

Stella Maris—the Generalate 1960-2012



Stella Maris in Broadstairs Kent, England was for many years the home and place of work of the central administration of the Faithful Companions of Jesus, meaning it was the Generalate.

At different times in the Society's history, for reasons of political security or convenience of administration, the Generalate was at Carouge, Ste. Anne d'Auray, Paris and Brussels. In recent times, October 2012, Gumley House, Isleworth, West London became the [Generalate](#).

In 1913, the decision was taken to purchase a holiday house for the communities working in the FCJ schools in London and for the children in their care. It was envisaged that when a suitable house was found, it would double as a residence where Sisters could convalesce after illness. In May the sisters took possession of a property a few miles from their new FCJ day-school in Cliftonville. Set in extensive grounds beside the [North Foreland Lighthouse](#) in Broadstairs, they gave it the new name of Santa Maria della Strada.



The sisters arrived just one year before the start of the Great War and in both 1914 and 1915, the little community experienced the effects of the heavy bombardment of the south coast of England. *On the 16th of May there was an air raid at Ramsgate; bombs were dropped and damage was done; a few lives were lost. We were awakened by heavy firing of guns which shook the house.... The Zeppelins passed over North Foreland on their way to London. ... On 31st we were once more called out of our sleep by the firing of heavy guns and every door and window in the house rattled most violently. Our grand expanse of sea is decked with various kinds of battle ships, and we see hundreds of soldiers marching to and fro between Ramsgate and Margate.* (FCJ Annals 1915).

[Read](#) more about the history of the FCJs in Thanet.

From 1980 to 2012 the tomb of the Foundress of the Faithful Companions of Jesus, Marie Madeleine Victoire de Bengy de Bonnault d'Houët, was in the chapel at Stella Maris.



The plaque reads:

*Venerable Marie Madeleine Victoire de Bengy de Bonnault d'Houët,
21 September 1781 – 5 April 1858
Foundress
Faithful Companions of Jesus
'le bon Dieu a tout conduit lui-même'*

Venerable Marie Madeleine is now [interred at the Church of St Dominique](#) in Paris.



“ La nostra piccola Società ha come fine di glorificare il cuore di Gesù con ogni mezzo in suo potere. ”

Marie Madeleine d'Houët

Fedeli Compagne di Gesù

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