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

BARTHOLOMEW EGAN, O.F.M.

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 Collegi 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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1633</td>
<td>Andrew Hickey³</td>
<td>1724</td>
<td>John Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1639</td>
<td>Anthony Meagh</td>
<td>1727</td>
<td>James Sexton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645</td>
<td>Edmund Fitzgerald</td>
<td>1729</td>
<td>Francis MacMahon⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1647</td>
<td>Anthony Hanly⁴</td>
<td>1733, 1735</td>
<td>Bonaventure O Donnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1648</td>
<td>Edmund Fitzgerald</td>
<td>1736, 1738</td>
<td>John Tiernan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1650</td>
<td>John Fitzgerald</td>
<td>1739, 1741</td>
<td>Bonaventure O Donnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1659, 1661</td>
<td>Louis MacCarthy</td>
<td>1742</td>
<td>John Tierney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1669</td>
<td>Jeremiah Herbert</td>
<td>1744</td>
<td>Bonaventure O Donnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1670</td>
<td>Philip Connell</td>
<td>1745</td>
<td>Edmund Hayes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1672</td>
<td>Matthew Cleary</td>
<td>1746, 1747</td>
<td>John Hayes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1676</td>
<td>Bernardine Gregan</td>
<td>1748, 1751</td>
<td>Bonaventure O Donnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1678</td>
<td>Gerald Gibbon</td>
<td>1751</td>
<td>Peter Buckley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1680, 1681</td>
<td>Francis Harold</td>
<td>1753</td>
<td>Bonaventure O Donnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1683</td>
<td>Anthony Magner</td>
<td>1754, 1755</td>
<td>Patrick Buckley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1684, 1685</td>
<td>Francis Harold</td>
<td>1757</td>
<td>Bonaventure O Donnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1687</td>
<td>Anthony Hanrahan</td>
<td>1759</td>
<td>Patrick Buckley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1690</td>
<td>John Mulcahy</td>
<td>1760, 1761</td>
<td>James Liddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1693, 1697</td>
<td>Anthony Hanrahan</td>
<td>1763</td>
<td>James Dundon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1699</td>
<td>Matthew Mac Mahon</td>
<td>1765</td>
<td>Patrick Looney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700, 1702</td>
<td>Anthony O Brien</td>
<td>1767</td>
<td>Bonaventure Healy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1703, 1705, 1706, 1708</td>
<td>Anthony MacEnery</td>
<td>1770</td>
<td>Bonaventure Connolly ; — MacCurtin⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1709, 1711, 1714</td>
<td>John Davis</td>
<td>1772, 1773</td>
<td>Bonaventure Connolly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patrick Purcell</td>
<td>1776, 1778, 1779, 1781</td>
<td>John Burke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1716</td>
<td>John Davis</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>Francis Phelan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1717</td>
<td>John Davis</td>
<td>1784</td>
<td>John Phelan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1719</td>
<td>Laurence Ryan</td>
<td>1785, 1787</td>
<td>John Shea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td>John Punch⁸</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴ The word *continuator* 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. 460) 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.
1788    Anthony Kelly
1790    Patrick Hogan
1792    Anthony Fleming
1793, 1794, 1796, 1800, 1801
        Daniel O'Brien
1803, 1804, 1806
        Francis Power
1815    Anthony Fitzgibbon
1819    Anthony Brennan
1822    Daniel Kelly
1824    Patrick Murphy
1825    Daniel Hourigan
1827    David Hearn
1828, 1830    Edward Hogan
1831, 1832    James Fitzgerald

1834, 1836, 1837
        William Cunningham
1840, 1843, 1845
        John Bergin
1846, 1848, 1849
        Michael Malone
1851, 1852    James Hanrahan
1857    James Reed
1858    Michael Malone
1860, 1861, 1863
        Anthony Slattery
1864    Charles Browne
1866    Francis Chambers
1867    Bernard Browne
1869    Charles Browne
1870    Anthony O'Shea
1872    John MacManus

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

ASKEATON

1639    Edmund Fitzgerald
1645    Anthony Hanly
1647, 1648    Jeremiah Herbert
1650    Eugene Kyne
1661    William Hurley
1669    Francis Wale
1670    Jeremiah Herbert
1672    Donat MacMahon
1673, 1676    Jeremiah Herbert
1678    William Hurley
1681, 1683    Jeremiah Herbert
1684, 1685    John Mulcahy
1687    Jeremiah Herbert
1689, 1690    David Fitzgerald
1693    John Mulcahy
1697    Patrick Purcell
1699, 1700    Anthony MacEnery
1702    John Davis
1703, 1705, 1706, 1708, 1709
        Patrick Purcell

1711
        Anthony MacEnery
1714    Francis Hickey
1716    John Egan
1717    Constantine Egan
1719    Patrick Reddan
1720    Peter Young
1724    John Kennedy
1727    Bonaventure Fitzgerald
1729    Louis O'Donnell
1733    Thomas Hennessy
1735, 1736    John Kennedy
1738    Francis MacMahon
1739, 1741    John Kennedy
1742    John MacNamara
1744    Anthony Haghieran (Hanrahan to Aherne?)
1745, 1746, 1747
        John Kennedy
1748    John Aherne
1751    Michael MacMahon
1753, 1754    John Aherne

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Prior</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Prior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1615</td>
<td>James Kent 11</td>
<td>1687</td>
<td>John O Dwyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1629</td>
<td>Bonaventure Fitzgerald</td>
<td>1689</td>
<td>Francis Harold, senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1639</td>
<td>Francis Woulfe</td>
<td>1690</td>
<td>Francis Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645, 1647</td>
<td>Thaddaeus Gorman 12</td>
<td>1693</td>
<td>Francis Harold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1648</td>
<td>Matthew Sharp 13</td>
<td>1697, 1699</td>
<td>Louis Fitzgerald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Francis Woulfe</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td>Francis Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1659</td>
<td>William Hurley</td>
<td>1702</td>
<td>Michael Dwyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1661</td>
<td>Bonaventure Grady</td>
<td>1703, 1705, 1706, 1708</td>
<td>Francis Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1669, 1670</td>
<td>Francis Brudin</td>
<td>1709</td>
<td>Michael Dwyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1672</td>
<td>Bonaventure Grady</td>
<td>1711, 1714</td>
<td>Bonaventure Fitzgerald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1675, 1676</td>
<td>Francis Kennedy</td>
<td>1716</td>
<td>Thomas Connell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1678, 1680</td>
<td>Andrew Egan</td>
<td>1717</td>
<td>Bonaventure Fitzgerald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1681, 1683, 1684, 1685</td>
<td>Francis Butler</td>
<td>1719</td>
<td>John Davis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Prergergast
11 See Note 11
12 Cf. Franciscan Limerick, pp. 18-19. The word "opposed" (p. 19) is inaccurate: it should read "accepted".
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 Clappett
1739  Francis MacMahon  1860, 1861, 1863  Michael Malone
1741  John Tiernan  1864  Bonaventure Murphy
1742, 1744  Francis MacMahon  1866  Peter Hanrahan
1745, 1740, 1747  John MacNamara  1867  Bonaventure MacLaughlin
1748  Francis MacMahon  1869, 1870  Alphonsus Jackman
1751  Anthony Casey  1872  Anthony O'Shea
1753, 1754  John Burke  1873, 1875, 1876, 1878, 1879, 1881, 1882, 1884, 1885, 1887
1755  John Casey  1888  Bonaventure MacDermott\(^{17}\)
1757  John Ahern\(^{18}\)  1890  Francis Maher
1759, 1760  John Burke  1892, 1893  Bonaventure Fitzmaurice
1761  Anthony Casey  1895  Bonaventure MacDermott
1763  Peter MacNamara  1897  Anthony Walsh
1765, 1767  Anthony MacCurtin  1899, 1900, 1902, 1903  Bonaventure MacDermott
1770  John Casey  1905  Anthony Moloney
1772  James Sheehan  1906, 1908  Anthony Slattery
1773  Patrick Prendergast  1910, 1911, 1918, 1921  Nicholas Dillon
1776  Charles Cullinan  1924  Bonaventure Ahern\(^{18}\)
1778  Francis Burke  1927, 1930  Peter Begley
1779  Patrick Purcell  1933  Fridolin Fehilly
1781, 1782, 1784, 1785  Anthony Casey\(^{14}\)  1936  Jarlath Mangan
1787, 1788, 1790, 1791  Thomas Burke  1939  Hilary Killory
1793, 1794, 1796, 1800, 1801, 1803, 1804, 1806  Malachy MacQuillan
1815  James O Regan  1942, 1945  Ephrem O'Shea
1819  Daniel Healy  1948, 1951  Theophilus Gantley
1822, 1824, 1825, 1827  Daniel Burke\(^{15}\)  1954  Eunan Deeney
1828  Daniel L. Hourigan  1957  Andrew Creighton
1831, 1832, 1834, 1835, 1837, 1840, 1843, 1845  Michael Malone
1846, 1848, 1849  John Bergin  1960, 1963  Raphael Clynes
                  1966, 1969  Hugh Daly
                  1972  Ernest Cronin

\(^{14}\) 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.