

Superiors of the Franciscan Friaries at Adare, Askeaton, and Limerick

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Any history of the Franciscan Order in Limerick City and County should include the names of the Superiors at the friaries in Adare, Askeaton and Limerick itself, in so far as it is possible to compile such a list. Recently, when the present writer published a brochure on the Order's history in Limerick City,¹ economic and other reasons precluded the publication of the list here presented.

It is possible to furnish a lengthy and authentic record of those who were in charge of the above-named friaries at various periods of Irish Franciscan history. The information has been culled mainly from the different chapter records of the Irish Province of the Order. Chapters were held at irregular intervals, and sometimes in places of refuge. When the friars assembled on such occasions new Superiors were appointed to the various friaries, or those already in office had their term renewed. The Franciscan Library at Killiney, Co. Dublin, contains an extensive collection of these records dating back to the year 1629 when, appropriately enough, the chapter was held at the Limerick Friary.

Up to the year 1717 the "Chapter Bills" (as these lists of superiors are called) form part of a collection known as *Liber Archivii Provincialis Collegii Lovaniensis*. These documents were assembled about the year 1720 at the Irish Franciscan College of St. Anthony, Louvain, Belgium. There they remained until the French Revolution when they were moved to Rome along with other valuable manuscripts. In 1872 political instability in Italy prompted the Order's Superiors to move them all to Dublin, whence they came to Killiney in 1946.²

The library also contains official copies of nearly all the chapter bills from 1717 to our own time. A few lacunae can be filled from other sources, e.g. the *Journals of the House of Lords*, the Public Record Office, and a bound typescript made in 1906 by the late Father Edward Bonaventure Fitzmaurice who was once Guardian at Limerick and, for his time, one of the most outstanding Irish Franciscan historians.

Names of Superiors that do not appear on the chapter bills can occasionally be gleaned from other sources. In these instances a footnote indicates the authority for the information. Names are usually latinized and the English equivalent is not always easy to determine. Without altering the essential details of the documents I have tried to modernize these names and eliminate inconsistencies. Now and again, at dates that are close to each other, the same surname appears preceded by a different christian name. It is possible that the same person may be in question in both cases, registered at one point under his baptismal name, at another under his religious name; one cannot be sure without other evidence. It should be borne in mind, however, that the appointment of a particular friar as Superior at any house of the Order does

¹ B. Egan, O.F.M., *Franciscan Limerick*, Limerick 1971.

² This *Liber Archivii . . . Lovaniensis* has been edited by Fr. C. Giblin, O.F.M., under the title *Liber Lovaniensis, a Collection of Irish Franciscan Documents 1629-1717*, (Dublin 1956).

not always mean that he was able to take up residence there, because of persecution or for some other reason. Consequently, many of these appointments may be regarded as purely titular, but this practice ceased in 1872.

The year before each name is the year of appointment as given in the chapter bills. Usually when the date comes from some other source, the friar mentioned was actually Superior in the year given though he may have been in office before that.

ADARE

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---|
| 1633 | Andrew Hickey ³ | 1724 | John Davis |
| 1639 | Anthony Meagh | 1727 | James Sexton |
| 1645 | Edmund Fitzgerald | 1729 | Francis MacMahon ⁶ |
| 1647 | Anthony Hanly ⁴ | 1733, 1735 | Bonaventure O'Donnell |
| 1648 | Edmund Fitzgerald | 1736, 1738 | John Tiernan |
| 1650 | John Fitzgerald | 1739, 1741 | Bonaventure O'Donnell |
| 1659, 1661 | Louis MacCarthy | 1742 | John Tierney |
| 1669 | Jeremiah Herbert | 1744 | Bonaventure O'Donnell |
| 1670 | Philip Connell | 1745 | Edmund Hayes |
| 1672 | Matthew Cleary | 1746, 1747 | John Hayes |
| 1676 | Bernardine Grogan | 1748, 1751 | Bonaventure O'Donnell |
| 1678 | Gerald Gibbon | 1751 | Peter Buckley |
| 1680, 1681 | Francis Harold | 1753 | Bonaventure O'Donnell |
| 1683 | Anthony Magner | 1754, 1755 | Patrick Buckley |
| 1684, 1685 | Francis Harold | 1757 | Bonaventure O'Donnell |
| 1687 | Anthony Hanrahan | 1759 | Patrick Buckley |
| 1690 | John Mulcahy | 1760, 1761 | James Liddy |
| 1693, 1697 | Anthony Hanrahan | 1763 | James Dundon |
| 1699 | Matthew MacMahon | 1765 | Patrick Looney |
| 1700, 1702 | Anthony O'Brien | 1767 | Bonaventure Healy |
| 1703, 1705, 1706, 1708 | Anthony MacEnery | 1770 | Bonaventure Connolly; — MacCurtin ⁷ |
| 1709, 1711, 1714 | John Davis | 1772, 1773 | Bonaventure Connolly ¹ |
| 1716 | Patrick Purcell | 1776, 1778, 1779, 1781 | John Burke |
| 1717 | John Davis | 1782 | Francis Phelan |
| 1719 | Laurence Ryan | 1784 | John Phelan |
| 1720 | John Punch ⁵ | 1785, 1787 | John Shea |

³ Cf. B. Jennings, O.F.M. (ed.), "Brevis Synopsis Provinciae Hyberniae Fratrum Minorum", *Analecta Hibernica*, 6 (1934), 159.

⁴ The word *continuatur* precedes this name in the chapter bill.

⁵ The official chapter bill has the date 3 September 1700 for this appointment, and for those of the same year at Askeaton and Limerick. A copy in the Public Record Office (Parliamentary Papers, religious returns, bundle 73, no. 450) has the date 3 February 1700, but the same names for all three friaries.

⁶ *Journals of the House of Lords*, a. 1731, no. 6, p. 214.

⁷ Only the surname appears on Fr. Fitzmaurice's typescript.

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|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1788 | Anthony Kelly | 1834, 1836, 1837 | William Cunningham |
| 1790 | Patrick Hogan | 1840, 1843, 1845 | John Bergin |
| 1791 | Anthony Fleming | 1846, 1848, 1849 | Michael Malone |
| 1793, 1794, 1796, 1800, 1801 | Daniel O'Brien | 1851, 1852 | James Hanrahan |
| 1803, 1804, 1806 | Francis Power | 1857 | James Reed |
| 1815 | Anthony Fitzgibbon | 1858 | Michael Malone |
| 1819 | Anthony Brennan | 1860, 1861, 1863 | Anthony Slattery |
| 1822 | Daniel Kelly | 1864 | Charles Browne |
| 1824 | Patrick Murphy | 1866 | Francis Chambers |
| 1825 | Daniel Hourigan | 1867 | Bernard Browne |
| 1827 | David Hearn | 1869 | Charles Browne |
| 1828, 1830 | Edward Hogan | 1870 | Anthony O'Shea |
| 1831, 1832 | James Fitzgerald | 1872 | John MacManus |

The friary at Adare was listed as vacant in the chapters of 1629, 1675, 1853, 1854.

ASKEATON

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--|
| 1639 | Edmund Fitzgerald | 1711 | Anthony MacEnery |
| 1645 | Anthony Hanly | 1714 | Francis Hickey |
| 1647, 1648 | Jeremiah Herbert | 1716 | John Egan |
| 1650 | Eugene Kyne | 1717 | Constantine Egan |
| 1661 | William Hurley | 1719 | Patrick Reddan |
| 1669 | Francis Wale | 1720 | Peter Young |
| 1670 | Jeremiah Herbert | 1724 | John Kennedy ⁸ |
| 1672 | Donat MacMahon | 1727 | Bonaventure Fitzgerald |
| 1675, 1676 | Jeremiah Herbert | 1729 | Louis O'Donnell ⁹ |
| 1678 | William Hurley | 1733 | Thomas Hennessy |
| 1681, 1683 | Jeremiah Herbert | 1735, 1736 | John Kennedy |
| 1684, 1685 | John Mulcahy | 1738 | Francis MacMahon |
| 1687 | Jeremiah Herbert | 1739, 1741 | John Kennedy |
| 1689, 1690 | David Fitzgerald | 1742 | John MacNamara |
| 1693 | John Mulcahy | 1744 | Anthony Hagheran (Hanrahan 10 Aherne?) |
| 1697 | Patrick Purcell | 1745, 1746, 1747 | John Kennedy |
| 1699, 1700 | Anthony MacEnery | 1748 | John Aherne |
| 1702 | John Davis | 1751 | Michael MacMahon |
| 1703, 1705, 1706, 1708, 1709 | Patrick Purcell | 1753, 1754 | John Aherne |

⁸ Public Record Office, *loc. cit.*, no. 451.

⁹ *Journals of the House of Lords*, a. 1731, no. 6, p. 214.

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| 1755 | John Walsh | 1815 | James Quin |
| 1757 | John Kennedy | 1819 | Charles Dalton |
| 1759, 1760 | John Walsh | 1822, 1824 | Daniel Hourigan |
| 1761 | James Dundon | 1825, 1827 | Michael Malone |
| 1763, 1765 | John Walsh | 1828, 1830 | Edmund Sheehy |
| 1767 | Patrick Hickey | 1831, 1832, 1834, 1836, 1837 | Daniel Healy |
| 1770 | — Prendergast ¹⁰ | 1840, 1842 | J. Cuddihy |
| 1772 | Patrick Burn | 1843, 1845, 1846, 1848 | Daniel Hogan |
| 1773 | Anthony Hickey | 1852, 1853 | Francis MacLoughlin |
| 1776 | N. Walsh | 1855 | Michael Malone |
| 1778 | Thomas White | 1857 | P. Keogh |
| 1779 | John Cahill | 1858 | Dominic Kehoe |
| 1781, 1782 | Anthony Cahill | 1860, 1861, 1863 | Augustine Hill |
| 1784, 1785 | Thomas Burke | 1864 | Augustine Power |
| 1787, 1788, 1790, 1791 | Patrick Clancy | 1866, 1867, 1869 | Anthony O Shea |
| 1793 | Patrick Lonergan | 1870, 1872 | Vincent Casey |
| 1794, 1796 | Bonaventure O Donoghue | | |
| 1800, 1801, 1803, 1804, 1806 | Anthony Laffan | | |

The friary at Askeaton is listed as vacant for the years 1629, 1849, 1851, and at the chapter of 1680 was put directly under the control of the reigning Provincial, Eugene Callanan.

LIMERICK CITY

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|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1615 | James Kent ¹¹ | 1687 | John O Dwyer |
| 1629 | Bonaventure Fitzgerald | 1689 | Francis Harold, senior |
| 1639 | Francis Woulfe | 1690 | Francis Butler |
| 1645, 1647 | Thaddaeus Gorman ¹² | 1693 | Francis Harold |
| 1648 | Matthew Sharp ¹³ | 1697, 1699 | Louis Fitzgerald |
| 1650 | Francis Woulfe | 1700 | Francis Butler |
| 1659 | William Hurley | 1702 | Michael Dwyer |
| 1661 | Bonaventure Grady | 1703, 1705, 1706, 1708 | Francis Butler |
| 1669, 1670 | Francis Bruodin | 1709 | Michael Dwyer |
| 1672 | Bonaventure Grady | 1711, 1714 | Bonaventure Fitzgerald |
| 1675, 1676 | Francis Kennedy | 1716 | Thomas Connell |
| 1678, 1680 | Andrew Egan | 1717 | Bonaventure Fitzgerald |
| 1681, 1683, 1684, 1685 | Francis Butler | 1719 | John Davis |

¹⁰ No christian name in typescript.

¹¹ *Analecta Hibernica* 6 (1934), 149.

¹² Cf. *Franciscan Limerick*, pp. 18-19. The word "opposed" (p. 19) is inaccurate: it should read "accepted".

¹³ Cf. *Commentarius Rinuccianus*, vol. IV: 1649-1651, (ed. S. Kavanagh, O.F.M.Cap.), Dublin 1941, p. 242; *Franciscan Limerick*, p. 20.

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| 1720 | Bonaventure Fitzgerald | 1851 | James O Carroll ¹⁶ |
| 1724, 1727 | Peter Hehir | 1852 | James Fitzgerald |
| 1729, 1733 | James MacNamara | 1853, 1855 | John Bergin |
| 1735, 1736 | John MacNamara | 1857 | Michael Malone |
| 1738 | Francis Sexton | 1858 | Joseph Clampett |
| 1739 | Francis MacMahon | 1860, 1861, 1863 | Michael Malone |
| 1741 | John Tiernan | | Bonaventure Murphy |
| 1742, 1744 | Francis MacMahon | 1864 | Peter Hanrahan |
| 1745, 1746, 1747 | John MacNamara | 1866 | Bonaventure MacLaughlin |
| 1748 | Francis MacMahon | 1867 | Alphonsus Jackman |
| 1751 | Anthony Casey | 1869, 1870 | Anthony O Shea |
| 1753, 1754 | John Burke | 1872 | 1873, 1875, 1876, 1878, 1879, 1881, 1882, 1884, 1885, 1887 |
| 1755 | John Casey | | Bonaventure MacDermott ¹⁷ |
| 1757 | John Aherne | | Francis Maher |
| 1759, 1760 | John Burke | 1888 | Bonaventure Fitzmaurice |
| 1761 | Anthony Casey | 1890 | Bonaventure MacDermott |
| 1763 | Peter MacNamara | 1892, 1893 | Anthony Walsh |
| 1765, 1767 | Anthony MacCurtin | 1895 | Bonaventure MacDermott |
| 1770 | John Casey | 1897 | 1899, 1900, 1902, 1903 |
| 1772 | James Sheehan | | Anthony Moloney |
| 1773 | Patrick Prendergast | 1905 | Anthony Slattery |
| 1776 | Charles Cullinan | 1906, 1908 | Nicholas Dillon |
| 1778 | Francis Burke | 1910, 1911, 1918, 1921 | Bonaventure Aherne ¹⁸ |
| 1779 | Patrick Purcell | | Peter Begley |
| 1781, 1782, 1784, 1785 | Anthony Casey ¹⁴ | 1924 | Fridolin Fehilly |
| 1787, 1788, 1790, 1791 | Thomas Burke | 1927, 1930 | Jarlath Mangan |
| 1793, 1794, 1796, 1800, 1801, 1803, 1804, | | 1933 | Hilary Killowry |
| 1806 | Denis Hogan | 1936 | Malachy MacQuillan |
| 1815 | James O Regan | 1939 | Ephrem O Shea |
| 1819 | Daniel Healy | 1942, 1945 | Theophilus Gantley |
| 1822, 1824, 1825, 1827 | Daniel Burke ¹⁵ | 1948, 1951 | Eunan Deeney |
| 1828 | Daniel L. Hourigan | 1954 | Andrew Creighton |
| 1831, 1832, 1834, 1836, 1837, 1840, 1843, | | 1957 | Raphael Clynes |
| 1845 | Michael Malone | 1960, 1963 | Hugh Daly |
| 1846, 1848, 1849 | John Bergin | 1966, 1969 | Ernest Cronin |
| | | 1972 | |

¹⁴ Anthony Casey was the first Guardian of the friary at Newgate Lane, behind St. Mary's Cathedral.

¹⁵ Daniel Burke went to South Africa early in 1838 and died there a year later. A very lengthy letter he wrote to Fr. W. A. O'Meara is in section E 29 of the Franciscan Library, Killiney. It contains valuable details about the Church in South Africa.

¹⁶ James O Carroll had been Guardian of St. Isidore's College, Rome, since 1845. The chapter bill names Bonaventure Cosgrove as Acting Superior at Limerick until O Carroll's arrival.

¹⁷ Bonaventure MacDermott was responsible for the building of the Franciscan Church which was dedicated in December 1879 by Dr. Butler. Dr. MacCarthy, Bishop of Kerry, preached on the occasion.

¹⁸ No chapter was held between 1911 and 1918.