
A short history of FMDM beginning in St. Mary of the Angels, Beaufort, Killarney, Co. Kerry

by Sr. Colmcille Sheils FMDM

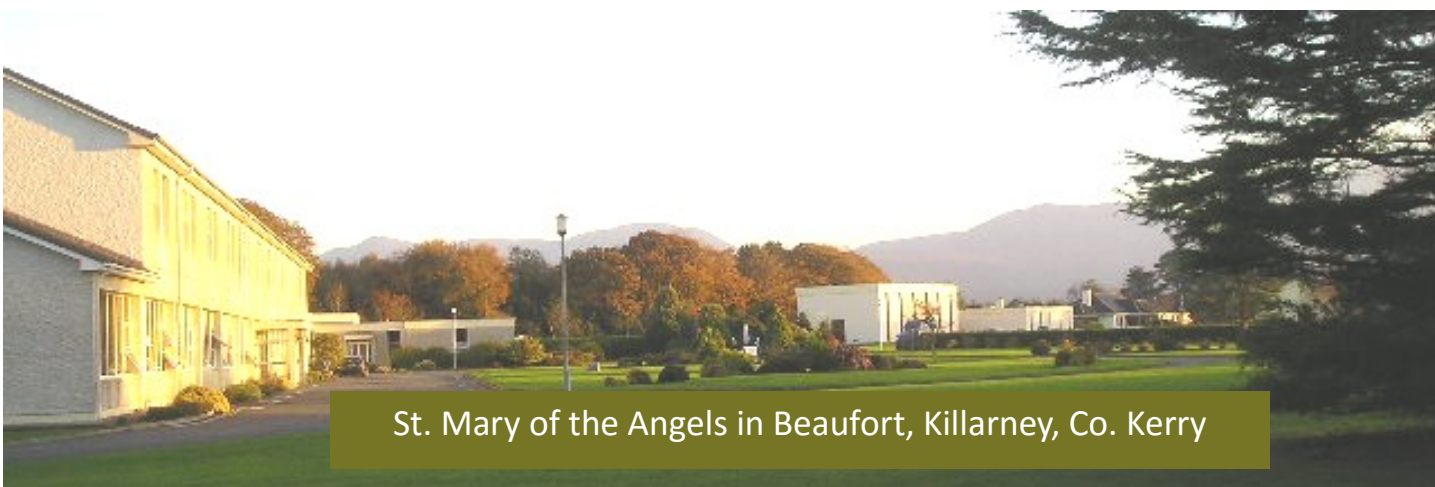
Sr. Colm Sheils—Administrator



The beginnings of St. Mary of the Angels, are in some way like a fairy tale. With the vocation of Mary Rose Doyle to the FMDM Congregation, and the death of her parents, Denis and Mary Doyle, they in a unique way, were instrumental in the Franciscan Sisters coming to Beaufort, and setting up a Home for the mentally handicapped children.

In 1966, the Franciscan Sisters came to Whitefield, Beaufort. When they first came to Kerry, their intention was to set up a home for the elderly, but on the advice of the Bishop of Kerry, it was felt that there was a greater need for a home for the mentally handicapped children. On 26 October 1966, with the support of the Congregation, and the wonderful generosity of the people of Kerry, Bishop Moynihan laid the foundation stone for the building, now known as St. Mary of the Angels.

In 1968, a 60-bed residential facility was officially opened, for children with varying degrees of disability. At that time, it was, and for many years to come, the only such residential facility in Kerry.



From small beginnings, St. Mary of the Angels' services continued to grow and over the years with greater needs for services both, residential, day, and respite. The numbers of children in residential care increased to 100, with additional boys and girls attending St. Francis Special School, so as a result new facilities were required to meet the demands, and these included the following:

- ◆ St. Austins/Maria Goretti: new residential facility.
- ◆ Oak Tree Lodge: Day Activation Centre
- ◆ Hydrotherapy Pool, gym, and physiotherapy department.
- ◆ 3 bungalows
- ◆ Caherciveen Day Centre
- ◆ Listowel Day Centre
- ◆ St. Francis School
- ◆ Woodview Centre
- ◆ St. Clares
- ◆ Community Based Outreach Programme Centre
- ◆ A Board of Directors and Executive Team established
- ◆ Members of the Federation of Voluntary Bodies Services

Towards the end of the 1998/2000 period, we witnessed many changes, namely membership of the Federation of Voluntary Bodies, which worked closely with the Department of Health. The celebration of the Silver Jubilee of St. Mary of the Angels, was also a very special and memorable occasion for us.

During the early 2000, a process of discernment with the Sisters, staff and Board members, was undertaken regarding the future of St. Mary of the Angels, as to how best we could transfer ownership of the Home, due to lack of sufficient FMDM Sisters.

After many negotiations, and much soul searching, St. Mary of the Angels was finally transferred to the St. John of God Brothers Services in 2005, with 150 adults and 81 children using our services at that time. Thus ending a golden era of great love, care, and the wonderful generosity of Denis and Mary Doyle RIP, who gave their home and property, the FMDM Sisters, our staff, families and the people of Kerry, who supported us right from the beginning. The first group of Sisters to leave St. Mary of the Angels for the new Franciscan Convent, Ballinasloe took place in 2004/5. The remaining 3 Sisters moved to a new Community at Sancta Chiara, St. Margaret's Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry in 2005.

The Community at St. Mary of the Angels



St. Mary of the Angels
Beaufort, Killarney, Co. Kerry