

FATHER DANIEL O'DALY

(Corpo-Santo — Lisbon)

(Contributed by Mrs Ernest Watson)

The Corpo Santo church in Lisbon has always been closely associated ever since its erection with the Irish Catholic community, a fact which is generally taken for granted. What is not so widely known perhaps is the history of Father Daniel O'Daly, better known in his time as Father Dominic of the Rosary, whose tomb, covered by a marble slab, is the one and only tomb in the cloisters of that church. It carries the following inscription :

Hic jacet
 Venerabilis Pater Magister
 Frater Dominicus de Rosario Hibernus
 Hujus et Conventus Monialium Boni Successus
 Fundator
 In variis Regum Legationibus felix
 Episcopus Conimbricensis Electus
 Vir. Prudentia Literis et Religione conspicuus
 Obiit 30 Junii, Anno Domini 1662
 Aetatis 67.

Born in County Kerry about the year 1595, he left Ireland as a youth and joined the Dominican Order, making his profession at Lugo in Spain and thereafter completing his studies at Burgos. Following his ordination he taught a course of philosophy and theology at Bordeaux, then returned to Ireland

for missionary work, only to go back to the continent in charge of the newly-founded college at Louvain. A visit to Madrid on college business brought him to the notice of Philip IV who received him so favourably that he ventured to press upon the monarch the advisability of founding a college of the Order in Lisbon, then, it will be remembered, under Spanish rule.

When he reached Lisbon Father O'Daly found but two Dominican Fathers living there together, but ere long, aided by the Archbishop of Lisbon, he obtained a small house and, several students being sent thither from Ireland, it was named a college by the General of the Order, with Father O'Daly as its first rector.

In the following year Portugal threw off the yoke of Spain and Fr. O'Daly, whose entire work and interest now centred in Lisbon, remained with the new monarchy. He soon became the trusted friend of both King and Queen, being sent as Ambassador to Louis XIV of France and remaining in Paris for over a year. Prior to this mission he had been employed on affairs of State during the secret negotiations between Charles I of England and Philip IV of Spain. In 1650 also, he had acted as go-between for Charles II of England, then in exile, and Pope Innocent X. It was shortly before his journey to Paris that Fr. O'Daly published his «History of the Geraldines». Written in Latin, it was published in Lisbon in 1655 and is a valuable contemporary record of the persecutions of the period.

Crown of his labours however was the founding of the College of Corpo Santo in 1659. Cromwellian persecution had driven most of the Dominicans to the Continent. Hence the small college in Lisbon was unable to accomodate all those who flocked to it, so that, relying on the sympathy of the Catholic people of Lisbon, a petition was handed to the Queen Regent asking that a new college on a much larger scale might be built. The request was granted, the foundation stone laid on the 4th May 1659, and the college soon completed.

There was however some difficulty in providing for the wants of the large community in the New College and for the still larger community of nuns in Bom Sucesso, the convent built at Belem in 1639 for forty Irish Dominican nuns, its

endowment being provided by a rich Portuguese lady, D. Irene de Brito, Countess of Atalaya. Fr. O'Daly was therefore persuaded by the Queen to accept the rich bishopric of Coimbra, in order that he might apply part of its revenues to the support of his brethren. He had previously refused this see, likewise that of Braga and the Archiepiscopal see of Goa, but now, to assist both College and Convent he accepted Coimbra, dying, unfortunately, before the time appointed for his consecration, on 30th June 1662.

He was buried in the cloisters of the College.

As built by Donna Lucia de Gusmão, at that time Queen Regent, the College stood in the Largo de Corte Real, its frontage and main door overlooking the Tagus being within the grounds of the court. On the foundation stone, laid with much pomp by the Bishop of Lamego, ran the inscription — in Portuguese — «Her Majesty Donna Lucia de Gusmão, Queen of Portugal founded this College dedicated to the Queen of the Holy Rosary and the Holy Patriarch St. Dominic, for the Irish Dominicans. May 4th. 1659».

The great earthquake of 1755 reduced the College to a heap of ruins, four of the Fathers being killed. Among others who were hurt was Father Charles O'Kelly, then regent of studies, who made up his mind to have the college rebuilt. He went to Rome to attend the general chapter, carrying with him commendatory letters from the Inquisition at Lisbon certifying that from its inception the college had been the source of nothing but good. Fr. O'Kelly was some time in Rome, obtaining an Apostolic brief from Benedict XIV, dated November 5th 1756 and addressed to all bishops of Spain and the Indies commending the work to their charity. Another appeal was issued by Pope Clement XIII in 1759. These appeals brought thousands of pounds from Spain and South America, while Fr. O'Kelly himself collected a certain amount in Ireland.

During the re-building the members of the community were housed in Rua Formosa at the royal expense. On the 13th October 1770, Dr. Burke, Bishop of Ossary, visited Lisbon and dedicated the Church of the new college for divine worship.

In all, the fabric is said to have cost £ 40,000. From Father O'Daly's time until the earthquake the college generally supported between twenty and thirty members. After this the community declined rapidly, firstly owing to the French occupation in 1807 and later on account of the civil wars and the suppression of religious houses in Portugal in 1833. In 1852 the General of the Order permitted the sale of part of Corpo Santo, provided sufficient room was left for twelve fathers. Much of the college was sold in 1856, the proceeds being applied to the purchase of a site for a new noviciate at Tallaght, Co. Dublin. In this college there is a splendid library of 8,000 volumes, gathered principally at Lisbon many years ago by Father Wiseman. There is also a valuable collection of oil paintings, most of which have been sent from Lisbon by Father Patrick Russell. It was he who bought the site for the new college and he always proved a firm friend and benefactor of the rising novices (1).

(1) Authorities referred to and used for extracts : —

O'HEYNES. *Irish Dominicans*.
História de S. Domingos. Quarta parte.