

FACTS: The Mission, the Collaborators!

Greece

Volos is a city in Thessaly, located 320 km from Athens. A city of 300,000 inhabitants, it attracts many tourists thanks to its location: its port opens toward the Sporades—Sciathos, Scopelos, Scyros... The beautiful Mount Pallium invites visitors to relaxing holidays and scenic walks.

In Volos, in 1904, Sister Philomène and Sister Aline Pittlinger, who spoke Greek, were sent and founded a small school—a discreet presence and support for the small Catholic minority of Austrians, Italians, and a few French... with only one elderly priest. The welcome from the town's inhabitants was not the warmest—there was suspicion of proselytism.

The school, with a small boarding section attended by girls from distant villages as well as from Macedonia, broadened the horizons of the town's inhabitants through the teaching of the French language. Over time, the people grew fond of and came to trust the Sisters. The small primary school still continues this tradition and mission today, though without the Sisters for the past two years.

It was the 30th anniversary of this primary school's life that we honored with our presence on this Sunday, March 30, 2025! We came to encourage and support the work and efforts of the teaching team—among them two Catholics—and their director, a true apostle, a great friend of Saint Emilie and Saint Joseph. In fact, the school bears the name of our holy Patron!

The seeds sown by our Sisters—I recall the names of Sisters Berthe, Pierre, Smaragda—who, after the great earthquake of 1986, had to carry out the necessary repairs and rebuild the school and boarding section, and Sisters Blandine, Catherine, Victoria... These seeds, I say, are bearing fruit. The school remains a Christian school—the only one in the city and in Thessaly. Mrs. Sophia Tsardaca, the director, is a committed believer, a teacher in every dimension of her life, a very discreet mentor, who, together with her team, prepared a magnificent celebration. It was enriched by two testimonies from former students and three journalists whose children currently attend the school.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

Sister Alberta- Greece SJA