

St. George's, Grenada Annals

The following is a Foreword to the Annals written by Archbishop Finbar Ryan.

It is with the greatest joy and satisfaction that I welcome the Brothers of the Presentation of Our Blessed Lady to Grenada - the Island formerly dedicated in Her august name as Our Lady of the Assumption (her Immaculate Conception). The coming of Her devoted Sons of the Congregation to take in hand the Catholic formation of our youth is a sign that She has not forgotten this part of the domain. From the bright throne above She will avowedly look down with love upon the Brothers and their pupils dispensing all those graces which it is Hers to mediate to men and without which we can achieve nothing.

With a full and grateful heart, I invite God's blessing on this College and pray that *Maria Mediante Duce*, both teachers and taught may "grow in wisdom and grace".

Finbar Ryan,
Archbishop, Port of Spain.

July 21, 1947.

1946: Presentation College Grenada, B. W. Indies, an entirely new foundation was first started on **Tuesday, November 19th, 1946**. On that day the first Brothers chosen as pioneers for Mission work in the British West Indies set foot on this island of Grenada. They were - V. Rev. Brother Cornelius Dunstan Curtin, Provincial of England who had been chosen as Provincial and leader of the pioneer band to the West Indies and, Rev. Brother Patrick Gregory Sheehan, first Superior and Principal of Presentation Brothers' College, St. George's, Grenada, British West Indies.

The house hitherto known as the Vicariate and occupied by the Dominican Fathers of the English Province was handed over to the Presentation Brothers to establish a College where secondary Education could be given to the Catholic boys of Grenada. The Fathers did not, however, vacate their old homes immediately and the two Brothers lived with the Dominican Fathers until the dawn of the New Year. Many things had to be done and many preparations had to be made in order that a start could be made in 1947.

Scarcely had Bro. Dunstan arrived when he got down to business. With Bro. Gregory, he surveyed the building and made mental calculations of what was wanted and what might be done with the present building to make it a suitable place for a College.

Seating accommodation and school equipment had to be seen too. The two Brothers accompanied by Rev. Fr. Charles Halpin, O.P. went to several places throughout the island and interviewed carpenters. At this particular time, it was almost impossible to get nails or screws but fortunately, Brother Dunstan happened to go into one of the leading stores in town and casually asked the question about this very scarce commodity. He was told that a supply was expected within the next few days. Immediately he booked the whole order. Unimportant as this incident appears it may have meant months of waiting had he not been "on the spot."

The Brothers now held several discussions with the Dominican Fathers and after Brother Dunstan had made known to them his plans, it was decided to send for Bro. Gabriel O.S.B. from Mount St. Benedict Abbey, Trinidad. Bro. Gabriel, O.S.B. is a famous architect and it was he that designed the plans for and, superintended the erection of the Convent Secondary School close by.

Brother Dunstan's idea was - that a super-structure could be built on the present building or, failing that - wings could be built outwards from it. Bro. Gabriel could not come immediately to Grenada, so Bro. Dunstan accompanied by Bro. Gregory proceeded to St. Lucia on business in connection with a sister College there. The Brothers were in St. Lucia but a few days when a cable arrived stating that Bro. Gabriel had arrived from Trinidad and to return to Grenada immediately. They returned to Grenada by plane and immediately went into discussions with Bro. Gabriel.

1946: After carefully considering all that Bro. Gabriel had said, the idea of a super-structure was condemned on the grounds that the present foundations would not stand it, and the idea of building wings was put aside for the moment. Bro. Gabriel then drew up plans for a new latrine for the future pupils. This building was small as it was meant much work and again many contacts had to be made with carpenters, masons and also with officials of the Board of Public Works. Much help was given in this matter by the Rev. Fr. Lewis Thompson, O.P. He each day helped with Bro. Gregory to superintend and direct the workers.

On **December 12th, 1946**, Rev. Bro. Dunstan addressed a representative gathering of the people of Grenada in the St. Louis Hall, Convent schools. He outlined clearly to them what was needed here to commence a College and told them of the "Trinity of Partners" in that great work viz. The people of Grenada, the Dominican Fathers, and the Presentation Brothers. He told them that each should play its part faithfully and well if they wanted the project to succeed.

Many applications were now made by parents who wished to enrol their boys as future pupils of the new College. Bro. Gregory was now kept busy interviewing parents and pupils and so had to abandon the directing of the work on the new latrine. Rev. Fr. Thompson now carried on alone.

Carpenters were also at work with orders to make 70 new desks and three rostrums with teachers' desks.

On **Sunday, December 22nd, 1946**, it was announced from the pulpits throughout the island that on December 30th 1946 a qualifying examination to enter the College would be held at the St. Joseph Convent Hall, commencing at 9 a.m.

On **December 30th** the examination was held, and 60 boys were examined.

1947: On January 2nd, 1947, a farewell party was given by the Dominican Fathers. Present at the luncheon were - Very Rev. Fr. Leo Kevin Clark, O.P. Vicar General and Vicar Provincial of the Dominican Fathers in Grenada. Rev. Fathers Charles Halpin O.P., Lewis Thompson O.P., Aldhelm Bowring O.P., Justin Fields O.P., Gregory Rupert O.P., Alfred Pike., Andrew Anderson O.P., Matthew Rigney O.P., Brian Proudman O.P., and Felix Watts O.P., also Rev. Brothers Dunstan and Gregory. Rev. Father Denis Fitzgerald O.P. and parish priest of St. George's, Grenada was unavoidably absent, as he had to go to Trinidad for an operation for tonsils. Many speeches were made after the luncheon. The Vicar General welcomed the Presentation Brothers in their taking over of the old Vicariate which from now onwards became known as Presentation College. Bro. Dunstan suitably replied on behalf of the Presentation Brothers and assured the Dominican Fathers present, that the Brothers would do everything humanly possible to further education in the island of Grenada.

On **January 3rd, 1947**, The Dominican Fathers left their old home here and took up their residence in the new Vicariate. From now on Brothers Dunstan and Gregory were living alone in the new Presentation College. This change-over together with the

supplying of desks etc. for the new College, the building of latrine and the passage fares of three Brothers from Ireland cost the Dominican Order (English Province) almost £2,000.

About the middle of January Rev. Bro. Dunstan received a cable message from Castries, St. Lucia with directions to proceed there at once to meet Rev. Bros. Canice Collins, Macartan Sheehy and Lawrence Reynolds who had just arrived from Ireland to take charge of St. Mary's College, Castries, St. Lucia.

Bro. Dunstan left by plane for St. Lucia almost immediately and so was unavoidably absent for the opening of the new College in Grenada which took place on **January 21st, 1947**. On that morning a sung Mass of the Holy Ghost was celebrated in the Parish Church at which all the new pupils attended. At 8.30 a.m. the new pupils arrived at the College (62 all told) and were met by Rev. Bro. Gregory the Principal who conducted them in their different classrooms.

At 10 a.m. a procession of the pupils was formed and all marched to the Parish Church. Here many parents, friends and well-wishers were collected as well as the Nuns from St. Joseph's Convent with their pupils.

At 10.15 a.m. Rev. Fr. Denis Fitzgerald O.P. P.P. came on the altar attended by Fathers Bowring and Thompson. Fr. Matthew Rigney O.P. was cross-bearer and in the choir were Rev. Fathers Justin Fields O.P., Gregory Raupert O.P., Andrew Anderson O.P., Brian Proudman O.P., Samuel Horn O.P., and Felix Watts O.P. Many prayers were recited at the altar and at 10.30 a.m. a solemn procession commenced from the Church to the College.

1947: The order of procession was as follows: Rev. Fr. Matthew Rigney O.P., Cross bearer, acolytes; Rev. Fr. Denis Fitzgerald O.P. P.P. celebrant, accompanied by Rev. Fathers Bowring and Thompson as Deacon and sub-deacon respectively followed by a choir of Dominican Fathers already mentioned. Immediately behind the Fathers came Rev. Bro. Gregory and the pupils of the College followed by the Nuns and pupils of St. Joseph's Convent. Then came the general public. When all had arrived at the College the Parish Priest solemnly blessed the building as a school and when this was completed the pupils returned to their Forms and the public were allowed to visit them and see them in their places.

Bro. Gregory was living alone at the College as Bro. Dunstan was still in St. Lucia. It is a coincidence that the very day - **January 21st**, which was the opening day of the College here was also the day on which Rev. Bros. Liam Dromey and Leonard Dennehy set sail from Southampton on their journey to Grenada the future scene of their labours. They did not arrive in Grenada until **February 14th, 1947**. In the meantime, the school went on and the Dominican Fathers taught here with Bro. Gregory until the arrival of the Brothers. The Dominican Fathers who taught each day were Rev. Fathers Thompson, Halpin, Bowring, Horn and Watts.

On the morning of **February 14th, 1947**, the two Brothers - Liam Dromey and Leonard Dennehy arrived by plane from Trinidad. They reached the College about 8.30 a.m. and afterwards when they visited each classroom, they were amazed to hear the West Indian boys welcome them with the words - "Céad míle fáilte róimait!

Serious work now became the order of the day, though this was done under great strain as the supply of books was most inadequate. Still, work went on. Games were held in the public park on two evenings of the week. The Brothers were always with the boys during games. Time rolled on quickly and it neared the end of the first school term. The Brothers in Grenada were glad to learn that their fellow Brothers from St. Lucia were coming here during the **Easter holidays**. They arrived and brought with them some twenty pupils who took part in the Inter-Island Tournament which was being held in Grenada.

The three Brothers from St. Lucia - Rev. Bro. Michael Canice Collins, Superior, Brother Patrick Macartan Sheehy, and Bro. Lawrence Reynolds were the guests of the Brothers in Grenada for two weeks. During this happy reunion, much useful work was done. Educational matters were discussed and dealt with, and the Rev. Bro. Provincial gave much useful help and advice. He also held a visitation of both Communities.

1947: During the **Easter recess** structural alterations were dealt with. Two dividing walls between rooms were knocked down and much-needed space and light were the result. Hitherto where there were four small rooms, now stands two large rooms which are most suitable as classrooms. This alteration was carried out by Mr. Albert Seon & Co. (Builders), St. George's, Grenada at an approximate cost of £62. The Dominican Fathers also undertook to defray the expense of this alteration.

The Second Term of the school year commenced on **April 28th, 1947**. We had on the roll on that date 67 pupils. During this term, things were better organised. Games were dealt with more seriously. A debating Society was formed in the College under the direction of Rev. Bro. Leonard and a branch of the Legion of Mary were also established in the College under the guidance of the untiring energy of Rev. Bro. Liam. Rev. Bro. Dunstan was occasionally away in Trinidad or St. Lucia on business. Some of the interesting items which happened during this term were - the pupils took part in Empire Day celebrations and The Corpus Christi processions, all dressed up in their white uniform. During this term we had a real "Red Letter Day", **July 18th, 1947**, the day on which His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Finbar Ryan O.P., Archbishop of Port-of-Spain visited the College and spoke to the pupils and gave them the papal blessing. He arrived at the College at 9.30 a.m., accompanied by V. Rev. Fr. Mungo McGibbon O.P., V.G. V.P. On their arrival, they were met by Rev. Bro. Gregory, Headmaster and Rev. Bros. Liam and Leonard, Assistant Masters. Twelve of the older boys formed a guard of honour as His Grace ascended the College steps.