



Chapter VIII

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

From the first missionary undertaking (1913) to the present day

The Servants of Mary today. The generalate of Fr. Alexis M. Lépicier. Acceptance of missionary territories by the Order. Expansion in the United States of America. The generalates of Fr. Alfonso M. Benetti and Fr. Alfonso M. Monta'. Foundation of the Servite Secular Institute and the Regnum Mariae. Renewal of the Constitutions after Vatican II. Some outstanding events and personalities of this century. Expansion of the Order in the present day. Distribution of Servite friars (1985).

The Servants of Mary today

The present situation of the Order can be seen more clearly from a comparison with two hundred years ago. While the 1700s saw the biggest numerical increase of the Order, the 1900s have witnessed its widest geographical distribution. In fact, the Order is now present on all five continents and in about thirty different countries.

This internationalization of the Order is reflected in the following comparison. From 1233 to 1913 the Servants of Mary had only one non-Italian prior general, Albuin M. Patscheider. From 1913 to the present day, five of the nine priors general have been non-Italians: from France Alexis M. Lépicier (1913-1920), from England Austin Moore (1926-1932), from the United States Joseph M. Loftus (1965-1971) and Peregrine M. Graffius (1971-1977), and from Canada Michel M. Sincerny, elected in the Barcelona general chapter of 1977 and reelected at the 1983 general chapter in Rome.

Comparing the twentieth century with the nineteenth, it is possible to see how in the last century the Order was in serious crisis because of suppressions by Napoleon and the Italian government, while in the latter part of the twentieth century there has been an enormous drop in candidates or vocations in the western world to the Servite Order and other religious orders. However, just as the closing years of the nineteenth century witnessed a revival, so too there are signs in the present age of a revival, though the areas offering greatest hope are in the southern hemisphere.

This century has also experienced a renewal of the constitutional text of the Order which has no precedent in any other part of its history.

It might also be noted that the Order's development from the second half of the nineteenth century to the present day has assuredly been helped by the number and growth of the women's congregations associated with the Order and, more recently, the emergence of two secular institutes in the Servite family. On the other hand, note should be made of the considerable decline of the Third Order, now called the Secular Order of the Servants of Mary, even if its new Rule and Statutes (1982) suggests a hopeful revival of this important branch of the Servite religious family.



Another noteworthy feature in recent developments has been the establishment of a communications network around the Order. Various information bulletins are successfully counter-acting any risk that wide dispersal of Servite communities around the world might lead to isolation or fragmentation. Communication among the members is maintained by the international newsletter *Cosmo* (produced in Italian, French, English, Spanish, German and Portuguese by the General Secretariat for Communications) and by a variety of bulletins and newsletters published by the various provinces and vicariates. This network is a result of the kind of decentralization and local autonomy that are the products of the present age.

The following account of the Servants of Mary in the twentieth century would have involved a lot of repetition if it had taken each geographical area separately. To follow the chronological order of events, this section will deal with: the generalate of Fr. Alexis M. Lépicier (1913-1920); acceptance of missionary territories by the Order from 1913; expansion (of the Order in the United States of America; the generalates of Fr. Alfonso M. Benetti (1938-1953) and Fr. Alfonso M. Montà (1953-1965); the beginnings of the Servite Secular Institute and the Regnum Mariae; renewal of the Constitutions after the Second Vatican Council; some significant events and personalities of recent years; the Servite family today.

The generalate of Fr. Alexis M. Lépicier

Of the many illustrious Servites from the late nineteenth Century to the middle of the present century, perhaps Fr. Alexis M. Lépicier is the one who represented and influenced the Order's history most typically.

He was born in 1863 at Vaucouleurs in Lorraine. Henri Lépicier joined the Order in 1878, doing his novitiate in London with the religious name of Alexis. He was ordained priest in the English capital in 1885, and then transferred to Rome to complete his doctorates in philosophy and theology at Propaganda Fide. It is interesting to note that he was present at the papal audience of Leo XIII in 1887 which was attended by the future St. Theresa of Lisieux when, as a young girl, she requested the pope to allow her to enter Carmel. Correspondence between Sr. Agnes of Jesus, one of the saint's sisters, and Cardinal Lépicier between 1918 and 1935 was published recently.



He returned to England in 1890 for two years, and was then summoned to Rome by Leo XIII to take the place of the future Cardinal Satolli as professor of dogmatic theology at Propaganda Fide. Here he was to teach for twenty-one years.

He was given many other responsibilities connected with various congregations of the Holy See. Fr. Lépicier was held in high regard by Pope Pius X as witnessed by a number of private letters from the pope to Alexis Lépicier when he was rector of the College of St. Alexis Falconieri in Rome; these letters are in the historical section of the Order's general archives.

During this period Fr. Lépicier held various positions of responsibility in the Order. He was founder and first rector of the International College of St. Alexis Falconieri, general consultor (1895), procurator general (1901) and in 1913 he was elected prior general to succeed Fr. Giuseppe M. Lucchesi (1907-1913). Even with all the demands of being prior general and an important official in the Holy See, Fr. Lépicier found time to publish numerous theological works. Outstanding among these was his *Tractatus de beatissima Virgine Maria Matre Dei* (Treatise on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God) (1901) which achieved five editions in twenty-five years. Fr. Lépicier was a strict Tomist in matters of doctrine and a man of richly varied cultural interests. A file of correspondence with Jacques Maritain points to an enduring friendship between these two great figures of culture.

As soon as he was elected prior general, he endorsed the Order's acceptance of the missionary territory of Swaziland in southern Africa. Towards the end of his generalate he accepted the Brazilian territory of Acre and Purus. In 1915 he created the Venetian Rectorate which was to become a full province of the Order in 1922. In 1916 he arranged for the first publication of *Acta Ordinis Servorum Beatae Mariae Virginis* which has continued ever since providing a detailed account of all significant happenings in the Order. This annual publication offers all the official documentation regarding the life of the Order and is edited by the General Secretariate OSM.

The First World War involved many friars in military conscription. Fr. Lépiciér took a special interest in each one of them, both during the war and afterwards when it was time for survivors to find their way back into the religious communities. He also gave special attention to the matter of studies and issued a number of important letters on the subject.

The general chapter at the end of June 1920 was celebrated at the priory of Monte Berico, Vicenza, where Fr. Luigi M. Tabanelli was elected as successor to Fr. Lépiciér. This chapter was held after the usual six-year interval on account of the Great War and its aftermath. It was a difficult and troubled chapter. In an unpublished account written some years later, Alexis Lépiciér expressed himself somewhat bitterly, judging that general chapter to have been one of the dark events in the whole history of the Order. His personal notes document in detail the reasons for this judgment.

In 1924, Fr. Lépiciér was consecrated titular archbishop of Tarsus and appointed apostolic visitor for India, where he travelled for the next eighteen months; later, in 1927, he did likewise for Eritrea and Abyssinia. In a consistory on 19 December 1927 he was named cardinal. He was papal legate on a number of occasions. He completed his life on 20 May 1936 in Rome. When Pope Pius XI wrote to the Order for the 700th anniversary of its foundation in 1933, he described Cardinal Lépiciér as "the glory of the Order, the sacred college of cardinals and the Church."

Acceptance of missionary territories by the Order

Today the Order has official responsibility for four missionary territories: Swaziland since 1913, Acre in Brazil since 1919, Aysén in Chile since 1937, and Zululand in South Africa, part of which came under the jurisdiction of the Servites in Swaziland in 1938, while additional territory was given to the Order in 1948 when this area was placed under the jurisdiction of the Servites of the American Province.

To the above list should be added foundations in Argentina from 1914 and more solidly since 1921; Transvaal in South Africa since 1935, Uruguay 1939, Bolivia 1946, Mexico 1948, Australia 1951, Venezuela 1952, Colombia 1953 and India 1974, not to forget the very latest foundations in Mozambique, Gabon and the Philippines, 1983-1984.

The Order's present day commitment to the Third World is considerable, without forgetting its service in other areas with special attention to ethnic minorities, as in the United States.

With reference to the missionary activities of the Order, it should be noted that the vicariates of the Order in Swaziland and Zululand are co-extensive with the ecclesiastical structures of the diocese of Manzini and the Prefecture Apostolic of Ingwavuma, Zululand. The co-extension of local church and Servite responsibility does not apply in Aysén, Chile, where communities of the friars are included in the much larger vicariate of Chile-Bolivia, and in Acre Brazil where the communities in the diocese of Rio Branco form part of the Brazilian Province.



For the purpose of renewal and coordination between the various Servants of Mary working in missionary territory, there is a General Secretariate for the Missions, some of whose members are located in the missions themselves. There are also mission secretariates in the provinces and vicariates of the Order. Recent general chapters (1971, 1974, 1977, 1983) have issued important decrees on the missionary commitments of the Servants of Mary.

As will be mentioned later, many of the great personalities of the Servants of Mary in the twentieth century are people from the missions.

An important element in the missionary story of Servites is the presence of the congregations of Servite sisters alongside their missionary brothers, as well as their independent missionary activities. The Mantellate Sisters of Pistoia are working in Swaziland, as is an African congregation of Servite Sisters. The Servants of Mary for Reparation, the Galeazza Servite Sisters, the Sisters Servants of Mary of Brazil and recently a number of sisters from the Servants of Mary of Ravenna are active in Acre, Brazil. There Ravenna sisters among the destitute shanty-town dwellers of in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The Servants of Our Lady of Sorrows of Florence are present in Aysén, Chile, and also in Colombia. The Servants of Our Lady of Sorrows of Naples went to Mexico in 1983, and the Servants of Mary of the Compassion have been in Aysén for a number of years, like the Servants of Mary for Reparation in Argentina.

The friars' community in Mozambique was started by the enclosed Servite nuns in Nampula, whose convent was founded in 1973.

To complete the picture, mention should be made of the Minims of Our Lady of Sorrows in Tanzania since 1974, and the London Servite Sisters in Jamaica since 1952. The Servite Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows of Pisa and the Servants of Mary of the Compassion both have foundations in India. The Galeazza Servite Sisters are in South Korea, and the Servants of Mary for Reparation went to the Ivory Coast in 1983. The Indian Servite Sisters are now in Burma and Australia, and the Servite Secular Institute is present in Zululand.

Expansion of the Order in the United States of America

It was already noted in the previous chapter that the American communities became a province of the Order in 1909. Subsequent developments were summed up in the 1970 *Catalogus* of the Order in the following terms:

"In 1927 a group of Italian Servites in the Chicago and Denver areas sought affiliation with the Roman Province so that they might serve the Italian apostolate in the United States more effectively. In 1952 this group became an American Province in its own right under the patronage of St. Joseph. Thus in 1952 the two provinces of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Joseph existed within the same territorial boundaries and both maintained their provincial centers in Chicago. Our Lady of Sorrows Province maintained a priory in Ireland and missions in Zululand, South Africa, while St. Joseph Province had charge of the Australian foundation. The latter was transferred to Our Lady of Sorrows Province in 1955.

"Changing conditions of time and apostolate, as well as the demands of distance and the effective use of manpower and finances rendered such territorial coexistence unrealistic and wasteful. The Prior General, Alfonso M. Montà, in a letter addressed to the two provincials on May 8, 1964, stated that the time had come for a territorial division of the two provinces and asked the two provincial councils to work out together the terms of this division. At a meeting on October 6-7, 1964, the two provincial councils agreed that two new provinces based on a geographical division should be formed and suggested that this take place at the time of the provincial chapters of 1967. The dividing line would run between the states of the Dakotas and Minnesota, Nebraska and Iowa, Kansas and Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas, and Texas and Louisiana. Ten joint provincial council meetings worked out the details of the division and final approval of the plans was given by the Servite, General Council on July 14, 1966, and by the Congregation of Religious

on August 4, 1966. The division took effect on February 6, 1967, date of the first provincial chapters of the new provinces.”

These two new jurisdictions were to be called the Eastern American Province and the Western American Province.

The twentieth century has also seen the formation of other groups of Servite Sisters in the United States in addition to those from London. In 1912 a group of young women who had been received into the Servite Third Order took charge of the parish school in Ladysmith, Wisconsin. The following year two Servite sisters of the Pistoia Congregation came to Ladysmith to help in the formation of the American sister. The sisters from Pistoia remained until 1919, and then in 1921 the Ladysmith Congregation was affiliated to the Servite Order. In the meantime other sisters of the Pistoia Congregation had arrived in the United States and began to work among the Italian immigrants in Chicago. Later a foundation was made in Blue Island, Illinois, near Chicago, where the American Province of the Congregation now maintains its motherhouse.

The first two priors general of the Order from the United States, Fr. Joseph M. Loftus (1965-1971) of the Eastern Province and Fr. Peregrine M. Graffius (1971-1977) of the Western Province, were both directly involved in the renewal of the Order's Constitutions. The text was approved in a special general chapter at Majadahonda, Madrid, in 1968, with a revision towards definitive approval in the elective chapter held at Barcelona in 1977.

The generalates of Fr. Alfonso M. Benetti and Fr. Alfonso M. Montà

These two generalates cover nearly thirty years: Fr. Benetti from 1938 to 1953 and Fr. Montà from 1953 to 1965. From 1932 to 1938 the Order had been governed by Fr. Raffaele M. Baldini. Fr. Benetti was from the Venetian Province and Fr. Montà, who died in 1982, was from the Piedmontese Province. Both these generals were zealous in their pursuit of the question of vocations. Under their leadership and during their terms of office the Order reached its largest number in the present century in the mid-1960s.

While Fr. Alfonso Benetti was prior general the Order was established in Uruguay 1939, Bolivia 1946, Ireland 1947, Mexico 1948, Australia 1951 and Venezuela 1952. It also returned to Spain in 1943. During the period of Fr. Alfonso Montà's generalate, the Order was begun in Germany 1954 and Colombia 1963. Communities were also opened in Geneva in 1958 and Issy-lesMoulineaux near Paris in 1964. That period also saw the creation in 1950 and definitive approval by the Holy See in 1955 of the Theological Faculty Marianum in Rome. This became a pontifical faculty in 1971.



The beatification in 1952 and subsequent canonization in 1962 of St. Anthony M. Pucci also took place during this period.

Frs. Benetti and Montà gave high priority to the development of Mariological studies. In 1939 the scholarly Mariological review *Marianum* was inaugurated.

Fr. Alfonso Montà had noticed a number of urgent needs of the age which would only find full response some years later, after the Second Vatican Council. He presented proposals to the 1959 general chapter on extending the period of temporary vows, on the need to set up a centre of spiritual life for periodical renewal of the friars, and on the need to improve community life by limiting those forms of apostolate which tended to disperse the friars. It was that same general chapter of 1959 which founded the Historical Institute of the Order.



In preparation for the 1965 general chapter, Fr. Montà and his general council drew up a series of concrete proposals for the revision of the Constitutions, for an adjusted role for

non-clerical brothers in the Order, for a revision of Servite liturgical texts, for the restructuring of the Italian Provinces, for improved links with the various women's congregations of the Order, and for a revival of the Third Order.

Foundation of the Servite Secular Institute and the Regnum Mariae

It was also under the above-mentioned priors general that the Servite Secular Institute was begun. Its origins were somewhat complex. In 1943 in London, Miss Joan Bartlett, with the help of Fr. Gerard M. Corr OSM, began *Servite House* for homeless elderly people after the bombing of London. It was a lay apostolate with distinctive Servite characteristics, but the group seemed to present something more than the traditional Third Order structure.

The first intention, however, of starting a group within the Servite family that would later have the physiognomy of a secular institute came from Fr. Tarcisio M. Bozzo (d. 1960) of the Piedmontese Province in 1954. He had been considering such a possibility for some time. Nevertheless, with links to the Servite Third Order, the emerging secular institute took on a more definite form in 1955 with the name "Servite Lay Association." At about the same time the group connected with *Servite House* in London declared itself enthusiastic to be part of a Servite secular institute. The early death of Fr. Bozzo, along with other circumstances, left the Italian group in some difficulties, while the group in England under Miss Joan Bartlett and Fr. Corr was developing rapidly. The overall direction of the new Servite Secular Institute thus moved to England, and it received canonical approval from the archbishop of Westminster, London, in 1964. On 25 March 1979 the Servite Secular Institute received formal approval from Pope John Paul II as an institute of pontifical right.

Meanwhile at Ancona in eastern Italy, a group of young persons belonging to the Third Order of Servants of Mary formed the Regnum Mariae in 1959. Fr. Luigi M. Poli OSM of the Bolognese Province and a group of young women from Ancona were responsible for these beginnings. It was aggregated to the Order in 1976 and received recognition as a secular institute in 1983. The institute's Rule of Life states the following: "The Regnum Mariae is made up of people who are called to live out their consecration to God in the world in a spirit of service. It arose within the Order of Servants of Mary and desires to maintain fraternal communion with the Order. Like the Servants of Mary, the Regnum Mariae has been dedicated from its beginnings to the Mother of the Lord so as to serve God and neighbour more fully. And so the members of Regnum Mariae dedicate themselves to Mary and look to her as their perfect model of evangelical-apostolic life..."

Between them the Servite Secular Institute and the Regnum Mariae number about one hundred and fifty members.

Renewal of the Constitutions after Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council required all religious orders, including the Servants of Mary, to undertake a renewal of their Constitutions. Servite legislation in force up to that time dated back to 1940, and in basic content to the Constitutions of 1907. Indeed the Constitutions that emerged from the post-Vatican II renewal represent the most far-reaching change in the Order's rule of life since 1580 and the period of the post-Tridentine reform.

The general chapter of 1965 held in Florence began the process of constitutional renewal, which went on until the special general chapter of Majadahonda, Madrid, in the autumn of 1968. The resulting text went into force on 6 April 1969 *ad experimentum*. A number of adjustments were made in the subsequent general chapters at Opatija, Yugoslavia, in 1971, Rome 1974, Barcelona 1977 and finally Rome 1983. Now the Order is awaiting final approval of its new Constitutions by the Holy See.

The priors general leading the Order during this crucial phase were Fr. Joseph M. Loftus (1965-1971), Fr. Peregrine M. Graffius (1971-1977) and from 1977 to the present day Fr. Michel M. Sincerny.

The assimilation of the new constitutional text by members of the Order was not always easy, especially at a time when vocations were dwindling and many structures were entering a period of crisis. This was especially true for the years from 1968 to 1977. Prior General Peregrine Graffius' report on the state of the Order presented to the general chapter of 1974 in Rome casts much light on this period.

The Second Vatican Council in *Perfectae Caritatis*, no. 2, required that the new Constitutions represent both a return to the spirit of the foundation of the Order and also adaptation to the changed needs of modern times. The first requirement can be seen in the way the revised Servite Constitutions affirm spiritual values rather than being merely a collection of norms; the second is seen in the commitment to live fraternity along the two interwoven lines of collegiality and subsidiarity.

The Order has been aided in fulfilling these two requirements by two permanent groups: the work of liturgical reform has been furthered by the creation of an International Liturgical Commission (CLIOS) and the need for historical studies by the establishment of the Servite Historical Institute in 1959.

Some outstanding events and personalities of this century

It might not be appropriate to dwell on very recent events and personalities, since some time must pass before historical assessments can be made. It is not through neglect, therefore, that some outstanding recent initiatives of the Order are passed over in silence. One could mention, for example, the tremendous vitality of the "Corsia dei Servi" in Milan during and after the Second World War; or the energetic group of Servites who *promoted Servitium*, a periodical which enjoyed the support of the Italian Provincials' Conference over several years. Likewise, there would be numerous "new forms" of apostolate to mention, such as the backing given to the famous pioneer Rev. Zeno Saltini who founded Nomadelfia, or recent apostolic initiatives among ethnic minorities in the United States or the destitute shack-dwellers of Sao Paulo in Brazil.

It was already stated that the outstanding feature of the Order's life in the early part of this century was its spread all over the world, accompanied by a parallel growth in numbers up to the 1960s. It is not surprising, then, that the outstanding personalities of this period were bound up with new foundations in the Third World, or with consolidation of the Order in Europe and U.S.A., with the acceptance of missionary territories, or the training of new entrants to the Order. It is from those areas of concern that the following list of personalities has been drawn up.

As a way of linking many features of the Order's development in the twentieth century, it seems appropriate to make special reference to Fr. Gabriele M. Roschini, founder of the review *Marianum*, champion and first president of the Pontifical Theological Faculty Marianum. He was born at Castel Sant'Elia, Viterbo, in 1900 and died in Rome in 1977.

He served in a variety of posts of responsibility in the Order and in several congregations of the Holy See. But this short biography singles out for attention his contribution to Marian studies. Fr. Giuseppe M. Besutti makes the following comment: "... the most outstanding feature for which Fr. Roschini is recognized as a true master of international fame is undoubtedly his activity in the sphere of Mariology. It was here that he exercised a vast, lasting and undeniable influence. In 1933 he wrote *The Divine Masterpiece*. This summary of Mariology, which was published in five editions, was followed in 1941-1943 by *Mariologia* in three volumes. This latter was revised and published in 1947-1948 in four volumes and underwent various adaptations and translations up to its last edition just after the Second Vatican Council.

"Fr. Roschini was not the first to conduct a systematic study of the life, mission, privileges and cult of the Blessed Virgin. Nevertheless, I think it must be said that he was the first to gather

all these themes into a systematic work in which theoretical and doctrinal considerations are interwoven with historical ones. ... The various tracts by Fr. Roschini, just like his many other specialized writings, provide an inexhaustible treasure for students, offering ample bibliography and suggestions for further study.

"...It will be for a future generation to assess the greatness of his contribution to Marian studies. Even now, however, it is possible to outline the themes where he made an original contribution to Marian studies, themes that were to occur again and again in his writings. These are: the question of the basic principle of Mariology; the problem of Marian interpretation of the Proto-evangelium (Genesis 3:15); the primary reason for the existence of Christ and therefore of his mother; the history of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception; the mediation of Mary; Mary's cooperation in salvation; the assumption and the question of the death or non-death of Mary; the queenship of Mary; doctrine on Marian devotion and cult; history of certain particular aspects of Marian devotion."

Fr. Gabriele Roschini was devoted to the history of the Servite Order. Over many years he patiently built up a vast collection of lives of different Servites. "A Servite gallery," he enjoyed calling it, with "over a thousand religious of the Order of Servants of Mary who were noted for holiness, learning, letters or art." His latter years were burdened by ill-health which prevented him from doing a thorough revision of the material in the collection. Nevertheless, its publication represents a remarkable contribution to knowledge of the part various Servites played in Marian studies across the centuries.

As already noted above, the Servite Order's acceptance of mission territories this century is bound up with a number of pioneers who displayed those unmistakable characteristics which have come to be identified with Servites and their traditions. Such men include Alessio M. Rattalino, Pellegrino M. Bellezze, Prospero M. Bernardi, Romualdo M. Migliorini, Costantino M. Barneschi, Giacchino M. Rossetto and James M. Keane.

Fr. Alessio M. Rattalino was born in Bra in northern Italy. He was a diocesan priest until he was thirty-three and then joined the Order in 1898. After living in a number of priories in the Piedmontese, and Roman provinces of the Order, he was sent to Argentina just before the First World War to start a community there. He first ministered in several places that had no priest, settling eventually in the parish of San Antonio de Obligado in Santa Fe, Argentina. In 1924 he moved to Brazil reaching Brasileia in Acre, where he remained until his death by malaria in June 1940.

He was a restless, itinerant missionary, who succeeded in living the spirit of the Servite Order in a powerful way, even when in complete isolation for many years. He is still remembered in Acre for his indomitable faith and his great love for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The early history of the mission in Swaziland was dogged by many problems and difficulties, and bound to this history is the name of Fr. Pellegrino M. Bellezze. He was born at Montefiore in Recanati, Macerata, in Italy in 1884, and followed his brother Agostino into the Servite Order. He was ordained priest in 1907 and seven years later departed for the mission in Swaziland which had been recently entrusted to the Order. When this mission was given the status of prefecture apostolic in 1923 Fr. Bellezze was made the first prefect apostolic, which he remained for ten years. He then moved to Brazil where he lived for the next twenty-eight years until his death at Sao Jose dos Campos in 1961.



This lively character was ahead of his time in trying to achieve Africanization in the preaching of the gospel in Swaziland. He met with resistance even among his religious brothers, but remained firm in his efforts to know and understand the Swazi people, to such an extent that King Sobhuza II considered him a great friend and trusty advisor. By 1929 Fr. Bellezze had started

sixty-two schools in the Swaziland mission. His reports to Rome still make lively reading, full of insight, missionary commitment and strong Marian devotion.

Fr. Prospero Gustavo M. Bernardi was the first prelate and bishop of the missionary territory of Acre, northwest Brazil, which had been assigned to the Order in 1919. He was already over fifty when he crossed the Atlantic to go to Acre. A native of Bologna, where he was born in 1870, he had already been general consultor and secretary of the Order prior to going to the missions. As already noted in a previous chapter, he also spent some years in Canada (1914-1917) as vicar provincial. Bishop Bernardi remained in Brazil until 1939, when incurable illness took him back to Italy for the last years of his life. He died at Monte Berico in 1944.

He was an uncomplicated and humble person, very hardworking and unassuming. Throughout his life he enjoyed recalling that he made his profession of vows in the hands of St. Anthony Pucci. He placed the mission in Acre upon firm and lasting foundations. Even though he was bishop he laboured and worked tirelessly just like the humblest of missionaries, and it is significant that the warmest memories of Bishop Bernardi have been among the non-clerical brothers of the Acre mission.

The successor to Fr. Pellegrino Bellezze as prefect apostolic in Swaziland was Fr. Romualdo M. Migliorini. He took up this office in 1933 after two years in Africa, but insisted that he would not accept nomination as bishop. Fr. Migliorini was born at Volegno, Lucca, in Italy in 1884 and spent several years in Canada after priestly ordination. His stay in Swaziland was to be quite brief. Bad health forced him to return to Italy in 1939 and he spent the rest of his life at the International College of St. Alexis Falconieri in Rome, where he offered valuable spiritual direction to Servite students. During this time he became a champion of the authenticity of the visionary writings of Maria Valtorta (d. 1961). These writings were later collected by Fr. Corrado M. Berti (d. 1980) and published in a multivolume series under the title *Il poema dell'Uomo-Dio* (The poem of the God-Man).

Fr. Migliorini died at Carsoli, Abruzzo, in Italy, on 10 July 1953, where he was accompanying the young professed students of the Order during their summer holidays. He left his mark in Africa especially in the foundation of the congregation of African Servite Sisters. Truth to tell, Fr. Migliorini preferred to give his attention to the spiritual life. Even though he gave many years to hard work in the apostolate, his first concern was always the apostolate's underpinning of prayer and contemplation.

Bishop Costantino M. Barneschi OSM traced his missionary vocation back to a promise he made as a Servite student during the First World War. He was in the army and was about to have his right arm amputated. He promised to go on the missions if his arm were spared. And so it came to pass. In 1923 when he was thirty-one - he was born at Foiano della Chiana, Arezzo in Italy in 1892 - Fr. Barneschi left for Swaziland. He was in charge of St. Joseph's Mission for over seventeen years. When the prefecture became a vicariate apostolic in 1939 he was appointed its first bishop with the title of Bishop of Tagaste. The vicariate became a diocese twenty years later and Bishop Barneschi the first bishop of Manzini. He died on 21 May 1965 and was laid to rest in front of the altar of Our Lady of Sorrows in the cathedral church which he had built.

This was a man of great energy, at the same time genial and good-natured. He laid the foundations of what is now a flourishing diocese in Swaziland. He started the seminary, made provisions for the training of catechists, and organized the mission schools into an efficient system. His people loved him and he was held in great regard by the King of Swaziland, who showed his esteem by allowing the Queen Mother to be baptized in the bishop's church and later to have her funeral there under the ministry of Bishop Barneschi. Those who appreciate Swazi customs will realize from such episodes how great was the respect for the bishop's human and religious qualities.

As well as recalling great missionaries of the present century, this chapter also highlights some other outstanding Servites. Fr. Gioacchino M. Rossetto could perhaps be called a missionary in his own native land. He was born at Schio, Vicenza, in Italy in 1880 and died at Tirano in 1935. He was part of the first group that went to Swaziland but was obliged to return to Italy almost

immediately. This grieved him considerably and he spent the remainder of his life working for the missions and encouraging people to help them. When the priories of the Venetian region became a separate entity in 1922, Fr. Rossetto was appointed prior at Monte Berico. Next door to the ancient priory in 1926 he built the Missionary Institute of Our Lady as a place for preparing young missionaries. He also founded and edited the magazine *Le Missioni della Madonna* and the periodical *Pater*. Likewise he was responsible for starting the Istituto San Raffaele as a house of hospitality for pilgrims to the shrine of Monte Berico. He met many difficulties and misunderstandings in his projects, but faced these with calm resignation. Some people consider him the "father" of the modern Venetian Province which is now the largest province in the Order.

Fr. James M. Keane goes down in Servite history as a person of the most energetic Marian commitment. He was born in Chicago in 1901 and died at Ladysmith in 1975.

In 1937 Fr. Keane started the famous "Perpetual Novena in honor of Our Sorrowful Mother" and its associated weekly bulletin *Novena Notes* whose circulation rose to almost a million copies every week. The "Novena" consisted in the recitation of the *Via Matris* every Friday as a "perpetual novena." It met with remarkable success and by 1947 had spread to over 1,800 churches and convents in 45 of the American states and 24 other countries. Fr. Keane also organized and directed radio and television programmes dedicated to the knowledge of Mary. In 1947 he was elected general consultor of the Order. That same year he founded the first community of the Servants of Mary in Ireland at Benburb, County Tyrone, and a few years later began the Order in Australia.

The prayerbook *Novena in Honor of Our Sorrowful Mother* eventually reached over six million copies in seventeen editions and twenty-two different languages. Fr. Keane also acquired some land near the shrine of Fatima in Portugal in the hope of establishing a Servite community there. A serious road accident in 1961 left him badly injured and prematurely cut short his untiring activities.

There would be many more people to write about in this chapter to provide a full treatment of outstanding Servites of the twentieth century.

Two friars from the Tuscan Province are remembered for noteworthy contributions to the study of the Order's history, namely Fr. Alessio M. Rossi (1888-1968) and Fr. Raffaello M. Taucci (1882-1971). Fr. Rossi produced, among other things, a useful and wide-ranging *Manuale di Storia dell'Ordine* (Manual of History of the Order), published by the general curia of the Order in 1956. Fr. Taucci was primarily responsible for starting the scholarly journal of Servite history *Studi Storici dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria* (Historical Studies of the Order of Servants of Mary) which first came out in 1933.

Human, religious and cultural training of young Servite students after the Second World War was intimately bound up with the names of Fr. Montà Vincenzo M. Buffon (d. 1975), Fr. Corrado M. Berti (d. 1980) and Fr. Giovanni M. Vannucci (d. 1984).

It is probably most fitting to complete this review of outstanding Servites of recent times by calling to mind two very saintly members of the Order in this century. Both died very young, one a clerical student Venanzio M. Quadri, the other a non-clerical brother Gioacchino M. Stevan. Each has had his cause for beatification opened.

Brother Venanzio M. Quadri was born at Vado di Monzuno, near Bologna in 1916 and died in Rome on 2 November 1937. His mortal remains are in the Basilica of S. Maria dei Servi in Bologna. What was considered so exceptional in Venanzio Quadri's life was the way he fulfilled ordinary things in an extraordinary way. His companions all noticed how his sense of responsibility for his vocation was very great. He showed singular devotion to fulfilling the daily requirements of religious life, as well as being untiringly available to others. His Marian commitment was solid and deep, and his death most edifying.

Brother Gioacchino M. Stevan displayed similar depth and maturity of spirit in one so young. He was born at Nove, Vicenza, in Italy in 1921 and died at Vicenza on 28 April 1949. His mortal remains are honoured in the tiny cloister adjoining the Basilica of Monte Berico. He was

twenty-six when he joined the Servites as a lay-brother. He died only two years later of acute meningitis. Prior to entering the Order he had been very active in Catholic associations. Then as a friar Servant of Mary he drew great inspiration from the ideals of sincere devotion and generous service. His "spiritual journal" shows a great wealth of spiritual life.

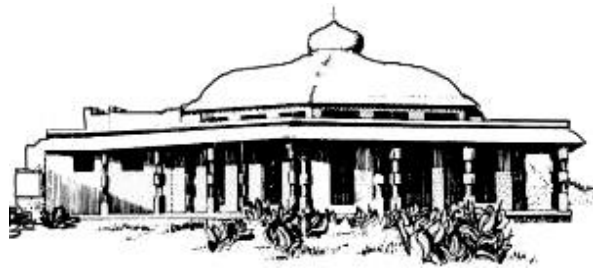
Only these two young men are mentioned here, but it would be possible to list quite a number of Servites who died after only a short life, yet left behind them a witness of total commitment to their calling. This too may be a "sign of the times" to be interpreted in silence rather than in writing.

Expansion of the Order in the present day

The latest *Catalogus* of the Order of Servants of Mary issued in 1986 gives statistics up to 31 December 1985. There were 1,139 friars in 207 priories spread around 13 provinces and 11 vicariates. There were 166 enclosed nuns in 14 convents. There were 4,652 Sisters Servants of Mary in 21 different congregations, of which two were on the way towards extinction (Hungary and Albania). The sisters had 611 convents. There were 146 members in the two secular institutes of the Order and about 10,000 members of the Servite Secular Order (formerly called Third Order) in about 140 groups.

The Order's presence reaches all five continents and about thirty different countries. Italy is the country with the largest number of friars, where there are six provinces of the Order.

A word about the most recent foundations of the Order: in 1974 the Venetian Province opened a community in Mamallapuram, a poor village on the Bay of Bengal about sixty kilometres south of Madras, India. This was the first Indian foundation of the friars. By 1984 another community had been started at Trichy (or Tiruchirapalli) with a promising number of young candidates.



In the 1973 the Servite enclosed nuns started a convent in

Mozambique around which grew a community of young candidates for the friars, now under the responsibility of the Spanish Province. In the southern African state of Lesotho a student formation house has been opened by the Swaziland :Vicariate for new members from Swaziland, Zululand and Transvaal. The Canadian Province has begun a small community of friars in the African state of Gabon with good prospects for development. And the Bolognese Province has opened a community in the Philippines. All this latest information was communicated at the elective general chapter celebrated in Rome from 15 October to 16 November 1983. It offers good hope for the future.

And since the healthy growth of the Order throughout its history has always been linked to a strengthening of its Marian characteristics, there is doubtlessly a promising sign in the recent publication of the Order's "Marian Document," issued by the general chapter of 1983 and entitled *Do Whatever He Tells You*. It was addressed to all members of the Servite family, to bishops wherever Servite communities are present, to other Marian religious orders and to all religious and laypersons who know and share the calling of the Servants of Mary.

Distribution of Servite friars (1985)

Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, San Marino, Spain.

America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Asia: India, Philippines.

Oceania: Australia.

Africa: Gabon, Lesotho, Mozambique, Republic of South Africa, Swaziland.

Religious jurisdictions

Provinces	Priories
Brazil	10
Canada	10
England	6
Piedmont	8
Romagna (Bologna)	15
<i>Rome</i>	10
Southern Italy (Naples)	10
Spain	6
Tyrol (Austria)	7
Tuscany	14
United States, Eastern Province	16
United States, Western Province	11
Veneto	19
General houses (in Rome)	3

- The Canadian Province includes a foundation in Gabon, the Province of Romagna (Bologna) a foundation in the Philippines, the Spanish Province a foundation in Mozambique, the Tuscan Province a house in Montreal, Canada, and the Venetian Province a foundation in India.
- Three communities in Rome are under the direct jurisdiction of the prior general.
- Friars of the Hungarian Province are not allowed to live in communities.

Vicariates and Delegations **Priories**

Argentina-Uruguay (Veneto)	8
Australia (USA, Western Province)	5
Belgium-France (Canada)	5
Chile-Bolivia (Veneto)	9
Germany	2
Ireland (USA, Eastern Province)	3
Mexico (Veneto)	9
Swaziland (Tuscany)	10
Transvaal (Veneto)	3
Venezuela-Colombia (Rome)	3
Zululand, S. Africa (USA, Eastern -Province)	5

Dates to Remember

- 1913 Start of missions in Africa (Swaziland).
Fr. Alexis M. Lépicier elected prior general.
- 1914 First Servant of Mary in Argentina
English Province canonically established.

- 1919-1920 Start of the missions in Acre and Purus, Brazil.
- 1922 Venetian Province canonically reestablished.
- 1927 Alexis Lépiciér made cardinal. The following year he became prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious.
- 1928 Opening of the new premises of the International College of St. Alexis in Rome.
Death of Cecilia Eusepi, Servite tertiary.
- 1933 Solemn festivities for the Order's Seventh Centenary.
First issue of the periodical *Studi Storici OSM*.
- 1935 Start of the Transvaal foundation, South Africa.
- 1936 Sister M Guadalupe Ricart Olmos from the enclosed convent in Valencia is killed during the Spanish Civil War.
- 1937 Start of the Chile foundation, Aysen mission.
- 1938-1953 Generalate of Fr. Alfonso M. Benetti. Foundations in Uruguay (1939), Bolivia (1946), Ireland (1947), Mexico (1948), Australia (1951) and Venezuela (1952).
- 1943 Servants of Mary return to Spain.
Servite House started in London, from which the Servite Secular Institute (1964) would be born.
- 1946 Canonical establishment of Southern Italian (Neapolitan) Province in the area of the former Neapolitan Province of the Order.
- 1948 Canadian Province canonically established. Servites; from United States start Zululand mission.
- 1950 The Hungarian communities are suppressed by government decree.
The Marianum Faculty started.
- 1952 Beatification of Anthony M. Pucci.
St. Joseph's Province, U.S.A., canonically established.
- 1953-1965 Generalate of Fr. Alfonso M. Montà.
- 1954 Servants of Mary return to Germany.
- 1959 Historical Institute OSM established.
The Regnum Mariae started in Ancona.
- 1961 Brazilian Province canonically established.
- 1962 Canonization of St. Anthony M. Pucci.
- 1963 First foundation in Colombia.
- 1966 Servite International Liturgical Commission (CLIOS) established.
- 1968 Special general chapter at Majadahonda, Madrid, for the revision of the Constitutions. A decree of this chapter changed the status of all missions and commissariates into vicariates.
- 1971 General chapter of Opatija, Yugoslavia.
Spanish Province canonically established.
- 1973 Enclosed convent started in Mozambique by nuns from Spain.
- 1974 General chapter of renewal held in Rome.
Venetian Province starts new foundation in India.
- 1977 General chapter of Barcelona.
- 1979 Servite Secular Institute receives pontifical status.
- 1983 Regnum Mariae becomes a secular institute.
Elective chapter in Rome; Fr. Michel M. Sincerny reelected prior general.