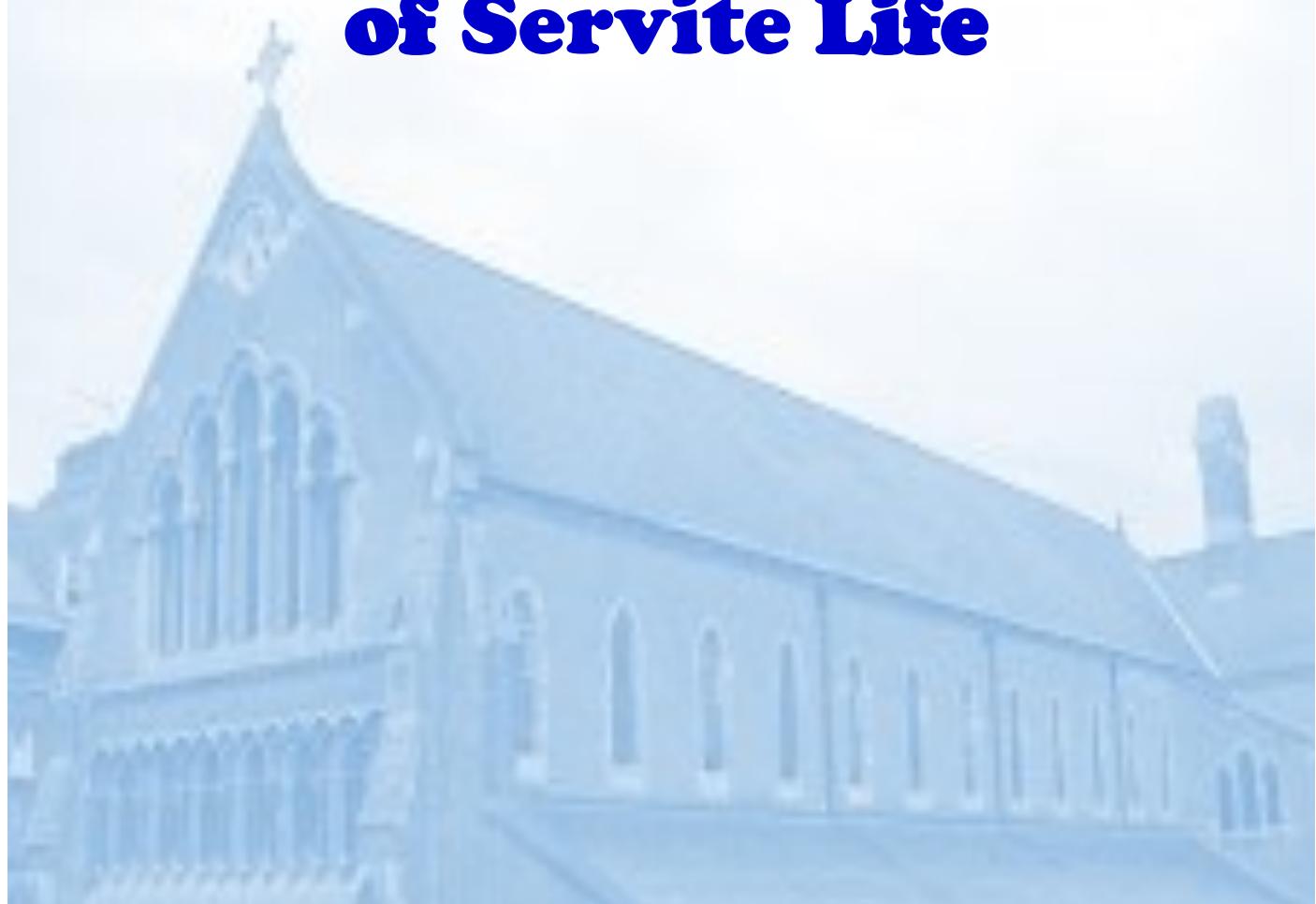




Celebrating 150 Years of Servite Life



Celebrating 150 Years of Servite Life

This story recalls the arrival of the Sisters in London from France in 1851 and how they were aggregated to the Servite Order on 18 June 1864.

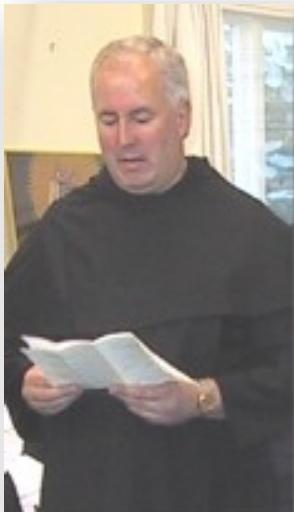
It marks the arrival of the first two Friars from Italy on 11 October 1864 and how they established the first communities on these Isles.

It celebrates the first Friars Community established in Benburb, Ireland in 1948.

It gives thanks for 50 years since the Pontifical recognition of the Servite Secular Institute on 27 May 1964.



Introduction



On behalf of our Servite Province of the Isles, I extend the warmest welcome to everyone who joins us in celebrating the 150th anniversary of our Servite presence in London. With great joy we give thanks to God for the involvement of all expressions of our Servite way of life. We recall our brothers and sisters who have spread the Gospels through our Servite Charism, to all parts of these Isles and throughout the world. We are grateful for all who have joined in this feast of remembering and giving thanks for 150 years in Our Lady's service.

Yours fraternally

Colm McGlynn osm



One Hundred and Fifty Years seems short compared to the age of our Servite Order. However, this Centenary is important because we are celebrating our presence in the U.K. History reveals to us 'the great things God has done for us' through the lives of our many Sisters, Brothers, SSI members, Friends and Families. We enter this 150th year filled with gratitude to the early Servite Missionaries. May we continue to create something new in the future as we stand beneath the countless crosses of our world today.

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Our Lady, and the Seven Holy Founders, through their intercession, bring fruitfulness to our service of the Order, the Church and the world, today, tomorrow and forever.

Union de prière,

Michelle Reilly osm

1 The Early Years

On 11 October 1864 two friars arrived at St Wilfrid's Convent in Cale Street, Chelsea. They were not the first Servites to visit Britain. On 14 March 1530, Henry VIII of England had proposed Dionisio Laurerio the Servite Procurator General then Prior General and, later Cardinal (1539) as his penitentiary-minister to Pope Clement VII, replacing Thomas Cranmer. Laurerio is reported to have been sent to London in 1533 to negotiate diplomatically in the King's matrimonial matters. Then in 1536 he was named as Nuncio to James V of Scotland to consult on the ensuing Council of Trent. It is believed that he met King James in Paris in 1537. Two hundred years later, in the eighteenth century Attilio Ariosti OSM had lived and died in London; a friend of Handel, he had spent his time concentrating on his musical career. The firm intention of Fr. Philip Bosio and Fr. Augustine Morini however, was that they should establish a Servite community, the first outside mainland Europe. This they did but not without difficulties that made that outcome uncertain at times.

St. Wilfrid's Convent was the then home of a new French congregation; Congregation of the Sisters of the Compassion. Their founder Abbé Chantome, had advised the newly formed congregation to seek refuge in England. Once in London they had come under the influence of the Oratorians, especially Fr. Frederick Faber. Fr. Faber had just written '*The Foot of the Cross*' in which he admitted to being a Servite Tertiary. Through a series of meetings and coincidences, which today we might want to call providential guidance, these sisters applied for aggregation to the Servite Order. This was very much due to the persistence of Mother Philomena and Sister Antonia, one French and the other English, but with a common mind and purpose to become Servites. Sr. Antonia's parents Mr. and Mrs. Loughnan lived in Rome and Mrs. Loughnan went to the administrator of San Marcello, Fr. Bosio for spiritual guidance. As a result of these connections they were able to win the favour of Fr. General who agreed to the friars going to England.

After presenting their credentials to the Archbishop of Westminster, Nicholas Wiseman, they settled down in a rented house 4 Stewart's Grove, Chelsea. Here they remained until the middle of 1867.

It was here that they received their first reinforcements with the arrival of Frs. Antoninus Appolloni and Philip Oppi.

During this time there was much investigating and many requests to come here and go there but the next move was into the area that was to become the Servite Parish. It was during February and March of 1867 that it was resolved that the Servites should be given the responsibility for a new parish so that they could relieve the Oratorians of the chaplaincy to St. George's workhouse. Because of this new responsibility another move ensued and the four friars were able to obtain a lease to a property at 78 Park Walk. Two rooms on the ground floor were adapted and became a chapel that could accommodate 30 people. The first Mass here was celebrated on 20 July 1867.

Fourteen months later they were on the move again, although not very far, to 21 Victoria Grove, (now Netherton Grove). With some adaptations of the existing buildings they were able to create a temporary church that would hold 300 people and this was to serve them for the next five years. Later that year Fr. Luigi Mazzochetti joined the four friars already in Victoria Grove.

Almost two years later, in May 1870 there were more arrivals Frs. Piritheus Simoni, Andrew Ventura and Br. Joseph Camera. Then in July of that year Frs. Austin Morini, and Andrew Ventura along with Br. Joseph Camera left for the United States or Doty Island in Wisconsin to be exact and this proved to be the beginning of a permanent foundation in the United States.

As far as the London Community was concerned the founder member Fr. Austin Morini had left but had been replaced by Fr. Piritheus Simoni.

Two years later in 1872 another landmark was reached; the establishment of a novitiate on the top floor of 21 Victoria Grove. Although there was a fair turn-over of arrivals, followed by departures quite early on two of the names that appear and indeed persevere, are Fr. Alphonsus Coventry and Philip Price.

The following year the Guardians of St George's Vestry (Workhouse) were anxious to extend their building and rescinded the lease by whose grace the Servites were living in Victoria Grove. This involved a compensation claim and was famous in that Fr. Philip Bosio contested the settlement that was offered and earned another thirty per cent.

The withdrawal of the lease meant that the Servite Community had to find another new home. Fr. John Bowden of the Oratory informed Fr. Bosio that there was a property on the north side of Fulham Road, Heckfield Lodge. The asking price was £4,200 which Fr. Bosio regarded as prohibitive. But Fr. Appolloni's reaction was quite the opposite and he saw this as a real moment of opportunity and urged his older confrere to reconsider the situation. The reconsidering meant finding the money and also paying off the debt of £1000 that related to Victoria Grove. At first this proved difficult and disheartening and almost in despair he wrote to "a pious benefactress" explaining the work, hopes of the Order in England and how all was in jeopardy, unless he could raise the debt of a thousand pounds and begin to look at the purchase fee of £4,200.

The response was beyond his wildest dreams and the good lady covered the whole figure and the purchase price for Heckfield Lodge. In her humility she preferred to remain anonymous and so one of the great patrons of the Order in England is lost to historical record.

It was over the summer months of 1873 that the legal and financial papers were completed and 264 Fulham Road became Servite property. On 9 October of that year it is recorded in the Community diary that Joseph Aloysius Hansom (who also gave his name to the horse-drawn cab) was engaged as the architect for the new church. He had just recently completed three churches, one in Manchester for the Jesuits, one in Boulogne and another in Arundel (now the Cathedral of Arundel and Brighton) for the Duke of Norfolk but this was to be his first church in London.

During November 1873 work was begun on Heckfield Lodge to adapt it as a Priory, the first of many such adaptations.

1874 Proved to be a year of great activity and excitement. On 27 January the community took up residence in the new Priory with a room adapted as a 'house chapel' for community prayers. On 29 April the ground was marked out for the new church and the first sods were turned on 25 March, feast of the Annunciation. Building actually began on the 1 May. Fr. Prytheus Simoni writes to Fr. Augustine Morini (now in the US) that the church will be 150 feet long, 59 feet wide and 60 feet high. On 19 June Archbishop Manning was present to lay the foundation stone.

Also during this time there were moves to open a second community and one of the options that was explored was to have a formation community in Fordingbridge in Hampshire, the village in which Alphonse Coventry's family lived. It was from here in February 1875 that Fr. Bosio wrote to Fr. Austin Morini lamenting that the original estimate for the construction of the Church which was set at £5,000 had now risen to £9,000.

As well as the construction of the church the Priory was extended with a three storey block built out into the front garden.

Then on the 19 September 1875, the third Sunday of the month and the traditional day for celebrating the Patronal feast of our Lady of Sorrows, the church was solemnly opened and blessed. This was presided by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Henry Manning and the solemn Mass was sung by the Bishop of Southwark, Mgr. James Danell.

The following year Fr Simoni began his work of painting the lives of the Founders on the panels at the back of the side altar dedicated to them, although due to the state of his health this took almost 2 years. These have been beautifully and lovingly restored in the renovation of 2010/12.

Personalities from the 150 years



Philip Bosio 1817-1886. Founder of the London Priory on the Fulham Road and first Prior and Parish Priest when the Church was built 1874-5. Served in London 1864-1877.



Austin Morini 1826-1909. Co-founder with Philip Bosio of the London Community. He served in London 1864-1870. In 1870 he was leader of the group that made the first USA foundation and remained there until 1888.



Pyritheus Simoni 1842-1895 Arrived in London 1865. He painted the panels on the Founder's altar in the London Church and also behind the high altar in the original Bognor Church.



Antonine Appollini 1838-1900 Second Prior of the London Community and parish priest 1877-1895. Besides completing the church and extending the Priory in London he also oversaw the foundations in Bognor and Begbroke. The Swynnerton Pietá is his monument.



John Aloysius Hansom 1803-1882 A prolific English architect working principally in the Gothic Revival style. He invented the Hansom cab. Architect for the Servite Churches in London and in Bognor Regis.



Alphonsus Coventry 1853-1925. Entered the Servites in London in 1872 as one of the first English novices. Commissary Provincial 1899-1908 and 1912-1914. Parish Priest in London 1887-1893 and Prior 1899-1905.



Peregrine Stagni 1859-1918. Arrived in London 1875, ordained in Hammersmith 1881. Novice Master in Bognor 1881-1883. Prior General 1901-1907. Archbishop of Aquila 1907. Apostolic Delegate to Canada and Newfoundland 1910-1917



Austin Moore 1872-1939. Served in London 1908-1914 and 1922-1926 as Prior & Parish Priest. 1914-1922 as Prior Provincial. The first English and 96th Prior General 1926-1932 who commissioned building of San Alexis College in Rome. Returned to London 1932-1939 and was Prior & Parish Priest 1934-1936.



Joachim McCarthy 1883-1964. Served in London 1922-1937 and from 1949-1959. The second Prior Provincial of the English Province 1922-1937. During his time in office the foundation was made in Kersal, Salford.



Francis McEnerney 1896-1983. Served in London 1937-1959 and 1966-1983. The third Prior Provincial 1937-1949 and Parish Priest 1952-1958. During his time as Provincial just after World War II a new student house was acquired in Newbury. Consulter General (Rome) 1959-1965.

Pictures taken through the years at Chapters and gatherings



Picture at St Marys, London c 1880

Front Row L-R Alphonsus Coventry, Peregrine Stagni, Pyritheus Simoni, Antoninus Appolloni (sitting)
Aloysius Mazzochetti, Philip Oppi, Augustine Melani, Amadeus Ceccherini.

Back Row L-R Alexis Lépicier, Thomas Perrin, Andrew, Charles, fr May, Patrick Mullarkey, John-Angelo Price,



Inaugural English Province Chapter 23 June 1914

St Mary's Priory, London

Back Row L-R Alexis Hallé, Peter Poirel, Thomas Perrin, Bernard Schofield, Joachim McCarthy, Hugh Richards, Aloysius Bouchier, Benedict Howard, Peter Riordan, P Sanders.

Front Row L-R Leo Grati, Anthony Mills, Austin Moore (Prior Provincial), Alexis Lépicier (Prior General), Alphonsus Coventry, P Bernardi (General Secretary), Augustine Brugnoli.

The opening of the Church was obviously a great achievement, but the way forward was not easy. Besides Fr. Simoni, Fr. Oppi was also in poor health and in January 1876 we find Fr. Bosio writing '*For myself, I have become much older in the past twelve months. I believe I have only a few years more to live.*' In fact he had another ten years to live but his time in London was beginning to run out and within two years he had effectively handed over the reins to Fr. Antonine Appolloni. This hand over was officially confirmed in September 1877.

In 1876 there was the ordination of Fr. Alphonsus Coventry along with Fr. Ledoux, a French diocesan priest who had applied to join the Order and made his novitiate in London. He later wrote the Lives of the Seven Founders and sought to emulate them by making a foundation in Vaucoulers in France. In 1878 the Mount Senario Poor School was transferred to Winterton Place, Park Walk, where it remained, and developed into the Parish School until severely damaged, beyond repair, by bombing during World War II.

On the 27 February of 1879 Fr. Philip Oppi died in Beckenham, the first of the founding friars to die in England and he is the first to be buried in the Servite plot in St Thomas of Canterbury in Fulham. In the December of 1879 Fr. Augustine Brugnoli arrived in London, coming from Florence. At the end of the same month a Nottingham priest arrived at Fulham Road and began his novitiate in February of the following year; he was Fr. James Philip Herbert. He proved to be a very fine preacher.

The 1880's are, among other things, notable for the second foundation in Bognor Regis in Sussex. The invitation came from the Rev. James Darnell, Bishop of Southwark, who had sung the Mass at the opening of the church in Fulham Road in 1875. This invitation is dated March 1880 and by November of that year the negotiations were in full swing so that by 8 March 1881 Fr. Appolloni was in pursuit of a piece of land for a Priory and Church. Fr. Alphonsus Coventry was appointed as the first superior and a temporary chapel was opened in Argyle Circus, above a general store.

Due to the generosity of Miss Susan Walker of London a start was made on the new Church and the foundation stone was laid on 26 October 1881. This was also the year that Peregrine Stagni was ordained. He came to London in 1875 as a student but had to return to Italy for his national service. After his ordination in Hammersmith he was sent to join the new Community in Bognor and acted as novice master until being recalled to Rome again for further studies and teaching at the Propaganda College.

It was at this time that the Rev Kegan Paul arrives on the scene, a well-known Anglican clergyman who had been influenced by the writings of Cardinal Newman and wished to emulate his move into the Catholic Church. It was thus that he turned to Fr. Appolloni for instruction and was accordingly received into the Church at the Servite Church on 12 August 1890, a fact which he records in his book '*Memories*'. He thus lost his living and had to find alternative employment, which he did by founding the publishing house known today as Routledge Kegan-Paul. He also made a gift to the Church in thanksgiving which can be found in the Narthex next to the pieta; the shrine of the Holy Face.

The following year Kegan-Paul was walking past the church along with his friend Charles Robertson, who at the young age of 33 was already a successful business man. It was a Friday evening and Kegan-Paul invited Charles Robertson into the Church for the evening service with Benediction and sermon given by Fr. Peregrine Stagni. Fr. Stagni had returned from Rome for another stint in England and was this time stationed in London. Through the wisdom and eloquence of Fr. Stagni or the grace of God or both the effect was definite and lasting and within a few months Charles Robertson was under instruction with Fr. Stagni and was received into the Church on 19 October 1891. His gratitude knew no bounds and his first act of generosity was to suggest that a covered entrance be provided for the church. Accordingly plans were soon in place and work began. It was finished and in use by 29 July 1894 and cost £14,000.

A most generous ‘thank you’ and indeed Charles Robertson was later to help with the purchase and adaptation of Begbroke Manor which became St. Philips Priory, the third foundation in 1896. His patron saint was Charles Borromeo and that is why you will find this saint, in his cardinal red, depicted in the stained glass windows of the church in Fulham Road.

Meanwhile Archbishop Peregrine Stagni had again been recalled to Rome to teach at the Propaganda College and become Procurator General with in the Order. In 1901 he was elected as the 92nd Prior General and in this capacity was General Secretary to the Marian Congress of 1905. Again his abilities were on display in an ever wider context and after his term as Prior General he was raised to rank of Archbishop and sent to Canada as Apostolic Delegate in 1910. Once established in Canada he sent for his books in English that were still in the London Priory. Accordingly they were sent to Southampton ready for despatch across the Atlantic and they were duly loaded onto the Titanic! Archbishop Stagni laments their loss in letters contained in the Servite archive in Rome.

Another illustrious figure in our story at this time was Alexis Lépicier. He arrived at Fulham Road in 1878, from his native Vaucouleurs, in France at the tender age of 14. After his ordination in 1885 he went to Rome for further studies, but was back in England by 1890 and appointed Novice Master in Bognor. After little more than a year he was recalled to Rome as professor of theology at the Propaganda College, and was in effect lost to the Servites in England.

Besides his teaching he found time to write many books and articles on Marian and related themes. In 1913 he was elected the 94th Prior General and it was in this capacity that he was present for the first Provincial Chapter in London in 1914 that saw the establishment of the English Province. After his time as Prior General he was consecrated a Bishop and later a Cardinal with special responsibility in the Congregation for Religious.

In 1896 Fr. Appolloni relinquished his position as Prior and Parish Priest in London and became the first commissary Provincial, a degree of autonomy for the English region that today would be known as a Vicariate. It was in this capacity as Commissary Provincial that he sought to establish a dedicated student community and this he did with the generous aid of Mr. Charles Robertson. The Jacobean Manor House in Begbroke, five miles north of Oxford was bought and extended with a new wing and chapel, in the same Cotswold stone and Stonesfield slate of the original house.

In 1898 Fr. Appolloni’s health began to fail and he was succeeded as Provincial by Fr. Alphonsus Coventry. On 30 May 1900 Fr. Antonine Appolloni breathed his last after being at the helm of the English foundation for 25 years. He is buried in St. Thomas’ cemetery, Fulham and his lasting memorial is the beautiful Joseph Swynnerton carving of the Pietà in the Narthex of the Fulham Road Church, and the tribute to him written below the sculpture.

At the opening of the Bognor Church on 16 August 1882, one of the confirmation candidates was Cyril Moore, a young boy of ten. Five years later he came to Fulham Road to join the Order. During these early years of the new century he along with Fr. Alphonsus Coventry, John-Angelo Price and Patrick Mullarkey were the more experienced hands guiding a fresh batch of young men namely Leo Graty, the Mills brothers Anthony and Sebastian, Philip O'Neill and Joachim McCarthy who laid the foundations for the creation of a new Province.

Augustine, or as he was more affectionately known Austin, returned to London in 1907 after spending his early priestly years in Chicago and then Begbroke. It was here that he began to engage in his life-long passion of care for the young and their schooling. Within a few years he had cleared the considerable debt of £5,000 on the existing school.



Alexis Mullens 1912-1983. Served in London 1941-1950, 1958-1983. Prior & Parish Priest 1958-1961 and 1967-1970. The first Prior and Parish Priest of the new foundation in Dundee, Scotland. Prior Provincial 1961-1967.



Alexis Lepicier 1863-1936. Born in France and studied in London, France & Bognor 1878- 1885. Ordained in London in 1985 and served there 1886-1890. Prior General (Rome) 1913-1920. Raised to Cardinal (Rome) in 1927



Charles Cunningham 1911-1987. Served in London 1941-1946 and 1967-1984. Prior Provincial 1967-1970. He completed the building of the Bognor Church in 1956 and was then invited to take charge in Kersal where he built the new brick church June 1964 replacing the temporary structure, now the St Benedict's Parish Centre.



Charles Robertson 1857-1944 Was instructed and received into the Church by Peregrine Stagni. As a thank you offering he funded the building of the colonnade and the narthex in the London church and then went onto be a generous benefactor in the purchase of St Philips Priory, Begbroke.



Joan Bartlett OBE DSG 1911-2002. Co-foundress of The Servite Secular Institute in London with Gerard Corr. She also opened Servite House in the Boltons which developed in to Servite Houses, housing trust, now renamed Viridian.



Andrew Walls b.1933. Served in London 1963-1964. Prior Provincial 1970-1976 (Begbroke) and 1982-1983 (Kersal) Presided over the implementation of the new and revised Constitutions and oversaw the move of the enclosed nuns from Bognor to Begbroke



Peter Conniffe b.1939. Served in London 1965. Prior Provincial 1976 – 1982 (Kersal) Served as Chairman of Servite Houses from 1982 for over 20 years both in London and Scotland and was awarded the OBE for his services to housing.



Paul Addison b. 1941. Served in London 1970-1976, 1979-1980, 1986-1988, 1991-1994, 2002-2007 and 2010-2012. Prior 1973-1976, 1979-1980, 2003-2006 and 2010-2012. General Councillor (Rome) 1983-1986. Student Master (London) 2002-2007. Prior Provincial 1991-1994



Margaret Milnes-Walker 1903-2000 Second member of the Institute and Joan Bartlett's personal assistant. Margaret spoke Portuguese and facilitated the Institute's expansion into South America.

This was all good training for his next eventful step when he was elected the first Prior Provincial of the new English Province, established in 1914. A memorable moment which was launched at the first Provincial Chapter held in London at which the Prior General, a former ‘London’ novice Fr. Alexis Lépicier, presided and said, “*I hope this event will be the starting point of new life and vigour for the Province. With three older communities already firmly established... a fourth one is being started in the North we have reason for thanking God for all his mercies towards us’.*

2 The Congregation of Servants of Mary (London) also known as Servite Sisters

Where it all began: 1840

Fr. Nicholas Chantôme was a young priest with a vision. In 1840 aged 30 years he was appointed parish priest in Cuves, he soon realised that the small group of young women who were persuaded to teach in his school for girls (itself a progressive idea) could become part of his plan to found a religious missionary society of priests, brothers and sisters, who would spread the Good News of Jesus Christ across the world. The Bishop of Langres, Mgr. Parisis, was reluctant initially to approve the teachers as a religious community. In the summer of 1842, having established a small school, Fr. Chantôme resigned as parish priest and went to Paris to lay the foundations of his clerical society. He returned to visit regularly and promoted vocations for the Cuves group as he travelled through France. Marie Guyot emerged as the leader of the little ‘community’. When Fr. Claude Brullon became parish priest at Cuves, he began to prepare them for a form of religious life.

The Congregation, Sisters of Calvary, consecrated to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, formally came into existence on **10 June 1845**, when Bishop Parisis gave the religious habit to three Sisters, with a Rule based on the rule of the Servites, probably that of the Tertiaries.

Fr. Chantôme remained the Ecclesiastical Superior of the Congregation, Fr. Brullon its Director and Sister Marie Guyot its Superior. The Congregation was diocesan. At the end of the novitiate year, all three novices decided separately not to request to make vows, but to be received as Servite Tertiaries. However, they were still receiving postulants sent by Fr. Chantôme.

In **1847** Fr. Brullon left Cuves to travel with Fr. Chantôme to Rome. Fr. Philpin de Rivière became parish priest and the Ecclesiastical Superior for the Congregation with complete control over its organisation. He continued in this role until 1854, when he followed the Sisters to London and joined the London Oratory, directed by Fr. William Faber.

On **2 June 1849**, Sister Marie Guyot died of tuberculosis at Cuves. The school failed following Fr. Chantôme’s disgrace. The Bishop ordered a canonical visitation in 1850.

In the spring of **1851**, two Sisters went to the Oratorian parish, London, to learn English, with the hope of going to the foreign missions. Four more came, and by 1852, twenty of the Sisters were reunited in London, the remainder having joined other Congregations in France, or returned home. From **1854** Fr. Faber was the Ecclesiastical Superior and the life of the Sisters changed totally.

Father Faber was an Oratorian and the Oratorians organised their parish well he used the Sisters to evangelise his poor, overcrowded flock, crammed into some of the worst of the Victorian slums in London. After 2 years of teaching in the Ragged School, in January 1854, Sr. Philomena Morel (aged 28) was almost dying of severe malnutrition and other inflammatory conditions.

Fr. Faber revised the Sisters’ Constitutions, gave the Congregation a new name, Sisters of the Compassion of Our Lady, and those Sisters who were ready made their First Vows on **21 November 1854**. The Congregation became increasingly associated with the diverse works of the Oratory and began to attract English speaking postulants. By **1861** there were 26 professed Sisters, plus probably 10 in formation, living in two rented properties and two convents, the Mother House in Bond Street and Arundel. However, all was not peaceful in the community. Sr. Marie du Sacré Coeur (Euphrasie Barbier) left the Congregation in 1861 to found the Congregation of Our Lady of the Missions. Then the Superior since 1848, Mother Jean Vannier, resigned her office. Other Sisters were unsettled and considering leaving the Congregation. Fr. Faber called the Sisters together to elect a superior.

After 16 years the Congregation was on the verge of disintegration. Every aspect of their life changed — their ideal to go the foreign missions, their Rule of Life, prayer structure, apostolates, habit, country and language with its customs and environment. They had had four different priests as Ecclesiastical Superiors.

When in **1861** Sr. Philomena Morel was elected superior there was a need to re-establish unity within the congregation and the necessity of taking measures to assist the sisters to recapture the spirit which the Congregation had known in Cuves. To do this she withdrew the novices and young professed from the active apostolate to complete their formation and strengthened the spirit of prayer within the Community.

This meant reviewing the apostolate and deciding which works could best be given up. Once again it was questioned whether the Congregation could survive or have to amalgamate with another group. The sisters were very clear on the fact that they were "Servites" and wished to remain true to the inspiration and spirit of Marie Guyot and the early community at Cuves.

Once elected, Mother M. Philomena Morel was determined to use her authority to reorganize the Congregation's structures for daily living more in keeping with the ideals of Cuves. As Fr. Faber's health deteriorated, he placed the Congregation into Cardinal Wiseman's hands. He respected the Sister's wishes, but suggested a merger with the Dominican Sisters or the Daughters of Wisdom.

Our sisters rejected the idea, and when Fr. Faber died in 1863, Mother M. Philomena decided with the agreement of the Sisters to go to Rome and seek out the Servite Father General. The Cardinal supported the Sisters' request to join the Servite Order. Mother M Philomena left with Sr. M Antonia Loughnan, who had relatives in Rome, on January 23 1864. Fr. Mura, the Prior General, was an experienced Canon Lawyer and did everything he could to expedite the request of the Sisters to become an apostolic Congregation of Servite Sisters. In 1864, all consecrated Servite women were enclosed nuns. **On 23 April, 1864**, Pope Pius IX informed the Sisters at San Marcello that their request has been granted. Back in London, on June 23, twenty four Sisters made perpetual vows as Servite Sisters. Again, the name of the Congregation was changed to MANTELLATE OF THE THIRD ORDER OF SERVANTS OF MARY. The Constitutions were revised and two Servite Friars came on the mission to London.

History since the aggregation to the Servite Order

From the time of the Aggregation of the Congregation of the Third Order of the Servants of Mary in 1864 the principal apostolates were now clearly their "own" and the sisters had their own spirituality confirmed by Servite Friars already in England to help them to learn more authentically about being Servite. The sisters were living in West Grinstead in difficult circumstances and also some in Arundel.

In 1871 the first foundation was made in USA which did not continue and another was made in 1893. The sisters returned to France in 1897.

It was with the acquisition in 1871 of its first Mother House, St. Mary's in North London, that the Congregation began to establish itself on a firm foundation. Convents were set up in England and in other countries.

The first foundation in USA in 1893 developed the USA Province now known as the USA Community. The foundation in France in 1897 led to the development of the Franco/ Belgian Province which later included Canada and more recently the Congo. This is now known as the Franco / Belgian / Canadian/ Congo Community. A group of Servite Sisters in Austria amalgamated with our Congregation in 1994 and were the direct descendants of a mission to Gratzen in 1893. Another group of Servite Sisters in Jolimont amalgamated with our Congregation in 1995. A mission was founded from England in 1952 to Jamaica. These three regions now come under the Generalate.

The foundations in England were: Dorking 1887; Stratton-on-the-Fosse 1897; Stamford Hill, London 1904; Bognor Regis, 1923; Chelmsford 1927; Kings Lynn 1930; Begbroke 1959; and Bognor Regis 1959. In 1967 the Sisters of Compassion, a Servite Congregation, amalgamated with our Congregation and had communities in Lancashire and Birmingham.

In 1967 a foundation was made in Wales and later in Scotland, Ireland, and Sheffield and at a naval base in Gosport.

In the 1960's specialisation in professional training of sisters and diversification of ministries was encouraged. This broke the mould of teaching communities within our own schools. The first changes to the Constitutions and customs were initiated. This opened the way for great changes which followed in the wake of the Second Vatican Council of 1964. At the end of the 1960's a serious and thorough process of renewal had begun which culminated in the final approval of the new Constitutions in 1985. These were to open up a new international dimension of our charism as we came to realise that cultural diversity was not an obstacle but a truly enriching dimension if unity in diversity could become a reality.



Provincial Chapter of the English Province May 1964

Our Lady's Priory, Newbury

Back Row L-R Ignatius McCafferty, Bernard O'Hanlon, Francis Donaghey, Paul Knowles, Patrick O'Connell, Ambrose Castleton, John Knowles, Basil Prior, Camillus (Andrew) Walls, Charles Cunningham, Anselm Richardson, Peregrine Balwin.

Front Row L-R Francis Mildner, Alexis Mullens (Prior Provincial), Alphonse Montá (Prior General), Francis McEnery, Vincent Naughton.



International Gathering of the Servite Secular Institute c 1970

In England

Back Row L-R Joan Bartlett, Audrey Butler, Barbara Brosnan, Molly McRae, Vyvienne Frost, Fr Gerard Corr

Front Row L-R Piera Icardi, Helga Schmidt, Fr Vernazio Ramasso

Sisters in Cuves in 1850 had wanted to work in Africa. The journey from France to England to learn English finally took our sisters to America, Austria, Belgium, Jamaica, Canada, Guatemala, Peru, Wales, Scotland and Ireland en route to Africa where in the Congo we now have the latest signs of new life in our Congregation. Today many of the original houses in the UK Community have closed and now we live in mainly small groups with some sisters living singly and meeting up often to support each other and to build community. We currently do not have direct responsibility for any schools. Sisters work in all areas of parishes with visiting the sick, elderly and lonely together with adult and child faith education, discussion groups, liturgy, retreat giving and counselling. They also work as school chaplains, on governing bodies of schools and charitable trusts, in therapy work with troubled children, in group facilitation, in teaching English to immigrants and on marriage tribunals; thus they carry on the mission of compassion entrusted to the Congregation which now also includes amongst others ministry to Travellers, in Hospitals, to Homeless and vulnerable women.

The mission of our Congregation has been expressed in various ways since the time of Marie Guyot and her companions in 1845. Then they were asked to open a school for girls who 'could not pay' and later there was a request to 'go to the missions'. In 1864 this was adapted to 'the active life of the apostolate in looking to St Juliana Falconieri's apostolic activities in caring for the sick and needy'.

When the New Constitutions were written in 1985 we developed the Marian aspect of this caring. 'In company with Mary standing at the foot of the cross, we wish to be present especially to the suffering, the poor, the oppressed, that they may experience the hope and peace which radiates from the cross. We put ourselves and our diverse gifts at the service of the Church's mission to foster love and unity among all people'. (Constitutions) 'In carrying out our mission, we recognise and respond to the needs of the Church by observing the signs of the times and by exploring possibilities of collaboration with other Servite groups'. (Directives) In a statement written in 1998 this was given fresh expression:

'As Servite Women, we seek to live reflectively in the attitude of Mary, standing alongside those who suffer in any way. Responding to the needs of today's world, we try to create and nurture Christ-centred community.'

As we continue to re-evaluate this mission of compassionate presence the General Chapter of 2009 described it in this way: 'to live and serve in ways that cultivate unity and non-violence both within our community and in our world; to live Mary's contemplative stance in a way that responds to the world's search for spirituality and meaning; to be a prophetic voice in the world and in the Church by promoting gospel values through various forms of education. Although the ways of expressing the mission of the Congregation have developed and evolved over the years it remains the same, that is, to serve those in any kind of need with compassion.'

3 The Next Thirty Years

When the Prior General, Alexis Lépicier mentions a new community in the North this was Todmorden a small mill town on the Lancashire Yorkshire border. New beginnings are never easy and this proved more difficult than most with the new Province like the rest of the country becoming embroiled in the Great War.

Several of the young priests volunteered for chaplain's duties. Fr. Aloysius Bouchier can be seen in the historic group gathered at the London Priory for the first Provincial Chapter and launch of the English Province. He signed up to be a military chaplain and was attached to the Kings own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He was wounded in battle and was awarded the Military Cross. Partly because of his injuries he found it difficult to settle back into community life and in 1929 joined the Plymouth Diocese where he was incardinated.

The precedent for serving as a chaplain to the military had been set by Fr. Edmund Cossins, who received both a Queen's and King's South Africa medal. This suggests two tours of duty before 1902 and then again afterwards when Edward VII was on the throne.

Perhaps the devotion to our Lady of Sorrows was a motivation for offering to be close those who suffer or are in mortal danger.

Fr. Philip O'Neill also received a citation and Military Cross as a result of his time with the Kings own Yorkshire Light Infantry. Others who served with the forces were Philip Northcote and Bernard Schofield. Perhaps because of his experience in France Bernard did not live to any great age and died September 1927 at the age of only 42. But to his credit was his appointment as first Parish Priest of the new Servite foundation in Kersal, Salford, where he oversaw the construction of the temporary church and then having succeeded Fr. Coventry in Bognor he erected the first elementary school.

Frs. Benedict Howard, Ambrose McGrath, Hugh Richards and Anselm Ross all volunteered at some point to be army chaplains while Fr. Andrew Kelly was a chaplain to the navy. For many who saw action during the war settling back into 'ordinary' life and especially life in community, proved difficult for our Servite brothers. Four of them: Aloysius Bouchier, Edmund Cossins, Philip Northcote and Hugh Richards all left the Order and were incardinated into different diocese.

Bognor Regis

As has been hinted at when the Servites first came to Bognor in 1881 there was only a handful of Catholics in the town. The permanent Church and Priory were opened 1882 although the design of Joseph Hansom for the church was not fully realised and remained in a truncated form until the 1950s. Along with Miss Susan Walker's donation of sufficient funds to build the Priory and the greater part of the church there was also a promise that at a later date she would supply the funds to finish the church but was called to God before her promise was fulfilled.

Seven years later in 1888, courtesy of some more generous and devoted ladies Miss Mary and Miss Agnes Waller a convent for the enclosed Servite Sister was built and endowed. Their convent was at Bersted and with a public chapel attached became an extra place of worship for the growing Catholic population of Bognor.

One of the priorities of the new Bognor parish was a school and after several years in a temporary site the Prior Fr Bernard Schofield acquired the site in Glamis Road in 1925 and began the new buildings.

In 1890 Alexis Lepicier was the novice master in Bognor before he was called to Rome but in 1932 he agreed to return for the fiftieth anniversary of the Community's foundation.

By then he had been raised to the rank of Cardinal and was Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious. The celebrations lasted for a whole week and included all the parish, the Servite enclosed nuns at Bersted and the Mantellate sisters who were by then a significant part of Servite life in Bognor.

Todmorden

In 1914, the new Bishop of Salford the Very Reverend L.C. Carsartelli was not happy about the pastoral arrangements in the Parish of Todmorden on the Lancashire, Yorkshire borders and through his friendship with Fr. Joachim McCarthy OSM approached the Servite Order with the request that the parish might be taken over by the Servites. Fr. Austin Moore, then Servite Provincial, agreed to the request and by October 1922 Fr. Joachim McCarthy OSM was appointed. In this virile young 31 year old priest the Catholics of the town found a worthy champion for their cause. His vigorous preaching soon made an impact on the Catholic community and he became a well-known figure. His vivid personality made itself felt far beyond the limits of his growing congregation. He was much in demand as a preacher and missionary in the surrounding parishes and through his determined efforts the Catholic community was becoming an integral part of life of the town and borough. While parish priest, Fr. McCarthy was ably assisted by Fr. Benedict Howard from 1915 to 1920, Fr. Francis McEnerney from 1921 to 1922 and Fr. Anselm Ross from 1915 to 1925, who became the third Prior and Parish Priest when in 1922 Fr. Joachim McCarthy OSM moved to London as the newly elected second Servite Prior Provincial.

The School and Chapel building in Ridge Street was condemned by the Board of Education as a school and placed on the blacklist. The building which had provided good service for almost fifty years was now too small to accommodate the number of children of school age which numbered over one hundred. The overcrowding was temporarily relieved by the Education authorities permitting the use of the upper portion to be used, on weekdays, as a school room. Efforts were made by the Priors Fr. Joachim McCarthy OSM and Fr. Anselm Ross OSM to raise the necessary funds to build a new school but the after effects of the First World War, particularly the depression in the cotton trade, delayed plans until building operations commenced on the Priory site in Wellington Road, in February 1925.



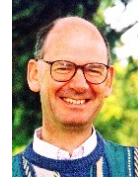
Vincent Coyne b. 1942. Served in Kersal, Todmorden, Bognor, Marley Grange, Dundee and London. Prior and Parish Priest: (Bognor) 1979-1985, (Kersal) 1997-2001 and (Dundee) 2003-2012. Prior Provincial (Kersal) 1985-1991.



Bernard Thorne b. 1939. Served in the Irish Vicariate 1965-2000. Missionary in South Africa 1965-1985. Prior and Parish Priest (Blakestown) 1986-1996. Vicar Provincial (Marley Grange) 1996-2000. Parish Priest (Marley Grange) 2000-2008. Prior Provincial 2010-2014.



Patrick Ryall b. 1945. Served in London 1972-1985 and 1997-present; Begbroke 1985-1994; Rome (San Alesio College) 1994-1997. Parish Priest: (London) 1976-1985 and 1997-2001. Prior: (London) 1982-1985, 1997-2001 and 2011-present; (Begbroke) 1985-1991. Prior Provincial of the newly created Province of the Isles 2000-2009.



Patrick Carroll 1952-2010. Served in the Irish Vicariate 1980-2000. Lecturer (Milltown Institute, Dublin) 1982-1992. Parish Priest (Rathfarnham) 1992-1995. General Councillor (Rome) 1995-2007. Prior Provincial (London) 2009-2010.



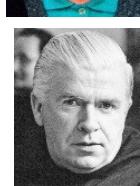
Colum McDonnell b.1932. Served in the Irish Vicariate 1957-2000. Vicar Provincial 1974-1975 and 1983-1992. Prior (Benburb) 1977-1980. Parish Priest (Blakestown) 1980-1983.



Colm McGlynn b.1957. Served in the Irish Vicariate 1988-2000. Parish Priest: Dundee 2001-2003 and Marley 2007-2012. Prior: Marley 2009-2012 and Benburb 2012-2014. Prior Provincial (Benburb) 2014-present.



Tim Flynn b.1942. Prior and student master in the Servite Priory, Rathfanham 1980-1992. Served on the first Irish Vicarial Council and then in 1992 was elected Vicar Provincial and served until1998. He was also elected onto the first Council of the Province of the Isles 2000-2003. Prior (Kiltipper) 2007-2014.



Eoin O'Malley b.1935. Served in the Irish Vicariate 1960-2000. First Vicar Provincial of the Irish Vicariate (Ramley Close, Dublin) 1971-1974.



James Keane 1901-1975. As Consulter General he founded the Servite Priory in Benburb in 1947. First Prior of Benburb Priory 1948-1950. He went onto help found the Order in Australia.



Peter Rookey b.c1916. Arrived in Benburb in 1948 to helped James Keane establish a Servite presence in Ireland. Second Prior of Benburb Priory 1950-1953. Began the healing ministry and blessing with the relic of Servite saints, a tradition that continues to the present day.

The building of brick foundations, a wood and asbestos upper structure, with classroom partitions, lavatory accommodation and tarmacadam playgrounds cost in total £3,490. It was officially opened with 140 children on the registers in 1926. The debt on the new school was cleared by July 1927.

During the winter of 1929 the old Church became unfit for public services and Mass was said on Sundays in the new school. The foundation stone for the new church was blessed by the Prior Provincial the Very Reverend Joachim McCarthy OSM on 8 September 1928. The new church was completed at a cost of £4,000 and ready for occupation within six months. The Church was officially opened for public worship at a Solemn High mass sung by the celebrant Prior Provincial the Very Reverend Joachim McCarthy OSM on 7 April 1929. The Bishop of Salford Diocese the Rt. Rev. Thomas Henshaw assisted at the mass and preached the sermon.

It was during Fr. Oswald Hagan's term of office (1925 to 1937) that the new church was built. He remained in Todmorden for over [18] years and during this time did much to consolidate the work of his predecessors. He concentrated much on youth activities taking a direct and personal interest in the well trained companies of cubs, Brownies, Girl guides and Boy Scouts that were formed and prospered in those active years. During his time Catholics became conscious of themselves and increasingly aware of their responsibilities.

The cotton trade boomed during the years that immediately followed World War 1. But the period of full employment did not last; the slump came and with it real poverty and hardship. At times the situation became desperate. During those difficult years Fr. Hagan was always at hand to advise and to counsel patience and trust in God. Quietly, unostentatiously he would give practical assistance whenever and wherever it was most needed, ably assisted by his assistant Fr. Augustine Cadd (1929 to 1931).

In 1937 Fr. Peregrine Baldwin (1937 to 1946) followed Fr. Hagan as Prior and Parish Priest. Owing to the blackout, petrol and food rationing attendance at Mass and Benediction meant a heroic effort on the part of the parishioners. Masses in those days were at 9.00 am and 11.00 am only.

The earlier church law of '*fasting from midnight*' was still in force and yet people would make their way often through rain and snow from outlying districts to fulfil their Sunday duties and receive the Eucharist.

Begbroke

As has been mentioned previously the Manor House at Begbroke was purchased by our great benefactor Charles Robertson who not only assisted in the purchase of the property but engaged Leonard Stokes of Westminster to design the extensions; more living space plus a lovely chapel with retro choir.

When finished in 1899 this was one of the few Catholic churches in Oxfordshire north of the City. In the early days the priests from the Community were able to supply some valuable pastoral assistance in the area.

On 14 June 1906 the first public procession of the Blessed Sacrament took place and this became a well-known and well attended devotion for many Catholics in the Oxford area for the next 60 years.

Perhaps as a result of the opening of the Priory in Todmorden two young students arrived from that part of the world in the Inter-war years to begin their studies. As we remember them today, Vincent Naughton from Hebdon Bridge and Gerard Corr from Clayton-le-Moors. They were joined in Begbroke by some contemporaries from London Alexis Mullens, Francis Mildner and Paul Johnson. All were to be significant in the story that evolved in the 1950s after the Second World War and in the years leading up to Vatican II.

These were just a few of the names and characters that passed through the Begbroke Priory in the 104 years that it remained in the care of the Servite Order. For the first half of the 20th Century it was the novitiate house but also served as the base for students receiving their education in other establishments, namely the Dominicans in Oxford, the Carmelites in Boars Hill and finally the Jesuits in Heythrop.

Kersal

As has been mentioned the first Provincial of the English Province was Austin Moore, who completed 8 years in office before handing over the reigns to Joachim McCarthy who presided over the inter-war years. Right at the beginning of his Provinciate in 1923 a second foundation was made in the Salford Diocese at Kersal, a short bus ride north of Manchester city centre.

The community was housed in a fine Victorian villa on the junction of Bury New Road and Cavendish Road. Soon they erected a temporary structure to serve as a church and within a short time a second chapel in Singleton Road in Lower Kersal. As well as a parish with two chapels the friars became chaplains to the Faithful Companions of Jesus in Sedgeley Park, where the sisters ran a girls college of education. Also within the parish were the Sisters of Nazareth Care Home and the Carmelite enclosed nuns in Vine Street.

Fr. Joachim McCarthy was very quickly entrusted with responsibility after returning from his studies and ordination in Rome in 1906. In 1911 he was asked to be Prior and novice master in Begbroke and then Prior and Parish priest in Bognor for two years before being entrusted with Prior and Parish Priest in Todmorden from its foundation in 1914 until he was elected the second Provincial of the Province in 1922. He was elected and re-elected to this office 5 times, such was his standing among his confreres. He had a great preaching gift and was tireless in honouring invitations to conduct retreats and missions.

Finally in 1937 he was able to step down from office and hand over to Fr. Francis McEnerney. He then moved back to Begbroke and his first love of responsibility for the students. Here he remained during the difficult years of the Second World War. Barely had the War receded than he contracted a serious illness from which he suffered for the next 18 years as an invalid, confined to a nursing home; an extraordinary end to a life that had been characterised by such energy, responsibility and grace.

It was during the War Years that a young woman Caryll Houselander came to frequent the Servite Church on the Fulham Road, and Maisie Ward in her biography mentions how she would often pray before the shrine to the Holy Face.

Also in Ward's book there is mention of her boarding in the 'little French convent in Olton.' A religious community that later merged with the Servite Sisters. Among Caryll's friends was a young Anglican woman whom Caryll introduced to Fr Gerard Corr; Miss Joan Bartlett. Within a matter of weeks Joan was not only under instruction but the seeds of a new expression of Servite life were being nurtured.

4 The Servite Secular Institute

Joan Bartlett the Foundress, was born in London on the 1 August 1911. In her teens she was a practising High Anglican, desiring to enter an Anglican convent, but was prevented from doing so by her family. During the Second World War she joined the Red Cross and became a Commandant of a Division, working during the day at the BBC and at night manning first aid posts.

In 1942 her good friend Caryll Houselander took her to the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows in the Fulham Road to meet Fr. Gerard Corr. At this meeting, to her own astonishment and Caryll's, she asked if she could be instructed in the Catholic Faith.

In 1945 Joan attended a meeting in Caxton Hall where Violet Markham spoke about the plight of elderly people who had been bombed out and had lost their homes and all their possessions, what was to become of them? In Joan's words, 'As I left Caxton Hall that afternoon the interior darkness received light. I knew I had to give up a secure job in European Broadcasting where I had known nothing but happiness, and become a wanderer without security'.

On 31 August 1945 Fr. Corr discussed with Joan her Hostel idea, he also wanted to start a home run mainly with Tertiaries. From this the Servite Houses that we know developed. In 1947 Fr. Corr was sent to Rome, by this time the house was up and running. It had been a difficult time getting the House ready to accept those in need. It had been occupied by WRENS and Joan had to get a derequisition order before anything could happen. This was obtained and the blankets and bed linen that had been assigned to her reclaimed, as the Wrens had thought it was theirs! Slowly the House took shape and people moved in to the sparsely furnished rooms.

Joan and helpers, worked hard caring for the residents, doing the cooking, cleaning etc. The idea that Joan should found a Lay Order was also in Fr. Corr's mind, they continued to work towards this foundation. It was at this time that Pope Pius XII promulgated *Provida Mater Ecclesia* where the Church recognised the desire of single people to live in the world while consecrating their lives to God by vows.

At this time Joan and one other person, Yvonne were running Servite House and living a dedicated life with the view to attracting others, and so the beginnings of the SSI were born. Nevertheless there was a long way to go before anything concrete emerged.

The first Group Meeting was held on 25 April 1952, when the first 4 members were admitted into the Institute, Fr Vincent Naughton – Provincial, officiated. By this time the members were not all living and working in Servite House but remained in their own homes and workplaces.

On 6 June 1952 there was a meeting of the 'Society of the Servants of Mary' this name was not acceptable so they chose Servite Secular Institute. Also at this meeting Joan was established as the Superior, Fr. Gerard Corr gave a conference. They decided to meet every 6 weeks.

In September 1953 at the invitation of Mother Celestine, the meeting was at Begbroke where they all spent the weekend under the same roof for the first time. The effect being that the little Society felt they were a family.

In 1954 Joan approached Cardinal Griffin seeking recognition. The Cardinal thinking Joan was asking for approval from Rome, did not give his approval suggesting that they should join the Lay Auxiliaries. Joan replied clearing the confusion and asked if they could continue to recruit members quietly, and that the present members may make a vow of Chastity.

On 2 August 1954 at the Servite Friars Chapter we see 'The Dieta takes cognisance of the Society and permission for members to make vows is granted.' This was a very big step forward. After this 3 members made vows of chastity and solemn promises of poverty and obedience to Joan according to the Constitutions.

In 1958 Fr General (Fr. Alfonso Montà OSM) was approached concerning approval of the Institute. There were now 25 members but still too few for approval.

On 27 May 1964 recognition as a Secular Institute was received from Cardinal John Carmel Heenan and on 28 May Aggregation to the Servite Order was received from Fr. Montà. On 19 June 1964 Joan made her perpetual vows which were received by Cardinal Heenan in his private Chapel. He also made her the first President of the Institute.

In 1960 Joan had seen the need to expand the work of Servite House. A house for those with disabilities was the next to be opened in Ealing. By this time a doctor, Barbara Brosnan had entered the Institute. She was a dynamic person and took charge of the house. The residents were given a life to live in contrast to sitting in an abandoned fashion as happened at that time in some homes. In Ealing the residents were given the opportunity to develop skills in art, music, theatre etc. theirs days were full and joyful.

In 1961 Anne Marie Stoklossa approached Joan with a group in Germany. In August 1963 3 members came from Italy to join the Institute retreat.

In 1966 Another member making an impact was Dity von Spaun a nurse. She with a companion went to Hlabisa Kwazulu Natal. Where with the help of Fr Mel Loftus explored the areas around seeing where the need was greatest.

They set up clinics over a large area, running vaccination programmes, anti-natal care, treatment of minor and sometimes not so minor ailments. Dity died after over 40 years of service in Hlabisa, her companion is still there, retired but working in the hospital on a voluntary basis. The Government have now taken over all the clinics that the two pioneers started.

Mention must also be made of Audrey Butler, first President after Joan. Audrey was a dynamic person, starting the Institute in Argentina and Colombia at the request of Servite Friars. She had previously helped to establish the Institute in Canada and the USA. She also had the opportunity of meeting Saint Pope John Paul II on 2 occasions and like Joan was made a Dame of St Gregory.

Over the years many of our SSI members have made a considerable difference in their particular area, some receiving recognition from the Queen.

Today we are no exception to the ageing process and find our most vibrant area is in South America, where in Colombia in particular there are a number of vocations. Our latest area is Australia.

5 The Foundation of the Servite Priory, Benburb

On 1 July 1870 the Servite Friars Frs. Morini, Venturi, Firibaldi and Bro. Camera left St Mary's Priory on the Fulham Road. They went to Paddington Station accompanied by Fr. Bosio OSM. They bade farewell to Fr. Bosio who blessed them and at 5.00 am they arrived in Liverpool. They made their way to the docks and eventually boarded the Cunard steamship JAVA. At midday they set sail for New York – making a short stop in Ireland (Cobh-Queenstown) to take on passengers and provisions. Eventually they established themselves at Greenbay, Wisconsin, and then at Chicago.

On December 5 1946 another Servite Friar – Fr. James Mary Keane OSM was sailing the wide Atlantic from New York to Southampton. He then made his way to St Mary's Priory on Fulham Road which was the Provincial Office of the Servites in England. Fr. Keane was consumed with the idea of founding the Order in Ireland. He was brought up in an Irish family whose stories and memories were all centred in Ireland. He attended the Servite School of St. Philip in Chicago and entered the Order in Milwaukee. He was a top grade student and headed to Rome to do theology. Immediately he entered an international scene which he relished. He was ordained in Rome on 8 August 1926. Even though he was studying for a doctorate in Theology he was recalled to Chicago and put in charge of students and then within the same year became principal of St Philip's High School on the West Side, where he himself had gone to school. In 1937 he took over the organization of "Our Lady of Sorrows" Novena. This was the religious phenomena of the decade and by 1938, 70,000 people were attending the Novena each week at the Basilica. Without a doubt he had great faith and drive and organization. Bob Hope and Bing Crosby both knew him and admired him. He was what today we would call a major "Celebrity" and he and the Novena attracted world-wide publicity. He then was asked to spend six years in the relative quiet of the Shrine of Our Lady in Portland Oregon. This he enhanced and developed and strengthened the community of friars living there.

It was this man then who rang the doorbell at St. Mary's Priory, London on 6 December 1946. He had received permission from his superiors to pursue the idea of establishing the Servites in Ireland. His plan was swinging into action. Being a forward planner – he had already had appointments with Archbishop McQuaid in Dublin and with Eamon De Valera – both on the same day. He was very aware of the Irish Missionary Movement and also the fact that Ireland was "overloaded" with religious.



Vicarial Chapter c 1970

Servite Priory, Benburb

L-R Colum McDonnell, Ray O'Connell, Tim Flynn, Pat Carroll, Mannetus Brady, Art Nugent, Cyril (Michael) Farrell, Eoin O'Malley, Dermot MacNeice, Matt Mulroe, Noel Hammill, Joe Whelan, Pat Gethins, Joe Madden, Pat Lowe, Noel McKenna, Frank Mallon, Jim Gallagher, Denis McSwiney, Vincent McGlue, Eamon McCreave.



Joint Chapter Between the Irish Vicariate and the English Province May 1999

Heronbrook House, Birmingham

It was during this meeting that the decision to join as the Province of the Isles was taken.

L-R Joe Whelan, Joe Colella, Peter Conniffe, Manuel Giani, Vincent Coyne, Jimmy Kelly, Basil Prior, Damian Kilbride, Tim Flynn, Kevin Donaghey, Aidan Kennedy, Maurice O'Gorman, Liam Tracey, Paul Addison, Eoin O'Malley, Eamon McCreave, Eugene Traynor, Michael Rogers, Pat Ryall, Peter Broadhurst, Philip Walsh, Colm McGlynn,

Bernard Thorne, Dermot MacNeice, Sean Lennon, Bernard Barlow, Tom Robinson, Ignatius McCafferty, Nick Martin, Chris O'Brien, Ray O'Connell, Philip Allen, Gabriel Bannon, Bill McLoughlin.

His idea however, was "Awareness" – awareness of the compassion of Our Lady and the love of God in Jesus Christ. This foundation was to be a Servite Community – presence – reaching out – embracing and accepting humanity. This was to be a life giving mission to the island of Ireland.

He had a difficult time as he made his rounds of various Bishops, most often refused with courtesy. At last in his meeting with Dr. O'Callaghan at the Bishops house in Monaghan – light shone at the end of the tunnel. He said "It's providential that you have come at this time because the Parish Priest in the Moy has bought one of the most historic spots in all of Ireland – Benburb Castle in County Tyrone about seven miles outside the Primate City of Armagh. Keane hot footed it to Moy and then with Frs. Soraghan and Moore viewed the property and knew immediately it was the very right place and totally providential! It was God's hand at work. There were many complications in the purchase and it was eventually sorted. The first community numbered eleven with Fr. James Mary Keane OSM as Prior. The dedication of the Priory – after much voluntary work, took place amid a totally festive atmosphere. There was music and dance on all sides and tens of thousands of people from everywhere. It was a national event. There were ordinations that day as Archbishop D'Alton wished. It was 5 June 1949 – Pentecost Sunday and the 303rd anniversary of the Battle of Benburb.

Fr. Keane wrote about the Servite attitude of hospitality and welcome – "The Priory must become a household word signifying charity of the highest kind, unquestioning, open-handed, and open-housed to all visitors, even those who may be taking advantage of us, because it will be founded on Our Lord's admonition to love. What we have is from the faithful anyhow, and doesn't belong to us; all the faithful should have free access to it."

It was from this foundation – that Servites went out to the U.S.A – Africa and Australia. Communities were later formed in Dublin. In the year 2000 the two jurisdictions England and Ireland formed a new Province – The Province of the Isles.

Through the 1950's this new community in Ireland truly flourished and became the largest in the Order. Within a few years an extension had been built with a purpose built monastic refectory and 20 new study bedrooms.

All the senior members of the community were Servite priests from the American Province of Our Lady of Sorrows. Young men from all across Ireland were recruited into the novitiate. Those who were progressing to priesthood studies were joined by American students and all were taught philosophy together for two years. And so it was that by the mid 50's the community numbered in excess of 60 friars.

One of the early Priors was Fr. Peter Rookey. He developed a ministry blessing people with the relic of St Philip. Over the years St. Peregrine was also added to the wooden Celtic cross that contained the relics and even to this day there are daily callers at the Priory seeking a blessing of the Servite saints.

6 From World War II to Vatican II

The years after the Second World War, like after the first were difficult. But what was very evident was that there was a fresh impetus in recruitment and this meant that the Priory at Begbroke was hardly able to cater for our formation needs.

Accordingly on 10 November 1948, Enborne Lodge on the outskirts of Newbury was renamed 'Our Lady's Priory' and Fr. Francis Mildner, became the first Prior as the community became the receiving house for new students preparing for novitiate.

Benburb

These were exciting times, it corresponded with the foundation of the Servite Priory in Benburb by friars from the USA, the spiritual descendants of Fr. Austin Morini. The indomitable Fr. James Keane after several weeks touring Ireland and meeting different bishops found a Manor House that had served during the War as a military hospital and was now available for purchase.

The first friars took up residence in 1948 although the official opening, a very grand affair involving 10,000 people didn't happen until 5 June 1949.

Dundee

Meanwhile across the Irish Sea a new foundation was made in Scotland. This was begun in September 1950, during the Holy Year dedicated to our Lady. It was partly due to the zeal and hard work of the two pioneers, Fr Alexis Mullens and Fr Patrick O'Connell, that within a few short months of arrival a Church had been built and work begun on a new Priory.

During those early years Dundee proved to be a very fruitful recruiting ground for the Servites, both the friars and the sisters. Among numerous vocations, Andrew Walls and Joseph Hynd joined the friars while the Campbell sisters Ruth and Elizabeth joined the sisters, along with Hildegarde Walls, Matthew Kinsella and Clare Grimes.

The parish was expanding and after St. Vincent's church was completed to serve Midcragie and Linlathen the expansion in Fintry called for a second church. The foundation stone was laid in 1955 and the church was opened for Mass on Christmas Day 1956. After several years of running the two churches in parallel in 1967 Fintry was given its own parish priest; Fr. John Knowles in St. Vincents and Fr. Paul Knowles at Our Lady of Sorrows in Fintry.

The last Servite Parish Priest of the Fintry parish, Fr. Peter Conniffe actually lived in a Council house on the estate. Then in 1973 the responsibility for the Fintry parish was handed back to the Diocese. The Servite Order continued its service at St. Vincent's, including a splendid Golden Jubilee event in 2005, until 2012 when the Order closed its priory in Dundee, with a farewell of gratitude from the people and the Diocese of Dunkeld. Numerous "*Friends of Servites*" remain in spiritual closeness to the Servite friars and sisters.

Back in Bognor

One of the hopes expressed in 1932 was that the church might be completed as planned in the near future. In fact the War intervened and it was the zeal of the Prior and Parish Priest Fr. Charles Cunningham who brought this to completion in 1956. In the 1960's a new Mass centre was opened in Rose Green and the Parish Priest at the time Fr. Patrick O'Connell, acquired a bungalow that was adapted as a chapel of Ease and named after the recently canonised Servite St. Anthony Pucci. Fr. Anthony Pucci had been the Tuscan Provincial on 7 May 1888 when young Cyril Moore had begun his novitiate at Monte Senario and received the religious name of Augustine, usually abbreviated to Austin.

7 The Post Vatican II Years

The years following the Second Vatican Council were filled with great studies, meetings, interchange of personnel and development of cooperation with lay Servites some more formal than others.

The Constitutions of the friars and sisters, along with all other Religious Orders were renewed and rewritten and this in turn involved travelling to meetings both regional and international. The Servite charism of community and hospitality was very much in evidence. Our Marian orientation was re-examined and while Our Lady of Dolours remains the patronal feast her role and model as recipient of the Holy Spirit and first among the disciples would have a more prominent place.

There was also a fair degree of movement. Some friars Michael Rogers, Aloysius Peoples, Maurice O'Gorman, Patrick O'Connell and Gabriel Hooper volunteered to go on the missions and gave valuable service in Swaziland, with Fr. Pat O'Connell eventually helping the new and very successful foundation in Uganda. The new recruits and students began to decline in numbers and priestly studies were pursued in Heythrop, firstly in Oxfordshire and then in London. This lead to the closure of Our Lady's Priory in Newbury and the development of Begbroke Priory.



Mother Philomena Morel 1826-1894 Foundress of the Cuves-London Mantellate Sisters she brought the Community to London in 1851 and was elected the first superior in 1861. In January 1864 she went to Rome to arrange for the aggregation of the group to the Servite Order and this signed by Pius IX on 18 June 1864.



Mother Antonia Loughnan 1837-1916 She entered the Order in 1862 and accompanied Mother Philomena Morel on the trip to Rome in 1864 and is regarded as co-foundress. On the death of Mother Philomena in 1894 she was elected Prioress General and remained in post until her own death in 1916



Sister Evangelist Davis Prioress General 1963-1969 During her term she began the process of updating the Constitutions and wrote to each sister seeking their views as to what should be amended. She also oversaw the amalgamation of the Sisters of Compassion with the Servite Sisters in 1967.



Sister Annunciata Duval Prioress General 1969-1981 During her term she continued the process of amending the Constitutions. In 1974 at a General Chapter the Austrian sisters were definitively accepted into the Congregation. She encouraged the Congregation to make real their desire to be a truly International Congregation.



Sister Mary Alice Haley Prioress General 1981-1992 She steered the New Constitutions through the Vatican Congregation for Religious Life. They were approved on the 25th March 1985. A cherished dream was a Congregation wide project for the poor and this became a reality when three French sisters left for Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) to establish a mission which has flourished to this day.



Sr Felicity McKeon 1934-2014 From the age of 11 when she went to Our Lady's Convent Grammar School Sister Felicity has been a Servite. She served as Provincial of the English Province and was Prioress General 1992-2004. During her term many International meetings took place to France, Italy and the US. She helped make Internationality a lived reality and wrote several books on the history of the Order and Congregation.



Sister Rose Chang Prioress General 2004-2009 Instead of living in an established Generalate house Rose chose to fulfil her mission by being an 'itinerant' Prioress General. Her vision was to spend the five years travelling to each part of the Congregation and being 'one among the sisters', sharing their life while still keeping Jamaica as her home base. Internationality was strengthened with a meeting held at High Leigh to which all parts of the Congregation were represented.



Sister Marie Thérèse Connor Prioress General 2009-present Marie with the General Council and with the co-operation of the sisters has worked strenuously to adapt our present Government structures to meet the current needs of the Congregation. A new model of Governance was accepted at the General Chapter held in Paris 2014. Although the ways of expressing the mission of the Congregation have developed and evolved over the years it remains the same, that is, to serve those in any kind of need with compassion .



In 1975 the enclosed sisters who had been in Bognor for 80 years sold their land and property to Servite House for development and built a new convent adjacent to the friars chapel in Begbroke. In 1974 a new foundation was made in **Glasgow** Scotland when Frs. Joseph Colella and Chris O'Brien pioneered a non-parochial community in Glasgow. The service of the community involved close cooperation with some social concerns and education but also involvement with the prayer groups that developed across the city at the time. The last Prior was Fr. Peter Broadhurst who began his time in a counselling role but eventually moved into animation of Christian Meditation prayer groups, firstly in Glasgow and latterly in Dundee and Tayport.

After extending the Bognor Church Fr. Charles Cunningham was transferred to **Kersal** where he soon put in hand the building of Our Lady of Dolours, a new brick church to replace the temporary structure that now houses the St. Benedict parish centre. Again, because of the changes in the liturgy, the sanctuary has been modified on two subsequent occasions. The parish still boasts three religious communities of sisters, a retreat from the halcyon days when there were five communities plus a girls training college. Over the years too the community has been very involved in Catholic education supplying chaplains and teachers to local Catholic secondary schools as well as being trustees and governors to the local primary school of St Philip.

Bognor

In the 1970's the enclosed nuns relocated from Bognor to Begbroke into a purpose built convent and the old convent became sheltered housing under the auspices of Servite Houses, the housing association founded by Joan Bartlett. A little later the Priory itself was rebuilt and another care home, Benizi Court was built on the old site. Part of the site was acquired as a care facility by the Mental Health charity l'Arche.

The Servite Sisters continue to maintain a presence in the town and built a care home, St Juliana's to accommodate their own sick and elderly sisters, which has been in constant use ever since.

In the early 1990's the friars had to take the difficult decision to withdraw from the Parish and the Bognor area. On 18 September 1994 a solemn Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated marking the end of the friars' presence after 113 years. The Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, Cormac Murphy-O'Connor presided assisted by the Provincial Paul Addison and former Parish Priest, Vincent Coyne, along with the last Prior and Parish Priest, Thomas Robinson. The church is called Our Lady of Sorrows and retains much of the charism and ethos of the Servite Order.

Benburb

Denis Hickey, looking back in later life wrote of life in the Priory; In the late 1960's as the student tide ebbed, the Big House donned a coat of different hue. No longer a training-ground for the young aspirants to religious service, Benburb which had housed an occasional scholar, true to the original charter of the Mendicant Orders, changed course, and, still within the broad ambit of Catholic and catholic thought, became the centre for adult religious and cultural studies, both oral and literary.'

Michael Cyril Farrell took up the theme; 'I was lucky enough to be Prior of Benburb as this lively wave crested. When the local Catholic community and the Servites put their heads together, a frenzy of activity resulted, from conferences to retreats to the annual phenomenon of Benburb Sunday to production of Servite calendars and Christmas cards, and eventually *Everyman*.'

Blakestown

This also proved a moment of expansion into **Dublin**. There was a succession of student houses in close proximity to Kimmage Manor and Milltown Park where the students could study. Then came the offer of a Parish on the north side of the city and a completely new Parish Blakestown was founded near the expanding Blanchardstown area. The animation of the parish was entrusted to Frs. Joe Madden and Colm McDonnell with Fr. Ray O'Connell being drafted in as the chaplain to the Community School. They worked alongside the St. Louis Sisters with the people to create a new and growing vibrant Christian Community.

St. Peregrine and the Oratory

The ministry and devotion to St Peregrine, our patron saint of cancer, began in Grangewood in 1982, with Frs. Dermot McNeice and Ray O'Connell. Over the years the monthly Mass has been taken up by all our Priories. From their early efforts Fr. Sean Lennon followed later Fr. Damian Kilbride and Fr. Tim Flynn established a more permanent oratory dedicated to St. Peregrine which for the past 25 years has been in the Rathfarnham Shopping Centre. This whole ministry was supported by the Servite Shop in the Camden Street area of Dublin.

Divine Word, Marley, Dublin

It was in 1992 that the Servites assumed responsibility for the parish and continues to the present day. The first Servite Community was Fr. Pat Carroll PP who along with Fr. Dermot McNeice, Vincent McGlue and Joe Madden brought a great renewal and vitality to the Parish community, built upon by friars and parishioners to this day.

In **Dundee**, as mentioned above, the Order continued its service and presence until 2012, with various friars and sisters there. The Servite Houses Scotland, founded by Joan Bartlett, remains as a legacy of social care and compassion, now titled Caledonian Housing.

Meanwhile in **London** the Priory resumed its position as the main student house with the students attending Heythrop College, newly relocated in Cavendish Square. Alongside the Parish continued to thrive. The sanctuary was remodelled to accommodate the revised liturgy with the removal of the reredos, revealing the beautiful oak choir stalls, just in time for the centenary of the church in 1975. In 1985 a Trust Fund was established with the generous support of benefactors and parishioners, enabling renovations to be made in 1987, 2011 and 2014.

What has become increasingly evident is the growing multicultural and multi-national nature of the parish and primary school. Every Sunday one of the Masses is celebrated in Spanish and then twice a month the Philippino choir grace the Saturday evening vigil Mass, made much easier since Fr. Allan Satur has joined the community from the Philippines in 2012.

8 The New Province

Down the years as the Irish and English Servites got to know each other better in the 1970's 80's and 90's, mainly in student Formation area and later involvement in Serviteur, which was the North European Servite forum for regional cooperation. This was an energetic phase of collaboration, involving Ireland, Scotland, England, France, Belgium, Austria and Germany. At one point a common Novitiate was held in St. Ortaire, Normandy under the direction of Fr. Chris O'Brien. Newsletters circulated in various languages. Regional meetings for renewal and planning were held, including a major meeting in 1996 of all the Councils of Northern Europe, about 20 friars, in the city-centre priory in Vienna.



Collaboration was increasing between the jurisdictions of the Order as the century was ending. There was a need for simplification of structures in the Order, with reduced numbers and increased systems of mobility and communication. Between the jurisdictions of the friars in England, Scotland and Ireland, it became clear that with political events like the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland in 1994 the time had come to try to witness to a greater sense of unity among ourselves on a Servite level.

Intense work and structural preparation was done towards this ideal and in 2000 the two jurisdictions became a new province of the Order called The Province of the Isles. The last Provincial of the English Province was Fr. Bernard Barlow 1997-2000, and the first Prior Provincial of the Province of the Isles was Fr. Patrick Ryall. Various friars crossed the Irish Sea to serve in priories in the other country. Fourteen years on friars have served in a very enriching way to build up this sense of community.

So has UNIFAS of the Isles: Servite sisters, Servite Secular Institute and Servite Secular Order, Associate Members of Servite Sisters, Friends of Servites and the St. Peregrine Ministry in each of our communal situations, witnessing a visible expansion of collective compassion.

There are many more memories to give thanks for on this wonderful occasion in conclusion the one that stands out was the release of Fr. Marty Jenco. After 2 years of hostage-captivity in Lebanon in the summer of 1986, the full glare of the world media was on the London Priory.

The following morning at the entrance to the church there was a press conference with Terry Waite, negotiator and others. The priory was full of FBI, CIA and Marty's family. Memories like these live on with gratitude for all of our 150 years

Conclusion

Along with the providential request of the Sisters to have Servite Friars in London, the arrival of the Friars in London also emanated from a situation of oppression and fragmentation in Italy, as religious orders were decimated by the liberal revolution. The inspiration to "go abroad" was very much like the move of Christians away from Jerusalem after the violent death of St. Stephen. It bore great fruit in new places.

England was quite anti-Catholic at this time, yet moving towards greater tolerance and emancipation since 1829 and the establishment in 1850 of a Catholic hierarchy and structure for the Church. The amazing convert Henry Edward Manning became Archbishop of Westminster in 1865, the year after the arrival of the Servite friars: Cardinal Manning was an ardent promoter of social justice, closely espoused by the Servite Order of Our Lady's compassion. It was Manning who blessed the foundation stone of the priory church on St Juliana's Day 19 June 1874, and opened the church on the feast of Our Lady of Dolours 19 September 1875.

From England the Order quickly made a foundation in the United States, and these areas of the Servite Order, along with later initiatives from the Venetian, Bolognese and Roman Provinces of the Order, have reached out widely across the world starting new communities with the same spirit of fraternity, compassion and devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows.



**15th Provincial Chapter of the Province of the Isles 26 June 2014
Servite Priory, Benburb**

L-R Bernard Thorne, Eugene Traynor, Rhett Sarabia, Bill McLoughlin, Tom Robinson, Ray O'Connell, Liam Tracey, Sean Lennon, Tim Flynn, Jimmy Kelly, Vincent Coyne, Paul Addison, Peter Conniffe, Camillus McGrane, Jim Mulherin, Colm McGlynn (Acting Provincial), Pat Ryall, Dermot MacNeice, Gabriel Bannon, Colum McDonnell, Chris O'Brien, Joe Whelan.



**General Chapter of the Servite Sisters (London) August 2014
Paris, France**

L-R Chantal le Diraison, Mary Gheringer, Michelle Reilly, Marie Thérèse Connor



Acknowledgement

This brief summary of Servite Life, as lived by Friars, Sisters, Nuns, Secular Institute and Secular Order over the past 150 years and lived at some point in all parts of the Isles; England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales is a co-operative effort. We have been able to draw on past efforts '*Servites in London*' By Gerard Corr. The Commemorative booklet of 1964 '*A Hundred Years in Mary's Service*' and that of the sisters '*Centenary of the Servite Mantellate Sisters*'

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Sr. Rachel O'Riordan
Sr. Michelle Reilly
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Miss Mary Burchfield
Fra Colm McGlynn
Fra Paul Addison
Fra Dermot MacNeice
Paul O'Brien
Mark Winter
& Fra Chris O'Brien

