

Family at Christmas



Christmas is a time of coming together, meeting up with neglected friends, cherishing our time with family and friends. Rev. Mother Scholastica Somers, 2nd Superior General, had lost her parents and older brother, by the age of 8. She was left orphaned with her younger sister, Margaret, Rev. Mother Benedicta Somers and brother Frances. These three formed a tightly knit family unit, their closeness was to remain throughout their lives. Frances, suffering from ill-health returned to Ireland from Italy, and resided in Gorey, Co. Wexford, in close proximity to his beloved sister Rev. Mother Benedicta, foundress of Loreto Gorey.

Frances Somers was a frequent correspondent with his sister, M. Scholastica, and wrote to her on Christmas Day 1849. Although weak from continuous ill health, he was determined that his Christmas day greeting should be completed in time for the Christmas day post.

“This was a very beautiful Christmas day”, he wrote. It had been his great joy, to be allowed the rare privilege of having his breakfast at Loreto Abbey Gorey. This was a rare, if not, unknown privilege for seculars. He had ‘the happy privilege of assisting at last mass by the side of our beloved Margaret [Rev Mother Benedicta Somers] in the nuns choir.’ He had planned to dine with his ‘beloved’ sister in the convent, but on hearing on Christmas Eve, a matter of ‘deep disgrace to Gorey’, that the town’s ‘clergymen were not engaged anywhere for their Christmas dinner’, he invited them to dine instead with him.

His sacrifice in remembering others less fortunate than himself is all the more remarkable, when one considers that it was to be his last Christmas on earth, a fact he was all too aware of. He died five months later, in May 1850.

