

ANNALS, Vol. 1 1842 - 1862

Salvian Nardocci, C.P.

(Anglo-Hibernian Province)

J. X. P.

To the Very Reverend Father Provincial, Vincent of the Sacred Heart of Jesus - to the Venerable Fathers of our 12th Provincial Chapter - to all the fathers - students - and brothers of our Anglo-Hibernian Province these annals are dedicated by a devoted son of the Congregation of the Passion and Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and member of the same Province.

July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1890.

St Paul's Retreat,  
Mount Argus,  
Dublin.

Annals  
Of the Anglo - Hibernian Province, of St Joseph.

**1694**

- Jan. 3. St Paul of the Cross, Founder of the Congregation of the Passionists, was born in Ovada, Diocese of Aqui, which at that time was subject to the Republic of Genoa.
- Jan. 6. St Paul was Baptised in the Parish Church of Ovada, and received the name of Paul Francis Danei.

**1720**

- Nov. 22 St Paul was clothed with the Holy Habit of the Passion, by Monsignor Francis Mary Arboero Guttinara, Bishop of Alessandria (Italy) and put aside the family name of Danei, and took that of Paul of the Cross.

**1721**

After clothing the habit of the Passion, St Paul wrote the rules of the new congregation. This was done between the year 1720 and 1721.

- Nov. 28 Father John Baptist of St Michael the Archangel brother of St Paul was clothed with a habit of the passion by the same Bishop, Monsignor Gattinara, the Bishop of Alesandria, who the year before had clothed St Paul of the Cross.

**1723**

The two brothers, retired to Monte Argentaro, near Orbetello in Tuscany, being inspired by God to lead a penitential life in that holy solitude.

After some time the two holy brothers were invited by the Bishop of Gaeta, Monsignor Carlo Pignatelli, and to his own diocese, where the two brothers led a most penitential life, and teaching the Christian doctrine in the public Church of Gaeta.

St Paul, although not yet a priest, was appointed by the saintly bishop, to give the spiritual exercises to the ordinandi.

1724

- Aug. St Paul, and his brother John Baptist, having done an immense good in Gaeta, at the earnest so solicitations of the Bishop of Troja, Monsignor Emilio Cavallieri, went with the permission of Monsignor Pignatelli to Troja and there St Paul was appointed by the holy bishop to preach publicly to the people in the Church.

**1725**

The two brothers, having met by appointment the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XIII at the Church of St Mary "in Domenica" which is called the "Navicella" which is

near Ss John and Paul in Monte Celio, there and then St Paul obtained permission from the Pope “Viva vocis oraculo” to receive postulants into the new congregation of the Passion.

### **1726**

October 8. By request of Cardinal Corradini St Paul, and his brother John Baptist, accepted the care of the sick in the newly founded Hospital of St Gallicano, in Rome.

### **1727**

Feb. 6 St Paul and his brother receive the tonsure from the hands of Monsignor Beccari Vicar Gerent, in Rome.

Feb.23 The two brothers, receive the first two minor orders, from the hands of the same Vice-Gerent, Monsignor Beccari.

Feb. 24 They receive the other two minor orders from the same bishop.

Apr 12. They two brothers, having made the spiritual exercises at the Novitiate house of the Jesuits at Monte Cavallo, Rome, were ordained sub-deacons in the Lateran Basilica, by this same Vice-Gerent Monsignor Beccari.

May 1 By the same Monsignor Beccari the two brothers were ordained deacons after having made again the spiritual exercises at the Mission House of the Vincentian fathers of Monte Citorio.

Jun. 7 St Paul, and Father John Baptist, are ordained priests in the Vatican basilica by the Supreme pontiff, Benedict XIII.

### **1730**

Feb. 21. The Supreme pontiff, Benedict the 13th, who had ordained priest St Paul, and his brother, Father John Baptist, died on this day. He had been Pope since May 29th, 1724.

July 12. Clement the 12th was created Pope on this day.

### **1733**

March 4. St Paul of the Cross laid the foundation stone of the Church on Monte Argentario which is called "Della Presentazione".

## 1737

September 14. The Church of the Presentation, at Monte Argentaro was solemnly opened and dedicated by the Vicar General of the Diocese. St Paul, with a rope round his neck, carried the cross, being followed by eight of his companions, viz. four priests, and four lay brothers.

## 1740

Feb. 6. Clement XII died on this day. He had been created Pope on the 12th July 1740.

Aug. 17. Benedict XIV was created Pope. As long as he lived, he had been a great friend of St Paul and of his Congregation.

## 1741

May 15. The new Pope, Benedict XIV, soon after his election approved the congregation of the Passionists, which had been founded by St Paul of the Cross. The approbation was by rescript.

June 11. All the priests and companions and St Paul, made their solemn profession in accordance with the lately approved congregation of the Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## 1746

March 28. The Holy rules of the congregation of the passion for were again approved by Benedict XIV with a brief. This brief was spedited on the 28th and of the following April. After the canonisation of St Paul, the supreme pontiff Pius IX fixed the 28th April for the celebration of the feast of St Paul of the Cross, not only amongst the Passionists, but also by the universal Church.

April 10. On this Day was held the first General Chapter of the Congregation of the Passionists, in the Retreat of the Presentation at Monte Argentaro. St Paul was elected General of the Congregation. Rules which had been approved and confirmed by the Holy See, were publicly read and recommended to be faithfully observed by all.

## 1751

In Lent 1751, St. Paul took possession of St. Sosio, in Salvaterra, Diocese of Veroli, with 12 of his Religious.

## 1752

Feb. 6. On Sexagesima Sunday of this year, St Paul with 11 of his religious took possession of the retreat of our Blessed Lady of Dolours in Terracino. The Retreat of St Angelo in Vetralla had been taken possession on the 6th March 1744 and that of St Gutizio near Soriano on the following day viz . March 7th, 1744. The Retreat in Ceccano had been opened on the 14th January 1748 being the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus.

## **1754**

March 2. The Second General Chapter of the Congregation was held in the Retreat of St Angelo near Vetralla, Province of Viterbo. St Paul was confirmed in his office of the General. At this chapter a decree was made amongst the rest, strictly obliging all the lectors of the Congregation to teach in our schools the “unshaken” doctrine of the Angelic Doctor St Thomas of Aquin.

## **1755**

Nov. In the month of November of this year St Paul took possession of our Blessed Lady of Pugliano near the town of Paliano.

## **1758**

Jan. 22. The Third General Chapter was held in the Retreat of St Angelo near Vetralla. St Paul was elected again Superior General of the Congregation by a Pontifical Dispensation. At this Chapter the Oblate Brothers were instituted to whom were allowed taking of the vow of perseverance in the Congregation, and of wearing the distinctive badge of the Passionists, even out of the retreat like the lay brothers.

March 19. St Paul took possession of the Retreat of the most Holy Trinity at Monte Cavi, near Rocca di Papa.

May 3. The great Pope Benedict XIV great friend of St Paul and of the Congregation of the Passion died. He had been created Pope on the 17th August 1740.

July 6. Clement XIII was created Pope. He, like his predecessor had, been a great friend of St Paul and of his Congregation.

## **1761**

St Paul opened the Novitiate house called St Josephs Retreat in Monte Argentaro, about a mile from that of the Presentation.

## **1764**

Feb. 22. The 4th General Chapter was held again in the retreat of St Angelo near Vetralla.

St Paul was re-elected for the fourth time Superior General of the Congregation. The rules for the oblates (which had been instituted at the last General Chapter in 1758) were approved.

At the ninth General Chapter held in 1790 the oblates of the Passion were suppressed.

## 1765

- Aug.30. Father John Baptist of St Michael the Archangel, brother of St Paul of the Cross, died in the odour of sanctity in the retreat of St Angelo Vetralla at the age of 70. His affectionate and holy brother St Paul assisted him during his illness and at his death.

## 1769

- Feb.2. The Holy Father, Clement XIII died. He had been created Pope on the 6th of July 1758.
- May 9. The V General Chapter was held again at the Retreat of St Angelo. St Paul was elected again General. A rescript had been Or obtained from the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (the are Papal Chair being vacant) without the knowledge of the Holy founder.  
At this chapter a second Province was established, to which was given the name of "Province Dell' Addolorata", the first remaining with the title of "Della Presentazione".
- May 19. On this day the election of the new Pope took place, taking the name of Clement XIV.
- Nov. 15. The new Pope, Clement XIV, confirmed the rules of the our Congregation by the brief "Salvatoris".
- Nov. 16. Today the same Pope confirmed also the Institute or Congregation of the Passionists by the Bulla "Supremi Apostolatus". After the Beatification of our Holy Founder which took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1853, the Supreme Pontiff Pius IX appointed the day (Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>) for the celebration of the Feast of Blessed Paul, and continued so till his Canonization, which took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 1867, after which the Feast of St. Paul was ordered by the same Pope Pius IX to be kept I future on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April.

## 1773

- December 9. Pope Clement XIV gave to St. Paul, and to his Congregation "for ever" the Church of SS. John and Paul, in Monte Celio, Rome. St. Paul took possession of the Church and House on this very day, December 9<sup>th</sup> 1773.

After a few days St. Paul called 30 of his children from the other Retreats of the two Provinces, and appointed them de familia, in SS. John and Paul.

## 1774

September 22 The great friend and beloved benefactor of St Paul of the Cross, Clement XIV (Garganelli) died on this day.

## 1775

Feb. 15. They successor of Clement for clean-cut was created, and took the name of Pius the 6th.

May 15. The VI General Chapter was held in the new Retreat of Saints John and Paul in Monte Celio, Rome. St Paul was re-elected again, for the 6th time General of the Congregation by a dispensation from the new Pope. A general meeting of several days duration was held during the Chapter, for the final revision of the rules.

September 15. The new Pope Pius the VI confirmed the Rules of our Congregation of the Passion which at the last General Chapter had been maturely revised and some small alterations made by The Bulla "Plectora Virtutum Exempla".

October In the month of October, St Paul, being dangerously ill, was visited in his poor cell by many eminent Ecclesiastics and seculars. Amongst them was the most Reverend Father Gian Thomas Boxadors, General of the Dominican Order. On this occasion the dying Saint put our poor Congregation under the protection of the illustrious order of the Dominicans. The good Father Boxadors promised to the dying Saint that he most winningly would take the Congregation of the Passion under his protection and that of his successors for ever.

At the same time, St Paul obtained from the same Father General the Faculty of erecting in all are Novitiate houses the Society of the Holy Rosary and likewise obtained for the Masters of the Novices faculty of enrolling his novices in the said society. This privilege has been used ever since and is become part of the ceremony at the reception of the novices.

On the feast of the Maternity of our Blessed Lady (October 2nd Sunday) St Paul received the last sacraments in the presence of the whole community. Amongst them was Venerable Vincent Strambi, Secretary of St Paul, who after the death of the Saint, wrote his life and after it, was made Bishop of Macerata, and Tolentino.

October 18. St Paul of the Cross, our Holy Founder, died in the Retreat of Saints John and Paul, Rome, surrounded by his dear children and others, "Plenus dierum et Immaculata Vita", at the patriarchal age of 81 years nine months and 15 days, after having blessed his beloved children present and future.

"Sancte Paule ora pro nobis."

## 1776

March 11 Five months after the death of St Paul, the Supreme Pontiff Pius VI confirmed anew the Rules of our Congregation with the Bulla "Omnium Saluti", dated this day March 11th, 1776.

## 1778

May 16. The VII General Chapter of our Congregation was held in Rome at the Retreat of Saints John and Paul.  
The most Reverend Father John Baptist of St Vincent Ferrar, was elected Superior General of the Congregation.  
The decrees made at this Chapter were the following  
1<sup>st</sup> That those of the fathers who had been at anytime General shall have the first place immediately after the actual Father General.  
2<sup>nd</sup> That the Secretary General and the Provincial Secretary shall have the first place immediately after the Rector.  
3<sup>rd</sup> The General and Provincials were authorised to grant dispensations to the old religious, if requested, from all, or in part, concerning the austerities of the rules.

## 1784

April 1 The Eighth General Chapter was held again in the Retreat of Saints John and Paul, Rome.  
At this chapter, amongst other things, was decreed and prescribed the taking of the oath of Perseverance "till death" at our Profession.

September The decree conferring the title of "Venerable" to our Holy Founder, Paul of the Cross, was signed by the Supreme Pontiff, Pius VI.

## 1785

March 11 Pope Pius VI, by a special brief, made a partial modification in our Rule, in what regards the use of fresh meat, and the length of the nocturnal choir.  
By this brief, fresh meat is permitted on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, out of Lent and Advent. If on the Wednesday occurs any feast of Rule, fresh meat is allowed on that day. The nocturnal prayer, is limited to one hour and a half.

## 1790

April 17 The Ninth General Chapter was held in the Retreat of Corneto, on account of political disturbances existing in Rome & .....

At this chapter the "Third Order" (as they were called) the Oblates of the Passion was suppressed, and prohibition was given, to receive for the future Postulants as Oblates into the Congregation.

It was decreed, that on the last day of the Annual Retreat, shall be made the renewal of the Vows, by all the Religious of the Congregation, at each Retreat.



This annual retreat is made by us from the feast of the Solemn Commemoration of the Passion (Tuesday after Sexagesima Sunday) to the day of the Octave of the same feast.

### **1796**

- April 5. The Tenth General Chapter was held in the Retreat of Saint Francis, in Anguillara, Italy (Rome being still in a disturbed state of political affairs). The Most Reverend Father Joseph Mary of Jesus Crucified was made General of the Congregation. Amongst other things the Capitular Fathers, published the new rescript of Pius VI, granting to all of our priests (four times in the week) the “Privilegium Altaris” with Plenary Indulgence.

### **1799**

- August 28 The Supreme Pontiff Pius VI, died on this day. He had been, as his predecessor, a great benefactor, and true friend of our Congregation.

### **1800**

- March 14 Pius VII was created Pope, to the great joy of the whole Catholic world.

### **1801**

The new Pope, Pius VII, took the Congregation of the Passionists under the immediate protection of the Holy See, by a special Bulla.

### **1801**

This year, besides being taken by the Pope under the protection of the Holy See our Congregation was also honoured by having our Father Vincent Strambi made Bishop of Macerata. Venerable Strambi had been Secretary of Saint Paul, and at this time was the First General Consultor of our Congregation, which office he retained ‘till the next General Chapter, at which he presided. He died on 1 January 1824.

As we may not have the opportunity to mention two others of our fathers who had been made Bishops before Strambi we will mention them here. The first was Father Thomas Struzzieri who was consecrated on 23 of December 1764, whilst he was Apostolic Visitor in Corsica. After he was translated to Jodi, and died there, on 12 January 1780. The other was Father Francis Ferreri who was consecrated in 1805 (four years after Strambi) Bishop of Nicopolis. He died on the third of November 1813.

From Monsignor Struzzieri 1764 to 1887 we had eleven Passionist Bishops. Here I will only mention their names. 1. Thomas Struzzieri. 2. Francis Ferreri. 3. Vincent Strambi. 4. Joseph Mulajoni. 5. Fortunato Maria Ercolani. 6. Angelo Parsi. 7. Joseph Pluym. 8. Ignatius Paoli. 9. Ippolito Agosto. 10. Joseph Palma. 11.

Patrick Fallon. N. B. Dr. Fallon made his Profession as Passionist at the point of death, having lived in Mt. Argus for many years.

## **1802**

April 26 The XI General Chapter was held in the Retreat of St. Angelo, near Vetralla. The Most Reverend Monsignor Vincent Strambi, First Consultor General of our Congregation, and bishop of Macerata, presided at the Chapter.

The Most Reverend Father Joseph Mary of Jesus Crucified was elected again General of the Congregation.

## **1809**

May 23 The Twelfth General Chapter was held in Rome at the Retreat of Saints John and Paul.

This Chapter was due in 1808, but by command of the supreme Pontiff Pius VII was put off for a year.

The Most Reverend Father Thomas of the incarnate wisdom was elected General of the Congregation.

At this Chapter the penalty of expulsion from the Congregation was decreed to be carried into effect against those subjects who would detract the Superiors of the Congregation.

## **1814**

November 14 Dominic of the Mother of God, afterwards the Founder of the Franco-Belgian and Anglo-Hibernian Provinces as was clothed with the Holy Habit of the Passionists in the Novitiate house of Paliano, Italy.

In 1840 he founded the first retreat at Ere near Tournay, Belgium and in March 1842 founded the first Retreat at Aston Hall near Stone, Staffordshire, England. He died suddenly at Reading 27 August 1849.

## **1815**

April 4 The Thirteenth General Chapter was held in the Retreat of Saints John and Paul, Rome.

The Most Reverend Father Thomas of the Incarnate Wisdom was re-elected General of the Congregation.

At this Chapter a decree was made fixing the distance from the town where our Retreats can be founded, which distance must be "Mille Passus" about a mile.

## **1821**

Jan 18 The decree conferring the title of the "Venerable" to our Holy Founder, which had been signed by Pius VI in September 1784, was published on this day when by a strict examination it was proved that Father Paul of the Cross, Founder of the Passionist's Order, had practised all the virtues in an "Heroic Degree".

April 30 The Fourteenth General Chapter was held again in the Retreat of SS. John and Paul, Rome.  
The Most Reverend Father Aloysius of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was elected General of the Congregation.  
At this Chapter was decreed that special care and comfort is to be bestowed to the poor sick religious.  
It was interdicted to 'Quest' in those places where lately a mission or public retreat had been given by our missionaries.

### **1823**

August 20 The Holy Father Pius VII died on this day. He had been a great sufferer under Napoleon Bonaparte who had cast the Holy Father into prison.

September 28 The new Pope was created on this day, and took the name of Leo XII.

### **1824**

Jan 1 The Venerable Vincent Strambi Passionist Bishop of Macerata and Tolentino died a victim of charity having offered his life to save that of Leo XII, while the Holy Pontiff was dangerously ill. God accepted the sacrifice.

### **1825**

Feb. 16 Eugene of Saint Anthony Martorelli was clothed with the Holy Habit of the Passionists in the Novitiate House of Paliano. Father Eugene came to England as a Visitor General in 1850. On the following year he was elected Provincial of the then Anglo-Belgian Province and re-elected as such several times. He is the Second Founder of the present Anglo-Hibernian Province as well as of the Franco-Belgian. He has seen his Golden Jubilee of his clothing the habit of Passionist as well as the Jubilee of his priesthood. "Dominus conservet eum" (1887). When we come to write extensively our annals, we shall have many a chapter about our venerated Father. Died 21 April 1888.

### **1827**

April 27 The XV General Chapter was held as usual in the Retreat of Saints John and Paul, Rome.  
The Most Reverend Father Anthony of Saint Joseph was elected General. Father Anthony had refused the Mitre more than once; he was a very learned and holy Passionist.

### **1829**

Feb. 10 The supreme Pontiff Leo XII whose life was spared by the prayers and sacrifice of Venerable Strambi, died on this day.

March 31 The new Pope was created on this day, and took the name of Pius VIII. He did not live long. Died 30 November 1830.

### **1831**

Feb 2 The new Pope was created, and took the name of the Gregory XVI.

This very year 1831 Father Dominic of the Mother of God, the Founder of our Province, became acquainted with the Honourable George Spencer (afterwards Father Ignatius of Saint Paul Passionist) and had a long interview about the conversion of England.

### **1831**

Feb. After this interview many letters were written by the said Father Dominic to Mr Spencer, to Mr Ambrose Lisle Philips, to Mrs Canning, and others concerning the foundation of the Passionist order in England, which at last took place in 1842 and Father Ignatius Spencer himself became Passionist in January 1847.

### **1833**

Jan 2. Father Eugene of Saint Anthony (afterwards Provincial for several years of the Anglo-Hibernian Province was ordained priest. His Golden Jubilee was celebrated with great solemnity in 1883 throughout the Province.

Apr. 18 The Sixteenth General Chapter of our Congregation was held in Rome at the Retreat of Saints John and Paul. The Most Reverend Father Anthony of Saint Joseph was re-elected Superior General of the Congregation.

### **1836**

May 24 Gaudentius of Saint Stephen (Rossi) was clothed that with the Holy Habit of the Passionists at Monte Argentario.

Father Gaudentius came to England in 1842 which was the very same year of the foundation at Aston Hall. For many years Father Gaudentius had been giving missions and retreats throughout England, and about 1863 or 64 went to America to continue the work of missions and other duties for the spiritual good of the Americans, where at this time (1887) we have there a very flourishing Province. Father Gaudentius is still there, holding some office or other. Died of 12 August 1891.

### **1837**

Jan 16 Constantine of Saint Francis (Lamberti) was clothed with the Holy habit of the Passionists in Saint Joseph's Novitiate house at Monte Argentario.

Father Constantine came to England in 1845, and after a short time was appointed by Father Dominic Superior of Saint Michael's Retreat, in Aston Hall, near Stone, Staffordshire, where the good man died the death of the just on 15 July 1848, to the great regret of Father Dominic and his dear children.

Aug. 9 Fr. Marcellinus of Saint John the Evangelist (Piri) was clothed in the Novitiate of Saint Joseph at Monte Argentaro seven months after Father Constantine, with whom he came to England in 1845. Father Marcellinus, like his companion, was indeed an excellent, good and saintly Passionist. He died at the new Retreat of Northfield, near Stroud, Gloucestershire, 14 March, 1847. We shall give more extensive information about these two saintly Passionists in the proper place.

### 1839

April 8. The Seventeenth General Chapter was held in Rome at the Retreat of Saints John and Paul. The Most Reverend Father Anthony of Saint James was elected general, which office he held for the space of 23 years and died in 1862 holding still the office of General. He also, like his predecessor Father Anthony of Saint Joseph, had refused the Mitre several times. At this chapter, the Capitular fathers spoke about the foundation in England. A memorial to that effect had been presented to the Venerable Chapter by the Honourable and Reverend George Spencer afterwards Father Ignatius. The enterprise was not carried into effect till the year 1842.

April 10 Cardinal Acton (Englishman) drew and presented another memorial to the Capitular Fathers, petitioning for a foundation of the Passionist Order in England. The Venerable Chapter accepted the offer, but when all the preliminary arrangements were in both sights satisfactorily settled the gentleman, who had promised to bear the expenses, withdrew the promise and for the present the matter fell on the ground. After this disappointment the Honourable George Spencer opened a correspondence with Monsieur Bernard, a priest of Lille, and other Belgian Ecclesiastics, and after some delay, he obtained a house for the Passionists at Ere, near Tournay, the possession of which was taken by Father Dominic in the following year 1840.

### 1840

November Father Dominic of the Mother of God opened the first Retreat of the Passionists at Ere, near Tournay, in Belgium. This foundation was obtained principally by the exertions of the Honourable and Reverend George Spencer, who afterwards entered our Novitiate, and took the name of Father Ignatius of Saint Paul. From Tournay, Father Dominic, being invited by Dr Wiseman came to England, to see a house which Dr. Walsh had offered to him to begin the desired foundation for the Passionists in this country. He, Father Dominic, arrived in London, towards the end of November, but to his great regret and disappointment, was

obliged to return to Belgium without even having seen the house, which had been offered to him.

## 1841

April 9 Austin of the Mother of God (Edgar) was clothed at Ere near Tournay. He was a Scotchman, and came to England after his profession. He was of great help to Father Dominic, and other Italian Fathers, who at that time knew very little of the English language. Father Austin spoke several languages but especially the Italian and French. He laboured in missions and amongst the people at Aston Hall, Stone, Sutton, and Saint Wilfrid's, Cotton Hall, near Cheadle, Staffordshire, where he died on 17 December 1854. We shall have great deal to say, in the proper place about our dear Father Austin.

April 16 Salvian of the Seven Dolours (Nardocci) was clothed at Saint Joseph's Retreat, Novitiate House in Monte Argentaro. He came to England 21 September 1849. Together with Father Bernardine and Father Raphael.

During the summer of this year Dr Walsh, and Dr Wiseman, met Father Dominic of the Mother of God in Brussels and came to a definite arrangement about the foundation in England, so that nothing appeared to be wanting save the actual possession.

October Father Dominic and his companion, Father Amadeus (McBride) Irishman, who had made his profession in Italy, where also had been ordained priest, arrived at Oscott, near Birmingham, to learn better the English language. Meanwhile Father Dominic gave to the students of the College some lectures on Moral Theology, being requested to do so by the Bishop.

## 1842

### **N.B. The annals of the English Province begin here.**

Feb. 17 Father Dominic, and his companion Father Amadeus, left Saint Mary's College, Oscott, and arrived at Aston Hall, near Stone, Staffordshire, and there opened the first Passionist Retreat.

With the two fathers, came also two postulants as lay brothers, but they did not persevere.

Feb. 18 Father Dominic celebrated Mass in the new Retreat for the first time, being the Feast of the Lance and Nails of Our Lord, viz. Friday after the first Sunday in Lent.

### **More extensive account of the English Foundation**

Our religious are aware of how absorbing has been our holy founders zeal, for the conversion of England, and how much he prayed for that object. It is said that God manifested to him that his children would, at a future date, arrive in this island to work for its conversion without however showing him how or when that would be accomplished.

Saint Paul died without seeing the fulfilment of his desires and 60 years passed over after his death before the occasion presented itself for undertaking such an enterprise. Nevertheless our religious inheritors of our Holy Founder's spirit had never ceased to offer up continual supplications for its conversion to the Catholic Faith, trusting the Divine Majesty would provide the means and the necessary instruments for so great a work

God prepared some of these in an extraordinary manner by inspiring into their mind a great desire for the conversion of England even before they had received a habit of the Passionists. In the year 1831 the Reverend George Spencer, recently converted from Protestantism, arrived in Rome where he made the acquaintance of Father Dominic of the Mother of God who at that time was Lector of Theology in Saints John and Paul's Retreat.

This young nobleman, discovering in Father Dominic a great zeal for England's return to Catholic unity, conceived a great esteem for him and introduced him to many other English gentlemen; Ambrose de L'Isle Philips and Mr Ford, a Protestant clergyman, being especially mentioned.

To the latter gentleman Father Dominic addressed several letters on controversy, which had been published in the appendix to Saint Paul's life printed by the Oratorians.

At a subsequent period Reverend Mr Spencer returned to England and on his way thither he called at Lucca to see Father Dominic who at that time was Superior of our Retreat (L'Angelo) situated a short distance from the above town.

They spoke again of a foundation in England, but Mr Spencer was of opinion that it was not then possible.

In this way six or seven years more were passed over and humanly speaking every hope of the projected foundation had vanished.

In the year 1839 while our Seventeenth General Chapter of our Congregation was being held, Mr Spencer wrote to Cardinal Acton, informing him that an opening for a foundation now offered itself. The good Cardinal drew up a memorial and presented it to the Chapter. The majority of the capitulars agreed to accept the foundation, but the new General the Most Reverend Father Anthony of Saint James, said he would withhold his consent unless Father Dominic of the Mother of God were sent to commence the good work.

In this manner every preliminary was satisfactorily arranged when a new disappointment occurred. The gentleman who undertook to bear the expenses of the foundation became apprehensive lest his means should be overtaxed, and having notified the fear he had to those interested it was agreed to let the matter drop, and all hope of a foundation in England seemed as far distant as ever.

However, Mr Spencer did not lose courage and as he could not succeed in establishing a house of our order in England, he endeavoured to do so either in France or Belgium.

He opened there for a correspondence within Monsieur Bernard, a priest of Lille. This worthy man took up the matter in earnest and with the assistance of his friends especially Canon Zeisi and Der succeeded finally in obtaining for us a house in the diocese of Tournay, in Belgium.

Some time after, Father Dominic and some of his companions departed for Belgium. Dr Wiseman was consecrated Bishop on 8 June 1840, as Coadjutor for the Midland District and was sent to England. The new Prelate who was very anxious to see a foundation of the Passionists in England wrote to Father Dominic, inviting him over, to look at a house that Dr Walsh, Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District, intended to bestow on the Passionists as a first step towards a foundation.

The same Father Dominic wrote immediately to the General to obtain the necessary permission, which being obtained, he started for England where he arrived towards the end of November 1840.

Here again Father Dominic met with a disappointment, and had to return to Belgium without even having seen the house destined for him. Even then it appeared as if every hope had vanished.

During the summer of the following year the two Bishops, Dr Walsh and Dr Wiseman, being in Belgium wrote to Father Dominic to meet them in Brussels in order to come to a definite arrangement about the foundation.

At this interview everything was satisfactorily arranged so that nothing more appeared wanting save the actual possession.

After this interview with the two English Prelates Father Dominic wrote to the General informing him of the turn matters had taken and requesting him to send at once the religious destined for the foundation.

Father General sent at once four priests and a Lay Brother. Three were to remain in Belgium, and one, (Father Amadeus, an Irishman) was to accompany Father Dominic to England.

They departed from Tournay on 30 September 1841 and proceeded to Oscott, where they arrived on 7 October.

At their arrival at Oscott, the two fathers thought that they would proceed at once to take possession of the promised house, but Dr Wiseman told them that the priest who lived there had not as yet left the place but that he would do so in a few days.

However, the few days lasted from week to week and from month to month, until the poor Fathers thought they should have to return to their own country again.

In this state of suspense they lived from October to the following February 1842, and when they had well nigh despaired of obtaining possession of Aston Hall, the priest arrived at Oscott and took them with him to Aston to their great delight and joy.

On 17 February 1842 the Fathers above mentioned arrived at Aston Hall, being accompanied (besides the priest) by two young men aspirants to the habit of the Passionists, but they did not persevere.

On the following day, Father Dominic and Father Amadeus celebrated Mass in the chapel attached to the house, being that day the Feast of the Lance and Nails of our Lord. Father Dominic taking occasion from this to remark that many trials awaited the community which would be established there, which in fact turned out to be too true as we shall see in the proper place.

They rose to Matins and went through the whole of the observance as well as circumstances permitted. Then Father Dominic gave to the little community the spiritual exercises at which the priest who was still in the house also assisted. The community having concluded their retreat, at the said priest's request Father Dominic gave the spiritual exercises to the secular congregation attached to the chapel, with no small amount of inconvenience to himself, not having yet acquired a sufficient knowledge of the English language. At the same time Father Dominic helped by Father Amadeus, prepared some fifteen children for their first communion.

The Fathers had to suffer much, not only on account of their limited knowledge of the language, but also on account of many other sources, especially the great aversion that people manifested for the Religious Habit and mode of living of the community, which was all strange to them.

Amidst all their trials Divine consolations were not wanting, and in a special manner the Fathers rejoiced when they beheld the good dispositions of some who wished to be received into the Catholic Church.

On good Friday of this year (1842) Father Dominic received a young man into the church, and before many months passed over some fourteen more followed his example.

At this time Brother Ansanus arrived from Belgium (25 April) to teach the Lay Novices their different duties. On Low Sunday (April 3<sup>rd</sup>) two postulants (the same who had come to Aston Hall with Father Dominic and his companion, Fr. Amadeus, from Oscott) were clothed, but they did not persevere.



- March 15 Bernardine of the Sacred Heart of Mary (Carosi) was clothed with the holy habit of the Passionists at Paliano, Italy. He came to England with Father Salvian and Father Raphael on 21 September 1849. We shall have to say a great deal about Father Bernardine and Father Raphael. (Now 1890 both dead.)
- March 16 Mission at Saint Michael's, Passionist's chapel in Aston Hall, near Stone, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic of the Mother of God, ended 24 March. (This is the first mission given in English by Father Dominic, as remarked above.)
- April 3 The two first postulants, who came to Aston all with Father Dominic, from Oscott were clothed. They took the name of Brother Ignatius of Saint Polycarp, and Brother Serenus of Saint Joseph.  
After some time these two young men got tired of the religious life and one after the other left the Novitiate on their own accord
- April 25 Brother Ansanus of Saint Joseph, an Italian professed Lay Brother came to Aston hall, from Ere, in Belgium to help the two Fathers and to teach the lay novices their respective duties of lay brothers. He was a very good lay brother, and indeed helped very much Father Dominic in the material work of the house, and in preparing the scanty meals for the community which before Brother Ansanus came had to be prepared by Father Dominic. Brother Ansanus return to Italy in 1850.
- May 7 On this day Father Dominic clothed with the holy habit of the Passionists the first cleric novice. He took the name of Confrater Joseph of the Blessed Virgin (Bunn). In due time he made his profession; was ordained priest, and became a very good missionary. He was a young man of considerable talents and Father Dominic had great hopes of good success in future times. After the death of Father Dominic, Father Joseph began to be very unhappy, and having lost his vocation, he returned to the world in the year 1855.
- June 10 Raphael of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, (Gorga), was clothed at Paliano's Novitiate house. He came to England with Fathers Salvian and Bernardine in September 1849. Father Raphael had been lector of our students at Woodchester, at Saint Wilfrid's, Aston Hall, and Sutton. He had been Vice-Rector at different times, superior or Rector in different houses of our Province, and died in Saint Anne's, Sutton, near Saint Helens, Lancashire, 15 January 1881. R.I.P.
- July 26 Father Gaudentius of Saint Stephen (Rossi) came to Aston Hall, directly from Saints John and Paul, Rome. He learned the English language very soon, and became one of the best missionaries of our Province. After having worked for many years in England in giving missions and retreats, he went to the new foundation in America, continuing the same missionary work as he had done in our own Province. Father Gaudentius was the founder of the Institute called "Sisters of the Holy Family" but now "Sisters of the Passion".

With Father Gaudentius, came to Aston Hall, Father Austin of the Mother of God, (Edgar). At this time Father Austin was only a professed student. Father Dominic prepared him, as well as Father Joseph (Bunn) for ordination, and both were of the

greatest help to the said Father Dominic. Father Austin died at Saint Wilfrid's, Cotton Hall, near Cheadle, Staffordshire 17 December 1854.

After the arrival of Father Gaudentius, and Father Austin, Father Dominic rent a large room in the Crown Inn at Stone and had it fitted up for a chapel and on the first Sunday of Advent of this year, the same Father Dominic celebrated mass in it, preached in the morning, Catechised their children in the afternoon, and in the evening began a series of controversial lectures which were attended every Sunday, by a large number of Protestants as well as Catholics.

The reason why Father Dominic rent the room in the Crown Inn in Stone was that in this town there was a large Catholic population, but being very poor and rather indifferent, was thought advisable for the present to begin the work in this place, and to wait till the Divine Providence would send means for the building of a chapel.

The lectures given by Father Dominic aroused the indignation of the Protestant ministers and of the different sects who forthwith declared war against the missionaries but especially Father Dominic. They likewise commenced a series of lectures on the "errors of Popery" composed chiefly on falsehood, misrepresentations and slander of the coarsest description.

Their lectures however were not successful and finally they had to desist, but adopted another course. They invited the people to persecute the poor converts, and went about from house to house offering money to the people, on condition that they ceased frequenting our chapel.

In one thing they succeeded - arousing the worst feelings of the lower order against the Fathers, who on more than one occasion were in great danger of being severely ill-used, if not stoned to death by them. Their conduct however was condemned by educated Protestants, who took no part in their proceedings.

This persecution however did not last long. After some time a good Catholic gentleman of the town, James Beech, made a present to the bishop of a piece of land and on this Father Dominic built a school which served on Sundays as a chapel and on weekdays as the school for their children. We shall speak of this in due time.

October 12 On this day Father Dominic clothed with the holy habit a young lay brother who took the name of Brother Bernard of Saint Michael (Brady). He did not persevere, but left the novitiate in January 1843.

It is marvellous how our beloved Father Dominic could undergo so many contradictions, trials, and labours, being almost the only active person especially in this first year of the foundation. Father Amadeus had no energy, nor abilities for the missionary work. Father Gaudentius could speak but imperfectly the English language - Father Austin and Father Joseph were simple clerics and students. The same Father Dominic had to prepare them for ordination: had to attend the two congregations viz. that of Aston - and Stone, besides having to fulfil the duties of Superior and to attend the regular observance of the choir, day and night, without mentioning the great number of letters which he had to write to the higher superiors, Bishops, and others. I say it is marvellous, how he could fulfil all these duties. But he did so "Animo Volenti" and for the love of God, which was burning in his heart.

## 1843

- March 15      Father and Dominic clothed with the holy habit, another lay brother, who took the name of Brother John of the Passion (Filding or Fielding). In due time he made his profession, became a most useful lay brother, but having lost the spirit of a Passionist, left the Congregation in 1852, in the expectation of being ordained priest (as he had been promised) by entering another Religious Order. He failed in both.
- April 5        Mission at Aston Hall, near Stone by Father Dominic. Ended 13 April. This, properly speaking, was a double mission. Father Dominic preached on the morning at Stone, and in the evening at Aston. By this arrangement both the Congregations had chance of attending the Mission.
- May 22        On this day two novices were clothed. The first was a cleric, who took the name of Anselm of Saint Vincent (Alcock), and the second a lay brother took the name of Thomas of Saint Ignatius (Dowson). Both made their profession in due time and both left the Congregation. Father Anselm left in 1852, being priest, and Brother Thomas left in 1862.
- July 19.      We have said above that Mr James Beech had given a piece of land for building a little chapel which would be used also as a school on weekdays and for divine Service on Sundays. The difficulty now was how and where to find money for the building. This undertaking was indeed attended without considerable difficulty as the fathers were for the most part unknown and had no friends of their own - in fact they had scarcely the necessaries of life on which to subsist. In this dilemma Mr Beech suggested that a sum of money sufficient to build the school, or chapel, could be borrowed at interest, which was subsequently done. Mr Pugin made the plans and specifications of the cost which amounted to £471. It was a large sum for the poor Passionists, but confining in divine Providence Father Dominic laid the foundation stone on the 19th July 1843. The Reverend William Richmond, a great friend of Father Dominic preached on the occasion a very suitable sermon, which was listened to with great attention not only by the Catholics but by the Protestants also, who attended the ceremony.
- Although the weather was unfavourable some six or seven hundred persons were present. During the ceremony the rain ceased and at its close, commenced again and rained heavily the whole day.
- After the ceremony several lost sheep presented themselves to Father Dominic and asked to be received again into the fold. It is a worthy of remark, that the grain of mustard seed sown at Stone by the good fathers has now increased to a considerable extent. On the ground adjoining the original school, a magnificent large convent has been built and a beautiful and spacious Church tells the increase of that mustard seed sown by saintly Father Dominic and his fervent companions. The building of the school was attended with considerable difficulties, money matters being not the least. The Catholics were poor, and of course could give but a little. Dr Wiseman kindly gave £50, and small sums came in from other quarters so that in one way or other the school was built.
- The Protestants alarmed at our success offered many annoyances to the fathers, and opened an opposition Chapel to counteract any influence they might have on the people. A zealous young person was appointed curate and he laboured hard to

bring back to Protestantism those who had embraced the truth. He went about from house to house circulating tracts, which were a tissue of foul calumnies against the Church of Christ, and her ministers, but especially against the poor fathers and Father Dominic in particular.

Not content with what they had done up to the present they concluded that a bolder strike was necessary and a stronger barrier erected to check the advance of Popery. With this end in view they erected a new Church within a stone's throw of our retreat at Aston, which they called the bulwark of Protestantism and in point of fact on the 13th of March 1844 a procession came with great solemnity - music - banners and thought that now was done with Papists. This grand display, took place on the day on which they had laid the foundation stone of this opposition Church.

Finally after so many delays and difficulties the time came when the building of the chapel in the town of Stone, which as we said above would be used as school on weekdays was completed and the opening and blessing took place on the 22nd April 1844.

Aug. 6. Retreat to the Sisters of Mercy, at Birmingham, by Father Dominic ended August 15th.

September 14. Father Raymond of St Aloysius (Disano) was clothed in the Novitiate house at Lucca, Italy. Father Raymond came to England in 1850 with the very Reverend Father Eugene of St Anthony, sent here as Visitor General. Father Raymond has been Rector - Vice Rector - and for many years has been, and is, at this very moment (1887) Master of Novices.

## 1844

- March 24 Public retreat at Newcastle-under-Lyne, Staffordshire by Father Dominic. Ended 31 March. Three Protestant ladies were received into the Catholic Church by the missionary.
- March 24 Public retreat at Aston Hall chapel by Father Gaudentius of Saint Stephen. Ended 29 March. This was the first retreat or mission in English given by Father Gaudentius. This good Father had come to England on 26 July 1842 entirely ignorant of the English language and after a year and eight months he had mastered it so well as to give the retreat herein mentioned to the great advantage to the congregation of Aston which was under our care.
- March 24 At the same time that Father Dominic was giving the retreat at Newcastle and Father Gaudentius at Aston Father Amadeus was preaching sermons in Manchester. Here he gave five sermons for the benefit especially of his countrymen, the Irish people of whom great many are to be found in Manchester.
- April 22 On this day was blessed and open the new chapel in Stone. The Reverend Mr Green performed the ceremony, being appointed by Dr Wiseman for that purpose. The function was very simple being without accompaniment of band or music or any other external display. After the function the above mentioned Reverend gentleman delivered a brief discourse appropriate to the occasion and all closed by the celebration of Holy Mass at which assisted Father Dominic and one of his companions and a number of secular priests from the neighbouring villages who had come together for the occasion and who were sumptuously treated and entertained afterwards by our kind and worthy friend James Beech esq. (the same who gave the bit of land for the building of this chapel).  
Few words about Mr Beech.  
This gentleman has given a substantial proof of his generosity from the very beginning of our coming to Aston Hall, but especially since we opened the mission at Stone, his native place. Every time that our Fathers went to say mass in Stone, whether in the Crown Inn, or in this new chapel, there was a place for breakfast, dinner, and tea, prepared at his own table for the Father or Fathers who were appointed by the Superior to say mass, or officiate in the town of Stone. Not only Mr Beech but the whole of his family were extremely kind to us in every way. His children served at the altar at mass and Benediction and the daughter had the care of the altar of the chapel which she kept very clean and tidy. The Blessed Sacrament was kept in a small room of his house which had been fitted up for that purpose alone, where a lamp was kept burning day and night.
- April 23 On this day, being the Feast of Saint George, the Patron Saint of England, Father Dominic said Mass in the chapel which had been opened the day before, and continued to do so afterwards not only on Sundays, and Feasts of Obligation, but also on Fridays and any other day of devotion. On Sundays and days of obligation two Masses were said in the same chapel, the first at 8.00, and the second at ten with a sermon, and in the evening there was Vespers, followed by instruction or Catechism and sometimes Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament.

April 29

On this day the children began to be taught in the same building, which as we have said above, was to be used as chapel on Sundays and as school on weekdays. Mr George Moore (son-in-law of Mr James Beech) taught the boys, and a certain Miss Nell, the girls. Both of them thought in the school, without receiving any salary. They were very respectable and most fervent Catholics, were known by the people of Stone. The progress which the children were making in learning proved how wisely Father Dominic had made the choice in appointing Mr Moore and Miss Nell as teachers of the new schools.

For the first week, the attendance was small, the number of boys and girls not exceeding 24, but in progress of time they increased to a respectable number which caused great consolation to the Fathers, but especially to Father Dominic, who above all was very anxious to see these tender plants progressing in learning and virtue.

After having provided the chapel for Catholic worship for all and the schools for their children, Father Dominic founded a Catholic society for the twofold purpose, viz. of instruction and amusement of grown-up people, men and women. The men used to assemble in the old chapel at Aston Hall, at 5.30 every Sunday evening, and read to them the annals of the Propagation of the Faith, and other Catholic periodicals, till after 7.00. The women held their meetings in the new school at Stone, at the same time and hour, the school mistress or some other lady reading some useful and amusing book to them. Both were well attended and produced great good

Up to this time it may be said that our labours were confined exclusively to our own congregations, or parishes of Aston and Stone, and the reason of it being solely the imperfect knowledge of the English language of Father Gaudentius, and Father Amadeus. During these two past years, only Father Dominic had gone out to preach elsewhere. In Lent, however, of this year, the others also commenced to go out, and do some good for other congregations also.

Father Dominic went to Lane-End, London, and gave the exercises there, from which more good resulted than could naturally have been expected. It would be incredible if it was not stated by Father Dominic himself, in the mission book, that during this very year, 1844, no less than 21 retreats were given by our Fathers to different places, the missionaries being only three, namely Father Dominic, Father Amadeus, and Father Gaudentius.

May 11

Public retreat at Swynnerton, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 19 May. During the retreat a special instruction was given by Father Dominic every day to 70 children, half of them being Protestants. One grown person was received into the church by the missionary and many children were left under the instruction of the local priest.

May 24

Retreat to the students at Oscott College, near Birmingham, by Father Dominic. Ended 31 May.

The same Father Dominic examined the students of the said college for ordination, having been appointed by Dr Wiseman.

June 15

Public retreat at Heythrop, Oxfordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 22 June.

June 23

Public retreat at Radford, Oxfordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 27 June.

- June 28 The day after the above mentioned to retreat at Radford Father Dominic paid a visit to Dr Newman and Mr Dalgairns at Little More. These two gentlemen were not then Catholics but were received into the church afterwards by the same Father Dominic. Mr Dalgairns was received on 29 September 1845 at the Retreat of Saint Michael, Aston Hall, and Dr Newman was received at this very "Little More" on 9 October of the same year 1845. We shall have a great deal to say about the conversion of Dr Newman and others in the proper place.
- June 30 Retreat to the Benedictine nuns at Saint Benedict's priory, Colwich, near Stafford, by Father Dominic. Ended 8 July. These good nuns from this time forward have been always very kind to Father Dominic and to the Passionists in general; and their kindness was not merely in words but in substantial deeds, by helping us in our poverty, especially in providing our Sacristy with Sacred Vestments,, and linen for the altar.
- July 21 Public retreat at Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 28 July.
- July 29 The day after the retreat at Tunstall Father Dominic began a retreat at Saint Mary's College, in Oscott, for the clergy of Birmingham district. Ended 3 August.
- August 6 Retreat to the Sisters of Mercy at Birmingham by the same Father Dominic. Ended 15 August. The same Father preached also every day to the orphans who were in the establishment connected with the convent. This orphanage contained Catholics and Protestants and all attended the lectures given by Father Dominic. Three of the Protestants were received into the Catholic Church by the missionary.
- August 6 Public retreat in the school room at Stone by Father Amadeus. Ended 15 August. This retreat had to be given by Father Dominic, but he having to give the retreat to the Sisters of Mercy in Birmingham was obliged to appoint Father Amadeus, who went through the retreat passably well
- August 22 Short retreat at Newcastle-under-Lyne, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 25 August. The missionary received into the Church one gentleman and reconciled 20 or 30 who had been out of the church for many years
- September 7 Retreat to the Benedictine nuns at Caverswell Castle, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 14 September About ten years after, the nuns left this place and went to Oulton, near Stone, where they built a splendid convent and church, which goes now by the name of Saint Mary's Abbey. At the same time that Father Dominic was giving the retreat to the nuns, he went every day to preach at Newcastle-under-Lyne in the school room. In this place he received four Protestants into the Catholic Church.
- September 23 Public retreat at Stafford, by Father Dominic. Ended 29 September Here also Father Dominic reconciled to the Church more than 20 persons who had been out of the Catholic Church for many years.

- September 28 Father Vincent of Saint Joseph (Grotti) was clothed with the holy habit of the Passionists at Monte Argentaro, being already priest and canon in his native city of Viterbo. He came to England in 1846 not long after his profession. Father Vincent had been Rector, Consultor, and Vice-Provincial, in this Province. In 1863 he returned to Italy and was employed in giving missions and retreats as he had done for many years in these countries. Whether in England or Italy his missions were always most beneficial to poor sinners. In the course of these annals we shall have occasion to write about our excellent religious. He died in Rome on 8 September 1883.
- October 27 Public retreat at Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 3 November. He received into the church three Protestants, one of them being a Methodist preacher.
- Nov. 3 Public retreat at Wolverhampton by Father Dominic and Father Amadeus. Ended on 10 November. Five Protestants were received into the Catholic Church.
- Nov. 17 Public retreat at Rugely, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 24 November. Three Protestant women were received into the Catholic Church by the missionary.
- Nov. 24 Mission at Saint Giles, Cheadle, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 1 December.
- December 8 Public retreat at Newcastle-under-Lyne, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius.. Ended 15 December.
- December 15 Public retreat at Cresswall, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 23 December.
- December 25 Renewal of the retreat at Newcastle-under-Lyne by Father Gaudentius. Ended 28 December. The attendants at this short retreat were almost all Irish.

We have said above that it was almost incredible how father Dominic and his two companions could give so many retreats or missions during the space of twelve months. If Father Dominic had twelve or fifteen missionaries at his disposal they would scarcely have been enough to supply to all the requests for missions made to Father Dominic, by Bishops or priests, not only in Staffordshire, but throughout England.



## 1845

- Jan 5            Father Ignatius of the Infant Jesus (Paoli) was clothed in the Novitiate house at Lucca. He came to England in 1857, having been elected Provincial of the Anglo-Hibernian province, at the General Chapter held in Rome. He was our Provincial for several years, and Provincial Consultor. He was obliged to return to Rome, having been elected General Consultor. In 1870 he was made Bishop of Nicopolis, and a few years after he was appointed the first Archbishop of Bucharest. He died at Vienna rather suddenly on the 27th February 1885, and was buried in Bucharest. We shall have great deal to say about Father Ignatius in the proper places.
- Jan 5            Public retreat at Farnworth, Lancashire by Father Amadeus. Ended on 11 January. During this retreat Father Amadeus received nine converts into the Catholic Church.
- Jan 12          Father Francis Xavier of Saint Paul (McEvoy) was clothed at Aston Hall, near Stone. Father is a fear was a very good and learned man, but very unwise in leaving the Congregation, which he did in 1855 for frivolous causes.
- Jan 19          Public retreat at Bilston, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 26 January.
- Feb. 8          Mission at Saint Nicholas, Liverpool, by Father Dominic and Father Amadeus. Ended 16 February.
- Feb 28          Public retreat at Swynnerton Park, near Stone, Staffordshire by Father Gaudentius. Ended 7 March.
- March 8        Public retreat at Derby, by Father Dominic and Father Gaudentius. Ended 17 March. During the retreat sixteen Protestants were received into the Catholic Church.
- April 3         The Eighteenth General Chapter was held in Saints John and Paul, Rome. The Most Reverend Father Anthony of Saint James was re-elected General of the Congregation.  
At this Chapter the feast of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga was made a feast of Rule, especially for our students
- April 18        On this day a Belgian priest was clothed at Aston Hall and took the name of Father Alphonsus of Saint Francis. After some time he got tired of the religious life as too severe for him, and left us in the month of July following. His family name was John Francis Brasseur. At his departure he generously presented the community of Aston Hall with a set of very handsome vestments viz.: a cope, Chasuble, and Dalmatics, all of gold cloth. Also, the works of Saint Gregory the Great in four volumes, Dr Calmets commentary on the Scriptures, and various other useful works. All these useful presents where indeed most acceptable to the poor community.  
We may as well mention here some other donations given by our kind friends. Mrs Louisa Canning present to Father Dominic a complete set of vestments for high Mass, a Remonstrance, and Thurible for Benediction. In Boulogne, Father Dominic was presented by Reverend Mr Haffreingne with a chasuble of silk, and

later on, the same the Reverend gentleman gave two other chasubles and a silver Chalice. All these things were most acceptable, as the two chapels viz. that at Aston Hall, and Stone, were not over- abundantly provided with church furniture.

- April 20      Public retreat at Sutton-Coldfield, near Birmingham by Father Gaudentius. Ended 27 April.
- April 29      On this day two other Italian Fathers arrived at Aston Hall, to the great consolation of the good Father Dominic, who at this very time was laid up, very ill by over work  
Before we come to speak about the two Fathers who arrived on this day, it will be necessary to remark that for about three months of this very year our dear Father Dominic suffered severely from illness, arising from the fatigues of his continual labours in the missions and spiritual exercises. Hence when these two young fathers came to help him he wrote "Our hearts received fresh consolation by the arrival at the Retreat of Aston Hall of our Fathers Constantine of Saint Francis de Sales and Marcellinus of Saint John the Evangelist. They arrived on 29 April after a safe and prosperous voyage."  
The former of these Fathers had held for some time the office of Vice-Master of Novices in the Novitiate of Saint Joseph at Monte Argentaro. Afterwards he was summoned to Rome by the Most Reverend Father General, and thence dispatched by him to England in order to fulfil the office of Master of Novices there. On his first arrival he was unable by reason of his ignorance of English properly to instruct the novices, and in consequence was made Vice-master, and Father Dominic continued to discharge the office of Master till Father Constantine was able to understand a little English.  
The Reverend Father Marcellianus, his companion was a very young man who had only just completed his course of studies and had been a member of the community of Saints John and Paul in Rome. Both these Fathers beyond all expectation began to preach in English within less than four months, although on their arrival they could not speak a single word of the language.  
Such favourable commencement gave great hopes to Father Dominic of a happy success was alas! These two good Fathers who indeed possessed the true spirit of a Passionist, did not live long to realise the hopes Father Dominic had anticipated. Father Marcellinus died on the fourteenth March 1847 in Northfield, near Stroud, being Superior of the new House which had been opened the year before, and Father Constantine died at Aston Hall on 15 July 1848, being also Superior of the House. The loss of these two promising Fathers caused great affliction to Father Dominic and his companions.
- May 2      Father Bernard of the Blessed Virgin Mary (O'Loughlin) was clothed at Aston Hall, Stone, as lay brother at first, but after some time continued his novitiate as a clerk. It seems that the saintly Father Dominic was guided by the Divine Spirit, in letting Father Bernard to go on as cleric. This Father even before his ordination had manifested all the signs of being called to be a priest. He has done great deal of good as a missionary and as Superior in after time. We shall have a great deal to say of what this good Passionist has done for the good of the Province, and I may say, of the congregation.
- May 4      Public retreat at Walsall, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 11 May.

- May 7           Retreat to the ordinandi at Saint Mary's College, Oscott, near Birmingham, by Father Dominic. Ended 16 May.  
Father Dominic was also appointed, by the Bishop, to examine the students for ordination. The bishop was Dr Wiseman.
- May 22           This year the feast of Corpus Christi as well as the Sunday within the Octave were celebrated with great solemnity at the retreat of Saint Michael, in Aston Hall. Both these days were celebrated with great pomp, bearing the Most Holy Sacrament, in triumphal procession round the grounds of the Retreat. There was a very large crowd of spectators both Catholic and Protestant. It is supposed to have been more than 2,000 people witnessing so magnificent a spectacle which never had been seen before. Probably it was the first religious ceremony of this kind celebrated in this unhappy country in so public festive and solemn a manner since the so-called Reformation.  
We abstain from describing the order of the procession and of mentioning the principal persons who took part in it, but I will not omit to mention that two temporary altars were erected in the grounds splendidly decorated with natural flowers and green boughs, with many candles from which altars Benediction was solemnly imparted to be kneeling crowds.  
To triumphal arches, made of evergreen, were erected along the way, where the procession would pass. One of these arches was put up by the young men of the Congregation of Aston, and the other by those of Stone, and it was most edifying to see these good and fervent young men, of Aston and Stone, vie with each other who would make it best.  
These two annual processions were kept up as long as we were at Aston, and the decorations and the solemnity with which they were kept were improving every year more and more. The singing of the "Pange Lingua" and the "Lauda Sion" were the one by the singers of the two choirs and the two bands belonging to Stone and Aston accompanied the singing with their instruments.
- May 26           Retreat to the clergy of the Lancashire district, at Bishop Eton, (now house of the Redemptorist Fathers) near Liverpool by father Dominic. Ended 31 May.
- June 1           Public retreat at Woodlane, Yoxal, Burton-on-Trent, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 8 June.
- June 15          Public retreat at Leek, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 22 June.
- June 16          Retreat to the Benedictine nuns, at Princethorpe, Warwickshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 25 June.
- June 26          Short retreat to the young ladies (educandae) at the above mentioned Benedictine Convent of Princethorpe by Father Dominic. Ended 28 June.
- June 29          Father Dominic preached two sermons at Leamington (being the feast of Saints Peter and Paul) after he had concluded the retreats at Princethorpe.
- June 29          Public retreat at Stone (our chapel) by Father Gaudentius. Ended 6 June. Many people from Aston attended the retreat, both chapels belonging to the same parish.

- July 7 Retreat to the clergy of the Western District (now the diocese of Clifton) At Prior Park, Somersetshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 19 July.  
On returning home, part of the train where Father Dominic sat was smashed to atoms by a collision of two trains, but the carriage, where Father Dominic was, escaped untouched by almost a miracle. "Deo Gratias."
- July 13 Retreat to the clergy of the Central District (now Birmingham Diocese) at Saint Mary's College, Oscott, by Father Dominic. Ended 12 July.  
N.B. "Errata corrige" the retreat at Oscott began on the 7 and the other at Prior Park the 13th.
- July 20 Public retreat at Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 27 July.
- August 6 Retreat to the Presentation Nuns at Manchester by Father Dominic. Ended 15 August. Father Dominic gave also an extra sermon every day to the orphans. One of them, who was Protestant, was received into the Catholic Church.
- August 10 Public retreat at Macclesfield, Cheshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 18 August. During this retreat the missionary received into the Catholic Church twelve Protestants. More than 300 Catholics who had been out of the church were reconciled. Some of them made their first communion, been 50, and some 70, years old. Most of the 300 were poor Irish.
- September 7 Clothing of Brother Andrew of the Assumption (Smith) at Aston Hall. He made his profession on the 6th of the same month of the following year. Being ripe for heaven almighty God took him to himself on 25 March 1848. He died at Aston Hall in order of sanctity. Father Dominic had already begun to write the life of this saintly lay brother, but his own death, which happened in August 1849, deprived us of such edifying life.
- September 7 Mission at Lane-end, Newcastle-under-Lyne, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 21 September  
During this mission sixteen Protestants were received into the Catholic Church, and more than 50 Catholics, principally Irish, were reconciled to the church, who had been away from it for many years.
- September 28 Mission at Saint Mary's, Congleton, Cheshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 5 October. Two Protestants were received into the Catholic Church by the missionary.
- September 29 On this day, the Feast of the glorious Archangel Saint Michael, Patron Saint of the Church and Retreat of Aston Hall, Father Dominic solemnised it by receiving into the Catholic Church Mr Dalgairns, one of the companions of Dr Newman who had come to Aston for that purpose.
- September 29 On the same day that Mr Dalgairns was received into the church Father Dominic laid aside the burden of the Mastership of Novices, which he had till then held, and appointed in his place Father Constantine, who at this time was able to speak English well enough to be able to fulfil his duty as Master of Novices.

- October 9      The great Dr Newman (afterwards Cardinal) was received into the Catholic Church by Father Dominic at "Little More", near Oxford, at that time the residence of the same Dr and of several of his followers.  
Before giving the full account of the remarkable event we shall give the date of the reception into the church of some of Dr Newman's followers.
- October 10     Father Dominic received into the church on this day three of the companions of Dr Newman, viz. Messers Saint John, Bowles, and Stanton. They were received at Little More.
- October 11     Father Dominic celebrated Mass in the private oratory of Dr Newman at "Little More" and gave the first Communion to the five gentlemen who had just been received into the Church viz. Dr Newman, Mr Dalgairns, Mr Saint John, Mr Bowles, and Mr Stanton.  
Here we insert the authentic relation of the event given by Father Dominic himself.  
"I arrived at Little More (says Father Dominic) at about eleven o'clock at night, and whilst I was sitting before the fire to dry my wet clothes, the Reverend Mr Newman entered the room, and falling at my feet begged my blessing, and requested me to hear his confession, and to receive him into the church. He made his confession that very night and the Reverend Messrs Bowles and Stanton did the same early the next morning, (October 9th). On the same day these three made their profession of the Catholic Faith in the accustomed form in their private chapel, and this was done with such piety and fervour as exceedingly rejoiced my heart."  
*See Vol. 3 page 276 - most interesting article from Whitehall Review.*  
"This having being accomplished, I gave them the canonical absolution and afterwards conditional baptism to all the converts.  
On the next day I celebrated Mass in their chapel and administered the Holy Eucharist to the Reverend Gentlemen viz. Dr Newman, Saint John Bowles, Stanton, and Dalgairns esq: ".  
It must indeed have rejoiced Father Dominic's heart in having been made the instrument in the hands of God in the conversion of Dr Newman and his companions. This alone was considered by the good Father Dominic a rich recompense for all he had suffered in these three years in working in these countries. Father Dominic knew well that the conversion of such a man as Dr Newman would bring into the bosom of the Catholic Church a great many others and perhaps the conversion of the whole nation.  
Dr Newman and the Reverend Mr Saint John honoured our Fathers with their presence at the Retreat of Saint Michael, Aston Hall, and stayed with them from 31 December 1845 to 2 January of the New Year 1846.  
Father Dominic and his companions were full of joy during these three days and paid every attention to the two converts who in their turn felt great pleasure to be in the company of such fervent servants of God.
- #                 Having mentioned the visit of Dr Newman and his companion it will not be out of place to mention here another visit paid at Aston Hall by another, great friend of Dr Newman, the Very Reverend Father Frederic W. Faber, the Founder of the Oratory in London. We take the account from the book of the arrivals and

departures of those who made the retreat in our house at Aston Hall, and is the following.

"On Friday morning 12 December 1845 Mr Faber (a Parson lately converted from the Anglican establishment) arrived here accompanied by two little boys, his cousins, named William, and James Pitts. He conducted them to this house that they might remain here for some time in retirement and seclusion. They had embraced the Catholic religion without the knowledge of their father who was a staunch and bitter Protestant.

"No sooner did he hear that they had been received into the bosom of the Catholic Church, and had made their first communion, and had been confirmed, then he imprisoned them in their own house: but the boys, seizing a favourable opportunity, escaped by the window and fled to Birmingham, a distance of about seventy miles, to seek their cousin Mr Faber.

"Their father wrote immediately to the different stations on the railway to have them arrested if seen, but they had taken the precaution, difficult as it was to the tender little boys, to travel all the way on foot. They reached Birmingham in safety and found their cousin, but were immediately pursued by their father, who came to Birmingham to look for them, but they lay for some time concealed, and were then transferred to our house, for better concealment.

"They remained with us only five days, being recalled by Mr Faber on Tuesday, 16 December. They seemed to be very downcast and melancholy during their stay here, although they were delighted with being in a religious house, but, poor boys, the forebodings of the future troubled them.

"When recalled by their cousin, they were obliged to return to their father, who was threatening signal vengeance against them." I do not know what became of the two brave sufferers. These are the trials to which the poor converts are exposed: persecutions from their own nearest and dearest to them. May God give these, and to many other confessors of their faith, grace, and strength, courage, and patience, to hold out to the end.

- Nov. 9           Retreat to the students, at Ushaw College, Durham, by Father Dominic. Ended 14 November.
- December 1     Father Charles of saint Andrew (Houban) was clothed with the holy habit of the Novitiate house of Ere, near Tournay, in Belgium. Father Charles was born at Mastergebund, Diocese of Ruremond, in Holland on 11 December 1821. Having completed his novitiate, made his profession on 10 December 1846. In due time was ordained priest and in 1850 came to England with Father Eugene and Father Raymond. After we had made the first foundation in Ireland, at Mount Argus, (1856) Father Charles was sent there "de familia", and there he has been ever since, for more than 30 years.
- Father Charles is highly respected by the people of Dublin, and his name is well known throughout Ireland. The people consider him to be a living saint, and hundreds of them come every day for his blessing, and for asking his prayers. Many are the cures which are said to take place every day by his blessings. It cannot be denied that our dear Father Charles is a saintly Passionist and as humble and simple as a child.

## 1846

- Jan 1 Public retreat at Tamworth, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 11 January.
- Jan 18 Public retreat at Rugely, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 25 January. During this retreat was introduced for the first time since the so-called the Reformation the Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament in this town. The same thing has been introduced in many other places in England, by Father Gaudentius, and other Passionists. At this time we were the only missionary Fathers existing in England.
- Feb 14 Clothing of Fathers Sebastian of the Purification (Enrico) at Monte Argentaro. He came to England from Bordeaux in 1881 when the poor religious had to leave their monasteries and seek refuge in other countries. At last the poor refugee was run over by an express train at Saint Helen's junction on 16 November 1881. (He had come from Boulogne)
- As we may have no occasion of speaking again about Father Sebastian we shall insert here the account of the shocking fatality given by Saint Helen's News Paper.
- "On Wednesday 16 November (1881) the Reverend Father Sebastian Enrico met his death in a most shocking manner at Saint Helen's Junction. The Reverend Gentleman arrived at the station about 10.00 with the intention apparently of taking train for Liverpool. About the same time two trains arrived at the junction, one from Manchester to Liverpool, and the other from Liverpool to Manchester. Without apparently perceiving the Manchester express which was travelling rapidly, Father Sebastian attempted to cross the line. A porter observing the danger to which he was exposed, shouted to him not to cross, but the warning came too late; he seemed to see his perilous position and before he could recover from the perplexity to which it gave rise, the engine of the express struck him, knocking him into the fourfoot and killing him instantaneously. The whole train passed over him with the most terrible result, the body being torn and cut to pieces and part of it scattered along the line.
- The remains were carefully collected and placed in a large sheet and carried to the Commercial Hotel. A number of gentlemen were on the platform when the accident occurred and as may be supposed were greatly affected by it. The express was stopped as soon as possible after the occurrence, but almost immediately afterwards resumed its journey to Manchester. One of the railway officials picked up a gold token and half a crown.
- The deceased gentleman was an Italian by birth and early education. Having finished his studies he was sent to France at the age of 23 where he laboured as a missionary priest for 30 years. About twelve months ago while stationed Boulogne-sur-Mer he was, like hundreds of other priests of the regular orders, cruelly expelled. He decided to seek a home in England, for, as he used to say, he had been so long way from his native place in Italy that he would know scarcely one if he returned to it. When forced to leave Boulogne he made to the headquarters of the Passionists in London, Saint Joseph's, Highgate, and there he remained for nearly nine months. When he arrived in England he knew little or nothing of the English language; but by diligence he had so far overcome this difficulty, that on Sunday the sixth instant he preached in English at Sutton for the

first time; up to the time of his unfortunate death he was unable to speak colloquially in English. He was known in the neighbourhood as the French priest and was well liked and respected by those to whom he had become known during his residence of some three months at the monastery. He was up early, as is the rule of the monastery, on the fated morning and at 6.30 offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. After breakfast he obtained leave of absence for a few hours and went to the station presumably for the purpose of going to Liverpool, and the unfortunate accident occurred which cost him his life. On the evidence of his passport which has been found amongst his papers he was about 54 years of age." On the following day after the accident an inquest was held, and it duly returned a verdict of "accidental death". His mangled body was buried in the churchyard close to our Retreat of Saint Anne, Sutton.

Feb 26 Mission at Chester by Father Gaudentius. Ended 11 March. Two Protestants were received into the Church by the missionary.

March 12 Mission at Glossop, Derbyshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 24 March. At this time Father Gaudentius had acquired great name as a missionary and was of the greatest help to Father Dominic, who having so much to do, at home in teaching students and abroad with the care of Aston Hall, and Stone, and other duties of Provincial, could not have been able to attend everything but especially the missions and retreats which were asked from everywhere.

March 24 Father Dominic took possession of a new Foundation, near Stroud, Gloucestershire, accompanied by one lay brother. Father Marcellinus and Father Anselm, lately ordained priest, followed them after a few days. After a year or more, the Father's changed from Northfield (where Father Marcellinus had died, being Superior) to Woodchester, which place was nearer the spot where Father Dominic had selected for the building of the church. We must give a more lengthy account of this foundation.

### **Opening of the New House, near Stroud.**

At the end of the year 1845 the little community of our first and only Retreat that we had then in these countries, had increased to the number of eleven professed and three or four most promising Novices. The holy observance was kept up with the greatest exactness, and all the religious were most fervent.

They had indeed many privations and had not even those little comforts which would be expected in the foundation of a longer standing. Our poor religious, but especially Father Dominic, had three years of struggling, but they braved them nobly and courageously like our Holy Founder, Saint Paul of the Cross.

Now the time was arrived when the little mustard seed which had been sown on 17 February 1842 and had already begun to take root, should begin to spread its branches in his beloved England, for which our Holy Father and Founder had prayed for so many years.

The time I say was now, and we would begin to go forth and open another retreat wherein should be observed the monastic discipline in another house, and the work for the good of our neighbour to be done in another locality also besides Aston Hall and Stone.



The opportunity was given by the conversion of William Leigh Esq. who having purchased the extensive property of the Ducie family near Stroud Gloucestershire, asked our fathers to come here and open a new house near his own property. This good gentleman as a mark of gratitude to heaven for his singular vocation to the one true religion determined to erect a large church in honour of our Blessed Lady of the Annunciation which should be served by a community of the regular clergy, and having heard that the Passionists of Aston Hall were anxious to have another house in England applied to Father Dominic and offered to him a house which he had hired from a dissenting minister, not far away from his own mansion.

When this clergyman let his house to Mr Leigh he little suspected that his place was to be a receptacle for the professors of Popery. Had he known this, he never would have let his house. When he did find it out he was very much enraged but it was too late to change the contract.

On the eighteenth March this year Father Dominic accompanied by Brother Thomas of Saint Ignatius, a lay brother, went to take possession of the said house, which was called "Northfield House". Fathers Marcellinus and Anselm followed them a few days after. They prepared a room in the house to serve as a temporary chapel and on the 25th of March, Feast of the Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady, Mass was said in it. Blessed day indeed for that vicinity.

Before two months from the foundation of this new house were over the following students were sent there from Aston Hall to prosecute their studies under the direction of Father Dominic himself. The students were Confrater Anselm of Saint Vincent, Confrater Martin of Jesus Crucified, Confrater Francis Xavier of Saint Paul, Confrater Bernardine (afterwards his name was changed into "Bernard" of the Blessed Virgin Mary) to whom were added Father Austin (lately ordained priest) and Brother John of the Passion, a lay brother.

Up to this time the students were obliged to live with the Novices, but now Aston Hall was to be exclusively the Novitiate House, and Northfield the house of study. Whilst the students worked diligently applying to their studies, and the priests working amongst the little flock of Catholics, and making efforts for the conversion of Protestants, active preparations were being made by Mr Leigh to commence the building of a church and monastery at Woodchester after the design of Mr Charles Hansom of Clifton, architect.

A foundation stone, in fact, of the magnificent church was laid by Dr. W. B. Mathorne on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November of this same year.

After some time from the foundation of this new retreat Father Dominic appointed Father Marcellinus to be the Rector of this House, and well he performed his difficult duty. The poor religious had of course their difficulties and trials in many ways. The house in which they lived was very small for a community of ten and it was very damp. Their poverty prevented them from keeping up fires during winter, and the consequence was that the poor Rector for the first began to feel the effects of the dampness, and before two years passed over from the foundation he passed to a better world, lamented indeed by his own brethren as well as by those who knew him. He died as we have said above on the fourteenth March 1848.

Just as it were by chance, whilst I was writing this very page I happened to put my eyes on a book where I found the very matter upon which I had just written. As this will give a clearer information of what I have already mentioned and will

open the way to what I shall say hereafter, I shall copy it as I found it in the said book.

"William Leigh Esq. of Woodchester, near Stroud, being anxious to extend the blessing of Catholic faith to his neighbourhood, decided on establishing a religious community on his property. At the recommendation of Bishop Wiseman he invited Father Dominic, Vice-Provincial of the Passionists, to meet him and to fix on an eligible site for the church and monastery.

"On 9 February 1846 Father Dominic reached Woodchester Park, where he was heartily welcomed by Mr Leigh and his family. A proper selection of the site being concluded on, Mr Leigh, desirous of losing no time, engaged for a temporary accommodation of the community a mansion (I would call it a small house) called Northfield House, Forest Green Village, near Neilworth, about a mile distant from the site of the intended monastery.

"On the 24 of March 1846 Father Dominic in company of Brother Thomas took possession of this temporary abode and in the next day the Feast of the Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady Father Dominic for the first time celebrated the Holy Sacrifice in a room hastily fitted up in the presence of six Catholics; four days later two other Passionists joined them and on the following Sunday they had a public service. Father Dominic delivered a discourse to about 20 Catholics, several of whom had come from distant places.

"For the Holy Week they fitted up for a temporary chapel a large room previously occupied as a dissenting school room and on Palm Sunday Father Dominic preached there several times."

"This zealous Father, writing at a subsequent period, expresses himself thus: -" the concourse of people to our little chapel from the very first has been great, so much so that it could not afford sufficient accommodation. Surely all do not attend with good dispositions; some to criticise, some through curiosity, and finally, some to disturb the devotion of this little congregation. However, with patience, and perseverance we have been enabled to get on.

"Seven Protestants have been received into the bosom of the Catholic Church (the first of whom is already dead and buried where the new church is being erected) many are under instruction and amongst others a person of great piety (Mrs Evans) whp from the first arrival of the religious here has shown a maternal charity towards us."

"By the end of 1846 the community was increased to ten, some were engaged in the affairs of the house - others were occupied in ministering to the spiritual concerns of the rising congregation, and the students in their Theological Studies." In the space of four years viz. from 1846 to 1850 when the Passionists left Woodchester were received by them into the Catholic Church 62 converts. . . . .

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| March 31 | Retreat at Aston Hall, near Stone, by Father Austin of the Mother of God (Edgar) lately ordained priest. Ended 7 April. This was the first mission given by Father Austin.   |
| April 2  | Sermons and confessions but not regular mission or retreat at Leamington, Warwickshire by Father Gaudentius. Ended on 19 April. Probably Father Gaudentius was supplying for the priest, who might be absent, or sick. |
| April 5  | Retreat at Newcastle-under-Lyne, Staffordshire, by Father Amadeus. Ended 11 April.   |

- May 9 Public retreat at Kidderminster, Worcestershire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 19 May. Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament was introduced for the first time in this place.
- May 21 Public retreat at Dudley, Worcestershire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 31 May.
- May 23 Clothing of Brother Alphonsus of Saint Joseph (Zeegers) at Ere, near Tournay, Belgium. He came to England in August 1848. Brother Alphonsus has been and is still (1887) a most useful lay brother, especially when some building must be done in the Province. For some years he was in Bucharest where he built the present Cathedral, where its first Archbishop, Monsignor Ignatius Paoli is buried. Died 2 September 1892.
- June 1 The Holy Father Gregory sixteenth died. He had been very kind to the Passionists, and had offered the mitre to some of them although only one or two of them accepted it.
- June 8 Clothing of Brother Philip of the Holy Ghost (Poyton) at Aston Hall, but did not persevere. He left the Novitiate on his own accord, on the fourth of October. It was of some inconvenience to the small community, but it could not be helped.
- June 14 Public retreat at great Hoywood, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 23 June.
- June 15 Clothing of Brother Henry of Saint Benedict (Bouveroux) at Ere, near Tournay. He came to England on 5 February 1849 where he remained till 1851. He learned the English language very soon, and made himself very useful in many ways. In 1851 he returned to Belgium, and soon after he was called to Rome by the Father General, and was appointed as "Questuante" amongst the English, French and Austrians, to collect means necessary for the Beatification of our Holy Founder. He knew different languages and was very successful in collecting money, especially among the English, French and Germans. Brother Henry is an excellent good religious continuing to this day (1887) to fulfil his duties as collector for the support of the community of Saints John and Paul in Rome.
- June 17 A new Pope was created in the person of Cardinal Mastai and took the name of Pius IX. Pio Nono has been a great Pontiff, and a great benefactor of the Passionists. He Beatified and Canonised Saint Paul of the Cross. He gave to us the sanctuary of the Scala Santa in Rome, and built for us the beautiful Retreat close to the said Sanctuary.
- June 18 On this day our Fathers had the consolation of receiving in their little community at Aston Hall other two of our Fathers, one of whom came from Rome, and the other from Ere, in Belgium. The first was Father Vincent of Saint Joseph (Grotti) a native of Viterbo, who had made his profession on 29 September 1845 in Monte Argentaro. He was priest before he joined our Congregation. Died 8 September 1883.

The other was Confrater Albert of Saint Michael (Opbroek) at Belgian by birth. He had just made his profession at Ere, and was sent to England to join our other students at Northfield House, near Stroud. Left us on 18 November 1857. Father Vincent was left at Aston Hall for some time that he might learn some English, and at the same time that he might help Father Constantine in those things for which the knowledge of the language was not absolutely required. When poor Father Marcellinus (the Superior of Northfield house) had become unable to fulfil the duty of Superior on account of the severe illness, which at the end proved fatal, Father Dominic ordered Father Vincent to go to Northfield and act as Vice- Rector in the place of father Marcellinus.

The number of our religious was slowly but steadily increasing just now and at the end of this year both houses had sufficient number of brethren not only for the carrying on the monastic observance in the Retreat but also to carry on the work of missions and retreats which were asked by the Bishops or Priests of different places. In the mission book, kept at Aston Hall, we find that no less than 20 missions or retreats had been given, the missioners being only three viz., Father Dominic, Father Gaudentius and Father Austin.

Father Amadeus who had helped Father Dominic at some mission or had given some retreat by himself in past years had now been sent back to Italy having become rather strange in his manners especially towards Father Dominic. It seems that the poor man felt very much in being kept back from any office when others, younger than himself, were put forward, as it was the case with Father Constantine, Father Marcellus, and Father Vincent; but he never perhaps reflected that being “minus habens” was not able to hold any responsible office as Superior, Master of Novices, or even the office of Vice-Master of Novices. When Father Dominic saw that Father Amadeus had rendered himself useless for the work thought better to send him back to Italy and be of some use there by attending at least to the regular observance of our rules.

- June 25      Public retreat at Bollington, near Macclesfield, Cheshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 2 July.
- July 16      Mission at Stockport, Cheshire, by Father Gaudentius, and Father Austin. Ended 2 August.
- Aug. 6        Public retreat at Doncaster, Yorkshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 18 August.
- Aug. 27      Public retreat at Blackbrook, Lancashire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended September 8th.
- September 10 Public retreat at Ashton, in the Willows, Lancashire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 22 September
- September 13 Clothing of Confrater Alphonsus of the Infant Jesus (Montgomery) at Aston Hall. After three months of Novitiate, finding himself unable to stand the austerities of our life, with sorrow of heart the poor novice was obliged to leave the Novitiate. Afterwards he became a secular priest, and has been always very much attached to the Congregation of the Passion, and most kind to any of our Religious, whether priest or lay brother.

- October 1 Public retreat at Selby, Yorkshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 18 October. The missionary received fourteen Protestants into the Catholic Church.
- October 26 Clothing of Reverend Father Charles of the Redeemer (Herdiel) a Bavarian priest. After a month or so he left the Novitiate, finding our life too severe for them.
- Nov 1 Retreat at Aldenham Park, Bridgenorth, Shropshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 14 November.
- Nov 26 The Foundation Stone of the new church at Woodchester, which we mentioned above, was laid and blessed on this day, by Dr Ullathorn. The spot where the church was to be built had been selected by Father Dominic himself. The ground upon which the church stands now, as well as the expenses of the building of it, would be defrayed by W. Leigh esq. of Woodchester Park, near Stroud, the same gentleman who had brought the Passionists here. The work began in earnest on this very day and was completed in three years. It was consecrated in 1849 not long after the death of poor Father Dominic, who had indeed seen the said church completed, but did not witness its opening and consecration. We shall speak at more length when we come to describe its consecration.
- December 3 Mission at Salford, Manchester, by Father Gaudentius and Father Austin. Ended 21 December. The missionaries received five converts into the church.
- December 28 Short retreat to the Sisters of Mercy, at Mount Vernon, Liverpool, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 1 January 1847.

For more than a year our venerated Father Dominic being engaged in teaching our students at Northfield, and having the whole weight of the infant Province on his shoulders to his great grief and sorrow, could not attend the work of the missions or retreats so dear to his heart.

After the ordination, however, of one of the students being considered competent to teach Father Dominic gave him the task of teaching in his place, and in February of the following year he (Father Dominic) began again to give missions and retreats.

## 1847

- Jan 3 Mission at Saint Mary's, Muberry St., Manchester, by Father Gaudentius, and Father Austin. Ended 18 January. During this mission 30 Protestants were received into the Catholic Church by the missionaries.
- Jan 5 The Honourable and Reverend George Spencer was clothed with the holy habit of the Passionists in the Novitiate House at Aston Hall, taking the name of Father Ignatius of Saint Paul the Apostle. After having worked incessantly for the conversion of England in missions, retreats, and occasional sermons throughout England, Ireland and Scotland; after having led a life of a true Passionist and true imitator of the Holy Founder, Saint Paul of the Cross, he died suddenly at

Carstairs, Scotland, on 1 October 1864 in odour of sanctity. Father Pius "a Spiritu Sancto" wrote a beautiful and edifying life of our beloved and saintly father Ignatius. In the course of these annals we shall have occasion of speaking very often about Father Ignatius.

- Feb 4            Clothing of Father Aloysius of Jesus (Bamber) at Aston Hall. The ceremony of the clothing was performed by Fr. Ignatius, who had been clothed a month ago, consequently being only a novice himself. Father Dominic who had power to appoint the officiating priest at the clothing of another, selected Fr. Ignatius, (who was already a priest) on account that the novice had been his own spiritual subject in Oscott College, when he (Father Ignatius) was the Spiritual Director of the students there.  
In due time Confrater Aloysius made his profession and was ordained priest. He had always a great love for the Congregation and was most exact and punctual in the observance of our holy rules. He had been Superior, Vice-Rector, and was one of the first who had been sent to Paris for the foundation in that city, where he died on 30 March 1869, being Vice-Rector of that Retreat.
- Feb 9            Annual retreat to the community at Aston Hall, Stone, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 16 February.
- Feb 17          Mission at Saints Mary and Joseph, Poplar, East London, by Father Dominic and Father Gaudentius. Ended 28 February.  
After a year and more at that Father Dominic had not appeared at missions or retreats on account of his being engaged in teaching the students and . . . . he took up again the missionary life without of course omitting the other duties of his office, of Provincial, and local Superior.
- March 4        Mission at Virginia Street, London, by Father Dominic and Father Gaudentius. Ended 18 March.
- March 25      Retreat at Saint Mary's, Oscott College, near Birmingham, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 30 March. Dr Wiseman gave one instruction every day during the retreat.
- April 1        Retreat at Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 10 April. Ten Protestants were received into the Catholic Church by the missionary.
- April 3        Public retreat at Aston Hall to our own Congregation by father Dominic. Ended 10 April. As long as Father Dominic lived he always gave a public retreat at Aston or Stone, for the people under our care. If he could not give it himself, he always appointed someone else in his place.
- April 26      The number of Catholics at Aston and Stone was now increasing very fast. The chapel in Stone had become too small to accommodate the increasing congregation there, although our Fathers gave them two Masses every Sunday and days of obligation, and a great many more were coming to Aston on these days for want of room in the chapel at Stone, hence the little chapel in Aston also became too small and there was no other chance but to begin at once the building of a church in Aston Hall.

Our Fathers were very poor and not able to undertake such a work which required a very good sum of money which they had not in their possession, but Almighty God came to their assistance by sending them some good benefactors who assisted them generously. I have no record of the names of these benefactors, but God will not forget them. I found only the name of our good friend Mr Monteith of Carstairs, Scotland, a convert, great friend of Father Ignatius Spencer, who gave £25, promising to give the same amount of the end of the year. The good gentleman did in reality give more than double, at different times, of what he had promised.

- April                    On 22 April this year Mr Hansom (architect) concluded a contract with Mr Grant (painter) and Mr Turner (builder) both from the town of Stone, in the name of Father Dominic. A contract was signed for the building, at present, of the nave, and north aisle of the new church for the sum of £1,250. They lost no time. The work happily began on the very following day after the signing of the contract which was on 26 April 1847. The foundation of the new building having been brought to the level of the ground, the Right Reverend Dr Walsh and Dr Wiseman with his Secretary came to Aston Hall to perform the solemn ceremony of the blessing and laying of the cornerstone of the said church. The ceremony was performed by Dr Walsh and the sermon was preached by Dr Wiseman in the presence of the neighbouring clergy and a large assemblance of Catholics as well as Protestants.
- April 29                Clothing of Brother Felix of Saint Joseph (Callaghan) at Aston Hall. In due time he made his profession, but not long after, he began to throw up quantity of blood, by which he was rendered unable to give any help to the community. He died on 14 November 1849 in the same Retreat of Aston Hall. It seems that his death was accelerated by the terrible shock he had at the news of the sudden death of our beloved Father Dominic.
- May 10                 Retreat to the Benedictine nuns at Caverswell, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 20 May.
- May 13                 Public retreat at Stafford, by father Gaudentius. Ended 25 May.
- June 1                 On this day, (*\*\*an error – see end of this day’s entry!!!!*) feast of the Ascension, Father Dominic took possession of a new house called Poplar House, situated in West-End, Hampstead, London, which had been offered by our kind friend and patron Dr Wiseman, afterwards "Cardinal". Before we proceed, let me say a few words about the great man, and luminary of the English Prelates, Dr Wiseman. Our Congregation, but especially our Province, is bound by a tie of eternal gratitude to Cardinal Wiseman. He was the instrument chosen by God for introducing the Passionists into England. No sooner was he consecrated bishop of “Malipotamus in Partibus”, and had been appointed Coadjutor to Dr Walsh of the Central District, than he invited us to it, and after many difficulties which had to be overcome, put us in possession of the first house in England viz. Aston Hall, as we have already mentioned.
- Four years later he introduced us to Mr W Leigh and induced him to give us a house and build for us a Church at Woodchester. Then as soon as he had been appointed Vicar Apostolic in the London District, this excellent Prelate gave us

the third foundation in his own district of London. In the month of January 1848, Dr Wiseman wrote to Father Dominic asking him whether he could furnish him some subjects to assist in giving missions in London to the poor Irish people. Amongst other things he wrote thus "I will give myself no rest, till I have found a house for the Passionists in my district. "It was not long before this promise was realised.

At the beginning of Lent of the same year 1848 Dr Wiseman wrote again to Father Dominic to say that he had succeeded in finding a house, very well suited for our Congregation, in the neighbourhood of London, and he wished Father Dominic to come and look at it. About the middle of Lent the same Father Dominic went to London where he was received by Dr Wiseman with great kindness and went to see the house which was called Poplar House, West End, Hampstead. Father Dominic found the house perfectly suited for us for the reason that although not far from the City of London, it stands in a beautiful solitude, where nothing could be seen but trees and sky.

The house itself was sufficiently large to contain a good community of religious, and though there was no chapel yet there was a handsome large room which could easily be converted into a chapel. Besides this house was surrounded by an extent of good fertile ground with a garden and a meadow sufficient enough to feed two cows, which is a thing indispensably necessary for a religious community, so that everything suited our circumstances.

But what pleased Father Dominic above all was that in this place we would not have the charge of a parish attached to the new house, but would be entirely free in the same way as we are in Italy, and thus prepare ourselves for missions and retreats, and help, of course, the Parish Priests if our services where required.

Father Dominic therefore with the most lively sentiments of gratitude, expressed to Dr Wiseman the satisfaction which would give him and his brethren to accept the new foundation. Dr Wiseman then told him to be ready to come at his first call which would be as soon as he would have made some arrangements and overcome some small remaining difficulties. The rest about this foundation will be inserted in the proper place, which is on Ascension Thursday of 1848 and not of this year, as erroneously we have stated in the beginning of this paragraph.

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| June 10 | Retreat at Wolston (Woolston), near Warrington, Lancashire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 23 June.  |
| June 14 | Retreat to the clergy of the Lancashire District at Bishop Eaton, near Liverpool, by Father Dominic. Ended 18 June.   |
| July 3  | Retreat to the clergy of the London district (half of them) at St. Clement's College, London, by Father Dominic. Ended 9 July.                                    |
| July 10 | Retreat to the other half of the clergy of the London district, at St. Clement's College, London, by the same Father Dominic. Ended 17 July.                      |
| Aug. 6  | Retreat to the Benedictine nuns at Saint Benedict's Priory, Colwich, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 15 August.   |
| Aug 7   | Clothing of Brother Joseph of Saint Francis (Van Riet) at the Novitiate house of Aston Hall, near Stone. In due time made his profession. Brother Joseph was born |



at Aston in Flanders, in October 1814. Consequently he had to be dispensed from the age. He has been a very good religious and for many years has been collecting arms(?) for the support of the religious, giving always good example wherever he went. He is and has been always a great lover of holy Poverty. At present (1887) is very much broken down and is a regular invalid. Died at Saint Mary's, Harborne, on Monday 25 March 1889. R.I.P.

- Aug 16           Retreat to the Benedictine nuns and Educande at Princethorpe, Warwickshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 25 August. Father Dominic gave an extra special instruction daily to the educandae, or young ladies.
  
- Aug 30           Retreat to the Wilfridites (the then Father Faber's community) at Saint Wilfrid's, Cotton Hall, near Cheadle, Staffordshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 8 September. Father Faber and his fervent companions had built a splendid church in this place and had enlarged the old building, which was called Cotton Hall. They had a very nice community when Father Dominic gave them the spiritual exercises. The Missioner was very much edified at the fervour, devotion and piety of the good Fathers, and Brothers. Three years after this retreat and one year after the death of Father Dominic, viz. 1850, this very house and church were given up by the saintly Father Faber to the Passionists. We shall give the particulars in its proper place.
  
- September 13   Retreat to the clergy of the York district, at York, by Father Dominic. Ended 18 September
  
- October 18      Retreat to the Benedictine nuns, and educandae, or young ladies, at Winchester, Hampshire, by Father Dominic. Ended 26 October. An extra instruction daily to the young ladies was given by the indefatigable good missioner. It is indeed wonderful how the saintly Father Dominic could endure such constant labours and without intermission. He had just concluded the retreat to the clergy at York this very morning, and we see him beginning another in the evening of the same day, at Winchester.
  
- November 7     Retreat at Ushaw college, to the students, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 12 November.
  
- November 18    Public retreat at Billinge, Wigan, Lancashire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 4 December.
  
- November 29    Retreat to the Benedictines at Hammersmith, London, by Father Dominic. Ended December 8th.
  
- December 9     Retreat (principally for the ordinandi) at Saint Mary's College, Oscott, near Birmingham, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 17 December.

During this year, England was visited by a most severe scourge, that is to say "Malignant Fever". Several of our Fathers at Aston Hall were attacked by it in succession. About the feast of Corpus Christi Father Vincent for the first, was taken ill, though it did not appear how the infection had reached him. He had scarcely well recovered when Father Ignatius (Spencer) was taken with it on 11

July. Although a novice, he had been employed in attending the sick, in the workhouse at Stone, where numbers of the poor Irish especially, lay in a wretched state. This work fell upon the poor novice, as Father Gaudentius was out on missions, and Father Constantine (the Superior) was already in a feverish state, which would have made it peculiarly dangerous for him to go near the patients. As soon as Father Gaudentius returned from the mission, he joined the other two Fathers, namely Father Dominic and Father Ignatius, in taking care and assisting the sick. But he also (Father Dominic) was struck down with a fever, and next Father Ignatius himself was taken ill. The poor novice had been dragging himself in the workhouse, with the malady already in his system, but the crisis came and was prostrated by the pestilence, after administering the last rites of the Church to many of the victims of the pestilence. He gets a very malignant attack and in a few days is “ad portas mortis”. He receives the Viaticum and Extreme Unction, makes his profession, “in periculo mortis”, becomes insensible and is given an hour to live by the doctor. The religious commence a Novena in which they are joined by the people for his recovery and from that moment he began to mend, and thank God, after some time he perfectly recovered.

We may form an idea of this poor community from the little we have said. All the active members except dear Father Dominic were dying or in a feeble convalescence; their resources run out. Few as they were, they have not the least idea of spareing themselves. In their need and I may, say in their distress, charitable friends come to their assistance and amongst the rest Earl Spencer (Father Ignatius’s brother) sent a handsome sum of money to pay the doctor's expenses. It is remarkable that although every one of the Fathers except (as we said above, Father Dominic) had been struck down by the fever, and every one of them had been “ad portas mortis”, it pleased God that we should not suffer the loss of one.

Before we conclude the records of this year we must say a few words about the building of the church at Aston Hall, whose foundation stone had been laid on 26 April of this year, 1847. The building did not advance so rapidly as was expected, owing and to the illness of our poor fathers and also for want of means. Having, however, the use of the old chapel rapidly in the work was of less consequence. After the recovery of Father Ignatius and the other Fathers, great promise of assistance from benefactors, especially from lord Arundel, and Surrey, encouraged us not only two put forward the completion of the Church, but also made us resolve on undertaking to build one wing of the Retreat as well, the present old house being very small for the increasing community.

The amount given by the above mentioned nobleman, is not stated, in deference to his express injunction of secrecy, but his Coat of Arms, appearing in a compartment of the stained glass window above the high altar the church is a token to all that he was a most magnificent helper. On the other side of the same window is a shield, in which the arms of Dr Walsh and Dr Wiseman are quartered together.

## 1848

- Jan 6            Almighty God, in his inscrutable ways, permits that his servants should have their trials and sufferings in abundance, but at the same time he does not deprive them of occasional consolations to encourage them to bear the trials with resignation. No doubt it was a great consolation and encouragement to our good Father Dominic to be the instrument in the hands of God to bring into the bosom of the Catholic Church the famous Dr Newman and many others of his friends, but the consolation which he felt at the entering of Father Ignatius (Spencer) into our Novitiate, but especially at his making the holy Profession on this day as a Passionist was above all encouraging and consoling not only to Father Dominic but to every Passionist of this Province as well as to the whole Congregation. These two great friends, Dominic and Ignatius, had known each other since the year 1831 and both were animated by the same desire for the conversion of England. When Father Ignatius entered our novitiate, being already priest, he would be of the greatest help to Father Dominic in carrying on their desire but at his Profession this desire would be carried to effect by undertaking both the work by them so much desired. The name alone of the honourable George Spencer was enough to attract the attention of Protestants as well as of Catholics. I shall say nothing more here about Father Ignatius except that he was born in London on 21 December 1799. Was received into the church on 30 January 1830. Was clothed with the habit of Passionist on 5 January 1847, and made his holy profession on 6 January 1848. He died suddenly at Carstairs, Scotland, on 1 October 1864 in odour of sanctity. Father Pius a Spiritu Sancto has written a beautiful life of Father Ignatius which was printed by James Duffy, of Dublin, in 1866.
- Jan 13            Public retreat at Richmond, near London, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 30 January.
- Feb 10            Public retreat at West Bromwich, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius and Father Ignatius (Spencer). Ended 27 February. West Bromwich was the first place where Father Ignatius began to work as a Catholic secular priest and in the same place he gave the first mission as a Passionist. During this retreat which in reality was a regular mission, seventeen Protestants were received into the Catholic Church.
- March 8            Public retreat at Northampton by Father Gaudentius. Ended 21 March. During this retreat 22 converts (principally women) were received into the church. The women were instructed and prepared by the nuns, and the men by the missionary.
- March 12            Mission at Webb Street, Towley street, London, by Father Ignatius and Father Gaudentius. Father Gaudentius joined father Ignatius only on 22 March after the retreat at Northampton. This mission which, was a very long one, was held in a hired, large room.
- April 14            Retreat at Saint Mary's College, Oscott, near Birmingham, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 21 April.
- May 4             Public retreat at Cambridge, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 21 May.

- May 14            Clothing of a subdeacon, who took the name of Father Philip of Saint Joseph (Clarke). He did not persevere long, but left the Novitiate and became a secular priest, and a very good one. Has been very kind to the Passionists.
- May 19            Retreat to the Sisters of Mercy, at York, by Father Dominic. Ended 27 May.
- July 10            Retreat to the clergy of the London District, at Saint Edmund's College, London, by Father Dominic. Ended 14 July.
- July 17            Retreat to the clergy of Birmingham district, at Saint Mary's College, Oscott, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 22 July. The last concluding sermon was preached by Father Dominic. Those who heard it testified to have been a magnificent sermon.
- July                On the Feast of the Ascension (which this year fell on 1 June) Father Dominic took possession of the new foundation called Poplar House, West End, Hampstead, London, of which we have already given some information at page 60. We have said there that Dr Wiseman had asked Father Dominic to keep himself ready to take possession of the new foundation at his first call. On 1 June therefore, Dr Wiseman himself accompanied by a secretary took Father Dominic to Poplar House, and there and then the kind Prelate put the Passionists in possession of the house.
- Father Dominic's first thought as soon as the Bishop had gone was to arrange the room where he might say mass. Two days later, Brother Thomas arrived, having been called by Father Dominic. He brought with him what was most indispensable for the chapel, and on the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension, Father Dominic said the first mass, at which assisted ten or twelve persons, besides Brother Thomas who served it. There was no sermon, as Dr Wiseman had requested Father Dominic not to preach in the morning, in order not to intrude on the rights of the Pastor of the parish, but that he might preach in the evening, as that worthy pastor had no sermon or any service in his Church after the 4.00 PM. Father Dominic therefore not only on that first Sunday evening but every other Sunday made a familiar exhortation in the new chapel for the people who attended, unless he was absent from the retreat.
- The Pastor of Hampstead, Reverend Mr Parkinson, invited Father Dominic to give a course of exercises in his chapel at Hampstead, to begin on the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension, and to close on Pentecost Sunday. Father Dominic gladly accepted the invitation and promised to give the retreat, but for reasons which we shall state below, it was deferred to the following week.
- When Father Dominic arrived at the new house there was unfortunately the family of a gentleman by name Bagshawe, a barrister by profession, who had gone to spend some time in the house for the purpose of giving country air to his numerous family, but on the agreement (as Dr Wiseman had told Father Dominic) he had to leave the house immediately on the arrival of the religious community, and to take possession of it without delay.
- Father Dominic saw at once the difficulty there would be in having the family removed, and he was right in one way, but he was acting according the directions given to him by Dr Wiseman. After (Father Dominic) having said Mass in the place prepared for it and the Blessed Sacrament left in the Tabernacle the good barrister went to Father Dominic and told him that the steps he had taken in saying mass there were premature. The house, said he, was not yet free, that there were

many legal difficulties, which although they did not make the title void yet would cause much embarrassment before full possession could be gained; and that if the landlord came to know that it was to be made into a religious house he would either refuse to give the possession, or would cause us some fixation and difficulties: that it was therefore of the greatest consequence that no one should know that we were going to establish there a religious community: that the matter ought to be kept secret, till everything was arranged.

This advice came too late, since it was already known through the village that we were there for the purpose of making a foundation. For this reason the retreat announced to the congregation at Hampstead could not be given according to the promise, and a week was spent in doubt and uncertainty by poor Father Dominic and his companion Brother Thomas. On the feast of Pentecost the same gentleman, the barrister, said that the retreat might be given and that there was no danger of losing the house; only some delay might be feared in taking "free" possession. Father Dominic had consequently began the exercises or retreat in the chapel at Hampstead, on Pentecost Sunday, and concluded them on Trinity Sunday. These exercises, as far as can be judged, were well received by the Catholics of the parish, who came in good number to hear the sermons, and instructions which were given by Father Dominic, twice a day, viz. meditation on the Passion in the morning, and a lecture, followed by a meditation on Eternal Truths.

Our good friend, the barrister, Mr Bagshawe, however did not seem to change his mind, and on the Monday after the retreat was over called again on Father Dominic and told him that it was desirable that he and his companion should quit the house for the present and to return again when the legal difficulties should be got over, which as he said might perhaps be in the spring of the following year 1849. Then said the barrister to Father Dominic "you might come back with your community". Meanwhile he himself, Mr Bagshawe, would take care of the house and make the alterations in it which Father Dominic might desire.

His reverence however showed no disposition to submit to the kind suggestions of Mr Bagshawe, but answered with some firmness that he had come to Poplar House by order of the bishop Dr Wiseman and that nothing but a contrary order from him should be able to remove him, and that if the bishop sent him away of course he would go, but in this case he could not promise to return there at all. He was expecting four of his Fathers from Rome, sent to him by Father General for this foundation and therefore he had need of a house to receive them; and if he could not remain there he would go to Liverpool, where he had been already invited by Dr Brown to found a retreat in his diocese.

Mr Bagshawe seemed not well satisfied at Father Dominic's resolution, hence he began to make apologies about the advice he had given, and begged of him not to put unfavourable constructions in what he had proposed. After this interview Father Dominic went to speak to Dr Wiseman, who had already been biassed by the barrister, and when the Bishop heard from Father Dominic that if you went away from that house he could not promise to return to Poplar House again. The good Prelate therefore not wishing to deprive his Diocese of the services of Father Dominic and of his religious judged it best that the Passionists would remain at Poplar House for the present at least and see what could be done.

On the Feast of Corpus Christi, Mr Bagshawe proposed to Father Dominic another plan which was that he would leave Poplar House and the Bishop would find another in the neighbourhood of Hammersmith where there had been a school of

young ladies which might easily be converted into a retreat for us. The mistress however, who by the by, was nearly 100 years old could not be removed from thence and in case that the house did not suit us we might in a year or so return to Poplar House; but in any way as the case stood we could not remain there till everything had been settled.

No sooner was it rumoured that we were to leave this village than our friends were in consternation, but above all the excellent Mrs Walker was truly inconsolable. When nothing else could be done she offered her own house to Father Dominic, being ready to leave it at his disposal and take another house near for herself. Her husband joined her in offering their house so that Father Dominic almost abandoned the thought even going to see the other house which had been proposed by Mr Bagshawe, where was the old woman who could not be removed and consequently if he took it, even for a short time he would have the poor old lady and her servant maid, to attend her, as part of the community!

More to please Mr Bagshawe than anything else, Father Dominic went to the house and was so badly received by the old granny that he could not even get leave to see the house. He was delighted and greatly pleased at his bad reception as, by this, poor Father Dominic was set free from considerable embarrassment. He returned to Poplar House the same day intending to accept the charitable offer of Mr And Mrs Walker, when to his great surprise, he found that Mrs Bagshawe, the wife of the Pastor, had made up her mind to go away with all her family. She left on 26 June leaving Father Dominic and Brother Thomas in full possession of the house. How the affair of this house ended we shall see in its proper place when we come to speak about the other house at the Hyde.

As soon as we were apparently settled for the time being, God Almighty moved the heart of some charitable persons to help us in our extreme necessities; and first of all the Reverend Mr Morel gave us £10, and Mrs Walker five, besides many useful articles procured for us by his wife, who took such interest in our regard as if we were her own children. Several other persons but especially Mr Stanfield gave us something then and promised to continue his contributions according to his means. So he did, and several others also do the same. In proof of this let us hear Father Dominic himself who wrote this.

"It is now several years since we left Italy (writes Father Dominic) we have never asked for anything except for the purpose of building and yet we have never wanted what was necessary. In this house especially (Poplar House) where we are without a farthing of income from anyone we have seen wonders of Divine Providence. I had set aside £55 to assist in furnishing this house with what was necessary, but being obliged to send away (probably to pay the expenses for the journey of four of our Fathers from Rome) I was left with only £15 and with this sum what could be done? Happily however soon after arriving here a young lady whom I had for some time directed when she was a secular made her religious profession at the Convent of Princethorp, and before her profession left at my disposal £30 which was forwarded to me by the Prioress of the Convent, just when we were in the greatest difficulties for the furnishing of the house. The name of this young lady is Whitgreave."

In the month of October another young lady who was to make her profession in the convent at York, left me £10 in token of gratitude, as she said, for my having on some occasion when I met her calmed some spiritual anxieties or scruples in her mind. Who would ever have expected such succours from these persons? But

"Deus ubi vult spirat", and whereas the resources of this district seemed partly dried up. I have given here three courses of exercises and no one has thought fit to pay the costs of my journey; God however has moved persons to help us from Princethorpe and York! Under this character of coldness which distinguishes the people of this district must not be placed Mr and Mrs Walker nor Mr Hasting who have always shown themselves most affectionate and generous. With the help of the first we have got a stove and a carpet for the Chapel, besides a variety of other things which they give almost every day. The second besides sending me £5 some time back has paid for the brass candlestick for the chapel.

"Another Mr Walker has given £5 and the Miss Walker various little articles as a new black chasuble made at her expense. Several other things have been received for the sacristy, particularly from Miss Byrne who is Mistress of the orphan asylum of Hampstead and who is much attached to us and gives all she can and perhaps even more than she can. Some people have been here (Poplar House) for some days in retreat, but none of these have given a farthing. This is all right." So says the good Father Dominic: but, as I say, this is all wrong, when we take into consideration the great poverty of the little community.

Whilst Father Dominic was doing his best in furnishing the house, chapel and sacristy at the Retreat, in Poplar House, Almighty God sent him another trial which gave him great affliction. The saintly Father Constantine, Master of Novices, at Aston Hall, was taken away from Father Dominic. He died on the fifteenth of this month and year. This was indeed a great blow to Father Dominic but like Holy Job he also exclaimed "Deus dedit, Dominus abstulit . . . sit nomen Domini benedictum". Father Constantine had been a very good religious, possessing the true spirit of Saint Paul of the Cross, and on this account Father Dominic gave to him the office of Master of Novices, being sure that under such Master the youths also would acquire the same spirit of our holy Founder. As Father Dominic was obliged to remain in Poplar House, London, came to the resolution of putting as Superior Father Ignatius at Aston Hall in preference to others, although lately professed. We must remark that Father Ignatius had been acting as Superior and Master of Novices from the beginning of the illness of Father Constantine and had given full satisfaction to the same Father Dominic, as well as to the community under his care. So Father Dominic putting aside any human consideration after having obtained the approbation from the Most Reverend Father General and his Consultors appointed Father Ignatius, Rector and Master of Novices.

This appointment, no doubt, gave a little dissatisfaction to some of the older members of the community, but if we reflect that Father Gaudentius was almost continuously out in missions and Father Louis (the two who had made some complaint) had not acquired yet sufficient knowledge of the English language as to be able to undertake just now of the office of Master of Novices hence there was no alternative for Father Dominic either to give up the foundation in London entirely or appoint Father Ignatius for Aston Hall. He could not be local Superior of both houses at the same time. It is true that Father Ignatius was young in the Congregation, being professed only since the sixth of the last January, but in age he was the oldest in the community (he was 49 years old) had been Spiritual Director of the students in Oscott College, and for several years before he had had the care of a Parish, or Congregation.

- August 6 Retreat to the Sisters of Mercy at Queen's Square, London, by Father Dominic. Ended 15 August.
- August 6 Retreat to the Sisters of Mercy at Saint Mary's, Handsworth, near Birmingham, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 15 August.  
There were 40 nuns in the convent during the retreat. The missionary besides preaching three times every day to the nuns, he preached also several times to about 40 women at the Mercy House, under the care of the Sisters and preached also several times in the public church of the parish.
- August 17 On this day three other Italian Fathers arrived at the new retreat of Poplar House, London. The names of the young Fathers were Father Honorius Maggini, Father Louis Giurlani, and Father Andrew De Angelis, all of them came from Saints John and Paul, Rome. After a few days rest in Poplar House the Fathers were divided; Father Honorius was sent to Northfield, near Stroud, Father Louis to Aston Hall, and Father Andrew was kept at Poplar House. In the beginning of course the young missionaries could only help in saying mass and do the observance inside of the retreat but after a few months they were able to master as much of the English language as to hear confessions and occasionally to give a short sermon in the public chapel. Strange to say, all of them, one after the other, left the Congregation. Father Louis and Father Andrew returned to Italy, and Father Honorius remained a secular priest in England first, and in Scotland afterwards. Father Honorius is at present at Lennoxton; he is one of the few who have acted honourably and justly towards the poor Passionists.
- August 21 Retreat at Hampstead, London, by Father Dominic. Ended 28 August. At this time Father Dominic having another priest for supplying mass (Father Andrew de Angelis) so was enabled occasionally to give retreats in other chapels besides our own, and also to pay a visit to Aston Hall, and Northfield.
- September 1 We have said above (page 64) that at Aston Hall we were in progress of building a church and part of the house by adding a wing to the old Hall, but in consequence of the illness of several of the Fathers and for want of means building was not so rapidly progressing.  
Several manufacturers as we remarked gave us magnificent donations, but when you have to do with bricks and mortar, money goes as fast as the two materials necessary for the building. However, as it had been determined to go forward with the building of the church and part of the house it was necessary that vigorous exertions should be made, to raise money for that purpose, till its completion. Father Ignatius who had taken as much interest in it as Father Dominic himself, even during his Novitiate, by writing letters for this end, having now been appointed Superior of the same House, he started for a begging mission in person, having the permission and blessing of Father Provincial, Dominic, who had every confidence in Father Ignatius's good success.  
He visited Birmingham, where Dr Walsh handed him as his contribution £20. Then he went to Leamington, Nottingham, Derby, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Newcastle-under-Lyne, Liverpool, Manchester, Preston, London & . . . In London alone he got £300. Then he went to Ireland, and there also he was most successful notwithstanding the recent visitation of famine which had almost devastated the whole country.



By these means and the already mentioned contributions from our kind benefactors the work of the buildings was kept up although now and then with some occasional interruption. At the end of this year (1848) the front of the retreat had been built and covered in, and the church with its tower and steeple was also completed, although only in spring of the following year the steeple was seen clear of scaffolding, offering a beautiful spectacle to the country all around.

- September 2 Retreat to the Ecclesiastical students at Saint Patrick's College, Carlow, Ireland, by Father Ignatius (Spencer). Ended 7 September This was the first missionary work done by the Passionists in Ireland. At that time Father Ignatius, finding himself in Ireland, collecting as we have said above for the building which was going on at Aston Hall, he was requested to give the retreat mentioned above. He preached four times every day to 70 students and professors. At that time we had no house in Ireland and indeed we were scarcely known by the general public of Ireland but in 1856 we succeeded in opening a house at Mount Argus, Dublin, and ever since we became to be well known by all.
- September 7 Retreat to the secular students at Saint Patrick's College, Carlow, by the same Father Ignatius. Ended 10 September At this retreat also Father Ignatius preached four times a day to about 60 boys.
- September 24 Retreat at Middleton, Shropshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 1 October. The larger number of attendants were Protestants. The Catholics were only about 40 in all. Very seldom they had mass and for these three past years they never had seen a priest.
- October 18 Clothing of Thomas O'Behan who took the name of Brother Michael of the Seven Dolours. In due time he made his holy profession and has been employed more or less in questing for the support of the religious, especially at Mount Argus, Dublin, where he has been and is still (July 1887) from the foundation of that Retreat (it took place in 1856) namely 31 years ago.
- October 26 Public retreat at Rugely, Staffordshire, by Father Gaudentius. Ended 9 November.
- Nov: At the beginning of November of this year Dr Wiseman went to our house Poplar House to see Father Dominic but he did not find him there having just gone two Northfield for some affairs connected with the duty of his office of Provincial. As soon as however Father Dominic returned home, went immediately to his Lordship's house, to apologise for the disappointment. Dr Wiseman received him with great cordiality and said "now we are almost sure of getting possession of the house" (He meant that place called the Hyde, of which we took possession on 16 April 1849) but the object for which Dr Wiseman was anxious to meet Father Dominic was not only about the new place, but especially to speak about the parochial duties of which he was not in favour, but wished us to be entirely free as we are in Italy. But the present circumstances of this country were such that this plan could not in any way be carried out. The surrounding parish priests, said Dr Wiseman, could not endure that any of their parishioners should attend a Church of those Regulars who had not parish duties. At any rate, it was settled at present that Father Dominic should take possession of the Hyde, and leave Poplar House

as soon as he was ready. After this interview with the Bishop new obstacles came in the way and poor Father Dominic did not live to see the change.

For the better understanding of the position in which Father Dominic found himself in regard to his taking possession of the house at the Hyde we shall insert here what Father Dominic himself wrote about it. "Scarcely had we arrived here (he speaks about Poplar House) when we began to hear the complaints of the pastor of the neighbouring chapel of Hampstead, who said that we got our profit without having any burden: that if we wish to have any people attending our chapel be ought to have a parish with the burdens belonging to it: that it was not fair that he should have the burden, and we the profit. Dr Wiseman however stood firm as long as he could, and wished that we might have no Parochial responsibilities so we might be more free to go wherever the Bishop or Pastors would require our services. Father Dominic was of the same opinion, but seeing that the complaints continually increased and that it would be impossible to live in peace without taking the care of souls, he (Father Dominic) was advised by our friends to come to this step by submitting to circumstances, otherwise we should have excited of war from the ordinary pastors, not only against ourselves, but also against other religious communities.

"Things came to such a pass that Father Dominic himself begged Dr Wiseman to reconsider the matter in order not to expose himself and us to a general persecution. In consequence of this proposal of Father Dominic, the good Bishop sent for him to meet him in the house of a good Catholic of Hampstead, where they met the Reverend Mr Parkinson, the pastor of Hampstead, who made a division of his parish, assigning to us all the Catholics who lived below Finchley Road and keeping for himself those who lived above this road. So that to us there remained all the poorer people scattered over an immense extent of country, to him belonged the few rich people of Hampstead.

"This transaction gave great satisfaction to the Reverend Mr Parkinson, at the same time it excited feelings of compassion for us who had the "bones" left us to gnaw, while the "flesh" was reserved for the Reverend gentleman and his successors. But see the Providence of God: the gentle people of Hampstead became more attached to us while they were equally alienated from their natural Pastor."

N.B. the whole of this account about the foundation of Poplar House had been written by Father Dominic himself and Father Ignatius Spencer had translated it into English from the Italian. At the end of this translation there is a short note written by Father Ignatius which runs thus. "Thus far has been translated from what was written in Italian, by Father Dominic, before his death."

In consequence of the arrangement above mentioned Father Dominic being charged with the burden of a most extensive parish very distant from the present habitation of Poplar House, considering himself now bound to take care of his sheep he went for the first time to celebrate mass at the Hyde which was four miles distant from thence. The parishioners however are scattered as far as twelve miles beyond that point. The day when Father Dominic took possession of this new place by celebrating for the first time holy Mass was on 15 April 1849, being Low Sunday.

December 7 Clothing of Patrick Courteney at Aston Hall, who took the name of Confrater Ambrose of the Immaculate Conception. In due time he made his profession and was ordained priest. He had been from the very beginning of his novitiate to the

last very mysterious and very close with his superiors. In the year 1853 when he had finished his studies and had been ordained priest went away and stayed away for good without saying a word to anyone.

December 14 Mission at the Saints Philip and James, Stockport, Cheshire, by Father Gaudentius and Father Joseph Bunn, lately ordained priest. Ended 1 January 1849. The missionaries received 22 Protestants into the Catholic Church.

December: During this year as we have said above three young Fathers had come to England from Rome namely Father Honorius, Father Louis, and Father Andrew. Father Ignatius Spencer (already priest) and Father Aloysius Bamber, have made their profession, the first on the sixth of January and the second on 9 March. Besides these, two of the lay Brothers also had made their profession, viz. Brother Felix Callaghan who died on the fourteenth November 1849, and Brother Joseph Van Riet, who is still alive. At the end of this year the total number of our religious in England was of 20, viz. ten priests, five students, and five lay Brothers. The novices are not included in this number, nor the three who had died this very year, viz. Father Marcellinus, Father Constantine and Brother Andrew Smith, who died in odour of sanctity last March. (See 5 September in 1845). We had just now three houses in England. The first was Aston Hall, the second Northfield near Stroud, and the third Poplar House in London. The House at Ere, in Belgium, was also under the jurisdiction of Father Dominic, forming a Province, which after the death of Father Dominic was called "Anglo-Belgian" Province. At the end of the year the House in Belgium was most flourishing, having several priests, students, and novices. In Belgium our Fathers had not the care of souls, but worked for them in the same way as they do in Italy. But in England we were obliged to take care of Parishes.