

UK and Ireland Province



The UK and Ireland Province is quite unique as it covers two main Islands and five distinct countries and cultures and languages: To the extreme left – is the Republic of Ireland, and to the extreme north east, Northern Ireland both are within the Island of Ireland. The second Island contains three countries: to the north, is Scotland and to the extreme west, Wales and the central body – England.

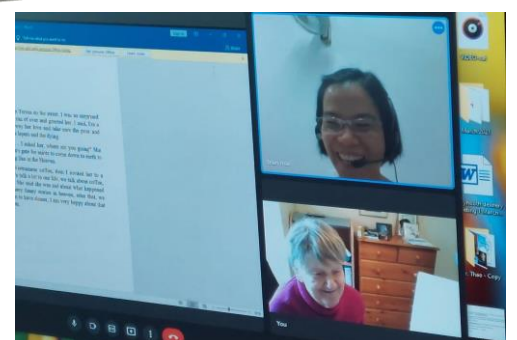


WHERE DO WE LIVE AND WORK?

Presently, we have sisters in the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and England. Our main ministries are parish-associated works and some sisters are still engaged in other social based ministries such as working as volunteers in various charities: Jesuit Refugee Services with refugees and asylum seekers, or working as translators and accompaniment. Other sisters are working with local services: Catching Lives in Canterbury for the homeless and vulnerable peoples and working with St Vincent de Paul locally. And individual work with asylum seekers and homeless people in Manchester.



For many sisters, parish work is still very much part of our mission, being engaged in active ministries such as Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, catechists and musicians and a few are still actively engaged as partners in mission with parishes and still a few sisters engaged weekly in schools, working with Chaplains and engaged in class work and RNDM activities.



Since the use of Zoom/email, some of our sisters are teaching English to help prepare them for the International Preparation for Final Vow's Programme in Davao, Philippines and assisting in supporting theological studies via email.

As most of our sisters in the Province are returned missionaries, we have a community for retired and aged sisters and those who need full time care in St Anne's Convent, Sturry, near Canterbury, England. Here we have a fulltime Manager and Carers, and sisters from Euphrasie Barbier Community who offer daily pastoral and spiritual care.



Up until 2016, when we welcomed home our last full time missionary back into the province, we have been in active missionary work in the following countries since 1870: France, New Zealand, Australia, Samoa, Bangladesh, India, Burma (Myanmar), Vietnam, Kenya, Peru, Canada, Senegal, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines.

FUND-RAISING

One of our many ministries today is funding-raising for the continuation of our overseas missions: Mission Appeals in parishes, parish events to fund-raise using crafts and various activities and involving our local schools in mission awareness and charitable events.





VIETNAMESE MINISTRY

In recent years, our work with the Vietnamese community has progressed in Ireland and in the UK with Catechetics, preparation for the Sacraments and even Marriage Preparation and working with youth groups. Because of COVID-19, some of the sessions were online and have remained even today, to reach out to various parts of the country.



HERITAGE



Our biggest and most important ministry is the care and protection for our Foundress's tomb in the chapel of St Anne's Convent and the Original House when Euphrasie Barbier arrived from Deal in 1881. It is in this house that Euphrasie died in 1829. Today, this is our Heritage Centre and the place of our Archives which holds her personal belongings and some original documents. Plus the original Chapel with the tomb of Euphrasie Barbier.



EARLY HISTORY

Unfortunately, our first official convent, St Etherburga's (Turret House) in Deal, and the house in Middle Street, where Euphrasie and the sisters arrived from France in 1870, and worked with Miss Boys, are no longer there. Number 8 Middle Street is now situated on the site of the present Library, but we still have pilgrimages to these sites where she lived and worked in the orphanage in Deal which historically marks the presence of Miss Boys' Orphanage with the help of Euphrasie Barbier and our first RNDMs by a Blue Plague (to be placed in September 2023) at the Library and on the Historic Plagues placed by Deal Council. Visits are also made to the cemetery that holds our early pioneer sisters.

HOSPITALITY

Another important ministry is hospitality to the many visitors to come to the UK Province, which includes pilgrimages to London, with an organised programme "In the Footsteps of Euphrasie Barbier." This includes the places where Euphrasie, known as Sr Marie, lived and worked in London from 1851 until August 1861, as a sister of Calvary, later to be called the Sisters of Compassion.

London



Great Titchfield St - Walking in the Footsteps of Euphrasie - Queen Square



Since COVID many building programmes in London have begun so places, places known to Euphrasie have either gone or changed, so we have now created a London Room Exhibit in the Heritage Centre to hold the story of the first 10 years of Euphrasie in London from 1851 until August 1861. In November 2022, the Renewal Group were the first to visit the London Room and see the New Cabinet display in the Euphrasie Barbier Room.

London Room



Euphrasie Barbier Room



Further pilgrimages are made to Deal and to Sturry and we welcome the RNDM Renewal Group each year and many others from local parishes, schools and various visitors. All of our communities offer hospitality and we have over the years, welcomed sisters from other provinces visiting family members or making retreats or following courses, especially in Ireland.



The UK and Ireland Province holds many memories and treasures of the early years of the Congregation. Since the Chapter of 2020, we have undertaken to accept our role and responsibility as a Province for the care of Sturry as one of the Congregational Heritage Sites and have begun work with France to share resources and ideas for the upkeep of the two major sites.

Over the years we have become a multi-cultural province and share cultural feasts and traditions. We are very fortunate to have Irish, Scottish, Welsh, English, Hong Kong, Vietnamese and Indian cultures among us.



Having the presence of Euphrasie Barbier in our Chapel in St Anne's is also a treasure that we cherish and a candle burns daily for the Congregation to embrace every sister who Euphrasie called her daughter in Christ, and her last recorded words uttered in Sturry were:

"Be all united" she said several times; *"be all united on earth that you may be also in Heaven."*
Abbé Coulomb. Pg 601.

