



CATHOLIC NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY THE BASILICA OF OUR LADY, WALSINGHAM

Walsingham - "England's Nazareth"

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM

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Greyfriars Ruins, Walsingham 2019 EWTN ©

England's Nazareth and the Successor of St Francis

St. Joseph's Solemnity was the perfect feast for the Guardian of the charism of St Francis to historically visit England's Nazareth for the very first time. As Successor to the saint whom in his time heard God say '**Francis, go and rebuild my Church**', Friar Marco Tasca, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual (Greyfriars), responded to the voice of his fellow friars to return to Walsingham for the conversion of England.

Beginning in the early 1300's a dream of St Francis before he died was that some of his brothers would be sent to England. As part of the heritage of England, Mary's Dowry, Walsingham was an inevitable place as the only one out of the four major shrines in Medieval Christendom which was devoted to the Mother of God.

For St. Francis the Blessed Virgin Mary was Mother, Advocate and Queen. St. Bonaventure bears witness that St. Francis honoured Her as Mother, when he says: "He loved with an unspeakable affection the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, forasmuch as that She had made the Lord of glory our Brother, and that through Her we have obtained mercy." (Leg. Mai. IX,3)

The Holy House

Much like the Porzioncula, the little holy house in Assisi which was the church in ruins that Francis rebuilt, in response to his literal interpretation of what he had felt God speaking to him, its not hard to see why the friars were drawn to England's Nazareth, where a replica of the holy house of the Annunciation in Nazareth had been constructed close to 1061, in honour of the first joy of Our Lady.



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The Franciscans first arrived in Great Britain on 10th September 1224. Blessed Agnellus of Pisa, who led this mission, had been chosen by St. Francis himself to go to England and become the first Minister Provincial. On this first voyage he was accompanied by eight Franciscan brothers; three of whom were English.

Out of this mission of evangelisation their contribution was vast. One figure stands out in particular - Blessed John Duns Scotus, who was one of the three most important philosopher-theologians of his times. His arguments in defence of the Immaculate Conception appeared in Pope Pius IX's 1854 declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Another Greyfriar John of Peckham later became the first and only Franciscan Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Greyfriars arrived in Walsingham in 1347 and had an active ministry of supporting pilgrims including Lepers. In 1534 the English Reformation began. At this time, there were around 60 Conventual Franciscan friaries in England and six Observant friaries. **By 1538** all Conventual Franciscan friaries had been suppressed.

Pope Francis since the inception of his papacy has intended to follow the Lord's mandate given to St. Francis of Assisi to go and rebuild his Church. It is fitting that in a few months' time a small community of Greyfriars will be coming to live in Walsingham to support the Basilica of Our Lady of Walsingham as a Centre of the New Evangelisation.

Hospitality is the hearth of a mother's home. The mission of the returning Greyfriars intends to welcome others into their mother's home at the heart of the nation - the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. It is in the spirit of charity and love that others feel

Welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed you. (Rom. 15:7)

Our Lady of Walsingham, Pray for us

St Joseph as Father of the New Evangelisation, Pray for us

St Francis, Pray for us

Find out more about the Greyfriars:

<http://www.ofmconv.net/?lang=en>

<https://www.thegreyfriars.org/>