

Casa Madre del Perdono - Italy

Introduction

Casa Madre del Perdono is a detention facility located in Montefiore Conca, Italy. This institution is an integral part of the APG association, also known as the "Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII." Originating from the visionary Father Orest Benzi, the APG Association has an international presence and



APG Houses Italy

operates as a religious institution with a practical and constant commitment to fighting marginalization and poverty. Their core philosophy consists of intertwining their lives with people living in poverty or oppression and living with them 24 hours a day. Over time, they have established several houses, each with its own purpose, some focusing on people in detention.

This house, which opened in 2004, stands out by creating an environment in which people in detention live together with a variety of people, including people who have served their sentences or people with mental disabilities. The idea is to offer people in detention an educational path in a home and family dimension. The APG-association is in charge of managing these facilities in accordance with national regulations. At the heart of Casa Madre del Perdono is the CEC model, which stands for "Educating Community with People Sentenced to Prison." This initiative revolves around recognizing the inevitability of punishment while placing even greater emphasis on recovery.

Scale

Casa Madre del Perdono can accommodate 25 individuals, classifying it as a small-scale facility.

RESCALED-principles in practice:

- Small-scale
- Differentiated
- Community-integrated

Differentiation

Target group:

Casa Madre del Perdono caters to adult men and women serving prison sentences. Although the facility accommodates both sexes, most residents are men. Criteria for admission are based on the nature of the offence, length of the sentence and explicit consent of the person applying for admission. Casa Madre del Perdono does not accept persons previously convicted of violence against minors or vulnerable persons. The length of stay can be up to three years, with the possibility of extension for further social support. The placement protocol is sequential: it begins with an expression of interest from the person concerned, followed by a court decision. During this period, the person is placed in a correctional facility. After court approval, the APG association conducts an evaluation process. Successful completion of these stages leads to admission to Casa Madre del Perdono.

Forms of security:

All APG association houses share a uniform security approach. Casa Madre del Perdono relies on relational security, combining individual trust and responsibility with group organization and decision-making. Static security measures are avoided, with minimal use of urine or blood tests. Only one person on the staff is responsible for security. Procedural security allows residents to move freely within the facility and community (day and night). Residents have a personal house key and are never restricted to their individual rooms. Notably, the staff consists entirely of men.

Activities:

Casa Madre del Perdono bases its approach on the CEC method and develops a comprehensive program aimed at educating people in detention in three phases. The first phase focuses on self-reflection, including the transformation of anger and the recognition of personal strengths. In the next phase, the emphasis shifts to job training and professionalization. The final phase of the program navigates through the gradual exploration of increased autonomy, freedom and reintegration into society. The duration of each phase depends on both the crime committed and the intrinsic characteristics of the individual. Several volunteers, seen as "real-life teachers," engage with residents during specific phases. The religious background of the APG association permeates daily activities, reflected in moments of prayer and thanksgiving prior to meals.

During these phases, residents encounter a range of activities. These activities include paid work, volunteer work, sports and participation in reintegration initiatives such as tutoring, mediation and legal interviews.

Residents may also be responsible for concrete tasks in the community; deliveries and/or pick-ups from other homes in the area, etc. While participation in activities is encouraged, there is no mandatory work mandate. Cooking is flexible in Casa Madre del Perdono, with residents able to prepare meals individually or engage in group cooking sessions. The extent of contact with their families is contingent on the court-mandated plan and the families' willingness to participate in the reconciliation process. External visits from other individuals are often restricted.

Community-integration

Location and architecture:

Casa Madre del Perdono is located in the municipality of Montefiore Conca. This municipality is located in the province of Rimini, in Italy, about 20 kilometers south of the city of Rimini. It has approximately 2300 inhabitants (2023).¹ The facility is

First impression of a visitor: "Upon entering, I was impressed by the fact that not all people in these houses had been sentenced to prison. There were also people who had already served their sentences and people with mental disabilities who are cared for by APG23 and supported by those serving prison sentences".

surrounded by houses, supermarkets, bars.... and there is a castle, which is a tourist attraction, about 100 meters from the house. Casa Madre del Perdono is easily accessible by public transportation.

Unlike the other visited houses of the APG association, most of the residents in Casa Madre del Perdono have their own bedrooms and some shared. The facility does not have other private spaces. In addition, Casa Madre del Perdono consists of shared bathrooms, a visitor's room, a kitchen, and a living room. They try to create a warm and inviting atmosphere by using different decorations throughout the building.

¹Montefiore Conca (Rimini, Emilia-Romagna, Italy) - population statistics, charts, map, location, weather and web information. (2023).
City *Population.* Retrieved August 28th, 2023, from
https://www.citypopulation.de/en/italy/emiliaromagna/rimini/099008__montefiore_conca/

Interaction with the community:

The combination of people in detention living with volunteers and those with mental disabilities stimulates the interaction between residents and the wider community. Casa Betania's residents have the possibility to work in the community. The local community actively participates through volunteering and making donations. Facilitating interaction is additionally achieved by coordinating communal gatherings like shared meals, religious activities, and sports events. The facility's religious character results in collaboration with the Catholic Church and select parishes.

Casa Madre del Perdono

Founded: 2004

Capacity: 25

Security level: Low

Nearest city/town: Montefiore
Conca (Italy)

Nature of interaction: Visited by
Reshape (26/04/2023)

Publicity/ read more

- About Casa Madre del Perdono at the official website of the APG-association (Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII) (in Italian):

Casa Madre del Perdono (n.d.). *Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII*. Retrieved August 28th, 2023, from <https://www.apg23.org/it/post/casa-madre-del-perdono.html>

- About the CEC-method at the official website of the APG-association (Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII) (in Italian):

Comunità Educante con i Carcerati. (n.d.). *Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII*. Retrieved August 28th, 2023, from https://www.apg23.org/it/carcere_comunita_educante/

- About the CEC-method in Italy at the official website of the APG-association (Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII) (in Italian):

CEC (Comunità Educanti con i Carcerati) in Italia (n.d.). *Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII*. Retrieved August 28th, 2023, from https://www.apg23.org/it/carcere_realta_cec/