



Chapter VII

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

From the Restoration (1815) to the early twentieth century.

An illusory hope. The life of the Order from 1815 to 1848. The suppressions by the Italian government up to events following the fall of Rome, 1870. Servants of Mary in England and the United States of America. The canonization of the Seven Holy Founders in the context of increased devotion within the Order to its saints and blessed. Congregations of Servite women. Revitalization into the early twentieth century. Servants of Mary in Canada. Servite priories from 1848 to 1911. Some outstanding Servites in the nineteenth century.

An illusory hope

Both secular and church history see the Congress of Vienna in 1815 as a key-date. It was here that Europe was partitioned in the vain hope of a "restoration." Some shrewd observers were aware of the fragility of the arrangement, in spite of its attention to detail. But there were many people of great talent and perspicacity who truly hoped that things would return to the way they were before the Napoleonic period, which had overturned and shattered so many familiar systems.

The situation was even more complicated for religious orders and congregations, because the attacks launched against them in Europe were begun under Emperor Joseph II only to be continued by Napoleon Bonaparte. The Servite Costantino M. Battini, a man of great learning and an energetic writer who later became prior general of the Order (1823-1829), made the following note about the end of the Napoleonic empire: "...it was hoped that there would be a resurgence of regulars and nuns." And indeed, a certain revival did occur. While quite promising in the beginning, it lasted only a short time, especially for the Servants of Mary, most of whom at this time were in Italy. It was here that a whole new series of laws of suppression were to be passed just a few decades later. These would bring the Order almost to the point of extinction.

In looking at the history of the Servants of Mary during the 1800s in general terms, 1815 stands out as the beginning of a short-lived revival, whereas the later 1800s and early 1900s would see a solid and lasting rebirth, starting slowly and gradually increasing right through to the 1960s. In the very middle of this time-span (1815-1964) we find the canonization of the Seven Holy Founders of the Order (1888), an event which is closely bound up with the revitalization of the Order in the twentieth century.

Chronologically the following pages on the nineteenth century extend from 1815 to the first ten years of the twentieth century, to just before the time when the Order of Servants of Mary accepted a number of significant commitments in mission areas. In any case the First World War is generally seen as closing one historical period and opening another.

Within this time-span the following pages will consider: the life of the Order from 1815 to 1848; suppressions by the Italian government up to events following the fall of Rome, 1870; the Order in England and the United States of America; the canonization of the Seven Holy Founders in the setting of an increased devotion within the Order to its saints and blessed; congregations of Servite women; revitalization into the early twentieth century; Servites in Canada; priories from 1848 to 1911; some outstanding Servites in the nineteenth century.

The life of the Order from 1815 to 1848

From 1815 to 1848 the Order was governed by an apostolic vicar general appointed by the Holy See, Stefano Antommarchi (1814-1823), then by priors general Costantino M. Battini (1823-1829), Vittorio Amedeo Pirattoni (1829-1834), Luigi Grati (1834-1841), Michele Francesco M. Strigelli (1841-1847) and Gaetano M. Bensi (1847-1853).

Each of these men had as a priority the regaining of the principal priories that had been suppressed and the reorganization and renewal of religious life in the provinces and communities. With such objectives, they each encountered many difficulties deriving from much instability among the friars and in society at large. What happened could barely warrant the name "revival".

These generals were in fact strong in character, well-suited to the task of "restoration." Some had known the hardships of the Napoleonic era, like Costantino Battini, who was captured by the French in 1799 and imprisoned for four months in Dijon; others were men of long experience in directing the Order's affairs. A register of deceased friars at the priory of Santissima Annunziata in Florence makes the following note by the name of Fra Stefano Antommarchi: "In recognition and gratitude for the pains suffered by the Most Reverend Stefano Antommarchi in the restoration of the Tuscan Province's priories, the fathers celebrated a solemn office with the catafalque in the centre of the church, reciting the entire office of the dead and offering Mass for him."

The provinces of the Order could not be quickly reestablished and the friars were widely dispersed. And so, to regain the suppressed priories, the priors general of this period, especially Stefano Antommarchi, named vicars general for the various provinces whenever necessary.

In 1835 the Order regained possession of the important priory of Monte Berico at Vicenza, near Venice. But the ancient Spanish Province, on the other hand, was breathing its last after all the suppressions. The friars had dispersed, either making their way to Italian priories or trying to live their Servite lives alone. Even when there were no priories left in Spain, a local liturgical calendar for Servite feasts continued to be published for more than thirty years, until there were no friars left. This is similar to what has been happening in more recent times in Hungary, where the priories of the Hungarian Province were suppressed by the government in 1950. Various friars have kept in sporadic contact with the rest of the Order, although there are now fewer than ten left.

It is not particularly surprising that the priors general of the period 1815-1848 were well-versed in governance, and some of them were entrusted with important offices in the Roman Curia. Fra Luigi Grati, prior general from 1834 to 1841, is unique for having been made prior general when he was already a bishop. Restoration work called for great skill and tact, legal expertise and administrative experience.

It could hardly be said that the thirty years from 1820 to 1850 were an era of resurgence for the Order. Nevertheless, a great deal was achieved, and by 1848 there were sixty-four priories in the Order with just under six hundred friars.

The suppressions by the Italian government up to the events following the fall of Rome (1870)

A distinction needs to be made between the legislation passed by the kingdom of Sardinia and that of the government of unified Italy, even though there is continuity from one to the other. The religious laws passed in the kingdom of Sardinia happened in the following sequence: the law of 19 June 1848, stating the equality of all citizens before the law irrespective of religion; the Siccardi laws of 9 April 1850, which abolished the right of sanctuary and tribunal privileges for ecclesiastics (a law in the preceding March had placed all charitable institutes under State supervision); the law of June 1850 insisting on "government authorization for accepting free gifts of property"; the law of 29 May 1855, which suppressed religious corporations.

Under the government of unified Italy, on the other hand, laws were passed on 7 July 1866 and 15 August 1867, both of which - but especially the first - stipulated the suppression of a large number of ecclesiastical bodies.

The government assured the support and annual upkeep for life of ecclesiastics belonging to the suppressed institutions. This upkeep, obtained from the sale of church goods, was distributed through the Cult Fund. All but metropolitan dioceses were abolished, and only one seminary per archdiocese was permitted. Former bishops' incomes were taken over by state officials, whose task it was to use them for the support of parish priests in need, for worship expenses and for the restoration of poor churches.

History has shown that the reduction of religious houses in Italy from 1850 to 1870 could probably have been avoided if the Holy See had been less intransigent, and if the Kingdom of Sardinia and the subsequent government of unified Italy had been more just. One has only to read the drastic measures of the law of 7 July 1866 which stated: "The State no longer recognizes religious orders, corporations and congregations, regular or secular; nor conservatories or retreats where common life is lived in an ecclesiastical way. Those houses and corporations, congregations, conservatories and retreats are hereby suppressed."

It should not be forgotten, however, that after an initially rigorous application of the above laws, there followed in many parts of Italy a kind of "illegal survival" policy permitting many religious houses to continue with deliberate tolerance by the government. Of course it should also be remembered that a great number of religious foundations in Italy took care of needy people, like the sick and elderly, and these activities were very much needed by the State. It could be added that many religious organizations had learned a hard lesson in survival during the Josephinist and Napoleonic suppression, and were thus better equipped to counteract the latest assaults. A number of them, for example, used fictitious names to repurchase their properties as they came up for auction by the State.

Even the ban on wearing the religious habit was frequently ignored without trouble from the authorities, mainly because, from the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy onwards, the government was trying to reach some sort of accord with the Holy See. It could be said, in fact, that the Italian suppressions were only secondarily ideological and that their main motivation was the government's need to raise money for the administration of the state.

For an Order of limited size like the Servants of Mary which had already suffered under previous assaults and which was located almost entirely in Italy, the above laws of suppression proved almost fatal. A letter from the prior general, Fra Bonfiglio M. Mura, in 1863 urges remedial action and speaks of "a question of life or death."

It was fortunate that the priors general of the Order from 1850 to 1870 were men of outstanding quality: Gaetano M. Bensi (1847-1853), Albuin M. Patscheider (1853-1859), the first non-Italian prior general, Bonfiglio M. Mura (1859-1868) and Giovanni Angelo Mondani (1868-1882). In spite of what Bonfiglio Mura called "the iniquities of this age," with the resulting impossibility of accepting new vocations, these generals believed in the Order and set about spreading it to other countries. Above all, they inaugurated a disciplined religious observance in the few remaining priories.

Once again we are faced with a period in the Order's history which has not been extensively studied. Contributions by Filippo M. Berlasso OSM on the life of Bonfiglio Mura and recent research by Richard M. Boyle OSM, along with other studies now being done, are beginning to shed some light on the troubles of those days.

It is not easy to determine the lowest number of Servite friars during the nineteenth-century suppressions. Probably the Order was reduced to little over three hundred friars. The terrible threat of absolute extinction came from the ban on receiving new vocations. It was because of this that Prior General Bonfiglio Mura opened two novitiates in 1863, one in the priory of San Marcello in Rome and the other at Monte Berico, Vicenza, in northern Italy. These were the only two priories where a novitiate was permitted. He also urged those friars who were obliged to live outside their priories to hand over their state pensions to their superiors as a fund for the education of new students of the Order.

Ever since the generalate of Pirattoni the Order had been looking at the possibility of new foundations outside of Europe. In 1830 the Order was unfortunately unable to accept a mission in Burma. Between 1840 and 1842 two Servite friars from the defunct Spanish Province unsuccessfully attempted to establish a mission on Mindanao in the Philippines. About the same time the Order was entrusted with the vice-apostolic prefecture of Arabia, with its See in Aden, in present-day South Yemen. This only lasted a few years - up to 1849 - but it is symbolic of vitality amid the hardship of those times.

Much more could be said about the priors general of the period 1850-1870. Among them Bonfiglio M. Mura stands out in a special way and more will be said about him in the concluding section of this chapter. It was during his term of office that the Order's first foundation was made in England.

Servants of Mary in England and the United States of America

In 1864 two friar Servants of Mary reached England to set up the Order there. They were Fr. Philip M. Bosio and Fr. Austin M. Morini. Within three years they had opened the first priory in London (1867). By the general chapter of 1895 the English communities were declared a provincial commissariats, and in 1914 they became the present English Province of the Order.

The early days presented many difficulties, including the new challenge of relations with the Servite Sisters of London, who had asked the Order to send priests to England in the first place. The friars entrusted with the new foundation were not only men of generosity and quality, but also very strong personalities. It is possible that a certain Italianate approach to the new foundations lay at the root of some misunderstandings, and it seemed that this lasted for a long time, and not just in England. This problem is recalled in the recent obituary of Fr. Francis M. McEnerney OSM (1896-1983) written by the provincia curia in England: the much revered Fr. McEnerney is credited



with having continued, between the two world wars, the labours of Fr. Alphonsus M. Coventry to lessen an excessive dependence on Italian ways in the province and give it a more truly English character.



Servite presence in the United States of America dates from 1852 when two lay brothers of the Tyrolese Province, Bro. Franz Paulsteiner and Bro. Bruno Kaufmann, accompanied two Norbertine missionaries from Wilten Abbey, Innsbruck, to Wisconsin. The following year Fr. Antoninus Grundner, also of the Tyrolese p Province, began working among the German-speaking Catholics first in New York City, then in eastern Pennsylvania, and finally as pastor of St. Alphonsus Church in Philadelphia. The 1970 Catalogue of the Order continues the story: "No Servite foundation was made and Fr. Grundner's death in 1876 ended the independent activity of the Tyrolese Province in the United States. Some Austrian Servites, however, continued to work with the Italians in their Midwestern foundations.

"While attending the First Vatican Council in 1870, Joseph Melcher, first bishop of Green Bay, Wisconsin, invited Servites to work in his diocese. That same year four Servites, under the guidance of Fr. Austin M. Morini, took charge of St. Charles Church in Menasha, Wisconsin. In 1874 Bishop Foley invited the Order to Chicago, and eventually Chicago became the center of Servite activity in America. The American Province was established in 1909."

For several years now, the American Servite Fr. Conrad M. Borntreger has been engaged in research on the activities of the Servants of Mary in North America prior to 1870. Doubtlessly the successful development of the two American provinces can be attributed in part to a solid

foundation laid at the beginning. The gradual organization of the archives of the Eastern Province in the United States will be instrumental in making the history of the Order in America better known.

The canonization of the Seven Holy Founders in the context of increased devotion within the Order to its saints and blessed

An examination of the liturgical celebrations of Servite blessed reveals that many were approved in the early nineteenth century. In 1804, Pius VII approved the office and Mass of Blessed Elizabeth of Mantua. Later, in 1806, he approved the office and the Mass of Blessed James of Citta della Pieve (the Almsgiver) and the Blessed Andrew of Sansepolcro. This same pope approved the cult of Blessed Ubald of Sansepolcro in 1821 and of Blessed Bonaventure of Pistoia in 1822. In 1828 Leo XII approved and confirmed devotion to Blessed Joan of Florence, and in 1829 Pius VIII acted likewise in favour of Blessed Benincasa of Montepulciano.

It was during this period of renewed devotion to Servite saints and blessed that the Order took up again the process for the canonization of the Seven Founders.

In 1884 Pope Leo XIII personally decreed that the cause of the Seven could go ahead, after an interval of nearly 150 years, with four miracles obtained by invoking the Seven as a group considered sufficient. The decree approving the four miracles which had been presented was published on 27 November 1887. Meanwhile, the Order had been giving considerable attention to celebrating the sixth centenary of the death of St. Philip Benizi (1285-1885). Pope Leo XIII canonized the Seven Holy Founders on 15 January '1888. The historian, Fr. Alessio M. Rossi, who died in 1968, recalled hearing how Monte Senario was buried in deep snow that January, preventing a number of friars from travelling to Rome for the celebrations. One of those who did attend was Fr. Anthony M. Pucci, who died four years later in 1892 and was to be himself canonized by the Church in 1962.

The decree of canonization obviously made reference to the names of the Founders: Bonfilius, Bonajuncta, Manettus, Hugh, Amadeus, Sostene and Alexis. The papal decree drew on the most recent of ancient texts bearing the names of the Founders, although historians have certain doubts about this list and are sure of the names of only the first and the last of the Seven, namely Bonfilius and Alexis. Church authorities chose to give precedence to the Seven as a group rather than as separate individuals, for they accepted four miracles obtained through the intercession of the Seven invoked together rather than each one singularly. This was the first time that this was done for saints who were not martyrs.

The canonization, which occurred as the repressive laws against religious institutes in Italy were being gradually eased, gave renewed confidence to the entire Order. With such a great benefit to be gained, one can understand why enthusiastic promoters like Fr. Anthony M. Pucci worked and prayed so hard to bring the canonization to reality.

And if its achievement is linked to the name of the prior general, Fr. Pier Francesco M. Testa (1882-1888), its earlier preparation must be attributed to predecessors like Fr. Giovanni Angelo M. Mondani (1868-1882), and even to Fr. Bonfiglio M. Mura, a close friend of Pope Leo XIII.



Congregations of Servite women



From the middle of the nineteenth century onward a number of congregations of sisters from different parts of the world have come to join the wider family of the Servants of Mary. Some of these groups grew up within the Order itself, often from secular tertiary origins (such as the sisters from Florence, Pistoia, Galeazza, the Sisters of the Compassion and the Sisters for Reparation, etc.); others sought official aggregation to the Order, often within a short time of their foundation, because of similarity of spirit or service and devotion to Our Lady.

The first of these congregations traces its heritage to 1840 and the French woman Marie Guyot whose religious community known as the Daughters of Calvary eventually established themselves in England in 1852 with the title Sisters of the Compassion. They took up permanent settlement at St. Mary's Priory in London. In 1864 Mother Philomena Morel and Sister Antonia Loughnan travelled to Rome and obtained affiliation of their community with the Servite Order. A foundation was made in 1893 at Mount Vernon, Indiana, in the United States, and two years later at Enfield, Illinois. In time these foundations developed into the American Province of the Congregation, with its provincialate at Omaha, Nebraska. The Congregation also has foundations in Canada, Jamaica, Belgium, France and Austria.

A community of sisters was founded in Tiruchirapalli, India, in 1854, and eleven years later the sisters were aggregated as individuals to the Servite Third Order. The congregation grew rapidly during the generalate of Mother Mary Alexis (1898-1916) and at the present time it is the largest of the congregations of Servite Sisters with 945 sisters (1985) in India, Burma and Australia.

In the last 120 years of the Order's history, since 1864 that is, many women's congregations were affiliated to the Servants of Mary. Some of them no longer belong to the Servite Family, for various reasons. The two principal ones are their demise (sometimes through suppression, as is happening at present with the sisters in Albania and Hungary), or else their amalgamation with another (usually Servite) congregation: for example, the sisters of Pistoia have incorporated, among other groups, the Servants of Mary of Viareggio (initially under the direction of St. Anthony Pucci), of Saluzzo, Leghorn, and, most recently, the Mantellates of St. Juliana of Florence.

The list below indicates the year of foundation and the year of aggregation to the Order of Servants of Mary. In some cases the aggregation was no more than an initial connection ratified later when the group was more evolved or wished for stronger links with the Order. The list presents all the congregations which are at present aggregated to the Order, including those founded or aggregated in the twentieth century.

The foundress, of the Minims of Our Lady of Sorrows, Sister Clelia Barbieri (d. 1870) was beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1968. The canonical process for beatification has been started for several foundresses and other sisters from a number of Servite congregations: Sr. M. Luisa di Gesù (Ascione), foundress of the Servants of Our Lady of Sorrows of Naples, who died in 1875; Sr. M. Consiglia dello Spirito Santo (Addatis), foundress of the Servants of Our Lady of Sorrows of Nocera, who died in 1900; Sr. M. Maddalena della Passione (Starace), foundress of the Servants of Mary of the Compassion, who died in 1921; Sr. M. Dolores Inglese of the Servants of Mary for Reparation, who died in 1928; Sr. M. Elisa Andreoli, foundress of the same congregation, who died in 1935; Sr. M. Eleonora Giorgi of the Servants of Our Lady of Sorrows of Florence, who died in 1945. Such a list should also include Rev. Ferdinando M. Baccilieri, Servite Tertiary and founder of the Servants of Mary of Galeazza, who died in 1893.

Congregation	Founded	Aggregated
Servite Sisters, London, England	1840	1864
Suore di Maria Ss.ma Addolorata, Naples, Italy	1840	1951
Serve di Maria, Ravenna, Italy	1852	1868
Serve di Maria SS.ma Addolorata, Florence, Italy	1854	1876
Sisters of the Mother of Sorrows, Servants of Mary, Tiruchirapalli, India	1854	1865
Mantellate Serve di Maria, Pistoia, Italy	1861	1868
Serve di Maria, Galeazza, Italy	1862	1883
Minime dell'Addolorata, Le Budrie, Italy	1868	1951
Compassioniste Serve di Maria, Scanzano di Sta- bia, Italy	1869	1893
Serve di Maria Addolorata, Nocera, Italy	1872	1880
Serve di Maria Addolorata, Chioggia, Italy	1873	1918
Sisters of Providence, Holyoke, U.S.A.	1873	1894
Socurs Servites de Maria, Jolimont, Belgium	1881	1927
Infermiere Serve di Maria, Pisa, Italy	1896	1916
Motrat Servite, Shkodrë, Albania	1898	1989
Serve di Maria Riparatrici, Adria, Italy	1900	1910
Servants of Mary, Ladysmith, U.S.A.	1912	1921
Irthas Servas de Maria, Jacarepagua', Brazil	1917	1922
Szervita Növerèk, Hungary	1922	1925
Scrvite Sisters, Mahlabane, Swaziland	1932	1935
Misioneras de Mara Dolorosa, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico	1942	1953

Revitalization into the early twentieth century

The closing decades of the nineteenth century and the opening part of the twentieth witnessed a number of events, which showed that a true rebirth was taking place.

In 1891 a Servite priory was founded in Brussels, Belgium.

Four years later the new priory of the Seven Holy Founders was built in Florence, while in Rome the International College of St. Alexis Falconieri was inaugurated in rented premises next to the Church of St. Nicholas of Tolentino. This college was the successor to the older Ghent College of the Order, and forerunner of the Marianum Pontifical Theological Faculty.

In 1897 modern historical writing began in the Order with the publication of the first volume of *Monumenta Ordinis Servorum sanctae Mariae*, edited by Fr. Austin Morini and Fr. Pérégrin M. Soulier. In the first two volumes of this work, figured the *Constitutiones antiquae* and the *Constitutiones novae*, which were the decrees of the general chapters from 1295 to 1473, the *Legenda de origine Ordinis* and the *Legenda beati Philippi*. The publication also gave access to sources for the history of early priories in Germany and the college that the Order had in Paris. The administrative register of the priors general St. Philip Benizi and Fra Lotarino of Florence for the years 1285 to 1300 was also printed. The collection of texts given in the *Monumenta* endorses the truth that a healthy revitalization must draw inspiration from the original options exercised at the foundation of the Order.

Nevertheless, the attention of the Order at this time was still directed towards new foundations outside of Italy. While an attempt in 1900 to reenter Spain proved ineffective, the general chapter of 1901 declared the Order's intention of "resuming as soon as possible missions to non-believers." But a little over ten years would pass before this desire could be acted upon. Mean-

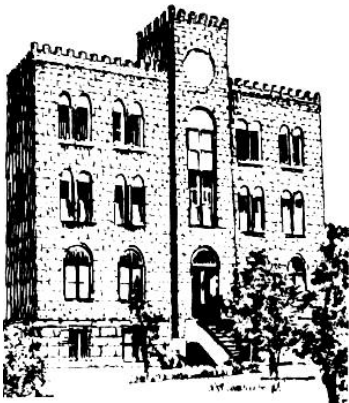
while, the whole atmosphere was one of renewal and "missionary" fervour. A considerable number of Servants of Mary played an enthusiastic part in the 1904 International Marian Congress held in Rome for the 50th anniversary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (1854).

There was an extraordinary general chapter held in Rome in 1905 for the revision of the Constitutions. These were promulgated in 1907. They were accepted by the communities of the Germanic Observance which by this time were gathered into two provinces, the Tyrolese and the Austro-Hungarian Provinces. Thus the Order was once again united under the same Constitutions.

The stormy period known as the modernist era does not seem to have had a particularly great effect on the Servants of Mary. It is worth mentioning at this point that, throughout its history, the Order has always been sensitive in matters of obedience to the Holy See. Fr. Filippo M. Ferrini (d. 1972) recorded in his personal memoirs in 1950, that after the general chapter of 1901 a decision was taken to keep Servite graduate students away from non-Servite centres, to avoid contact with the various teachings that would be later collected under the heading of modernism. History would show that this decision was excessively limiting, but it does give an indication of a constant feature of the Order's approach to theological currents throughout its history.

A general atmosphere of missionary enthusiasm in the Order in the early 1900s, as noted above, preceded the acceptance of missionary territories in the strict sense of the word. This page of the Order's history has yet to be written. Donations and funds were collected for the future "missions among non-believers," and bank accounts were started. Proposals for missions were drawn up and examined in great detail. It is fascinating to note that the friar put in charge of this work was a young priest from the Bolognese Province, Fr. Prospero M. Bernardi, who was to become the first vicar provincial of the Order in Canada and later the first bishop of the Brazilian mission of Acre and Purus. More will be said about him later. As the revitalization of the Order between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries drew to a close, let us see how the Order began in Canada.

Servants of Mary in Canada



An article was published in 1980 in the magazine *Le Missioni d'ei Servi di Maria* (The Missions of the Servants of Mary) on the early foundations of the Order in Canada, entitled "To Canada as if to the Missions." And indeed it was in a missionary spirit that the Order of Servants of Mary first arrived in that country in 1912.

Although a number of factors contributed to bringing the Order to Canada, the foundation there was the first concrete result of many missionary dreams and plans. It predates even the mission to Swaziland. It might seem strange today to call the early foundations in Canada "missions" but the documents of that period use that specific title. This is found in the discourse which Prior General Giuseppe M. Lucchesi (1907-1913) addressed to the three friars in Florence who were about to leave for Canada. Account should also be taken of the mentality of the age: anyone leaving Europe to work in the young churches across the Atlantic, especially among the immigrants, was considered a missionary. Besides the pastoral care of immigrants, there was also the evangelization of Indians and the conversion of non-Catholic. Whatever the case, the movement to establish the Order in Canada was the first fruit of a missionary attitude which grew out of the canonization of the Seven Holy Founders.

There were also other factors which influenced the foundation in Canada. Mention could be made of Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal (1840-1885) who was a Servite tertiary very attached to the Order and committed to spreading devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows. In 1910 Alexis M. Lépicié, later prior general and cardinal, took part in the Eucharistic Congress in Montreal. In

1911 Archbishop Pellegrino M. Stagni OSM, former prior general and at that time archbishop of Aquila, was sent to Ottawa as apostolic delegate to Canada and Newfoundland.

It was the following year, 1912, that three Servants of Mary from the Tuscan Province arrived in Montreal: Fr. Ildefonso M. Francesconi, Fr. Angelico M. Barsi and Fr. Aurelio M. Prosperi.

Events leading up to their departure from Italy happened very suddenly between the end of 1911 and the first months of 1912. The details given below are more ample than for other foundations because they have never been published before.

Two significant things happened at the end of 1911 which had a bearing on the project. Firstly, Fr. Rusconi, Canadian by birth but of Italian origin, was a parish priest in Montreal who made it clear that he wished to leave his parish made up mainly of Italian immigrants. When Archbishop Stagni informed Rome of this, he obviously thought that this could open the way for the Servants of Mary to enter Canada. Secondly, the Archbishop of Vancouver, on the west coast of Canada, had written Stagni asking for an Italian priest to minister to the four thousand Italians of his city and many others throughout his vast diocese. Archbishop Stagni suggested to him that an Italian religious order, possibly the Servants of Mary, could meet this pastoral need, and the archbishop of Vancouver was favourable to the idea.

The second possibility was pursued. Once Archbishop Stagni realized that Italian priests from the American Province of the Servants of Mary were unable to go to Vancouver, he wrote to the prior general in Rome. His letter from Ottawa was dated 16 January 1912 and already by 29 January the prior general was in contact with the Tuscan Provincial in Florence.

Preparations egad at once, with the utmost speed. Just two months after the prior general's letter to Florence, the first Servants of Mary arrived in Montreal (29 March 1912).

How equipped were these men for their new assignment? Apart from Latin, their only language was Italian. Enthusiasm and generosity are important, but they are not everything. Plans changed. They never left Montreal for Vancouver, but instead accepted two parishes of Italian immigrants there in Montreal: Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Madonna della Difesa, which is still part of the Servite Tuscan Province. In the meantime, the American Province accepted the parish in Vancouver.

Not long afterwards the Order was entrusted with the parish of St. Anthony of Padua in Ottawa, once again a parish for Italians. It was here that a student house for the future Canadian Servants of Mary was eventually built. Already by 1920 the majority of applicants to the Order had French surnames and the Order took on a Canadian character. Growth was rapid. After being a provincial commissariats for a number of years, the priories were declared an autonomous province of the Order in 1948. In 1979 the Servite communities in France were incorporated into the Canadian Province. The present prior general, the Canadian Fr. Michel M. Sincerny, joined the Order in 1948, the same year that the priories in Canada became a province. He was reelected to a second six year term as prior general at the general chapter held in Rome in 1983.

Servite priories from 1848 to 1911

In 1848, just thirty-three years after the Vienna restoration and the ensuing reorganization of the Order, there were 64 Servite priories, all in Europe, and about 600 friars, not including the ones in Spain who were living in dispersal after the suppression of religious orders in 1835 but who considered themselves very much part of the Order. In Aden (now South Yemen) Fr. Marco M. Gradenigo was serving as vice-prefect apostolic in the mission there.

By 1885, after a long and devastating phase of religious suppressions in Italy, the priories were down to 53 in number, with just 34 in Italy as opposed to 46 in 1848. The Order was now present in England, not to mention its longstanding communities in Austria and Hungary. The most significant new feature was the existence of two priories in the United States of America with 15 friars. In all the Order counted 359 friars.

Twenty-five years later, in 1911, there were 63 priories in the Order, of which 35 were in Italy and 28 elsewhere (one now in Belgium and seven in the United States). The number of friars had risen to 584, with 54 in America.

Some outstanding Servites in the nineteenth century

It would seem useful at this point to highlight some of the more significant personalities of the nineteenth century in Servite history. Due to limitations of space, only four will be presented here, with brief sketches of Fr. Bonfiglio M. Mariani, one of the last remaining friars of the suppressed Congregation of Hermits of Monte Senario; Fr. Bonfiglio M. Mura, outstanding prior general, teacher and writer, a man deeply involved in the events of his time; Fr. Anthony M. Pucci, the "little Parish Priest" and saint from Viareggio; and Fr. Austin M. Morini, historian of the Order, one of the first two friars sent to England and superior of the first Servite community in the United States.

Fr Bonfiglio M. Mariani was born at Camaiole, province of Lucca, Italy, in 1734, and joined the hermits of Monte Senario while still quite young. He lived subsequently in the hermitages of Monterano and Cibona. When the hermit congregation was suppressed some years later he was sent to the Roman priory of Santa Maria in Via where he lived almost until his death in 1831. A recent study by Fr. Roberto M. Faggioli OSM provides a detailed reconstruction of Fr. Mariani's life and spirituality. He was particularly devoted to the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady of Sorrows, and well known for his austere life style and apostolic labours. Many spoke of him as a saint after his death. There are numerous records of him, and there would probably have been more had there not arisen a protracted dispute within the Santa Maria in Via community on the type of burial and tomb to be accorded to him.

Fr. Bonfiglio M. Mura was born in Cuglieri, Sardinia, on 6 August 1810. His family were unassuming artisans. He met the Servants of Mary at their priory in his home town, and joined the Order when he was fifteen. He studied in Florence, Genoa and Turin, and was ordained priest in 1833. He then moved to Sassari and received a doctorate in theology there, becoming professor of philosophy and regent of studies. In 1842, when he was just thirty-two years old, he was designated by the government and the Holy See as archbishop of Oristano, Sardinia, but he declined the nominations. In 1847 he was elected procurator of the Order for the following six years. In 1853, as he was about to return to Sardinia, he was appointed by Pius IX as professor of natural law and law of nations at the University of Perugia. He became rector of the University in 1854 and was appointed for a second term in 1859. Just a few days before the riots in Perugia in 1859, he was elected prior general by the Servite general chapter. A thick file of correspondence between Mura and Gioacchino Pecci, bishop of Perugia and later Pope Leo XIII, confirms that Fr. Mura's departure from Perugia doubtlessly saved him from reprisals by the revolutionaries.

Fr. Mura remained prior general until 1868. Other tasks were given him as well during this time. In 1860 he was elected rector of the Roman Sapienza University, and he held this title until 1876, even though it was ineffective after 20 September 1870, the fall of Rome.

He was a member of the theological faculties of Florence, Perugia and Siena, a consultor for the pontifical congregations of the Inquisition and Indulgences, a member of the Syllabus commission, and personal theologian to Cardinals Filippo de Angelis and Luigi Amat di San Filippo e Sorso. At the First Vatican Council he was a consultor of the Commission on Faith and Dogma. Following the fall of Rome in 1870 he was obliged to move away after hostile demonstrations by former students of the Sapienza University. He obtained a safe-conduct to Cagliari from General Cadorna and returned to his native Cuglieri. Between 1878 and 1879 he taught natural law and law of nations at Cagliari Seminary. Leo XIII made him archbishop of Oristano and he was consecrated in Sardinia in 1879. His service as archbishop lasted just three years and he died at Cuglieri on 18 July 1882. His body was buried initially in the civic cemetery at

Cuglieri, but was later transferred to the collegiate church of Our Lady of the Snows, Cuglieri, on 1 October 1902.

Fr. Bonfiglio Mura wrote about thirty works, some twenty in his own name, others just initialled and still others anonymously. His name is still remembered in Sardinia, where this outstanding Servant of Mary is honoured with street names and public monuments. Most commentators on the last years of the Sapienza University before the fall of Rome describe Fr. Mura somewhat unfairly as conservative and reactionary. This is undoubtedly caused by the way his writings are judged through the retrospective eyes of modern society. Nevertheless, his diffidence about change was always counterbalanced by unflinching loyalty and firmness of principle, which gained him the respect of all who knew him well.

St. Anthony M. Pucci was born in 1819; his father was sacristan and farmer for the parish priest of Poggiole a little parish in the highland valley of Bisenzio. He was one of nine children, ten including an adopted daughter. He lived with his family until he was eighteen, and was introduced to studies by his parish priest, a man of letters in the typical mold of Tuscan clergy. In 1873 he was accompanied by his father and his parish priest to the priory of Santissima Annunziata in Florence to join the Servants of Mary. He was admitted to the novitiate, changing his baptismal name Eustachio to Anthony Mary. But, in accordance with the laws of the time, he could not profess his vows until he was twenty-five. From 1839 to 1843 he lived at Monte Senario amid its harsh climate and stringent discipline, being ordained priest on 24 September 1843. The following year he was sent to Viareggio where a new parish, St. Andrew's, had been started four years previously. He continued his studies and became a Bachelor of Theology in 1847, the same year that he was appointed parish priest at St. Andrew's, Viareggio. In 1850 he received the degree of Master of Theology. He was to remain in Viareggio until his death in 1892, even during the time he was Tuscan prior provincial (1883-1890).

The half century that he spent at Viareggio was full of important events. In 1847 Lucca was transferred to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. That same year witnessed a dreadful famine, and 1854 was the year of a devastating cholera epidemic. Fr. Pucci never left Viareggio during this time. Religious suppressions put the community in extreme financial difficulties in 1866, but Fr. Pucci made light of the matter. His chief concerns were always to care for the interests of the poor fisherfolk of his parish day by day, to provide catechetical instruction and basic education for their children, to prepare his Sunday preaching most assiduously (for which numerous volumes of notes still exist) and to care for the material and moral needs of children and youth to the point where he set up Italy's first seaside health resort for sick children.

The spiritual life of St. Anthony Pucci is characterized by

moderation, simplicity and poverty. The Blessed Sacrament was most important for him, as was great devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows, his attachment to the Servite family and his practical commitment to vocations. A detailed description of him was given in the Servite Basilica of Monte Berico on 21 May 1963 by Bishop Albino Luciani of Vittorio Veneto, later Pope John Paul I. In one of the most difficult periods of the Order's history Anthony Pucci was able to face every situation with faith and constancy. Pope John XXIII canonized him on 9 December 1962. The bull of canonization



oni pastoris ima-
ginem quotiescum-
que animo considera-
mus, suavissima illa
mentem subeunt verba, quibus
Christus intima sui cordis discipu-
lis aperiens totius vitae suae rati-

opens with the meaningful words, "Every time we reflect on the image of the Good Shepherd..." And the same theme provides the title for two recent books, one by Fr. Ubaldo M. Forconi OSM, written just before his death in 1981, called *Piccola storia di un buon Pastore* (Short Account of a

Good Shepherd), and a second entitled *Shepherd of Souls* by Fr. Peter M. Rookey OSM (1985). Both are affectionate biographies of the "little parish priest" of Viareggio.

Detailed biographies of Fr. Austin M. Morini (Florence 1826 - Rome 1909) have been written by Fr. Pérégrin M. Soulier OSM and, more recently, by Fr. Justin Ryska. From his youth Fr. Morini had been deeply interested in the humanities and especially in history. He had a lively and versatile mind, as witnessed by the reams of correspondence he shared with intellectuals in many countries. From 1864 to 1888 he made a decisive contribution to the Order's foundation in England and the United States of America. The general chapter of 1888 appointed him postulator for saints and blessed of the Order, and from then onwards he returned to his studies, collaborating with Fr. Pérégrin M. Soulier in starting and developing the historical collection *Monumenta Ordinis Servorum sanctae Mariae*. He was honoured in 1895 with the privileges reserved to former priors general, and completed his days in the priory of Santa Maria in Via, Roma, where he died in 1909 at the age of eighty-four.



Many other Servants of Mary of the nineteenth century warrant a special mention here. There was, for example, Fr. Gavino Secchi-Murro (1794-1868), procurator of the Order from 1835 to 1841, a great promoter of the missions, friend and defender of Rosmini (many documents concerning Rosmini are to be found in the priory archives of Santa Maria in Via, Rome). Great missionaries, even before the establishment of missions in the twentieth century, included Antonio Buenajunta Foguet, Bernardo Rabascall, José Viñes, Pellegrino Serafini and Marco M. Gradenigo.

Fr. Alessio M. Biffoli (1828-1892) was a parishioner of Santa Maria in Via in Rome who joined the Order, became parish priest of San Marcello in Rome and later bishop of Fossombrone. Some of the priors general have been mentioned already, but all of them contributed to the strengthening of the Order in the nineteenth century: Pier Francesco M. Testa (1882-1888), Andrea M. Corrado (1889-1895), Giovanni Angelo M. Pagliai (1895-1901), Pellegrino M. Stagni (1901-1907) and Giuseppe M. Lucchesi (1907-1913). Nor should the following be omitted: the tertiary Servant of Mary, Rev. Ferdinando M. Baccilieri; Fr. Philip M. Bosio and Fr. Antonine M. Appolloni who were very much involved in the Order's beginnings in England; and Fr. Manetto M. Niccolini, who was mortally wounded during the Garibaldi assault on the city of Viterbo in 1867 and later proclaimed a hero of Italian unification, though this would have surprised him.

Dates to Remember

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| 1814-1823 | Fr. Stefano Antommarchi, apostolic vicar general, governs the Order. Gradual revival of the Order after the Napoleonic suppressions. |
| 1831 | Death of Fr. Bonfiglio M. Mariani, survivor of the Congregation of Hermits of Monte -Senario.
Death of Venerable Maria Luisa Maurizi. |
| 1835 | Servants of Mary return officially to Monte Berico Vicenza. Complete suppression of the Spanish Province. |
| 1840-1842 | Abortive mission of two Spanish Servites to Mindanao, Philippines. |
| 1840-1849 | Vice-prefecture apostolic of Arabia entrusted to the Order: See at Aden, now South Yemen. |
| 1841 | St. Andrew's Priory, Viareggio, founded. From 1847 Fr. Anthony M. Pucci parish priest for the next 45 years. |
| 1852 | First Servants of Mary in the United States of America. |

- 1859-1869 Generalate of Fr. Bonfiglio M. Mura.
- 1860 Third Order of Servants of Mary established in Cuba.
- 1864 Mantellate Sisters of London (now Servite Sisters) aggregated to the Order, first of a long series. First Servite friars arrive in England.
- 1866 Suppression of religious orders by the government of unified Italy.
- 1870 First foundation of the Order in the United States of America.
- 1877 Return of Servites to France after a century of absence Vaucouleurs College).
- 1885 Solemn celebrations of sixth centenary of the death of St. Philip Benizi.
- 1888 15 January: canonization of the Seven Holy Founders. General chapter celebrated in Rome after a forced interruption of nearly thirty years, preceded by provincial chapters in some Italian provinces in 1883. Foundation of monastery of enclosed Servite nuns at Bognor Regis, England.
- 1890 Remaining priories of the Piedmontese Province amalgamated for nine years with those of Picena Province (formerly called Province of Romagna).
- 1891 First presence of Servants of Mary in Brussels, Belgium.
- 1892 Death of St. Anthony M. Pucci.
- 1895 Inauguration of International College of St. Alexis Falconieri, Rome.
- 1896 Servites return to Venice and make a foundation at the church of the -Sacred Heart.
- 1900 Unsuccessful attempt to return to Spain.
- 1901 General chapter commitment asking the Order to "resume as soon as possible missions to nonbelievers."
- 1905 Extraordinary general chapter in Rome for revision of Constitutions.
- 1907 Promulgation of revised Constitutions.
- 1909 Communities in the United States become a province of the Order. Death of Fr. Austin M. Morini.
- 1912 First foundation of the Order in Canada.