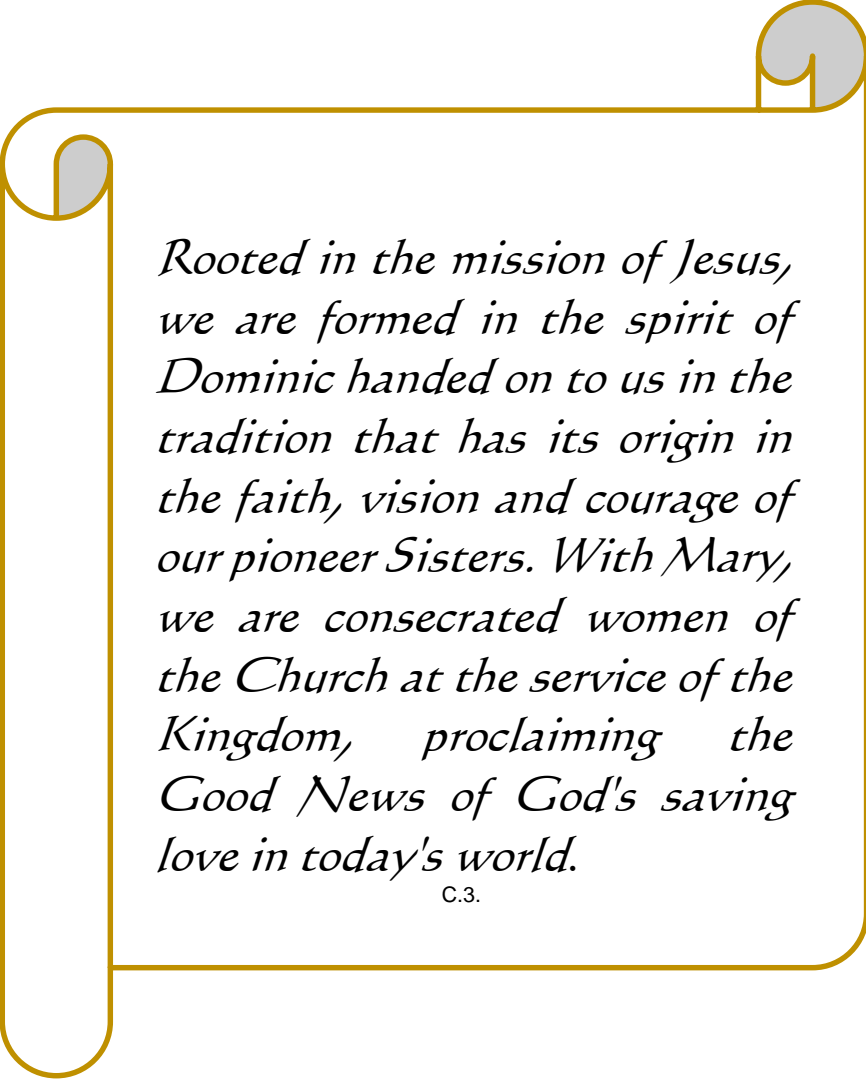


*The Dominican Congregation of St Catherine of Siena
of Oakford, Natal*

1889 – 2014





*Rooted in the mission of Jesus,
we are formed in the spirit of
Dominic handed on to us in the
tradition that has its origin in
the faith, vision and courage of
our pioneer Sisters. With Mary,
we are consecrated women of
the Church at the service of the
Kingdom, proclaiming the
Good News of God's saving
love in today's world.*

C.3.

MESSAGE FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL PRIORESS

March of 1889, marked the arrival of our Pioneer Sisters in Oakford, and now in the year 2014 the Dominican Congregation of St Catherine of Siena, Oakford, Natal, celebrates 125 years of our Sisters in relationship with God and God's People.



The biblical story of God's chosen people reflects their covenantal relationship and our salvation history. This brief history of the Congregation, compiled for the occasion of our Quasiquicentennial Jubilee allows us a privileged glimpse into the life and achievements of our predecessors in the Congregation. Only through their consecrated way of being and doing, in relationship with God and God's People, has this all been possible.

The dedication of the women on whose shoulders we stand is evident in the way they endured unbelievable hardships yet persevered with joy in the Mission of Jesus. We note with deep gratitude our Sisters' incredible generosity and the amazing feats achieved through their reliance on and commitment to God.

Generations have come and gone; realities and contexts have changed and continue to do so. However the essence of our call and response to God remains the Mission of Jesus – conversion and transformation of ourselves and our world of today.

We commend those who over the years have kept the annals and archives, and most recently, the work of Sr Alison Munro and those who worked with her, researching the Oakford annals and archives in an effort to trace our history from the beginnings in Augsburg (Germany) to Oakford (South Africa) and way beyond, to North and South America, Italy and England, so that together we may continue to:

Praise, Bless and Preach

Passionate for God, We Proclaim God's Presence in our World.

(Congregational Mission Focus)

Sr Paula-Mary van der Walt, OP

Congregational Prioress

Bedfordview, South Africa
8 August 2014
Feast of St Dominic

THE MISSION AND OUTREACH OF THE DOMINICAN SISTERS OF OAKFORD 1889-2014

The Oakford Congregation was established at the time of great expansion of apostolic missionary religious congregations in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Bishop of the Eastern Vicariate of the Cape had invited the Sisters of St Ursula's in Augsburg to send Sisters to King Williamstown to see to the spiritual needs of German settlers in the Eastern Cape Colony. At the same time there was expansion within South Africa towards the interior of the sub-continent. The Vicariate of Natal extended beyond the boundaries of the British Colony of Natal, inviting the mission of the Church to be extended ever further. Indeed, there was pressure from Europe on Bishop Jolivet OMI of the Vicariate of Natal to make converts to Catholicism among the indigenous Zulu people and open missions.



Oakford Sisters went with or followed the Oblates of Mary Immaculate to a number of Zulu missions in Natal, and were involved in the primary evangelisation of the local people, as well as in establishing schools. They also set up clinics and dispensaries to take care of the health needs of the people. Later foundations made by Oakford Sisters in Natal had a more urban approach, often among whites in the cities and towns. The Free State and Cape foundations were established in small towns and their neighbouring African townships, in what today are the Dioceses of Bethlehem, Kroonstad, Bloemfontein, Mthatha and Kimberley, covering a huge geographic area. The Transvaal communities, in today's Archdioceses of Johannesburg and Pretoria, served the mission in schools, hostels, clinics, parishes and maternity hospitals, in both African and White areas. Many areas across the country in which the Sisters worked were directly affected by *Apartheid* legislation.

The Sisters were also invited to help establish the Church and schools in Swaziland and Bechuanaland (now Botswana), both British Protectorates until independence in the 1960s, but linked to the South African mission of the Congregation and the ecclesiastical territories of the Church in Southern Africa.

The Congregation's move to Germany, already in 1909, to Neustadt/Main, was one in search of recruits to the Congregation who could be assessed before being sent to South Africa. The First World War had an effect on the movement of Sisters and candidates from Germany. Later came the establishment of the house in Volkersberg, initially for the training of candidates. Other foundations in Germany made after World War II promoted the need for mission within Germany, not only in South Africa. It was also increasingly difficult for missionaries to enter South Africa under *Apartheid*.

England was seen initially as a source of potential vocations for the Congregation, and indeed in earlier years there were more Sisters from England and Ireland than was the case later on. It was only after World War II that new foundations, away from Chingford, were made. Sisters were involved in education, youth work, family ministry, retreats, pastoral work and the care of the elderly.

The Congregation's invitation to California and the United States of America opened a new chapter for mission, initially focused on support services at the Dominican House of Studies at St Albert's, Oakland. Sisters then moved elsewhere in the San Francisco Bay Area, into education, care of the elderly, pastoral service and spiritual care. Mission outreach and pastoral service to predominantly Hispanic communities in Southern California and Arizona has taken Oakford Sisters to the borders of Mexico.

For about twenty years the Congregation owned a house in the Eternal City, Rome. It was initially a guest house and a place for our own student Sisters. Later it served the wider Dominican Family as

an International Dominican House of Studies, drawing Dominicans from across the globe into sabbatical and formation programmes.

Invited also to Argentina, Oakford Sisters lived and worked in the Province of Misiones between 1974 and 2002. Foundations were made in 25 de Mayo, Obera and Panambi. The Sisters served as pastoral workers in the chapels, in hospitals, schools and university, and in the care of the elderly and of expectant mothers. Several Sisters were missioned to Argentina over the years, from South Africa, Germany, England, and the United States of America.

There are gaps and incomplete details in what is presented here – and an invitation to more detailed future research. Compiling even a brief overview of the establishment, expansion, mission and outreach of the Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena of Oakford, Natal has been an enriching and humbling experience. The Sisters who went before us and from whose inspiration we draw often endured unbelievable physical hardships, living in very poor conditions with hardly any space to call their own. Language and cultural differences, the requests and expectations of bishops and clergy, the need for more Sisters, political realities, travel difficulties, and ever-present financial worries had all to be faced.

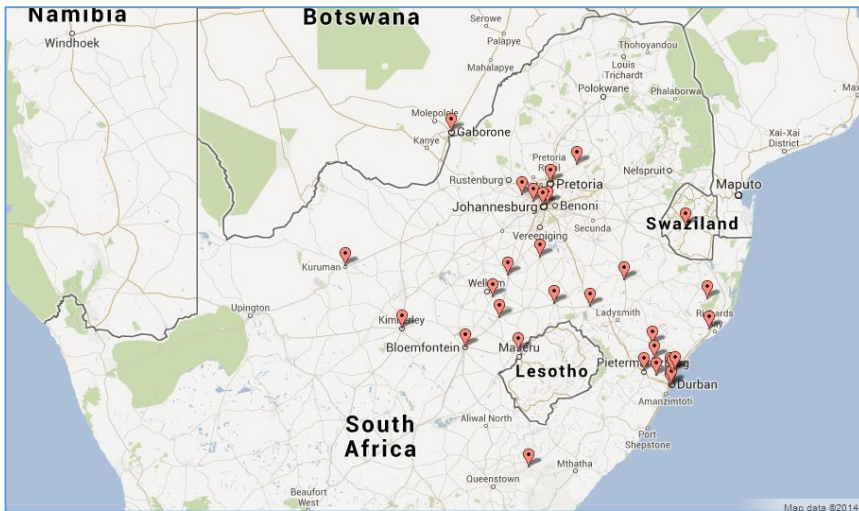
The mission outreach across four continents by the Congregation in its history is no mean feat given the small numbers of Sisters. For all who have gone before us, and for the fidelity of God over 125 years, we are grateful.

Sr Alison Munro, OP

*Go out into the whole world,
preach the Good News.*



Oakford Presence



Botswana
Swaziland
South Africa



England
Germany
Italy



USA
Argentina



SOUTHERN AFRICA



NATAL/KWAZULU NATAL

- **1889 OAKFORD, Verulam: Convent of the Sacred Heart**

The 30th March 1889 saw the arrival at Oakford of eight pioneer Sisters from King Williamstown, four choir Sisters and four lay Sisters, including Sr Gertrude Walter who had come with the original group from St Ursula's, Augsburg in 1877. In 1890 Oakford became an independent Congregation, today known as the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena of Oakford, Natal. Mother Gabriel Foley, one of the pioneers, who had been King Williamstown's first South African postulant, was subsequently elected the first prioress of Oakford.



Sr Raphael Walter OP teaching shoe-making

Before 1889, the first Sisters at Oakford were three Holy Family Sisters who stayed for about 2 ½ years.

Oakford provided education to generations of children of different cultural backgrounds at St Vincent's, St Mary's, St Aloysius, Sacred Heart, and St Xavier's. Sacred Heart was opened in 1886 with 50 children. It received an annual grant of £36 already in April 1889. St Xavier's School which began in 1925 served the Indian community of the area by providing excellent

educational services. Some of the families became Christians. In 1997 the two schools, Sacred Heart Primary and St Xavier's amalgamated into one school, Oakford Primary School. Sacred Heart Secondary School still serves the communities around Oakford and further afield, receiving excellent matric results each year.

From 1936 to 1942 Sisters taught in the New Glasgow School until government regulations permitted work with Indians, not Africans, in the area.

In 1917 Indians were employed for the first time, and the barracks, later known as the village, were established.

The clinic was begun in the 1950s. Later the KwaGertrude old aged home was established.

In 1890 the first postulants arrived from Bavaria, through Mother Hyacinth of Gablingen, a foundation made by the Kaufbeuren Convent, and from Augsburg. Generations of Sisters were trained in the novitiate at Oakford (and in Montebello between 1920 and 1924). In 1923, the African novitiate was begun at Oakford, but later moved to Montebello. In 1924 lay Sisters integrated with choir Sisters. In 1961, the African novitiate was re-established at Oakford, transferring to Ekukhanyeni in 1976.

From 1986 to 1990 the Ethembeni small community lived in a house at Oakford, away from the main priory community. In 1993 the house was used for a pre-novitiate.

The orientation seminary for prospective priests of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference territory was located at Oakford for nine years; some Sisters were also engaged there.

In 1996 the Congregation began the process of disposing of land at Oakford, selling parts of it and donating part to the land reform programme of the government. Sr Bernadette Zulu served as the last prioress at Oakford Priory from 2007-2009. The South African Area celebrated 120 years of the Congregation at Oakford in April 2009, in November 2009 the Oakford parish celebrated 125 years since its foundation; in the same year the remaining Oakford property was sold.



A view of Oakford

- **1891 NEWCASTLE**

An entry in Bishop Jolivet's diary in June 1891 reads: *"I went to Oakford to interview the prioress on the subject of a foundation at Newcastle."* Another entry, also in 1891, reads: *"I can confirm the complete success of our Dominican Sisters. All, Protestants and Catholics alike, praise them. We made plans to develop and strengthen the work."*

The Newcastle foundation, as requested by Bishop Jolivet was made on 6 July 1891 to serve the educational needs of Catholics in Northern Natal. Its poor beginnings resemble those of Oakford. Sr Rose Niland who had originally belonged to the King Williamstown Dominicans and had accompanied Mother Mauritia Tiefenbock on her first visit to Oakford had asked to join the Oakford Congregation, and was assigned to Newcastle. She was appointed superior of Newcastle for three years in 1893.

Mother Gabriel later wanted to withdraw the community from Newcastle because of financial problems, but instead, the Oakford Congregation withdrew. Newcastle became an independent house from 1896 with five Sisters of the original eight, one of them Sr Columba O'Sullivan who was one of Oakford's pioneers, electing to stay with Mother Rose Niland, and three returning to Oakford. This was the beginning of a new Dominican Congregation. It accepted the debt (Mother Rose's relatives solved the financial problems) and responsibility for the development of the new foundation. The new Congregation opened convents and in 1925, when its Constitutions were approved by Rome, moved its motherhouse and novitiate to Europe. Later on fifteen young African women from Newcastle joined Montebello at the time when Montebello became an independent Congregation in 1939.



First Convent at Newcastle

- **1895 TONGAAT, Genazzano: Convent of St Pius, Stella Maris**

Genazzano began as a holiday house in January 1896. The first wood and iron convent was built in 1895 and was guaranteed to last 30 years. In 1905 it became a guest house. St Vincent's School, begun at Oakford, was moved to Genazzano in 1899, taking in Coloured and later African children. Because of



St Vincent's School 1928

the Group Areas Act it became a school for Indian children in 1974, and in 1976 the property was sold to Boys' Town SA. In 1970 the North Coast Road cut Genazzano off from its beach. From 1983 - 1990, a community again lived at Genazzano, in a small convent, doing mission work in the African and Indian communities, and assisting in Boys' Town. The small house is now maintained as a holiday house for the Sisters.

- **1896 EMOYENI, Zululand: Convent of the Holy Cross**

Bishop Jolivet invited the Sisters to do mission work at one of the abodes of John Dunn, Emoyeni/Mangete, Zululand, south of Empangeni, the home of his first wife, to assist Fr Rousset and teach Dunn's children. On loan for a short period to Emoyeni, the Sisters travelled by ox-wagon, hired from Mr Swales in Inanda, for five days, and crossed the Tugela River by punt. Sr Beatrice Holderied, one of Oakford's pioneers, spent seven months at Emoyeni after which she returned to Oakford.

When the Sisters were withdrawn in 1897, the Newcastle Sisters took over for about two years. One of them, Sr Mary Augustine Brady, later became Oakford's Sr Monica Brady. Another, Sr Patrick Delaney, had joined the Assumption Sisters, then King Williamstown, then Oakford (as Sr Alexandra), and was one of the Sisters who chose to remain in Newcastle. From Newcastle she was sent to Emoyeni for two years before being recalled to Newcastle. Her niece Agnes Clare, at one time a postulant with Newcastle, joined a party of postulants for Oakford in 1899; she became Mother Angela, later known for her work in the Transvaal hostels.

After the withdrawal of the Newcastle Sisters, the school was taken over first by Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, then by Benedictines.

- **1904 NOODSBERG / MONTEBELLO: St Peter's Mission: Convent of St Louis Bertrand**

In 1902, the Sisters, including Mother Lucy Bader, made their first visit to Noodsberg, one of the missions Fr Mathieu visited monthly, crossing the Umhloti River 13 times and travelling by ox wagon. Among the four Noodsberg pioneer Sisters in December 1904 was Sr Alphonsa Scherer, one of Oakford's pioneers. Over time there was a holiday house, mission work, a mission school, a hospital, and St Angela's Girls' School Belmont (1909 - 1927). In 1913 the name of the post office was changed from Belmont to Montebello, and Noodsberg became known as Montebello.

From 1920 to 1924 the novitiate was located at Montebello, moved from Oakford. Among the young people were two former pupils of St Mary's, the first group from Neustadt since 1914, and a group from Chingford. In 1925 the first African postulants from Oakford were accepted as novices, with Sr Euphemia Ruf as novice mistress. This was the first African novitiate for the Dominican Sisters in South Africa. Three African Sisters made profession in 1927. From 1929 to 1930 there was a training college for Sisters at



Front: Mother Cecilia Schleich, Rev B J Gijlswijk, Mother Euphemia
Back: Srs Siena, Andreas, Gabriel Possenti

Montebello, occupying the former St Angela's school buildings. It included Sisters from Oakford, Inkamana and Mariannhill, and was a project of the apostolic delegate. When Montebello became an independent Congregation of diocesan right in 1939, there were five postulants, fourteen temporary professed Sisters, and four finally professed Sisters from the Oakford Congregation, and fifteen African Sisters from Newcastle. Three Oakford Sisters, including Sr Euphemia Ruf, remained at Montebello, finally transferring to the Montebello Congregation in 1960.

- **1916 GREYTOWN: Convent of St Dominic**

Greytown was the third branch house in Natal founded on 10 February 1916. At the invitation of Bishop Delalle the Sisters ran a day school for white children until 1934. The constant moving of Sisters may have had an effect on pupil numbers. The school was re-opened in 1937 under Mother Reginald Buchler as a commercial and music school. Boarders were again taken in 1947. The Sisters taught in the township at a school for African children from 1928 to 1967. The convent was closed in 1967 and the property sold. Priscilla and Maureen Boys from Greytown entered Oakford and became our Sr Geraldine and Sr Gervase respectively.

- **1925 KRUISFONTEIN: Convent of St Agnes**

Kruisfontein, near Tongaat, founded by Fr Mathieu, opened in January 1925. Mother Aloysia Stoss was appointed superior there after her resignation as Prioress General. The mission was transferred from an earlier site after opposition from sugar cane planters, the school having been started by a former pupil from Oakford at her home. The Sisters taught in the school and were involved in the work of the mission. The original mud convent was replaced by a new convent, and in 1928 a school building was begun. From 1929 Fr Mathieu took up his abode at Kruisfontein, spending some of the last years of his life there. One hundred and twenty people died there in 1944 because of a smallpox outbreak. In December of the same year the Sisters were withdrawn. Bishop Delalle wanted Sisters for Walsingham House in Durban; also, there was no daily Mass at Kruisfontein since the departure of Fr Mathieu, and arrangements for even the monthly celebration of Mass did not work out.



Kruisfontein Mission

- **1928 INANDA/ EKUKHANYENI: Convent of St Rose of Lima**

The Inanda house was founded in February 1928 under Mother Cecilia Schleich and blessed by Bishop Delalle. In 1947, Archbishop Hurley donated 2 acres of land plus the buildings to the Sisters. The Sisters taught in a day and boarding school for African children till 1957, and only in 1953 was the clinic begun. Sr Augustine was given a Basotho pony to visit patients, and Sr Sylvestra had a horse. In 1957 the Archdiocese opened a minor seminary in place of the boarding school, and in 1962/3 the new convent was built. In 1975, the African novitiate was transferred from Oakford to Ekukhanyeni. Later the clinic was closed and renovated to operate as an in-patient AIDS hospice (eventually receiving a Department of Health subsidy in 2011).

From 2008 Ekukhanyeni was part of the Oakford local community. Sr Bernadette Zulu, at Ekukhanyeni after the move from Oakford, was re-elected local prioress.

- **1929 INCHANGA**

For 18 months, from January 1929 to June 1930, a small community served the mission in Inchanga between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Sisters were accommodated in two small rooms. There were three different superiors in 18 months.

- **1933 SEVEN OAKS**

Seven Oaks opened in November 1933 under Mother Cecilia, and was relinquished to the Montebello Sisters in 1939. Sr Lucina, later one of the three Oakford Sisters to remain at Montebello, was superior of the first community which began a mission school. In May 1934 Mother Euphemia was appointed superior for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the community. Fifty acres of land was purchased in November 1934.

- **1944/5 DURBAN, Walsingham**

The Sisters were invited, in December 1944, under Mother Reginald Buchler, to run a hostel for young working girls, begun by the Catholic Women's League of Durban. The property was bought by the Congregation in 1946. A new building had to be erected in 1956 under Mother Paula Hebel after the first building was attacked by termites, condemned and demolished. The house was used by many student Sisters at training colleges and Religious passing through Durban. In December 1976 it became the property of the Archdiocese of Durban. Several residents entered different congregations, one of them, Denise Parrot, entered at Oakford.

- **1952 PIETERMARITZBURG: Villa Assumpta, Convent of Our Lady of the Assumption**

- **1999 PIETERMARITZBURG: Villa Siena**

At the invitation of Archbishop Hurley a home for the elderly was opened in Pietermaritzburg, named Villa Assumpta, opening in August 1952 under Mother Paula. Our Lady Assumed into Heaven had recently been proclaimed the patroness of South Africa. It also served the need of student priests and Sisters. Buildings were extended in 1967 to accommodate more residents, and part of the property was sold. In 1999 a new building, Villa Siena, was added to accommodate retired Sisters and some residents.

The annals of Villa Siena between 2006 and 2011 note the health concerns of the Sisters, the many visitors who had known our Sisters elsewhere in the Area, the generous donations of benefactors, the workshops and retreats in which Sisters participated, the process towards the election of one local prioress for both Villa Assumpta and Villa Siena, the work of the co-ordinating team set up to take care of the running of the home, and concerns around staff, remuneration, property maintenance and needs of Sisters and residents. Some Sisters helped to staff the home while others were engaged in such part-time ministries as school boards and counselling.

Pietermaritzburg is today home to our retired and infirm Sisters in South Africa and other residents.

- **1955 EMPANGENI, St Catherine's**

St Catherine's day school for white children in Empangeni was begun under Mother Paula Hebel in February 1955 after the continued invitation of Bishop Bilgeri of Eshowe because of the growing industrial expansion in Zululand. The original African school building had been vacated when the area was proclaimed white. There was no proper convent, and the Sisters lived in the former presbytery. Repairs and alterations to existing buildings were needed. The boarding school was begun in 1958 and the new church used for the first time in 1960. The high school and new block opened in 1968. In 1969 there were many young Sisters teaching at St Catherine's and studying part time.

In 2010 one community member was employed at St Joseph's Theological Institute to oversee the community needs and residence of student Sisters from various congregations studying at Cedara. Other ministries have included outreach in the parish and to people affected by AIDS, and pastoral

work in the diocese. Under the new governance structures, the community first opted to remain a local community on their own, but later joined the Sisters of Hlabisa to form the Zululand Local Community of which Sr Lidia Danyluk (living in Hlabisa) was elected the first prioress. The Sisters left Empangeni in September 2014.

- **1963 OAKFORD, Osindisweni: Regina Mundi Convent**



June 1963 saw the beginnings of the Osindisweni Hospital under Mother de Lima Trunk. In 1960 Archbishop Hurley had wanted Mother Paula to take over one of the three tuberculosis (TB) hospitals the government had offered, with Waterfall the preferred site. In 1962, however, the decision was made to build on Oakford land. The TB section of the hospital and the convent opened in 1963. In 1964 the hospital received an ambulance from the German Federal Republic. The church was opened in August 1964, the general hospital in 1969. In 1974 Sr Dr Gertrudis

Birkner was awarded a papal medal in recognition of her services to health care.

The administration of the hospital was taken over by the KwaZulu government in 1985. In 1986 a new nurses' home was opened, paid for by the Dominican Association; and in 1987 a new outpatient department was added, paid for by the State. The State bought the hospital in 1989. The convent closed in January 1992, with some Sisters continuing to work at the hospital for a few years.

- **1964 BLUFF, Durban: Convent of the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

The Bluff is noted as the first mission of Bishop Jolivet, and the place from which some Catholic families of freed Zanzibari slaves were re-located to Oakford towards the end of 1887 to become the nucleus of Bishop Jolivet's second mission, Oakford. The Holy Family Sisters had established a school at the Bluff for the children of freed slaves and Fr Baudry and the Sisters prepared some people for baptism.

In August 1964, under Mother de Lima, the Congregation began a school, "Our Lady of Natal", at the Bluff on land purchased from the Archdiocese of Durban and from the Holy Family Sisters (who had conducted a school for African children). There were plans to have a high school. In 1973 the infant school and part of the convent were used by Christian Life Groups and for Adult Education. Today there is a pre-school and junior primary school, known as Our Lady of Natal Convent School, and a retreat centre, St Dominic's House of Prayer.

In more recent years, the ministries of the Sisters have included teaching in Our Lady of Natal Junior Primary School, the teaching of theology at St Joseph's Theological Institute, Cedara; pastoral and catechetical work in several parishes around the Bluff and in Durban; work in the programme of the



African Network of Higher Education and Research in Theology HIV and AIDS (ANHERTHA); and community financial management support to our communities in KwaZulu Natal. St Dominic's Retreat Centre has been used for the Dominican Sisters International (DSI) leadership and formators' courses, and for the Dominican Sisters Africa (DSA), Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) programmes. Dominican visitors have included Timothy Radcliffe,

Mary O'Driscoll and Margaret Ormond. In 2014 the Centre hosted the sabbatical programme of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, as well as the Assembly of the South African Area celebrating 125 years since the establishment of the Congregation in 1889.

- **1978 DURBAN: Fanjeaux**

Some Sisters continued living at Walsingham House until 1978. A small house, Fanjeaux, owned by the Archdiocese, was then bought in 1978, providing a residence for Sisters in Durban doing pastoral work, radiography, visiting of the aged and catechetics. In 1980, a larger house was bought, and the Sisters moved from Hewitt Road to Manning Road. The house was closed in February 1984.

- **1985 HLABISA, Zululand: Nkosinathi Convent**

The Nkosinathi pre-novitiate was opened in Hlabisa in 1985 in a convent owned by the Vicariate of Ingwavuma, and previously occupied by Servite Sisters. Over the years the Sisters have been involved in primary school education at Good Shepherd Mission, catechetical and parish work, diocesan training, AIDS ministry and women's programmes, both in Hlabisa and in the vicariate. In 2009 the new bishop of Ingwavuma, Bishop José Luís Gerardo Ponce de León, an Argentinian, was consecrated. In the same year the Hlabisa and Empangeni house communities elected a prioress for their new local community.



Mass in the convent chapel

- **1998 PHOENIX, Durban**

A house was acquired for Sisters working at Good Shepherd Parish, Phoenix, an Indian area, and a small community lived there for some time. Some of the temporary professed Sisters studying nursing at Mariannhill were part of the community during their times away from Mariannhill. The house was sold to the family of one of Oakford's Indian workmen. One of the Sisters still works in the parish.

- **2004 CHATSWORTH, Durban**

Between 2004 and 2008, a presbytery in Chatsworth, St John's, housed a small community of Sisters, including some pre-novices and temporary professed Sisters studying nursing at Mariannhill. Sisters ministered as hospital chaplains in the parish, serving the Indian community.

- **2010 OAKLANDS, near Verulam**

After the sale of Oakford was completed in 2010, the South African Area rented a house in Oaklands, located between Oakford and the town of Verulam, for two Sisters continuing to minister, one teaching at Sacred Heart Secondary School until her retirement from teaching, and the other serving in pastoral ministry at Good Shepherd Parish in Phoenix. This house community is part of the Ekukhanyeni Local Community.

ORANGE FREE STATE / FREE STATE

- **1921 HARRISMITH**

In 1913 six Sisters of Mercy from Oldham in Lancashire, England, travelling to South Africa to make a foundation in Harrismith, met Mother Joseph Ryan and Sr Cecilia Schleich and 17 aspirants from Germany and Ireland on the boat. In January 1921 the Oakford Sisters took over a boarding school for white children from these Sisters of Mercy, but were withdrawn in December 1922, as Bishop Delalle and Fr Mathieu had not been involved in the decision. Some of the Sisters and some pupils went to Greytown. Bishop Cox, under whose jurisdiction Harrismith fell, opposed the withdrawal of the Sisters. The Sisters were, however, invited back from 1927 to 1937 by Archbishop Gijswijk, the apostolic

delegate, to open a school for African children which was then handed over to another Congregation. Mother Paula Murphy is buried in Harrismith.

- **1926 LADYBRAND: Convent of St Catherine of Siena**



Ladybrand was originally part of the Kroonstad Vicariate, but later became part of the new Bethlehem Diocese. It was the third mission opened by Mother Cecilia Schleich, and Sisters were involved in mission work, a clinic, a school, and house-keeping for the priest from April 1926. The Sisters were withdrawn in June 1963 after 37 years, much to the disappointment of the bishop.

Sr Peregrina with needlework class

- **1928 BETHLEHEM: Convent of St Vincent Ferrer**

From April 1928, even before the church was built in Bethlehem, the Sisters were involved in mission work with the Holy Ghost Fathers (now called Holy Spirit Fathers), giving religious instruction and teaching in school. In 1948, when the prefecture was divided, the Sisters went with the Dominican Fathers to Kroonstad, and handed over their ministry to the Sisters of St Paul.



First Communion

- **1929 BLOEMFONTEIN**

Our Sisters were housekeepers for the apostolic delegate, Archbishop Gijlswijk, in Bloemfontein, from 1929 to 1946 when the apostolic delegation was moved to Pretoria.

- **1932 HEILBRON: Convent of St Albert**

In Heilbron, from December 1932 to 1969, the Sisters were involved in mission work, an African primary school, a clinic, and a crèche (from 1947). Two Heilbron girls entered the novitiate at Montebello. The Sisters' property, purchased in 1948, was sold with other church property to the municipality in 1969 when the Bishop moved the priest, because of a shortage of priests, and because of the Group Areas Act.

- **1935 WINBURG: Convent of St Thomas**

From December 1934 to 1937 the Sisters ran a small school in Winburg, and were later involved in a small crèche and mission work, caring for the Dominican presbytery and church. From 1941 they ran a small dispensary. In February 1957, after twenty years of service, the Sisters were withdrawn to the disappointment of the parishioners and the local people. A petition was received by the Prioress General from the Catholics of Winburg protesting against the Sisters' leaving.

- **1948 KROONSTAD: Convent of St Vincent Ferrer**

Sisters provided housekeeping for the presbytery and for Bishop van Velsen in Kroonstad from July 1948, shouldering much of the financial burden for the running of the presbytery; they also ran a clinic in the township. They took over from the Sisters of St Paul who were transferred to the Diocese of Bethlehem when the Diocese of Kroonstad was formed. In February 1957 the last two Sisters were withdrawn by Mother Paula Hebel.

- **1955 VIRGINIA: Regina Coeli Convent**

Bishop van Velsen wanted a school near the Goldfields which were opening up in the Orange Free State. When the Sisters arrived in Virginia the school building was not complete and the convent was built only later. The day school for white boys and girls to which classes were gradually added was officially



Virginia: Community of Sisters 1965

opened in November 1955. Later some classes were discontinued because of low pupil numbers. In 1971 Standard 10 was recommenced, but from 1976 there was only a primary school and a new nursery school on the property. The school was sold to the Education Department in December 1979 as an English medium primary school, and the Sisters were withdrawn. In 1960 the superior, Mother de Lima Trunk who had been the first principal, was elected Prioress General of the Congregation.

EASTERN CAPE AND NORTHERN CAPE

- **1931 CALA, Transkei (now in the Eastern Cape) : Convent of the Child Jesus**

At the invitation of the prefect apostolic, Mother Cecilia Schleich opened a hospital in Cala for Whites and Africans in a former school of the Marist Brothers in 1931. In 1934 it received a subsidy from the Cape Provincial Administration Hospital Division, and from various funds. The Sisters were bound to the hospital because of an agreement with Victoria Memorial Hospital Fund. In 1952 an inspection report noted the need for a replacement hospital, but also noted that it was the only hospital available to many people, relieving Queenstown and East London hospitals of patient burden. The hospital was extended in 1963. The control of the hospital was later moved between different government departments, and it was finally taken over by the homeland Transkei government in 1976. The last two Sisters left in January 1980, the last Mass having been celebrated in the new chapel of the Newcastle Dominican Convent nearby.

- **1928 KIMBERLEY (now in the Northern Cape) : Convent of St Raymund**

From July 1928, there were four Oakford Sisters in Kimberley, providing housekeeping (from 1931) for the priests at the cathedral and for the bishop, teaching at St Boniface diocesan school, and being involved in catechetics and pastoral work.

The Oblate Fathers had opened St Boniface Mission in 1925. As was the case elsewhere, evangelisation and missionary work was closely linked to the establishment of a school. Holy Family Sisters were the first Sisters involved in the school. The financing of the Mission during the years of the Second World War was a struggle. One of the Christian Brothers managed to get an army tender for the Mission, and St Boniface was registered as a laundry and shoe repair factory for the army. Some Brothers and some Sisters, already serving as builders and teachers, became shoemakers and laundry workers.

The convent was built by Bishop Bokenfohr at St Boniface in 1963. The Sisters were temporarily withdrawn in July 1989 for 6 months because of riots. In February 1994 three Holy Family Sisters and two Oakford Sisters formed a joint community at St Boniface for three years. Over the years several Sisters taught at St Boniface Christian Brothers High School.

The annals of the last few years note the positive association with the Christian Brothers and the various ministry activities of the Sisters: hospital chaplaincy, parish work, catechetical co-ordination, religious instruction, counselling and library work at St Boniface, outreach to the poor, work with the Thusong Kids' Haven, the Re Tlameleng school for disabled learners and the Thutong ya bana project, the pre-school and prison ministry. The last four Oakford Sisters left St Boniface in 2013.

- **1981 BENDELL, Kalahari Desert (now in the Northern Cape) : Boammaruri**

In 1974, 12 000 people were removed to Bendell, part of Bophuthatswana, one of the former homelands of South Africa. The Sisters arrived in January 1981, at the request of the bishop, first living in three caravans, moving to a small convent, *Boammaruri* (Truth), in April 1981. From 1981, they were involved in a school, a pre-school and a clinic. In 1983 there was a severe drought and a worsening unemployment situation because of mine retrenchments and a strike at ISCOR, the iron and steel company. The Sisters were withdrawn in May 1999.

TRANSVAAL / GAUTENG

- **1931 JOHANNESBURG: Melrose House: Convent of St Lucy**

Melrose House, begun under Mother Cecilia Schleich in 1931, was the first of the hostels for young women and students and was situated in Jeppe Street, Johannesburg. In September 1931 it was relocated to Main Street, to a more suitable house, and was opened officially in October 1931. Extensions were made, and an adjoining house was purchased in 1936. Melrose House was sold in 1992 to a Muslim community. Our Sisters de Montfort James, Louis Marie James, Clare Trevail and Monica Maidman had been former residents.

- **1933 LEWISHAM /LUIPAARDSVLEI (KRUGERSDORP): Convent of Blessed Imelda**

The mission was initially opened by the Bishop in the township in 1925, and included a school and a clinic. The Sisters arrived in January 1933, living for some time in a hut, until a small convent was built. Bishop O'Leary erected a new school in 1936 and a crèche in 1948. In 1951 the school enrolment was 536. Because of the Group Areas Act of the *Apartheid* government, the Sisters could not live at the mission from 1954, and for some time commuted daily from Mazenod, and then from Marymount, not wanting to live on mine property nearby. In January 1959 the Sisters handed over to a Congregation of African Sisters, and were withdrawn.

- **1933 MAGALIESBURG, St James Mission: Convent of Our Lady of Fatima**

Bishop O'Leary invited Mother Cecilia Schleich to serve the new mission and a girls' boarding school at St James Mission. The school began with 30 children. In 1937 the school was registered for two teachers, and Sr Gratia and an African teacher were paid. In 1953 there were nearly 300 pupils, but neighbours were against the continuation of the school which was forced to close in 1956 because of the Group Areas Act. From 1935 the Sisters ran a guest house and hosted retreats and conferences for religious and priests. There was also a small clinic. The Sisters served two outstations from the mission.



Magaliesburg Mission

From 1987 to 1993, the novitiate, Bethany, was in Magaliesburg after which the Congregation joined the Common Dominican Novitiate. Sr Eva-Maria Thupatsogong, who had been at the Common Novitiate and was later teaching at a primary school in Magaliesburg, made final vows in 2006.

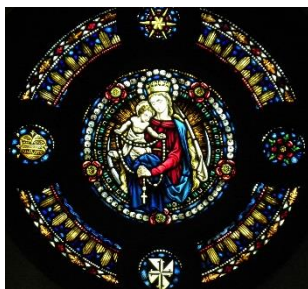
In 2008 the clinic at Boys Town Magaliesburg was closed.

Boys' Town South Africa was begun under Mother Paula Hebel with 25 boys in 1958 by Fr Orsmond (later Bishop Orsmond) in the former school buildings. The Magaliesburg property was sold by the Congregation to Boys' Town, with an agreement, signed in 1999 between Boys' Town and the Congregation, concerning the Sisters' living and working arrangements and remuneration.

The community continues to welcome Sisters for holidays and retreats.

- **1935 JOHANNESBURG, Mazenod / Koinonia: Convent of the Immaculate Conception**

The Mazenod foundation was made on 1 March 1935 under Mother Cecilia Schleich. The original house was built in 1904 and called "The White House". It became a hostel for young working women, initially owned by the Catholic Women's League and staffed by the Congregation. The Congregation bought the property in 1944. The money from the sale was used by the CWL to open St Anne's home for the elderly in Edenvale. In 1952 the chapel was built. Our twins, Srs Dominic Mary and Mannes, lived in Mazenod as young women. Fr Lionel Sham was ordained in the grounds in 1967.



Chapel window at Koinonia

In 1972 Mazenod changed its name to Koinonia, with additions to the buildings having been made for Christian Life Group work. Koinonia is now a Retreat and Conference Centre.

Koinonia provided meeting space for multi-racial groups during *Apartheid* times. A visitor of note before the 1994 elections was future president Nelson Mandela. Koinonia has hosted groups from Catholic and other churches, from the Johannesburg area and from different dioceses in Southern Africa, as well as church and other groups from as far afield as the USA, Germany, Taiwan and Poland. Among the many groups that make use of Koinonia are Retrouvaille (for hurting marriages), formation groups, the International Diaconate and pilgrims to Ngome. The Dominican Family has made use of the house over the years. In 2006 Koinonia hosted Timothy Radcliffe OP at open days of FEDOSA, and in 2011 Bruno Cadore OP at the Dominican Indaba. In 2013 there was a major media and communications training workshop for Dominican Sisters in Africa, aimed at giving participants enhanced tools for modern day preaching.

Other ministries of Sisters living at Koinonia have included pastoral ministry in neighbouring parishes, and AIDS work at the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference.

- **1940 PRETORIA, Rosary Lodge**

Rosary Lodge, opened on 1 March 1940. It was the first foundation of Mother Reginald Buchler, and was a hostel for girls, also providing generous hospitality to priests, bishops, Sisters and visitors from all over. Additions were made to the convent and chapel in 1956 under Mother Paula Hebel. The property was sold to the Bishops' Conference in April 1975 and renamed Khanya House. It was bombed in 1988 under the *Apartheid* government and had to be rebuilt. Several former residents joined various religious congregations.

- **1949 JOHANNESBURG, Marymount: Convent of St Anne**

The property was purchased under Mother Paula Hebel from Bishop O'Leary, and the Marymount maternity hospital was opened in November 1949. The convent was opened in 1955, and various additions to the property acquired and additional buildings erected in the years following. It was for many years a successful maternity hospital, its services utilised by many Johannesburg, and East and West Rand mothers. It served also as a hub for our Sisters passing through Johannesburg, and helped support mission work elsewhere in the Congregation. When the Congregation was unable to meet the demands of running a modern hospital, it was leased to the Diocese of Johannesburg, and finally sold in 2000. The convent was closed in 1996. It is now the Millennium Centre, a home for indigent elderly. Our Sisters Paula-Mary and Alison were born at the Marymount.



- **1955 PRETORIA, Marifont: Convent of St Joseph**

The "White Lodge" purchased in 1955 under Mother Paula Hebel from ISCOR became Marifont Maternity Hospital. Archbishop Garner proposed the name for the new hospital. The convent opened in February 1956. New buildings were opened in 1958. In 1961 the community became a priory. The house rented as a convent was bought in 1963. From 1975 Archbishop Emeritus Garner lived in one of the flats.

The 7000th baby was born at Marifont in 1962. One of South Africa's first test-tube babies was born at Marifont. In 1984 the Master of the Order visited the Sisters at Marifont. In 1994 the grounds of Marifont were used as a polling station during the first democratic elections.

In 1994 the first floor was closed, and in 1997 the hospital was sold to Professor de Muelenaere. The convent closed in May 1997.

- **1976 BEDFORDVIEW, Generalate: Convent of Our Lady, Mother of Good Counsel**

In 1976 the generalate of the Congregation was moved from Oakford to Bedfordview, where the Congregation owned a small holiday cottage. A new generalate was built on the property, and the property was officially opened in December 1976. In the earlier years, the community was fortunate to have a resident chaplain in one of the cottages on the property. Sisters have used the cottages for holidays and retreats.

From the mid-2000s a small community of two to three Sisters lived in the original farm house at Bedfordview, engaged for some years in AIDS ministry at St Francis Care Centre in Boksburg and in facilitation work with religious Congregations in South Africa and across English-speaking Africa.

- **1977 JOHANNESBURG, Villa Maria: Convent of the Presentation**



In January 1977 a novitiate house, Villa Maria, was opened on the property adjoining Marymount. In 1980 it accommodated student Sisters, and in 1982 it became the regional house for South Africa, when the Congregation was divided into regions. It has provided accommodation and community to Sisters involved in various ministries in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg, and is also a house of hospitality for Sisters of the local Gauteng community and elsewhere in need of accommodation in Johannesburg.

Stairs previously connecting
Villa Maria and Marymount

- **1985 KWANDEBELE: Inkhanyiso**

In 1985, under Sr Dolores Renkel, the Sisters were invited to live and work with resettled people in the KwaNdebele Homeland, 70 km north of Pretoria. The convent was called *Inkhanyiso* (the place where we receive light and hand it on). The Sisters were involved in a clinic, parish work and crèches, and worked with the Missionaries of Africa, also known as the White Fathers.

In 2001 the contract with the Archdiocese of Pretoria was not renewed, the clinic was handed to a trust, and the Sisters were withdrawn.

- **1983 COMPTONVILLE, Johannesburg**
- **1988 JOHANNESBURG: Emmanuel**

The house in Comptonville, Johannesburg, near Soweto, was intended as a pre-novitiate house, though this did not happen. Sisters were involved in schools, at a pastoral centre, in parish and youth work in Soweto and Eldorado Park. The house was sold to the Marist Brothers in 1988, and the Sisters moved to Emmanuel house next door to Villa Maria and Marymount in Kensington. Various Sisters formed community over the years, involved in the ministry in the Diocese (later Archdiocese) of Johannesburg, and at Orange Farm. Sr Liz Elbert, for many years at Emmanuel, was involved in the spiritual direction of many people, and also directed retreats at, among other places, the Maria Trost Centre in Lydenburg, St Dominic's at the Bluff, and in Cape Town, where she worked with many Anglicans.

A new community of three Sisters was assigned to Emmanuel from November 2013 after their withdrawal from Kimberley.

- **1992 JOHANNESBURG: Casa Siena**

For some time a small community lived at Casa Siena, a house donated to the Congregation by Miss Annie Hufnagel, who had been greatly assisted in earlier years by the Sisters at Marymount. The house is close to Villa Maria and Marymount. Sisters served in various ministries around Johannesburg, including hospital chaplaincy, work at the Department of Evangelisation of the Diocese of Johannesburg, teaching at the Theological Education by Extension College (ecumenical but with Dominican roots), AIDS ministry, counselling services at Catholic Psychological Services, and facilitation work at Community Consulting Services.

The house was then let to Good Shepherd Sisters in 2001, and later sold.

BECHUANALAND / BOTSWANA

- **1931 KHALE / KGALE SIDING: Convent of St Hyacinth**

Sisters were involved in the school and a clinic at a mission along the railway line from South Africa to Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), at a mission opened by the Oblate Fathers in 1928 under Fr Meysing who later became Bishop of Kimberley. Holy Cross Sisters taught at the school from 1930 to 1931, handing over to Oakford Sisters in February 1931. In 1939 the school was one of the leading primary schools in the Protectorate, the first and only junior secondary school for some time. In 1950 there were only three Catholic Missions in the whole territory. Oakford Sisters were withdrawn in January 1953 with the arrival of the Passionist Fathers and Sisters.



Khale / Kgale Siding (Bechuanaland / Botswana)
with Srs Joachim and Isabel

Mother Joachim and Sr Isabel are still remembered by Bishop Emeritus Boniface Setlelakgosi, the first Motswana bishop of Gaborone, and a former pupil.

SWAZILAND

- **1931 BREMERSDORP (renamed MANZINI in 1962): Convent of the Holy Rosary**

The Bremersdorp foundation was made by Mother Cecilia Schleich in January 1931. Five Sisters were sent from Oakford. The mission had been begun by the efforts of the Servites in Swaziland, some of whom had been in Oakford to learn English and Zulu before going to Swaziland in 1914. There was a day and boarding school for whites. The Sisters were involved in pioneering education work among the Swazis under a tree, and building up what became St Theresa's into one of the best schools in the country, educating many royal children and grandchildren. Another school (1970 to 1974) handed over to the government was started in Maliyaduma; the Sisters also assisted the Cabra Dominican Sisters who were invited to establish a school for the deaf in Siteki. Swaziland celebrated its independence in 1968.

At the request of the bishop, Sr Prisca Ritz and Sr Cosma Gräf were involved in the formation of Swazi Sisters for the diocese. Sr Prisca left for Oakford in 1989, after serving in Swaziland for 52 years.

The Sisters were withdrawn at the end of 1992, the year of Manzini's centenary. The school was made over to the diocese, and the convent sold to the bishop. Subsequently there was a Federation of the Dominicans of Southern Africa (FEDOSA) community in Swaziland. For three years from 2008 – 2010, this community, including one Oakford sister, worked in the Diocese of Manzini. The Catholic Church in Swaziland celebrated its centenary in 2014.



Little Flower School



Meeting with King Sobhuza II of Swaziland



GERMANY

BAVARIA

- **1909 NEUSTADT/MAIN: Convent of St Joseph**

Neustadt was founded by Mother Lucy Bader on 14 May 1909. It had become necessary to establish a probation house in Germany to test vocations before postulants would be brought to South Africa. The Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen had offered, as a temporary abode for this house, a building known as “The Villa” in Neustadt am Main. Three parties of postulants were sent to Oakford between 1909 and 1912. By 1960, 300 postulants had passed through Neustadt on their way to South Africa, 200 of them trained by Mother Lucy. It was only in 1947 that Neustadt was bought by the Congregation.

The new novitiate building was opened in 1962. In 1975 two old buildings were demolished and a new building constructed. The REHA Centre, 1977/8, was opened in collaboration with Caritas.



Neustadt 1920:
Sisters, Novices and Candidates



Neustadt am Main – the new and the old –
the convent nestles against the imposing Parish Church

In 1979, Neustadt celebrated its 70th anniversary, and in 1980 it became a priory, with Sr de Lima Trunk as its first prioress. Neustadt has served as the headquarters of the Congregation in Germany, and has provided financial and administrative support to the mission of the Sisters throughout the Congregation.

Annals in recent years have noted community workshops and retreats, and various ministries of the Sisters, including pastoral work and pastoral counselling, social work, bereavement counselling, work in the REHA Centre, hospitality to guests, education at a school in Würzburg, care of the elderly Sisters. Sr Christiane Sartorius worked in

the sabbatical programme at Münsterschwarzach, and Sr Dagmar Fasel is currently employed by the Diocese of Würzburg in a programme addressing sexual abuse issues.

In 2007 Sr Lynn Jarrell OSU conducted a workshop on religious life for Sisters of the German Area and Sisters from England. The German Dominican Leadership Conference was hosted in 2008. The Congregation’s 120 years, and Neustadt’s 100 years, were celebrated in May 2009, with Sr Léoncienne LaBonté from the Bluff, South Africa, as the homilist. The local community, under the new governance structures, included the Sisters of Volkersberg from 2009 until the Sisters were withdrawn from Volkersberg in 2013. Some of the Congregational Leadership Meetings have been held in Neustadt, with members travelling from the USA and South Africa.

- **1921 VOLKERSBERG: Convent of the Sacred Heart**

April 1921 saw the Congregation's first German property, Volkersberg, purchased from the Notre Dame Sisters by Mother Lucy Bader as a house for postulants. It also took in guests to procure funds, and served as a novitiate when postulants could not go to South Africa during the Second World War. In 1939 the National Socialists ("Nazis") wanted to close the convent, but it was too poor for their needs. Several Sisters served in military hospitals rather than ammunition factories during the War. Volkersberg took in people from Würzburg after the bombings. Some were friends and relatives of Sisters, rather than refugees sent by authorities. In September 1955 the property was sold to the Diocese of Würzburg, but in October 1956 the Sisters were invited back to run a youth centre after the buildings had been renovated.

In 1978 the 300 years jubilee of the Franciscan Monastery Volkersberg was celebrated. 1982 was the 25th anniversary since the re-establishment of the community of Sisters. In 1989 the Landvolkshochschule Volkersberg hosted an inter-regional meeting of the Congregation and in 2010 the Congregational Chapter. 2006 marked the 50th anniversary of the opening of Haus Volkersberg as a diocesan youth centre. The Guests included the first director of the house from 1956 to 1974, Prelate Wilhelm Heinz.

Ministries of the Sisters living at Volkersberg have included social work in Völklingen, Saar; administration in the Landvolkshochschule; management of the German Area finances; adult education; guest services; and ministry to the elderly. In 2011 Sr Ursula Bomholt was elected the prioress of the Neustadt Local Community to which Volkersberg belonged, and, in the same year, the Sisters set up an exhibition showcasing the 90 years of Dominican Sisters at Volkersberg. The last Sisters were withdrawn in 2013.

- **1967 DIESSEN and UTTING: Convent of St Joseph**

The first three Sisters had originally come to Diessen from Landsberg in 1867, and Diessen remained a filial house of Landsberg till 1896, when it became an independent Congregation. In 1967 the Congregation of 38 Sisters celebrated its centenary year. Vatican II had proposed that smaller congregations amalgamate with larger ones, where feasible. As the sister of our late Mother Reginald Buchler was living in the Diessen convent, the Sisters of that community requested to join Oakford. Thus, in 1967, the Diessen Congregation was incorporated into the Oakford Congregation under Mother de Lima.



The Girls' School, "Liebfrauenschule", Diessen

The Sisters were involved in a school for girls, begun in 1950, in a kindergarten, and on the farm in Utting. The farm was closed in 1990 and sold to the Diocese of Augsburg. The old convent at Diessen was rebuilt in 1993, and major extensions were conducted at the school, which, in 2003, was taken over by the Diocese of Augsburg. Diessen convent serves today as a retirement home for our Sisters.

In 2006 Sr Gisela Wittershagen, living in Sunnyvale in the US Area, was elected prioress of the Diessen local community. Ministries of our Sisters at the time included teaching in school, the care of our elderly Sisters, the nursing of the dying, group facilitation, parish work, services to guests. The Federation of Dominican Convents in Wettenhausen, Donauwörth, Landsberg and Wörishofen, which are convents with connection to St Ursula's in Augsburg, have held their annual meeting in the Diessen Convent.

2008 saw the last two Sisters retire from the school and with that the complete handing over of the school as a flourishing Catholic school with 700 students to the Diocese of Augsburg.

HESSEN

- **1951 FRANKFURT: Convent of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour**

This foundation was made under Mother Paula Hebel. Haus Barbara and Haus Lucia were established as a Caritas Hostel for young women, and the Sisters served from December 1951 to May 1968.

- **1955/6 FLÖRSHEIM: Convent of the Visitation**

In 1955, under Mother Paula Hebel, a hospital in Flörsheim was offered to the Congregation free of charge, but the old building was in need of repair after the War. Building began in 1956, and the Marienkrankenhaus opened in November 1957, with generous donations to the building costs from the town and district. The Congregation had been the 42nd to be approached to take on the hospital!

The community became a priory at the General Chapter of 1961. A new administration and convent block were opened in January 1969. The new mission to Argentina, begun in 1974, included a Sister from Flörsheim. In 1981, the Marienkrankenhaus and convent celebrated their silver jubilee. An adjoining property was bought in 1984.

Many Sisters worked in the various departments of the hospital, and through the hospital in Flörsheim much support was provided to the mission of the Congregation in Argentina and South Africa. Major renovations were completed in 1996. In 2003 the hospital was taken over by the Marienhaus GmbH, initially on probation.

Sr Engelharde retired in 2006 after 50 years of nursing. During the same year the number of beds was reduced because of new German health care regulations. In 2007 the maternity section was closed. The last Sisters working in the hospital now live in a nearby house of the Congregation, having moved from the hospital building in 2013.



Sisters in front of the original hospital with the renovated building in the background

WESTPHALIA

- **1954 FRECKENHORST: Convent of Mary Immaculate**

Sisters worked at the Landvolkshochschule and retreat centre belonging to the Diocese of Münster from January 1954 to June 1968.

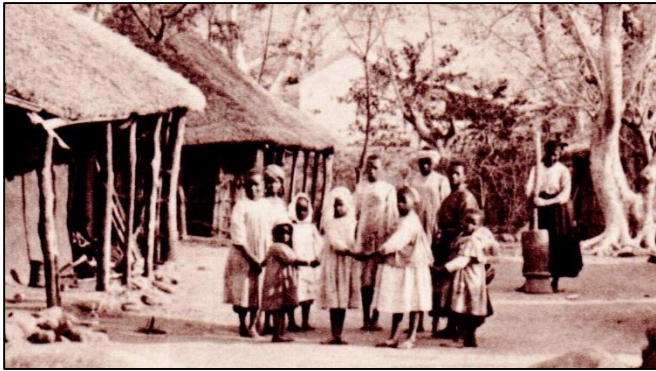
Youth Centre Freckenhorst



- **1954 MERSCH: Haus Venne**

A property, intended for the care of children with special needs, was given to the Congregation. It opened in January 1954. When the land was found unsuitable for building and the promised subsidy was not received, the project was abandoned. The Sisters were withdrawn in October 1957 and the land given back to Baroness von Ascheberg.

Early Days ...



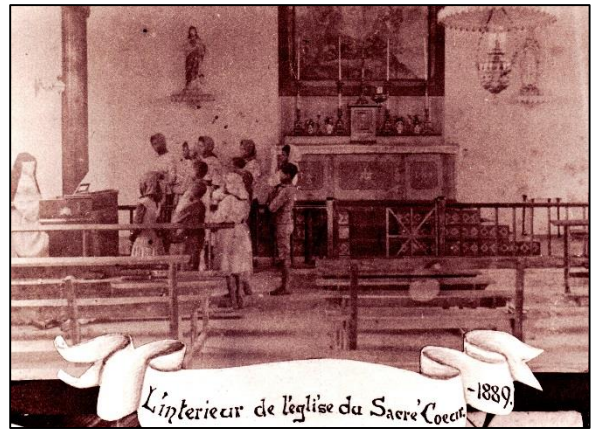
Early Oakford Village



Pioneer Sisters with novices and a postulant



Fr Mathieu OMI



Interior of the Sacred Heart Church at Oakford – 1889
Note the Sister (on the left) playing the harmonium.



Travel by ox wagon ...



... or on horse back!



En route to Montebello



ENGLAND

- **1921 CHINGFORD: Convent of the Holy Rosary**



27 Forest View, Chingford: first convent and school

A house in Forest View was purchased, the fourth foundation of Mother Joseph Ryan who was later appointed prioress. The first four Sisters arrived on 10 January 1921. The first novices were received the same year. The joint Dominican novitiate, started in 1924, for Oakford, King and Salisbury (Harare) Dominicans, lasted three years. St Dominic's was a day school for boys and girls from 1921 to 1959, when the buildings were taken over temporarily by St Paul's Secondary School. A parish school was begun in 1928. Various neighbouring properties were acquired over

several years. Some Sisters and some children were evacuated to Stinchcombe, Chelmsford and Wolverhampton during the War.

In 1928 Sr Aquinas Caples became prioress, and was also appointed visitator to Germany. In 1930 Mother Reginald Buchler became novice mistress. In 1932 the community numbered 30. In 1947 Mother Reginald and Sr Xavier attended the requiem of Mother Rose Niland at Bushey. In 1954 Mother Claudia Matzke was appointed as vicar of the houses in Germany and England. In 1959 three Sisters, including Mother Margaret Mary Sexton, were chosen as the pioneers for St Justin's School in Santa Clara, USA.

The formation house and school were later used as a youth centre and a home for the elderly.

In 1981 the community was divided. An apostolic visitation followed, and a small group of Sisters moved to Ashurst to run a retreat house owned by the Montfort Fathers.

In 1986, when Chingford was sold, the Oakford Sisters moved to Burghwallis.



Postulants around 1921

- **1949 CHIPPING NORTON, Oxford, Convent of St Joseph**

In August 1949 a small diocesan school near Oxford was taken over from the Notre Dame Sisters under Mother Paula Hebel. Good work was done, but there was only one trained sister. Oakford Sisters were withdrawn in July 1960, and the school was taken over by the Sisters of St Paul.

- **1968 KESWICK**

Sisters worked in Keswick from February 1968 to 1980. The diocese owned Lakeside House and then Castlerigg Manor, operating a youth residential centre. The last two Sisters were withdrawn in May 1980.

- **1971 PRESTON**

In Preston from 1971, at the invitation of the bishop of Lancaster Diocese, the Sisters were engaged in youth work and education, parish work in poor areas and the family apostolate. They first lived with the Little Sisters of the Poor and at St Joseph's Parish before moving into the Fletcher Road Convent in 1972, providing social outreach, pastoral work, retreats. In 2006 there were three Sisters living in Preston, involved in parish work, nursing at the home of the retired Jesuits, and in work with alcohol addicts. Some Sisters lived at Hawkstone Hall, in Doncaster and at Burghwallis among the residents of the rest home. The Sisters were withdrawn from Preston in 2010.



Preston Chapel

- **1981 ASHURST: Convent of St Joseph**

Some Sisters moved to Ashurst from Chingford in 1981 at the invitation of the apostolic visitor and, for a period approved by Rome, to live a deeper commitment to Dominican Life. The Sisters rejoined the Oakford Congregation at the end of the experimental period. The convent in Ashurst was purchased by the Oakford Congregation in November 1987 and Veritas Novitiate was opened in 1988. The Sisters again requested separation, and in July 1994 the Sisters at Ashurst were recognised by Rome as a new diocesan congregation. In February 1996 the house was transferred to the new Congregation, Dominican Sisters of St Joseph.

- **1983 PINNER: Convent Siena**



St Luke's Parish Church

To accommodate the needs of Sr Maura, teaching at Bushey Dominican School, and Sr Sarah, working as catechetical co-ordinator for Pinner Parish, it was decided to open a house in Pinner. The first community of four Sisters lived at 32 Love Lane, and in 1989 moved to a bigger house at 34 Love Lane. They were involved in catechetical work, teaching in school, and parish work. In 2006 three Sisters lived in the house, retired, but still involved in the life of the parish, and one sister, living in a flat, continued teaching children with severe learning difficulties until her retirement. The last Sisters were withdrawn from 34 Love Lane in 2013, and are living in retirement nearby.

- **1986 BURGHWALLIS**

St Anne's Rest Home, Burghwallis, was purchased in 1985 from the Sisters of Charity when the Chingford property was sold. The Sisters ran St Anne's home for the elderly and our own elderly Sisters until it was sold to the diocese of Hallam in 1997. The Sisters were withdrawn in 1998, with some Sisters remaining as residents in the home. A plaque to the memory of the Oakford Sisters was erected in 1999. Burghwallis has a long history, it is mentioned in the *Domesday Book* of 1086!



St. Anne's, Burghwallis



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

The beginnings -
<http://oakforddominicans.org>

- **1955 OAKLAND: Convent of the Holy Name**

The invitation to Oakland and the Dominican House of Studies at St Albert's Priory came via Fr. Paul Zammit OP to Mother Paula Hebel, Prioress General. Sr Assunta Vorndran was the Prioress of the small pioneer community. The Sisters provided care to numerous generations of students and staff of the seminary, and to successive Masters of the Order, bishops and other visitors. These included the capitulars of the 1989 General Chapter of the Dominican Order. 1994 was the last full year of ministry at St Albert's for the Sisters. Over the years through the Congregation's link to St Albert's several Sisters were afforded the opportunity for theological studies. In 1958 the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael offered three scholarships at their college in California to our Sisters from Germany, when the South African government refused visas to those who applied to teach in the mission. For years young Sisters from Germany received tertiary education at the Dominican College of San Rafael.

The community left St Albert's in June 1995, after 40 years of ministry.

- **1959 SANTA CLARA: Convent of the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary**

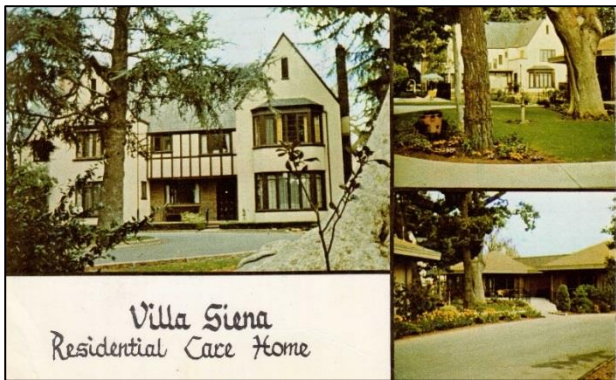
In August 1959 the Sisters were invited under Mother Paula Hebel by the parish priest Fr Ronald Mentasti, to establish St Justin's School. Among the pioneers from England was Sr Margaret Mary Sexton who later became Prioress General of the Congregation. The three Irish Sisters at the school were joined in 1960 by the German Sisters graduating from San Rafael College. Classes increased until numbers of pupils reached 500. In 1965 the convent was enlarged for the novitiate. The first American postulant was received in 1965. Many of the Sisters in Santa Clara were involved both in school and parish and played a major role in building up a vibrant parish community in collaboration with the priests and parishioners. Sr Gemma Neunzling was offered a teaching position at Santa Clara University in 1968. In June 1985, the Sisters were withdrawn. Sr Jodi Min is a former pupil of St Justin's.



At St. Justin's

- **1965 MOUNTAIN VIEW, Villa Siena: Convent of St Catherine**

The Villa Siena property, the first owned by the Sisters in the USA, was first called Siena Retreat, later Villa Siena, and was bought from the Society of St John Bosco under Mother de Lima Trunk in



September 1965. It was developed as a home for the aged, a formation house and the first regional centre, financed by fund-raising and loans, and by the Congregation through Flörsheim and Marifont. Mother Paula Hebel was appointed Regional Superior for California.

The Oakford Non Profit Corporation was made up initially of the superiors of Mountain View, Oakland and Santa Clara communities. In 1981, Villa Siena home for the elderly, was separately incorporated as a Non Profit Corporation. Sr

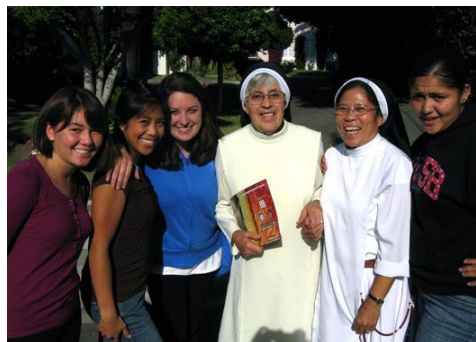
Bertilla Heil was appointed novice mistress in 1966. Additions to the building were opened in 1970, 1973 and 1979. The ministry outreach, presence and help of the postulants and novices at Villa Siena for twenty years was valued by Sisters, the residents and their families. The Sisters withdrew in September 1998 and the property and ministry to the elderly was taken over by the Daughters of Charity.

There were inter-novitiate experiences with novices from St Albert's and the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose and San Rafael from 1974 to 1994. In 1977 the newly renovated novitiate building was fully occupied. The first regional chapter of election was held in 1980, followed by a regional chapter of affairs in early 1981. Sr Adelinde Ostheimer had been the last Regional Superior appointed by the Prioress General. In 1981 Bishop Pierre DuMaine, a great friend of our Sisters, was appointed the first bishop of the new Diocese of San Jose, formerly part of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. The communities in Santa Clara and Mountain View were situated in the new diocese. Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban was awarded an honorary degree in theology at Santa Clara University. Present in 1990 at the celebrations to mark the close of the Congregation's centenary year was Fr Paul Zammit OP who had been instrumental in bringing the Oakford Sisters to Oakland in 1955. Sr Gisela Wittershagen succeeded Sr Gemma Neunzling in 1986 as Regional Superior, and was in turn succeeded by Sr Ursula Bomholt.

From 1987-1991 two Sisters living in the nearby Fairchild Community commuted to Villa Siena for nursing ministry in the home.

- **1984 SAN LEANDRO: Formation House (327 Woodland Ave)**
- **1998 SAN LEANDRO: Regional Centre (980 Woodland Ave)**

The novitiate was re-located to San Leandro (327 Woodland Avenue) from Mountain View in 1984, with Sr Nicolina Köhler as the novice directress for many years. In 1998, after the closing of Mountain View, the regional centre (980 Woodland Avenue) opened across the street from the house of formation. This property housed the office of the regional superior of the US Region, Sr Nicolina Köhler. Later, after the changes to the governance structures of the Congregation, the office of the Congregational Councillor for the US Area was located at the centre. Sr Anna Oven, Councillor for the US Area, became the Congregational Vicaress after the resignation of Sr Sheila Flynn from the Congregational Leadership during the term of office of Sr Paula-Mary van der Walt as Congregational Prioress.



Srs Rosalia and Apolonia send off a group of young women on their Oakford Outreach Project to South Africa

The other ministries of Sisters in the two houses have included youth ministry, pastoral care, pastoral ministry in St Felicitas, St Mary's and St Leander's parishes, Oakford Outreach Projects and Lasallian Mission Program with high school and college students, high school teaching at St Francis High School, massage and spiritual direction. Sisters have also been involved with the Collaborative Dominican Novitiate (CDN) Board of Directors.

The Formation House is now being used for an "intentional community" of young women who are attending college and who have the desire to live a life based on the four pillars of Dominican life, community, prayer, study and ministry outreach.

Sisters in need of nursing care have been welcomed at St Martin's Care Centre with the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose. Sr Sophie Hofmann has been a resident at Mission San Jose since 2003 and was recently joined by Sr Dolores Renkel. They are regularly visited by the Sisters of the Bay Area.

San Leandro has been the venue for Bay Area community meetings and celebrations, meetings of the Congregational Leadership, and Area Assemblies.

- **1994 SUNNYVALE: Convent of St Catherine**

Sisters have been involved variously in Sunnyvale in teaching, nursing, social work, spiritual direction and retreat ministry, pastoral ministry at Mission San Jose, teaching English as a second language to Asian women, pastoral care in a Spanish-speaking community at St Martin's Church, and prison ministry. They have also kept regular contact with our Sisters at Mission San Jose.

After their term of office in Congregational Leadership, Srs Gisela Wittershagen and Ursula Bomholt lived in community in Sunnyvale until Sr Gisela was elected Prioress in Diessen in 2006. Sr Ursula also moved to Germany in 2009 and Sr. Karolina moved in to minister to the Latina community and volunteer in the Diocesan prison ministry and that of restorative justice. After her term of office in Congregational Leadership Sr Gemma Neunzling moved to Sunnyvale in 2011 to live in community with Sr Karolina Hohmann and offer spiritual direction at the convent. In 2011 Sr Karolina, formerly missioned in Argentina, became one of 425 new US citizens from 67 countries.

- **1995 OAKLAND: Bethany House**



Sr Mary de Crus

After the withdrawal of the community from St Albert's Priory in 1995, two Sisters moved to Bethany House. Ministry included work with homeless elderly people at St Mary's Centre in Oakland. St Mary's Centre received the UN Committee of the East Bay Global Citizen Award for work to end poverty and homelessness.

After the death of Sr Maria Goretti Eder in 2013, Sr Mary de Crus Nolan moved to a smaller house close to her ministry at St. Mary's where she has contributed much to a successful, transformative program for the homeless elderly.

ARIZONA AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

- **1982 TUCSON: Convent of St Thomas More**

From 1982 Sisters served in campus ministry with Dominican men of the Western Dominican Province at Tucson in the St Thomas More Newman Centre at the University of Arizona, assisting young people in discerning their vocations and giving witness through community and prayer life. One sister served in parish ministry as director of faith formation, organised retreats for young adults and worked in the

area of social justice. In 1991 the community was closed, with one Sister going to Argentina, the other to St Timothy's Parish, Mesa.

- **1991 MESA**

Sisters were involved in parish work at St Timothy's from 1991, with the first Sister to be employed on the staff being Sr Theresa Maria Collingwood from South Africa. Six other Sisters also served at St Timothy's Parish through the years and at Paz de Cristo interfaith community centre. The community was closed in 2008.

Sr Gladys Echenique worked for a few years in Holy Cross Parish as co-ordinator of Hispanic and multicultural ministry, and in adult faith formation. She first lived in the community at St Timothy's, and then for one year with Sr Marie-Christopher Wehner, who was on sabbatical after retiring from her teaching position in Diessen, Germany.

- **2003 RIO RICO**

Two Sisters have served at Most Holy Nativity Parish in Rio Rico: Sr Guadalupe Jurado, in charge of parish administration and pastoral care, and Sr Carolina Lumactod doing pastoral co-ordination, youth and senior programmes, as well as pastoral work at St Anne's Parish in Tubac Parish and at Our Lady of Lourdes in Green Valley. The growing parish at Rio Rico, serves a Latino population. The parish has land for a future new church building. Challenges include the need for a priest for the celebration of the sacraments, and fund-raising for the new church. Bishop Kicanas is most appreciative and supportive of the Sisters.



Sr Guadalupe

Two other Sisters in Arizona are Sr Gladys Echenique, living with the Benedictine Sisters in Tucson and currently employed by the diocese as co-ordinator of Hispanic ministry, and Sr Lynn Allvin, employed by Jesuit Refugee Service since 2010 as a chaplain and Religious Service Coordinator at the Florence Federal Immigration and Detention Centre.

The four Sisters are part of the Santa Rosa local community with Sisters in Southern California and Arizona. Sr Lynn is the local prioress. The community meets twice yearly and joins the Sisters of the Bay Area for the Area Assemblies.

- **2003 LA QUINTA**

Sisters served in pastoral work, adult faith formation, youth programmes and social work with migrants in the Diocese of San Bernadino, from 2003 to 2006. Sr Gabriella Williams joined the Bishop in his canonical visitations of parishes, speaking on social concerns.

- **2007 INDIO**

When the Sisters' convent, which belonged to the parish, was needed for another purpose, the Sisters rented a house in Indio. Srs Gabriella Williams and Teresita Navarro worked in the trailer parks with the poor for better housing, health and safety, and Sr Apolonia Torrino coordinated a youth programme. In 2008 Sr Gabriella was given the national award from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) that honours pastoral leaders who help immigrants, refugees, migrant workers and people on the move. Since 2013 Sr Teresita has worked in health care for the poor of Coachella Valley. When Sr Apolonia was elected local prioress of the San Francisco Bay Area community she moved in January 2013 to San Leandro.



AUSTRIA

- **1972 OBERNBERG**

A holiday house in Austria, now sold.



ITALY

- **1970/1 ROME: Regina Angelorum**



Oakford Formators Workshop 1988

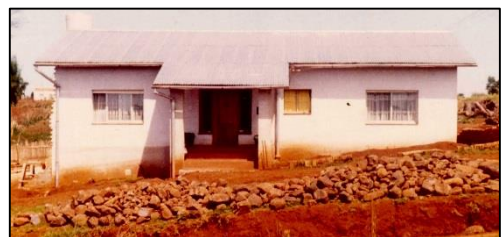
The house in Rome served as a guest house, a house for our student Sisters studying at Regina Mundi College and at the Angelicum, and then as an International House of Studies for the Dominican Family, providing sabbatical and formation programmes from 1987. In 1987/8 three Oakford Sisters participated in a Dominican formation course. They then ran a short workshop for Oakford formators. The house hosted the 1973/4 Chapter, and the 1993 International Leadership Event, and numerous visitors from Rome and elsewhere. Mother de Lima Trunk and Mother Margaret Mary Sexton invested much in the house and in the programmes. In July 1994 the house was sold and the Sisters were withdrawn.



ARGENTINA

- **1974 25 DE MAYO, Misiones: Convent the Sacred Heart**

The *25 de Mayo* foundation was made under Mother Margaret Mary Sexton in October 1974. This followed Bishop Kemmerer's invitation to Mother de Lima Trunk and her subsequent visit to Argentina in 1973. Sisters arrived in Argentina by ship in 1974, and the new convent was blessed in 1975.



Convent at 25 de Mayo (1975)



Apostolates covered mission and parish work, nursing, health care, and social work.

The founding Sisters



In 1995, at the international event of the Oakford Sisters held in Argentina, took the decision to continue the Congregation's presence in Misiones, subject to review. Sr Carmen Brokamp was appointed as special Superior/Animator by the General Council.

The convent closed in 2000 and was given to the Bishop of Posadas.

Participants in the 1995 Congregational Event

- **1984 OBERA, Misiones: Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary**

Sisters were invited to the old age home in 1979; a sister was initially loaned to supervise the work of the home. Land was donated for the erection of a novitiate building which began in 1983, financed by the German Province and by Adveniat. Sr Mercedes Schneiderbanger was sent by the General Council to oversee the building project. The novitiate programme began in 1986. Sr Lidia Danyluk was one of the novices. In 1999 the Sisters celebrated 25 years of mission in Argentina.

The property of Obera was made over to the diocese of Posadas.



Obera: Visit of General Council Members

- **1989 PANAMBI, Misiones: Convent of St Dominic**



The Convent at Panambi (1990)

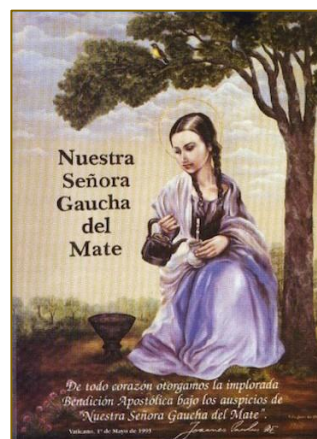
The community began in 1989, and the pre-novitiate in 1990. The Sisters were ministering in the clinic, the chapels and in pastoral work throughout the area.

The property of Panambi was also made over to the diocese of Posadas.

The Oakford Sisters finally left Argentina in 2003. Our two Argentinian Sisters, Lidia Danyluk and Gladys Echenique were subsequently missioned to South Africa and the USA.



Mate tea,
the daily brew in Argentina



IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE CONGREGATION BEFORE OAKFORD BEGAN

AUGSBURG, GERMANY

- 1335 Six young women began a communal life in poverty on the Schwal, Augsburg, Germany.
Sisters of the "Willigen Armuth" – Voluntary Poverty
- 1394 Adopted the Rule of St Augustine and the Constitutions of the Preaching Order
- 1516 Convent built on present site of St Ursula's Augsburg
- 1537 Refugees with the Franciscan Sisters in Dillingen
- 1548 Returned to Augsburg – three of the original group, plus six young postulants
- 1632 – 1634 War years. Soldiers billeted with the Sisters
- 1696 Enclosure complete
- 1789 French Revolution, followed by secularization
- 1802 State and City Authorities took over the Convent
- 1828 Only four Sisters left
- 1837 - 1865 Sent Sisters to Speyer, Wörishofen, Donauwörth, Landsberg/Lech, Wettenhausen
- 1877 Mother Mauritia Tiefenbock with six Sisters to King Williamstown, South Africa, from
St Ursula's, Augsburg, Germany

OAKFORD DATES

SOUTHERN AFRICA, GERMANY, ENGLAND, USA, ITALY, ARGENTINA

- 1889 OAKFORD, Verulam, South Africa, 30 March, Mother Gabriel Foley and seven Sisters arrived
from King Williamstown
- 1890 OAKFORD became an Independent Congregation
- 1891 NEWCASTLE, South Africa
- 1894 First Constitutions approved by Bishop Jolivet
- 1895 GENAZZANO, near Tongaat, South Africa
- 1896 NEWCASTLE became an independent house and an independent Congregation
EMOYENI, Zululand, South Africa
- 1904 NOODSBERG/MONTEBELLO, South Africa
- 1909 NEUSTADT, Germany
- 1915 Affiliation to the Dominican Order
- 1916 GREYTOWN, South Africa

- 1921 CHINGFORD, England
VOLKERSBERG, Germany
HARRISMITH, South Africa
- 1924 Lay Sisters integrated with Choir Sisters
- 1925 KRUISFONTEIN, South Africa
LADYBRAND, South Africa
- 1927 Returned to HARRISMITH, South Africa
- 1928 EKUKHANYENI, Inanda, South Africa
KIMBERLEY, South Africa
BETHLEHEM, South Africa
Sisters allowed to use title “OP”
- 1929 INCHANGA, South Africa
BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa
- 1931 KHALE / KGALE, Bechuanaland/Botswana
BREMERSDORP/MANZINI, Swaziland
MELROSE HOUSE, Johannesburg, South Africa
CALA, Transkei, South Africa
- 1932 HEILBRON, South Africa
- 1933 MAGALIESBURG, South Africa
LEWISHAM, South Africa
SEVEN OAKS, near Montebello, South Africa
- 1934 WINBURG, South Africa
- 1935 MAZENOD HOSTEL/KOINONIA, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1936 NEW GLASGOW, Canelands, Verulam, South Africa
- 1939 MONTEBELLO, independent
- 1940 ROSARY LODGE, Pretoria, South Africa
- 1944 WALSINGHAM HOSTEL, Durban, South Africa
- 1948 KROONSTAD, South Africa
First approval and revision of Constitutions, 2 January 1948, by Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes

1949 MARYMOUNT, Johannesburg, South Africa
CHIPPING NORTON, England

1951 FRANKFURT, Germany

1952 VILLA ASSUMPTA, (1999 VILLA SIENA), Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

1954 FRECKENHORST, Germany
MERSCH, Germany

1955 EMPANGENI, South Africa
OAKLAND, USA
VIRGINIA, South Africa

1956 MARIFONT, Pretoria, South Africa
FLÖRSHEIM, Germany

1959 SANTA CLARA, USA

1961 OAKFORD: African Novitiate re-established

1963 OSINDISWENI, Oakford, South Africa

1964 BLUFF, Durban, South Africa

1965 MOUNTAIN VIEW, USA

1967 DIESEN-UTTING, Germany, incorporated into the Congregation

1968 KESWICK, England

1971 PRESTON, England
ROME, Italy

1972 OBERNBERG, Austria

1974 25 DE MAYO, Misiones, Argentina

1976 GENERALATE to BEDFORDVIEW, South Africa

1977 VILLA MARIA, Johannesburg, South Africa

1978 FANJEAUX, Durban, South Africa

1979 OBERA, Misiones, Argentina

1980 Congregation declared an International Missionary Congregation

1981 BENDELL, South Africa
ASHURST, England

1982 TUCSON, Arizona, USA

- 1983 PINNER, England
- COMPTONVILLE, Johannesburg, South Africa
- ETHEMBENI, Oakford, South Africa
- 1984 SAN LEANDRO, novitiate, USA
- 1985 HLABISA, South Africa
- KWANDEBELE, South Africa
- Revised Constitutions approved by Rome, 8 August
- 1986 BURGHWALLIS, England
- 1987 FAIRCHILD, Mountain View, USA
- 1988 EMMANUEL, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1989 PANAMBI, Misiones, Argentina
- 1991 MESA, Arizona, USA
- 1992 CASA SIENA, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 1994 ASHURST separation as independent Diocesan Congregation
- SUNNYVALE, California, USA
- 1999 VILLA SIENA, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa
- 1997 BETHANY HOUSE, Oakland, USA
- 1998 PHOENIX, near Verulam, South Africa
- 1999 SAN LEANDRO, Regional Centre, USA
- 2003 RIO RICO, Southern California, USA
- 2003 LA QUINTA, Southern California, USA
- 2004 CHATSWORTH, Durban, South Africa
- 2008 MANZINI, Swaziland, part of FEDOSA community
- 2009 OAKFORD sold
- 2010 OAKLANDS, Durban, South Africa
- 2014 Congregation celebrates 125 years



Srs Theresita, Ehrengard and Antonia
with the Jubilee Flag

CONGREGATIONAL PRIORESSES



Mother Gabriel Foley
May 1890 – June 1900



Mother Joseph Ryan
June 1900 – July 1922



Mother Aloysia Stoß
July 1922 – January 1925
(Resigned)



Mother Cecilia Schleich
January 1925 – January 1937



Mother Reginald Buchler
January 1937 – January 1949



Mother Paula Hebel
January 1949 – January 1961



Mother de Lima Trunk
January 1961 – December 1973



Mother Margaret Mary Sexton
December 1973 – January 1980



Mother Dolores Renkel
January 1980 – December 1991



Sr Gisela Wittershagen
December 1991 – January 2004



Sr Dagmar Fasel
January 2004 – January 2011



Sr Paula-Mary van der Walt
January 2011 –

Requiescant in Pace



Cemetery at Oakford - with Founders' Monument left, and right the new monument with the names of all our deceased Sisters



USA: Gravestone of Sr Assunta Vorndran OP



New gravestones at Oakford – required by the flood line regulations for the Hazelmere Dam



Graves at Burghwallis:
Srs Teresa Thomas and Patricia Hannigan OP



Wall of Remembrance and Place of Interment
at Pietermaritzburg



In the parish
cemetery at
Volksberg



Cemetery wall at Neustadt



Dominican Congregation of Saint Catherine of Siena of Oakford, Natal
P.O. Box 448 / 18 Pine Road
Bedfordview
2008
South Africa

