

Blessed Dominic Barberi – the link with Reading

What is Reading's connection with Blessed Dominic Barberi, who never preached or worked in the area? The connection is that he died in Reading, and the story is perhaps particularly poignant when you know the area and can imagine the scenes.

Dominic Barberi joined the Passionist Order in 1813. In prayer he received a call from God to preach the Gospel in England. At the time it was not normal for a lay brother to transfer to study for the priesthood, the Passionists had no house in England, and Dominic did not even know any English people. However he believed that it was God's will and therefore applied to train for the priesthood. After ordination in 1818 he continued his studies while carrying out his duties including preaching, giving retreats and hearing Confession. He was not a great orator but his sincerity was attractive and he was noted for his ability to heal disputes. In 1829 he was sent to Rome where he was able to meet English visitors.

Finally, in 1841, he was sent to England to establish a Passionist house at Aston in Staffordshire. There was strong anti-Catholic feeling in England at the time and even the local Catholics did not welcome him. However, as in Italy, his sincerity and love of God attracted people. In 1844 he held the first Corpus Christi procession in England, attracting a large crowd of whom half were Protestants.

In 1844 he met John Henry Newman briefly and the following year was invited to call on him. Having travelled on the outside of the stagecoach he arrived soaked through. While he was drying himself by the fire Newman entered the room, knelt and asked to be received into the Catholic Church.

On 27 August 1849 Fr. Dominic and a companion, Fr. Louis Pesciaroli, set off from Paddington to go to the opening of a new church at Woodchester. As the train neared Pangbourne he became ill. A doctor who lived in Oxford Road happened to be travelling to Goring and attended him. The doctor and Fr. Louis helped him off the train at Pangbourne but none of the inns would admit him because they were afraid it was cholera. They went back to Reading where he was taken to the Railway Tavern in Caversham Road. This building, later renamed the Duke of Edinburgh, no longer exists but was on the Reading side of the railway bridge. There he was put to bed and assured the doctor that he was in much less pain. The doctor continued on his own interrupted journey, but Fr. Dominic died that afternoon.

Dominic Barberi was beatified in 1963. He was driven by a great love for England. During the short time he had in England he established three Passionist houses, and preached about 100 missions and retreats. His feast day is 26 August.

Ann Davis

St. Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School OPEN MORNINGS:

Come and see the school at work before the **deadline for applications**, which is Monday 16th January 2012: the school welcomes prospective families on

Wednesday 21st September 9.15am – 11.30am

Thursday 20th October 9.15am – 11.30am

Tuesday 15th November 9.15am – 11.30am

Tours will take place at 9.30am, 10am and 11am

See colour poster on St. Dominic Savio School notice board in D.B. Room

Fashion for Freedom: Saturday 17th September @ 6pm -

Harvest International church presents a **fashion show** next weekend - includes a 'vintage vault' with many items for sale, and a new Christian clothing line.

All proceeds go to *Hope for Justice*, campaigning to bring an end to Human Trafficking. All welcome – entrance £3.

See poster on Board 1 in Advent Room

Prayers as we await a new Bishop –

In thanksgiving for Bishop Crispian's time among us:

Loving God, we give heartfelt thanks for the ministry of our Bishop Crispian, who has led us so generously for the past 23 years.

He has been a true father to us, a shepherd and guide who has watched over us and cared for us.

We pray that he may have abundant blessings as he relinquishes his pastoral leadership among us.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord.

For the Church:

Heavenly Father, send your Spirit on the Church in this time of discernment for a new pastor for our diocese.

May the one chosen to lead and inspire us in the years to come be an ardent and gentle shepherd to us all.

Grant this in the name of Christ our Lord.