

## INSTITUTE HISTORY WORKSHEET

### TOPIC: Mission to England

#### Impact of War/Political Unrest:

- Lingering effects of the Protestant Reformation:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic\\_Church\\_in\\_England\\_and\\_Wales](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_in_England_and_Wales)
- Link to Penal Law article: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11611c.htm> Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829  
Link to information about Edward Petre's life and role in Catholic Emancipation:  
<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/petre-hon-edward-1794-1848>
- Anti-Catholic bigotry in England is part of why our 1<sup>st</sup> community moves from Penryn to Clapham
- Impact of politics on Catholic schools in England: Education Codes of 1862 and 1870

#### Places:

Penryn, Cornwall – 1<sup>st</sup> foundation 1845

Clapham, London – Penryn community transfers there in 1848

Blackburn 1850

Islington Flags, Liverpool Orphanage 1851  
(transfers to Liverpool)

Manchester 1851

Northampton 1852

Wigan 1854

Sheffield 1855

Mt. Pleasant 1855/6

Southwark 1855 (request of Dr. Grant)

St. Helen 1858

Plymouth 1860

Norwich 1864

Stockport 1864

Camberwell 1867

Yarmouth 1867

Birkdale 1868

Everton Valley 1869

Islington 1870

Battersea 1870

Glasgow (Dowanhill) 1894

Leeds 1898

Teignmouth 1900

Dumbarton 1912

Ashtown 1919: purchased when it becomes clear that provinces are coming, need a place for English novitiate



Scotland

Lancashire: Liverpool, Manchester

Greater London

Penryn

### **People & Relationships between them:**

- Mère Constantine: challenged by need for new kinds of adaptability
- Redemptorist Priests: co-workers; Belgian; instrumental in getting us to England
- Sr. Clarie: first superior, 33 in 1845
- Fr. de Buggenoms - superior of the Redemptorist community at Penryn & later Clapham
- Father de Held - Redemptorist, tells Laura Petre of SNDdeN poverty and she makes donations through him; he thinks it might be the order for her; instrumental in bringing SNDdeN to England in 1845
- Sr. Marie Theresia - Postulant Mistress at Namur, replaces Sr. Clarie at Clapham in 1852, later superior at Mt. Pleasant
- Sisters of the Infant Jesus - small order that joins with us at the urging of Fr. de Buggenons-they have convent at Northampton, and when they join us, it becomes ours
- Sr. Aimée de Jésus: makes vows in 1848, sent to Islington Flags, Liverpool as Superior in September 1851; moves community to Mt. Pleasant
- Dr. Grant - Bishop of Southwark, extraordinary confessor of Clapham community
- Fr. James Clare SJ –becomes spiritual director to Mary Elizabeth Towneley, (Sr. Marie des Saints Anges) encourages her vocation, sends her to SNDdeN at Clapham in 1872
- Sr. Mary of St Francis: born Laura Stafford-Jerningham, a.k.a. the Honorable Mrs. Edward Petre
- Sr. Mary of St. Philip - Frances Leshner, starts Mt. Pleasant Training School straight from novitiate & ran it for 50 years
- Sr. Mary of St. Michael - Annie Leshner
- Sr. Marie des Saints Anges - Mary Elizabeth Towneley.

### **Dates & Events:**

- 1829: Catholic Emancipation in England and marriage of Laura Stafford-Jerningham to the Honorable Edward Petre
- 1845: November 8 Sisters leave Namur for Penryn, arriving November 15, Sisters travel in secular dress
- 1846: January - school opens w/50 children – Mary Elizabeth Towneley born the same year
- 1848: June - Laura Petre widowed – begins to consider following vocation she has always felt she had
- 1848: Penryn community moves to Clapham, London
- 1848: October 1 – Day School opens at Clapham
- 1849: January – Boarding School opens at Clapham
- 1850: July 2 – Mrs. Petre arrives at Namur for visit
- 1850: July 3 – Blackburn foundation – thanks to Mrs. Petre's funds
- 1850: August 22 – Laura Petre becomes postulant at Clapham – pays rent on house, purchases new property for community
- 1850: October 21 – Laura reaches Namur
- 1850: November 21 – Laura enters novitiate and receives name Sister Mary of St. Francis
- 1852: September 14 – Sister Mary of St. Francis professes vows – serves as Mistress of Postulants until 1864
- 1856: 1st Catholic Female Training School in England opens at Mount Pleasant
- 1864-1868: Sister Mary of St. Francis serves as Novice Mistress
- 1868-1875: Sister Mary of St. Francis serves as Assistant to Mère Constantine
- 1872: September 8 – 26 year old Mary Elizabeth Towneley enters novitiate at Namur and becomes Sister Marie des Saints Anges (she will be one of the ones present at the examination of Julie's remains on April 9, 1906)
- 1874: September 12 – vows of Sister Marie des Saints Anges
- 1874: November 29 – Sister Marie des Saints Anges named postulant mistress; serves in that role for 40 years
- 1875: December – Sister Mary of St. Francis appointed Superior of Motherhouse and serves in that role until death June 24, 1886
- 1919: Ashdown opens to serve as English novitiate & Provincialate

### **Relationship with Hierarchy & Clergy:**

- Overall seems positive & Collaborative – anti-Catholic bigotry may play a role in that
- Connection with the Redemptorists (they are from Belgium and our co-workers in England)
- Bishop of Namur not keen on SNDdeN going to England (protective)
- Diocese not re-established until 1850

### **Primitive Spirit:**

- Incredible poverty of Sisters in England; Redemptorists having to beg for both their own & SNDdeN Community
- Focus on equality among the Sisters by Mary of St. Francis & Marie des Saints Anges
- Commitment to the poor
- Unity: English Sisters were formed in Belgium until after World War I; bilingual
- Apostolic mobility: some English Sisters served in Belgium almost their whole lives; many Belgian Sisters served in England and Scotland
- Sharing of resources – a lot of our growth EVERYWHERE was enabled by the money brought to the congregation by women who entered from the English upperclass
- Adaptability (accepting Widows, different educational systems)
- Simplicity

### **Spirituality underpinning everything:**

- Sr. Mary of St. Francis praying for Sisters traveling by water (candle lit in her room)
- Sr. Mary of St. Francis has the English Sisters constantly praying before the Blessed Sacrament when Parliament is voting on the Education Act of 1870
- Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament
- Devotion to the Sacred Heart & Mary
- Contemplation in action; seeing God in all things

### **What touched your heart?**

- Generosity of Laura Petre (she didn't just fund the British Houses)
- Justice: she saw a significant portion of the funds coming from the labor of English Catholics – they should be used to help English Catholics
- Marie des Saints Anges' money built 12 secondary schools in England
- Marie des Saints Anges – dealing with machinery; good with carpentry; her patience; her absolute terror of teaching
- Simplicity of these English aristocrats choosing religious life
- Trust of Mère Constantine in these English women
- Resistance on part of Towneley family to Sister Marie des Saints Anges entering
- Marie des Saints Anges asking to make final vows early
- Marie des Saints Anges accompanying Aimée de Jésus on all her travels (including US)

### **New insights?**

- Without the Catholic aristocrats, the Church in England would not have survived.
- Laura Petre (later Sister Mary of St. Francis) donor to Notre Dame before she enters, her fortune pays for much of the expansion in England, she forms the English postulants/novices who enter after her; her money also helps at Namur (building Chapel of the Sacred Heart of Mary)
- Trust in the strength of formation received in the Novitiate –
  - Mary of St. Francis is made Mistress of Postulants shortly after profession – what is not clear is if she serves in that roll only for English Postulants. What is clear is being bi-lingual is required.

- Marie des Saints Anges also made Mistress of Postulants very quickly
  - Mary of St. Philip sent straight to Mt. Pleasant to start Training School
- Why England did not fund Catholic schools through parishes like US did: Catholics too poor, not enough resources (people or finance)
- Practice of training lay teachers to teach in Catholic schools from very early on
- Starting with Constantine – taking a native English speaker along for Visitation to England (and later the US and Southern Africa); delegating the visitation at times to Sisters for whom English is their 1<sup>st</sup> language – including Mary of St. Frances and Marie des Saints Anges
- Constantine & her successors were delegators: Marie des Saints Anges is a prime example: decisions regarding use of income of English estates and assignments of Sisters in England to where they were most needed was left up to her. Collaborative decision making.
- Perhaps part of why Constantine was willing to trust Laura Petre is Laura had so much more experience of the world and of business affairs than Constantine (Constantine had never been out of Belgium!)