

The social service organization « Accompagner » was born on March 19, 2001 at the heart of the Belgian capital. It was an initiative of the general chapter of the Assumptionists held in 1999 and was meant to be a "prophetic gesture" for the new millennium, a project that was energetically and enthusiastically oriented to the neediest in society and addressing a particularly modern problem. What was the origin of "Accompagner"? The experience of certain Assumptionists who worked at our church, La Madeleine, in the heart of Brussels, led them to observe that many poor people whom they directed to various social service agencies returned without having their issues resolved, usually because they didn't and often simply weren't able to meet all the filing directives. Thus there arose the idea to create a center, made up of volunteers directed by several salaried professionals who would not only direct but accompany people in difficulty to various social agencies to help them comply with all the necessary directives.



As needs became clearer and clearer over the years, the center joined a wider network of

social service agencies under the aegis of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in 2005. In 2007 the center received special recognition and some financial aid from the **Fondation Roi Baudouin** and was awarded the mayor's prize for civic responsibility in the commune of Koekelberg. In 2009 a crowning achievement for the Center took place when it was taken under the patronage of Her Highness Princess Astrid for a period of two years.

One of the individuals who was welcomed at the center and accompanied was Claudine, formerly self-employed. Here is her story of being supported by "Accompagner" personnel.

- **Claudine, how did you come to know of this organization "Accompagner"» ?**

- It was recommended to me by a friend who herself had benefited from their services.

- **What finally pushed you to go?**

- Up to now, I survived. I barely had enough to clothe myself. I was afraid of everything. I knew I had rights to certain things but I was helpless in the face of adversity. I simply didn't have the strength to go to a social service agency to ask for anything. Still, remember, that I was a businesswoman at one time and I once had plenty of energy. But I found myself at one point down and out, without any motivation. Until, that is, my friend literally pushed me here.





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- How did « Accompagner» help you?

