratatouille.

My friends and classmates at Saint Mary's School were from various countries, for example Lebanon, Russia, Ukraine, and the UK. This helped me to easily make friends at the university and also work with people of various linguistic and

cultural backgrounds. Through the years, I realised that the experiences I had during my Saint Mary's years helped me in living and working with people of different cultural backgrounds and I discovered that diversity is very important for world relationships, communication and coexistence.

I feel that the School not only equipped me with knowledge and skills useful for career prospects, but it also gifted me with values and principles which proved useful in my life.

(Christina Ionella Neokleous, student from 2001 to 2008, Interview, 7 February 2023)

Maria Kalorkoti, as noted earlier, studied at *Saint Mary's School* from 1985 to 1999 (pre-primary, primary and secondary school). She then became a Greek teacher (philologist).

“ *All this knowledge and experiences with foreign language teaching gave me the resources I needed to continue my studies at university. At the same time, the teaching of the mother tongue was equally important at this particular School and we had the opportunity to have a very good philologist, Mrs. Iota Ladia, who introduced us to the value of the Greek language and history.*

(Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999, Interview, 6 March 2023)

Upon completion of her university studies at the University of Athens at the Department of Greek History and Archaeology in 2003, due to her qualification background, she immediately obtained a teaching position at *The Grammar School*.

“ *The Principal, Mr Michalis Azas, was impressed with the results of my language A level exams and my qualifications and considered that I was ready to teach the Greek language at Ordinary and Advanced Levels to Lyceum school children and the History course to Gymnasium school children.*

(Maria Kalorkoti, student from 1985 to 1999, Interview, 6 March 2023)

She worked there for 13 years; then, in 2016, she was appointed to teach at the public school sector, where she has been teaching Modern Greek for seven years.

Rodothea Nicolaou studied at *Saint Mary's* from 1992 to 1999. She shared her memories in an email she sent:

“ *Friday afternoon, my phone rang and at the end of the line a familiar voice, Sister Angelica. It was a nice surprise. She asked me to write a small reference to my school years at Saint Mary's School (1992-1999). As I told my beloved Sister Angelica, who was also one of my Italian language teachers, I could write a book. All those memories*

I feel blessed to have spent those years with them, my teachers (with some of them we still keep in touch), the Sisters and our Head Sister Josephine. All the

aforementioned, along with my parents are the “creators” of who I am today, my character, my ethics, my social status, my professionalism.

When I was in difficulty or extreme stress during exam periods, the first thing I remember is me going every morning in our little chapel and just saying a prayer, absorbing all that calmness you feel when you are there. I must admit I still feel that way every time I go into the chapel. You see my daughter is at Sain. Mary’s now so I am visiting the School daily for the last 11 years and we still have another five years ahead of us.

Now as an adult and parent, every time I face a challenge – that’s how I call life difficulties now – I keep saying to myself the quote “Grant Me the Serenity to Accept the Things I Cannot Change, Courage to Change the Things I Can, and Wisdom to Know the Difference”.

Honestly, I wish I could get into a time machine and experience those years again. My friends, good and bad memories, most of them are good if you take out all those stressful exam periods. We had great teachers. They cultivated respect for our teachers but the teachers also respected us as teenagers and guided us in the most efficient and correct way in view of us being the new generation that had to maintain a high level of respect, dignity, ethics and professionalism.

They have provided us with all the necessary “weapons” to get out and deal with the society and have the necessary grounds to be future parents passing onto our children everything they have taught us.

No words can describe how thankful I am and if I was to choose again, I would attend the same school over and over again, but I would like to have the same amazing teachers.

(Rodothea Nicolaou, student 1992-1999. 7 May 2023)

Andreas Stylianou started at Saint Mary’s as a high school student in 2016 and completed his studies in June 2023.

“ I believe that the School is actually very interesting architecturally as well as socially, since it combines the life of a monastery and the life of young students. It makes you appreciate this coexistence and it is a really nice environment for getting to understand better other communities, and especially the Catholic Maronite Community, since it is not often represented, thus making it very difficult to notice their presence in our society and appreciate their history. Throughout these years I have chosen to follow the literary subjects, which has been a great advantage for me and I would not have chosen otherwise. The School has helped me develop in many ways and it has also helped improve my knowledge in languages and my love for them. The school has shaped what I want to proceed to do in my life and has directed me to what I want to do in the future and how to achieve it, which is being able to interact with people from other cultures, speaking their language and understanding them at a deeper cultural level. I will pursue tertiary studies in Humanities, focusing on languages.

The School has also passed down to me many different values that I believe that, personally, I would not have practised or followed if I was in a different situation. It has made it easier for me to be more attentive and respectful as well as being able to have limits, so that I can help myself as well as the people around me.

(Andreas Stylianou, student from 2016 to 2014, Interview, 29 March 2023)

Marilena Panteli started at Saint Mary's as a high school student in 2016 and completed her studies in June 2023.

“ I started at Saint Mary's my first year of high school in 2016 and I have been studying there for seven years. My whole high school experience has been in this School and I wouldn't change it for anything.

I have followed the literature stream over the scientific, that has been also offered at the School, as I was more interested in English literature, History and languages, and it has fostered my love for those subjects even till today.

The School provides a certain level of structure that a lot of kids need in today's days and age. It provides us with different experiences that in other Schools we wouldn't be able to live in, given the fact that we learn so many languages within our curriculum every day. It opens our eyes to different cultures that we wouldn't have had access to if we went to a different school.

Because our classes are so full of different cultures we get to appreciate our differences and really get to know each other's countries and histories. The School has also helped me feel safe. It isn't like other schools because here you feel like people care about you and help you grow and understand and express yourself, because it feels more like a family rather than a structure where you are supposed to follow certain things; even though we do have rules, we're still allowed to be ourselves.

Even the added emphasis on religion in our day-to-day lives because of the nature of the School has contributed to what we are. In our School, we have learned to pray in four different languages; it is part of our daily routine, as, together in the yard, we pray during the school daily assembly. We also have religion lessons twice a week for seven years; other schools would have cut these classes. These have embedded certain morals and values in us and shaped us, for example, to care for each other, try to see different points of views and not judge one another.

On the academic front, I can say that I feel prepared for the next steps in my life which is university. With my four languages and A-levels that we've done at school, I am excited and grateful for my seven years at Saint Mary's. Given that I will study Law, the four languages that we have learned most fluently can open my horizons more than other people can have the opportunity.

(Marilena Panteli, student from 2016 to 2023, Interview, 29 March 2023)

I, the author of this book, personally gained a lot during my six years of high school education at *Saint Mary's School*, something that I have learned to appreciate during different times in my life. Although my religious background was Orthodox (my grandfather Papadimitris was the priest at Agia Napa church in Agiou Andreou Street in Lemesos for more than 60 years and my father, Andreas Papadimas, has been a church singer all his life), this has not stopped my family from entrusting my education to *Saint Mary's School*. During my school years:

“ I learned four languages and four cultures. As a result, I learned to appreciate and respect other peoples as well as diversity. The education I received from “Kalogries” (the Nuns) gave me the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences, which then helped me develop into what I am today. If I had not attended this School, I would have not learned the four languages I know in depth, I would have not learned enough about their cultures, I would have not experienced tolerance for other people, from other nationalities, languages, cultures, religions and lifestyles, I would have not made friends of different religions and nationalities during my schools years. I would have not had the necessary qualifications, which I needed, to immerse myself in the field of Applied Linguistics, in which I specialised, and which enabled me to become an academic for many years, both in Australia and Cyprus. Even typing, which, when we learned it, was intended for secretarial work, proved to be invaluable to me, when the use of computers and technology became an integral part of education. The ability I acquired in my student years, in blind typing, made me ready to immerse myself in the field of new technologies and to the point of specialising in the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning and Assessment. I deeply thank Saint Mary's for preparing appropriately, both me and thousands of other students who have studied there for the last 100 years, to become better people and to successfully join the society and workforce. I am sure that the city of Lemesos and the broader society of the Republic of Cyprus, have many things to thank the School for.

(Papadima-Sophocleous, 2009, pp. 202-203)

It becomes clear that the students of a School, after time passes and the memories and experiences settle down, can be in a position to evaluate what the School has offered them as a whole, and in their later life in particular, either as individuals or as professionals.

From the memories of all the students interviewed, some of which belonged to the same families (grandmothers, mothers, children), some common features were extracted, features which reflect what one expects a school to offer: Respect for the School that has nourished them, knowledge, skills, experiences and values acquired and developed, useful and important for an individual in their lives and for a citizen and a professional. And although they also referred to the discipline and the hard work, they saw those as positive attributes to their learning.

CHAPTER

12

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

“The purpose of education has always been to everyone, in essence, the same - to give the young the things they need in order to develop in an orderly, sequential way into members of society. This was the purpose of the education given to a little aboriginal in the Australian bush before the coming of the white man. It was the purpose of the education of youth in the golden age of Athens. It is the purpose of education today, whether this education goes on in a one-room school in the mountains of Tennessee or in the most advanced, progressive school in a radical community. But to develop into a member of society in the Australian bush had nothing in common with developing into a member of society in ancient Greece, and still less with what is needed today. **Any education is, in its forms and methods, an outgrowth of the needs of the society in which it exists.**”

(John Dewey, 1934, p. 1)

Terra Santa Girls’ School/Saint Mary’s School has been offering education, which has been the outgrowth of the society it has been operating in during the last 100 years in the Republic of Cyprus and Europe.

The study of its history, based on research in education in Cyprus, and documented by the *Chronicles of the House of Limassol*, the School archives, the local press, and testimonies of students, parents and staff, revealed that the School has been responding to the needs of the society it has been part of for a century.

From the beginning, the Franciscans felt it was very important to operate the School in appropriate school facilities. Therefore, they made sure that the School was housed in educationally appropriate premises. They chose a prominent architect of the times, Joseph Gaffero, to build the first School and boarding house in 1923. When those premises could no longer meet the needs of the growing student population, the Franciscan Sisters chose another prominent architect of the 1960s, Stavros Economou, to build the second school premises and boarding facilities, which house the School to the present day.

The education offered by the School was evidently an outgrowth of the needs of the society of the time from its very beginnings. Although the first aim, when the School was established in 1923, was to cater for the particular needs of the Latin Catholic girls in Cyprus, the profile of the first students of that year proved that the School sensitively felt the needs of the society and accepted not only girls of Latin Catholic background but also boys (53 students: 48 girls and five boys) and

not only Latin Catholic girls but also students of other backgrounds (26 Orthodox, 20 Catholics, three Protestants, three Armenians and one with the background not declared). The study of the School population evidenced that this continued through all the hundred years of the School's existence. In total, some 57,113 students (45,855 girls and 11,258 boys) of somewhat 31 religions and 87 nationalities attended the School in its 100-year history.

The acceptance, and promotion of diversity of the society has been reflected in numerous other ways in the School through the years. It has been reflected not only in the diverse gender and religious/national background of its students and their families, but also of its staff, sisters and non-clerical staff, and that of the many distinguished visitors that had been visiting the School and honouring and supporting its activities (Archbishop Makarios, President of the Republic of Cyprus, ambassadors, religious leaders, kings, etc.) It has also been reflected in its curriculum (languages and cultures), and out-of-class activities (e.g., end-of-year festivities, theatrical performances and concerts) and out-of-school community event participation (e.g., national parades, King Umberto II Savoia school visit, Holy Father Benedict XVI and Pope Francis visits to Cyprus, etc.). It has been reflected in the School values and atmosphere, which promoted the understanding of the feelings of others through the understanding and sharing of the feelings of students coming from different backgrounds, which has helped in developing and cultivating acceptance, sympathy, love, and cooperation. Not only this is evident in the diversity of the student population, it is also strongly supported by the harmonious co-existence in the School of Greek and Turkish Cypriot students for many years until the forced displacement of the population. The education of the School was not only the outgrowth of the society in which it has been existing, in matters of diversity, it has proved that it sensed these needs and applied the necessary approach from the very beginning of its history. The tolerance and acceptance of others, main principles of multilingualism and multiculturalism, were applied since the early days of the School and decades before these concepts were theoretically introduced and implemented in societies and educational systems.

The School also followed the educational needs of its times. It chose to follow the progressive trend of education of the 1920s, which reflected a different curriculum and new approaches to teaching and learning, instead of the classic one, followed by most community schools of the time. It offered four languages and other subjects, which were broadly sought, and continued to do that to the present day. By focussing on offering languages, Saint Mary's has been pioneering since the 1900s in what is sought today, the offer of schools which focus on specific disciplines, for example music schools, sports schools, language schools. The School followed the progressive trend of education in an effort to prepare: (a) girls for the new challenges of the times, which were to be good citizens and members

of the workforce they started entering back then; (b) boys, whose parents' felt they needed a progressive curriculum (which included languages and commercial subjects; (c) for their children in order to prepare them for the new challenges of the society, and the world of work. The examination of the School curriculum through the years to the present day revealed a continuous change and development in curriculum content (updating existing, and adding new subject areas), learning and teaching methods, and learning certification (recognised examinations), which reflected the changes of the needs of the society.

Schools are not just about learning and developing skills and experiences in various fields of study, but also about learning many other things that would help students get along better with others, develop leadership qualities, take challenges, become more confident about themselves and be able to go out in the world armed with the necessary social skills to deal with different people. For this reason, in addition to the development of these aspects through the curriculum, from the very beginning to the present day, the school has been complementing its curriculum with out-of-class activities and out of school community participation. It has been encouraging students to participate in such events in an effort to help students establish themselves as role models among peers, and offer them the opportunity to excel not only in curriculum areas, but also in areas outside the curriculum, which support an all-round development of the individual, through drawing out and developing hidden potentials of students. It has encouraged students to involve themselves in environmental awareness activities (e.g., planting trees), and charity events such as charity markets, and bazars; participate in the Peace March organised by the women of Cyprus for the liberation of the occupied area of Cyprus, and in the Christodoula's March, organised by the Cyprus Anti-Cancer Association (PASYKAF) for the support of cancer patients; visit nursing homes, orphanages and hospitals. This involvement aimed to the development of civic virtues such as cooperation, and kindness, and the raising of responsible and caring citizens who take active role in their societies going into the future.

The School has contributed to the building of students' social skills through class discussions, group work, organisation and celebration of major festivals, fundraising activities, etc. together. It provided them with opportunities to develop the ability to interact with other people from different backgrounds and understand them better, build interpersonal and communication skills, find new friends and expand their social circle, but also build close ties with teachers. This aimed to bring about greater cohesion among everyone involved.

The School made all that possible with the leadership, commitment and dedication of its six principals, and the commitment of its teachers who supported the development of their students with passion and dedication: 56 Sisters and 457

non-clerical teaching staff taught the 57,113 students (45,855 girls and 11,258 boys) of somewhat 31 religions and 87 nationalities that did their schooling at *Terra Santa Girls' School/Saint Mary's School*. Many of these teachers have dedicated more than 35 years to the students and the School.

The School curriculum, out-of-class activities and out-of-school community participation have constituted an integral entity, and have promoted, and developed valuable culture, tradition, family, religious, social and work values with the rolling of time, spreading them to the next generations.

Another very important element which has been revealed from the students' interviews was the appreciation of the provision of a well-structured environment which has supported the development of students' self-discipline, and ensured harmony among different people (*Christina Ionella Neokleous, Interview, 7 February 2023*).

Saint Mary's School today is well described on the website *Latin Catholics of Cyprus* (www.laticatholicsofcyprus.com):

The School of the *Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart*, which was established in 1923, is a community committed to providing, through academically challenging curriculum and cultural pursuits, an environment in which students entrusted to its care gain self-confidence, recognise their self-worth and become life-long learners and responsible citizens

Saint Mary's School provides a unique learning environment from kindergarten up to the 7th year of Secondary School. The School provides an academically rigorous and socially responsible education programme that commences in the Kindergarten and continues through Primary School right up to the completion of Secondary School. Our students are consistently given academic preparation and cultural experiences that are essential for their future employment or their post-secondary education.

Both the Kindergarten and Primary Schools are separated into two sections: the Greek Kindergarten and Primary School and the English Kindergarten and Primary School. The Greek Primary School follows the academic curriculum as defined by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The curriculum is further enriched by the teaching of two modern foreign languages: English and French. In the English Primary School students learn through the medium of English and are taught two modern foreign languages: Greek and French.

Saint Mary's Secondary School recognises the importance of modern foreign language to equip our students to succeed in today's challenging multicultural world. The curriculum focuses on students becoming fluent in four modern languages: English, Greek, French and Italian. This is balanced by a comprehensive range of science and commercial subjects. This common core of knowledge is developed in a safe, caring and disciplined environment which supports not only critical thinking and decision-making but the values of integrity, fairness and respect.

Graduates of *Saint Mary's School* are responsible decision-makers who are ready to be productive life-long learners in a global society.

(*Latin Catholics of Cyprus. Saint Mary's School. (n.d.)*)

At the moment, at all levels of the School we have grandchildren and great-grandchildren of our old students.

(*Maroniteslive.com website, Interview of Ad. Josephine Vrahimi*)

Top educational destination

The School of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart is a community that promotes, through culture, the full maturity of the individual, through his own potential, helping him to apply the authentic values of life, which will be harmoniously combined with himself and those around him, such as critical thinking, love and mutual respect, acceptance of diversity, self-confidence and honesty, in order to become righteous and responsible people in society. Graduates of the school choose various fields of employment in society such as medicine, law, hotel, accounting, education of various levels, banking and more.

The School is constantly moving forward with changes, it never stands still. Changes based on what society seeks today. This is what the Sisters and the teaching staff try to pass on to the children. Today's graduates, as Sister Vrahimi typically mentions, excel in their fields. The principles and values they received from the School always accompany them. Most of them hold managerial positions in companies, in the Government and elsewhere, while many of them have even reached the doctoral level at the academic level.

In the face of the great challenges of the time, the School of Saint Mary's in Lemesos can be proud of its achievements. The future of the School is brightly predicted and the Maronite Community, especially of Lemesos, can feel just as proud that this School is part of it.

(Maroniteslive.com website, Interview of Ad. Josephine Vrahimi)

The examination of the one-century history of *Terra Santa Girls School/Saint Mary's School* has documented that it has been providing an environment conducive to learning with opportunities of acquiring knowledge, skills and experiences and for children growing up into responsible adults who would be contributing to society. It has also encouraged students to build friendships, which would turn into social networks and continue into their adult lives.

The Terra Santa Girls School/Saint Mary's School long history has been the strongest evidence that this School has constituted a big piece of the puzzle of the history of education and schools in Cyprus. Although it lived through major world and local historical, political, social and educational events, it managed to find its way through the years with bright colours, responding to the needs of the students, the expectations of the parents, who continue to entrust their children's education to the School, and to the expectations of the different domains of society, including that of work.

The year 2023, the year of publication of this book, finds the whole world historically, politically, socially, culturally and educationally, at a turning point.

Hughes (n.d.) discusses the following seven challenges for the 21st century education: (a) mindfulness (what schools should be doing to promote happy, focussed, calm and appreciative people); (b) singularity (what schools should be doing to develop those facets of humanity that are uniquely human and cannot be taken over by artificial intelligence); (c) terrorism (how schools can work with young people to face the problem of terrorism and, hopefully, reduce it); (d) sustainability (what schools can do to encourage young people to love and respect nature and make them aware of the local parameters of environmentalism so that they do not fall into the trap of seeing planetary causes as generalised, distant needs while disregarding their immediate surroundings); (e) post-truth politics (schools should make young people aware of how information is grappled in the 21st century); (f) knowledge in the 21st century (what schools need to rethink in terms of the way knowledge is available and distributed, rethink what they teach); and (g) character (schools should think the way character is determined by discipline, ethics and emotional intelligence).

The year 2023 finds *Saint Mary's School* also at a turning point, as it celebrates its centenary. A century of history is a remarkably very long period of time. It constitutes a milestone. The world, as well as the local school challenges are ahead of us. With such an illustrious past behind it, the School can look to the challenges the future holds with optimism. Having studied its past, I am sure that the future will be "shining bright".

Back in 2006, during my first, brief presentation of the history of the School, at the 2nd Symposium of Oral History of the Patticheion Municipal Museum-Historical Archives and Research Centre of Limassol, I had made a promise to Sister Vrahimi, that I will record the history of *Saint Mary's School*, as a token of appreciation for what I obtained from the School. I hope that this book does justice to the School. I also hope it fills some of the gap in the history of the schools of Lemesos and Cyprus.

I close with something that the first President of the Republic of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios, said to the fourth Principal of the School and Superior at the time, Mère Arsène, when, a few days after the inauguration of the new School premises in 1966, he invited his Beatitude Mons Alberto Gori, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem with all the Directors and Directresses of the Religious Schools, the Ambassadors, the Parish priests, Ministers, deputies, more than 70 guests for lunch at the Presidential Palace. During this visit, he gave Sister Arsène a donation for the new School and said the following about the School:

"This school offers you something that no other school offers."

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Speech of Andreas Parides, teacher of Greek, during the School celebration of Sister Josephine's name day, 19 March 2018.

Record Book Teaching Staff 1983-

Staff Provident Fund (covers year 1985-1986 to 98-1999).

St Mary's School Lemesos Staff, ID card + Insurance Number, Residential Address 1989-1996 (pink exercise book).

Teaching Staff 2006-2016 (Yellow Folder-1).

Teaching Staff 2016 (Yellow Folder -2).

Registration record of 1923.

Change of Superior.

Tribute to Sister Emilienne.

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Can be found at the School archives.

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Personal archives

Pambis Anayiotos

Andreas Bayada, relative of Gaffiero

Katina Frangeskou

Goris Gregoriadis

Elenitsa Katsioloudi

Marios Katsioloudis

Nitsa Kattami

Antonia Nikita-Loucaidou

Thomas Michaelides

Elli Michailidou

Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous

Michaella Skordi

Interviews

- Karmella Antoniou, student from 1967 to 1973, 12 September 2022.
- Sarah Burns-Cowan Droussiou, student in the 1940s, 20 September 2022.
- Vicky Christodoulou, student in the 1980s, 20 January 2023.
- Loretta Donoghue, student from 1956 to 1962, 8 February 2023.
- Katina Frangeskou, student and teacher of French, 15 March 2023.
- Mary Gregoriadi, Terra Santa Girls' School neighbour, 5 September 2022.
- Goris Gregoriadis, student in the 1940s, 5 September 2022.
- Angelica Hadjihanni, Sister, 18 January, 7 February 2023.
- Monica Hannoulli, Sister, 18 January 2023.
- Maria Kalorkoti, Student from 1985 to 1999, 6 March 2023.
- Elenitsa Katsioloudi, student in the 1970s, 28 September 2022.
- Marios Katsioloudis, student from 1999 to 2014, 24 February 2023.
- Nitsa Kattami, teacher of Typing, 3 March 2023.
- Filitsa Constantinou, student of Terra Santa School (1957-1962).
- Helen Loucaides, student from 1968 to 1974, 20 March 2023.
- Antonia Nikita Loucaidou, student and teacher of French, 9 February 2023.
- Benito Mantovani, Religious Group at the House of Representatives
- Elli Michaelidou, student from 1929 to 1933, 2005.
- Thomas Michaelides, teacher of Accounting, 6 March 2023.
- Anastasia Neocleous, student from 1962 to 1968, 8 February 2023.
- Rodothea Nicolaou, student 1992-1999. 7 May 2023.
- Christina Ionella Neokleous, student 2001 to 2008, 7 February 2023.
- Georgia Panayidou, student, 6 May 2023.
- Marilena Panteli, student from 2016 to 2023, Interview, 29 March 2023
- Antonia Piripitsi, Sister, Provincial Superior, 17 February 2023.
- Beatrice Skorti, Sister, 6 May 2023.
- Vassiliki Stylianou, student from 1962 to 1974, 9 May 2023.
- Andreas Stylianou, student from 2016 to 2014, Interview, 29 March 2023.
- Josephine Vrahimi, Sister, 15 February 2023.
- Nitsa Zachariou, teacher of English, 5 May 2022.
- Theodoros Psiras, Teacher of Italian, 30 March 2023.

Appendix

Helen Loucaides, student in the late 1960s-early 1970s, Interview transcript, 20 March 2023

I am of Greek and Cypriot descent and was born in East Africa. When I was 12, my parents decided it would be best for me to attend secondary school in Cyprus so the only choices I had were, to either stay with relatives and attend a Greek Gymnasium where I would have struggled initially as my Greek was marginal or attend *Saint Mary's All-Girls School* in Lemesos as a boarder. I opted for *Saint Mary's* which I joined in 1968 as it was renowned for teaching French, English, Italian and Greek.

Academically, I did not struggle and I attribute this not only to the way languages were taught at *Saint Mary's*, but also to the fact that my brain had learnt from an early age to switch between three languages, English which, at the time, was the official language in Kenya, Swahili which was the native language, and Greek which was widely spoken at home as well as at the large Greek Community in East Africa. Therefore, adding two extra languages did not present me with any major challenges, and I managed to acquire a few impressive certificates at the end of my schooling. I was then able to join a bi-lingual secretarial college in Kenya where, apart from shorthand and typewriting skills, I acquired certificates in Advanced French, Commercial French, Correspondence & Report Writing and Sociology, none of which would have been possible had it not been for the ground preparation I had received at *Saint Mary's*.

Boarding life, however, proved an enormous struggle for me as I missed my family and friends in Africa and felt totally displaced. These intense feelings of not belonging quickly turned me against the establishment which I found oppressive and very quickly I became a rebel. If I was to describe my young self at the time, the lyrics from the *Sound of Music* come to mind: "Many a thing you know you'd like to tell her, many a thing she ought to understand, but how do you make her stay, and listen to all you say? How do you keep a wave upon the sand? Oh, how do you solve a problem like Maria? How do you hold a moonbeam in your hand" If *Saint Mary's* operated a boarding school today, I would have gladly offered constructive advice on how to turn displaced boarder's negativity into positivity, but, alas, it does not, so I will not dwell on what became a tug-of-war between the establishment and myself but rather express my gratitude to everything *Saint Mary's* offered me in the long run.

Firstly, I made friends for life, who have stuck with me through thick and thin. In particular, Salomi Papadima, the author of this book, whose parents and sisters became my surrogate family in Cyprus. I am forever grateful for the exeat week-ends afforded by Salomi and her family, which offered me some windows of normal family life. I also bonded with a few boarders with whom I feel closer to than my own sisters, like Angela Martaki, Mary and Barbara Stylianou, Maria Iacovou, as well as

day-school students Jacqui and Vivienne Zifteh, Niamh Bryan and the late Christine McBride, whose daughters refer to me as “family”, which is a great honour.

Secondly, I had a very inspiring English teacher, Sylvia Jones, who never challenged my rebellious nature but treated me as an intelligent and capable student in class. I was lucky enough to meet up with Sylvia a few years ago and thank her in person for influencing my learning, not just my English, in a general positive way.

Thirdly, being surrounded by students from many different countries taught me to be diverse, open-minded and forward thinking. This helped me assimilate in all the jobs I successfully held in my adult life. I started my journey as a medical secretary in the X-Ray Department of the Wellington Hospital, London; then moved into the Travel Industry, where I successfully run my own Travel Agency and in 1992, I launched Palefip UK, Panathinaikos Football Supporters Club in London and was the President for two years. One of my responsibilities was to work closely with the fans in order that Panathinaikos’ good name was not tarnished during our European matches. Apart from organising their travel arrangements (flights, hotels, coaches where my languages came handy), I escorted them to Europe and worked closely with the local Police to assist them with crowd segregation and good public order. I did this successfully and the Club continues to be strong in the UK today (www.palefip.co.uk). In 1994 I got married to an Englishman who paradoxically took me to Greece through his work and I took a career break to raise our son and daughter. I returned to full-time employment when my daughter first went to school. This time I had a complete change of career as I joined the Investment Bank of Greece as PA to the Head of Investment Banking. The family then moved back to the UK where I joined the National Bank of Greece as PA to the Country Manager, which unfortunately closed its London Branch due to the Brexit. I was, however, fortunate enough to join the American Bureau of Shipping, a Classification Society, as an Executive Assistant to the Business Development Europe Office. ABS’s core business is providing global classification services to the marine, offshore, and gas industries with 5,500 employees worldwide. The job entails communicating with a range of different people across the globe as well as extensive travelling. I attribute my ability to work under pressure and communicate with people from all paths of life worldwide as well as the ability to travel at the drop of a hat, to my tough boarding school days in a multi-cultural environment, which proved a good preparation for life. I have come to realise that much as I did not enjoy boarding life at *Saint Mary’s*, it has provided me with an ability to cope with anything that life throws at me.

Lastly, being a religious school, *Saint Mary’s* instilled in me excellent moral values and taught me compassion, all of which I hope I have been able to pass on to my children.

Author's biographical notes

Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous (BA Athens, GradCertEd & DipEd La Trobe, PostGradDipCALL Melbourne, MeD La Trobe, MLit UNE, DProf, Middlesex) was born in Lemesos. She lived and taught in Melbourne, Australia for 23 years. She has taught on site and/or online at high schools and La Trobe and RMIT Universities in Melbourne, Intercollege Limassol, the University of Nicosia and the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT). She was the Director of the CUT Language Centre (at Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics rank) and coordinator of the Master in Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) programme. She is now a research fellow at the Cyprus Interaction Lab (CIL) of the Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts at CUT.

She has been publishing research since the 1980s. She is the author, co-author, editor or co-editor of more than 25 books on topics related to both the history of Lemesos and Applied Linguistics: She has been the editor of the series of proceedings (18) of the annual Oral History Symposia of Patticheion Municipal Museum-Historical Archives and Research Centre of Limassol since 2005, which deal with the various aspects of the history of Lemesos over the last 200 years of the city. She is the author of the books *Andreas Papadimas: Once a Football Player in Limassol — Praise God on the Fields*, (2015) and *The Private School of Foreign Languages and Greek Studies (1920-1950)*, (2020). In 2009, she published a paper on the history of the School of the Nuns entitled *Saint Mary's School: A multifaceted contribution to the educational activities of Limassol*.

Her publications also include language printed and digital materials for the teaching of Greek and French in Australia, and Greek, English, Computer Assisted Language Assessment and Testing and Computer Assisted Curriculum Development and Evaluation.

For more information on Dr Salomi Papadima-Sophocleous, visit her website at:
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100 YEARS

From Terra Santa
to Saint Mary's School of Lemesos
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