



ASIA/PAKISTAN - The Sindh government grants land to the Sisters of Jesus and Mary

Karachi (Agenzia Fides) - The government of Sindh province (in southern Pakistan) has given to the Sisters of Jesus and Mary land on an extended loan in the center of Karachi for a period of 99 years. During a ceremony held in recent days, Ishrat ul Ebad, Governor of Sindh, presented the official documents to Sister Mary Langan and sister Berchmanns Conway, representatives of the congregation. As reported to Fides, the land was presented by the government as a "free gift" in recognition of the educational work of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary in Pakistan. It will allow the religious sisters to expand and consolidate the girls school they have been running in Karachi since 1952.

The Government of Sindh has made significant gestures of appreciation for the work of the Catholic Church in Pakistan. Three Catholic hospitals in Sindh were exempted from property taxes. The government is prepared to grant a tax exemption to 40 schools run by the Diocese of Hyderabad in the economically depressed urban areas and for indigenous peoples in the Thar Desert. It recently gave 30 tribal families of the ethnic group parkari koli, affected by the floods, four acres of land and new homes, which are part of a support program launched by the Catholic hospital of St. Elizabeth in Hyderabad. The governor praised the role and presence of the Catholic Church as an integral part of Pakistani society,

The Sisters of Jesus and Mary arrived in the Indian subcontinent in 1856 (well before the partition between India and Pakistan) and started school in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, Mariakhel, Murree and Toba Tek. The former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, Asma Jehangir, President of the Commission for Human Rights of Pakistan, Tehmina Janjua, Pakistan's Ambassador to Italy, and other eminent Muslim political leaders studied at their schools. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 03/10/2012)