

Death Register of the Rouen Poor Clares 1647 - 1779
Edited by Caroline Bowden

Introduction

This document is a transcript of the original from the English Poor Clares founded in exile at Rouen in 1644. It is still kept by the present community and I am very grateful to the community for their interest in this project and for their permission to publish the text and images. My thanks are also due to Sue Lovell-Greene who transcribed with great care by over many months: this project would not have been possible without her input and also to Eddie Bohnert for his advice and support with the images. The notes and references are intended to allow readers to understand more about the context of the document. For the history of the convent, readers are referred to my edition of *Rouen Chronicle, Volumes I & II 1644-1780*.¹

Poor Clares.

The Order of Poor Clares was originally founded by Clare, sister of St Francis of Assisi on Palm Sunday 1212. Clare died in 1253 and was canonised in 1255. The Order of Poor Clares was originally a mendicant order based on Saint Clare's vows of total poverty and is now a global institution. The houses of English Poor Clares established in the seventeenth-century in exile were not permitted in their foundation agreements to beg for alms to support their convents in order to avoid creating a burden for the local population. Like the other English convent communities they relied for long-term financial support on dowries brought by candidates for profession. However, for the Poor Clares in keeping with their emphasis on observing "holy poverty" the dowries tended to be more modest, frequently varied by the abbesses according to family circumstances. Each convent was and still is autonomous having individual dress, work and liturgical practices outlined in their constitutions. Several versions of The Rule were published for the Rouen community, for instance, *The First Rule of the Glorious Virgin S. Clare*, (St Omer: Thomae Geubels, 1665).²

Poor Clares, Gravelines

The first English convent of Poor Clares at Gravelines owed its origin to Mary Ward who had left England to join the French Poor Clares of St Omer as a lay sister on the recommendation of her Jesuit advisors.³ Several explanations for Mary Ward's departure from the house have been put forward. The editors of the Gravelines Register explain that since Mary Ward did not have a dowry she was unable to become a choir nun. At the Poor Clares, lay sisters had external roles including begging in the streets to support the community, a role Mary Ward found difficult because it was not the kind of religious life she sought. She heard of some land becoming available at Gravelines and persuaded the Jesuits to obtain it in order to establish a convent for English nuns. However, although Mary Ward was successful in obtaining all the necessary permits for the foundation of the new convent, she decided to leave to follow a calling to create a totally different way of religious life for women based on a Jesuit model. It became known as the Institute of Mary or Mary Ward Sisters.⁴ The convent at Gravelines flourished and became overcrowded so in 1625 the first Dunkirk house was started; in 1629 a new house was opened in Aire; followed by a third daughter house in Rouen in 1644. The mother house at Gravelines continued to attract candidates remaining a substantial foundation.

¹ *English Convents in Exile 1600-1800*, 6 vols.; Vol. I, *History Writing, Rouen Chronicles, Vols I and II*, (London: Pickering and Chatto 2012).

² Both the 1658 and 1665 editions are available on Jisc Historic Texts.

³ <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-28699>

⁴ A number of histories of this early period have been written: see, for example Susan O'Brien's ODNB Life of Mary Ward (above), and Sister Christina Kenworth-Brown's (ed.), *Mary Ward, 1585-1645. A Brief Relation with Autobiographical Fragments and a Selection of Letters*. The Catholic Record Society Publication, vol. 81 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008).



Eighteenth-century map of Rouen showing the convent of the English Poor Clares marked in red.

Poor Clares, Rouen

The convent in Rouen was known as the convent of Jesus-Mary-Joseph or "Gravelines" and was situated in Rue du Petit Maulevrier, just inside the city walls in the north of the city. (See Map) Sixteen nuns left Gravelines to make the new foundation which continued to attract members until the interruption caused by the French Revolution. On 30 March 1793 revolutionary action started against the convent; on 2 October the convent was occupied and the nuns were instructed the next day to treat the premises as a prison. On 6 February 1794 the chapel was turned into a prisoners' dormitory. Finally the nuns were released on 16 January 1795 and a first group left for England on 1 July. After a brief stay in London they moved first to Haggerston Castle in Northumberland and then in 1807 to Scorton Hall near Catterick, Yorkshire, before moving to a newly built monastery at Darlington in 1857. In 2007, due to declining numbers, the remaining Sisters decided to amalgamate with the Poor Clares monastery at Much Birch, near Hereford.

Many of the manuscripts and books were deposited at Durham University Library Special Collections: MSS Reference Code GB-0033-PCD

http://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ark/32150_s1zs25x850k.xml#node.1.4.8.1 accessed 15 March 2019.

Books listed at:

<http://library.dur.ac.uk/search/?searchtype=c&searcharg=poorclares&searchscope=1&submit.x=10&submit.y=7> accessed 15 March 2019

Published primary sources from the Poor Clares in the exile period

Caroline Bowden, *English Convents in Exile 1600-1800*, Vol. I, *History Writing: Rouen Chronicle, Volumes I & II 1644-1780*, (London: Pickering and Chatto 2012 and 2013) Sections of the Gravelines Chronicle appear in *Life Writing I*, ed. Nicky Hallett, of Vol. 3 *English Convents in Exile 1600-1800*.

Gravelines Registers <https://emen.hypotheses.org/files/2018/10/Gravelines-Poor-Clares-Registers.pdf> accessed 15 March 2019

W. M. Hunnybun & J. Gillow, 'Registers of the English Poor Clares at Gravelines, 1608-1837', *Miscellanea*, Catholic Record Society 9 (1914), pp. 25-173.

A. B. [Alban Butler] *A short account of the life and virtues of the venerable and religious mother, Mary of the Holy Cross, [Talbot Howard] abbess of the English Poor Clares at Rouen*, (London: 1767)

Secondary Sources

Jaime Goodrich, "'Ensigne-Bearers of Saint Clare": Elizabeth Evelinge's Early Translations and the Restoration of English Franciscanism', in ed., Micheline White, *English Women, Religion, and Textual Production, 1500-1625*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011) pp. 83-100.

Jaime Goodrich, 'A Poor Clare's Legacy: Catherine Magdalen Evelyn and New Directions in Early Modern Women's Literary History,' *English Literary Renaissance* 46.1 (Winter 2016): pp. 3-28.

Caroline Bowden, 'Les Clarisses anglaises d'Aire-sur-la-Lys (1629-1799): stratégies d'une survie', *Etudes Franciscaines*, Nouvelle série, 5, 2012, fasc. 2, pp. 263-282.

Ann C M Forster, 'The Chronicles of the English Poor Clares of Rouen-I', *Recusant History*, 18 (1986-7), pp. 59-102.

Ann C M Forster, 'The Chronicles of the English Poor Clares of Rouen-II', *Recusant History*, 18/2 (Oct 1986), pp. 149-191. These articles contain substantial portions of the text of the Chronicles with modernised spelling.

Online resources

Database of the Who Were the Nuns? Project:

<https://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk/search/nsearch.php>

History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland: <https://historyofwomenreligious.org>

Glossary

The terms have been explained here as they applied to a Poor Clare Convent following the Council of Trent and so they are as close as possible to the uses here in this document. As far as possible they have been derived from the Rule and associated documents including, *The First Rule of the Glorious Virgin S. Clare*, (St Omer: Thomae Geubels, 1665)

Abbess: Poor Clare communities were governed by an abbess who was elected by secret ballot for life generally from the existing Discreets. She was required to excel in all aspects of monastic life and to lead by her exemplar life and behaviour. The Abbess was to be obeyed without question in all aspects of the life of the convent.

Active/contemplative- although the nuns were cloistered at all times, there were elements of both an active and contemplative life in the tradition of the Biblical characters Martha and Mary of Bethany taken as models of religious women. The active tasks were undertaken mainly by lay sisters ensured the maintenance of the convent: they included cleaning, cooking, caring for other sisters, as well as whatever enterprise each convent undertook to make a living. The contemplative elements of the religious life were prayer, meditation upon the word of God and reading and were the role of the choir sisters. For further details see Claire Walker, 'Combining Martha and Mary: Gender and Work in Seventeenth -Century English Cloisters', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30.2 (1999): 397-418.

Cellaress: was responsible for all food and drink in the convent including the Father's house, preparation, keeping, purchasing etc.

Chantress: was required to be fluent in Latin and in plain chant. She was responsible for the performance of the liturgy, selecting music, choosing cantors and readers, supervising singing practices and ensuring all the correct books are in place and in good order.

Choir nun: the heart of the community. She brought a substantial dowry before profession, although these were lower for Poor Clares. They had their origins as mendicant communities and emphasised poverty at the core of their religious life. Choir nuns could vote in all convent elections and on business matters. They had to know sufficient Latin in order to perform the Office.

Discreet/Dean: were senior members of the convent either elected or appointed to manage the convent and assist the Mother Superior. 'These Discreets are to be of eminent wisdom, singular prudence, exemplary conversation, and commendable in all'. They acted as auditors of the annual accounts of the convent.

Dispenser: supervised all the household affairs regarding the kitchen, ordering and disposing of all provisions brought in by the Portress. Had to see to the particular needs for the seasons of Lent and Advent. She must have great regard for holy poverty and ensure there is no waste. She must see that all the meals are on time according to the day of the week and season. Must provide any special diets needed for the sick.

Divine Office: the Liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church found in the Breviary and recited in its entirety by cloistered communities in the Choir or Quire. All convents for women followed the Roman Rite as decreed by the Council of Trent, although there were variations in the pattern of the day and night between the different Orders.

Grate sister: also known as Portress who acted as guardian of access to the cloister, making sure that only those with special permits could enter the enclosure and that time spent in the speak house was monitored to avoid gossip and social gatherings. The grate or grille sealed the aperture in the wall where lay people came to talk to members of the community.

Infirmarian, Sick Mother, Dispenser, Apothecary: all were nuns involved in managing the infirmary and care for the sick sisters of the community. Mostly they were choir nuns, but occasionally lay sisters with particular skills might serve in these capacities. Doctors were called for serious illness or when infectious diseases such as smallpox were suspected.

Jubilees: celebrated 50 years of profession or occasionally to celebrate foundations.

Lay or converse sister: served the convent by carrying out practical work and brought a much lower dowry than a choir sister. She could not vote on most matters, but did have recourse to Mother Abbess to discuss private problems.

Novice Mistress: The nun responsible for implementing the education and daily routine of the Novices. It was considered to be a senior role in the convent as she played such an important role in setting standards for the community. The Mistress of Novices must teach those in her care the practice and ceremonies of a religious state, instruct them in the method of mental and vocal prayer and in the exercises of humility, mortification and all other virtues. She was required to give a full account of all her charges to the Abbess four times a year and that is to include the physical, mental and spiritual development of each novice.

Novice: The period of novitiate was generally one year. It began with clothing when a candidate put on her monastic robes as a novice, having completed the examination when she vowed that she entered of her own freewill. Before proceeding to clothing, a candidate spent some time as a

Postulant living with the community to test her vocation. A candidate was required to be at least 16 before profession. Once clothed the novice spent the year under the Novice Mistress who taught her everything she would need to become a full member of the community.

Pentioner or boarder: a number of convents permitted lodgers, generally quiet respectable devout widows to live on convent premises in return for contributions to convent expenses. The Poor Clares tended to have fewer lodgers than other communities, and they were probably already connected to the convent in some way. The Rouen Chronicles describe the arrival of a number of English exiles following anti-Catholic actions at the time of the Popish Plot 1678-1681.⁵

Portress: one of the three key officers of the convent. The Portress was the conduit for all communication with the outside world. According to the Rule, she spent the day in an open cell without a door in order to keep guard of the entrance gate. She was one of the Discreets responsible for securing the sanctity of the enclosure. The doors were locked with two separate locks each with their own keys. Only workmen or medical men were allowed into the enclosure or visitors who had received special permission from the bishop.

Procuratrix/Procuratress: A nun chosen to manage the convent finances and accounts in consort with the Arcaria, Prioress and Subprioress. The Procuratrix was responsible for securing funds from benefactors, dowries from the parents and guardians of professed nuns, and interest accrued from investments or rents. She was also responsible for keeping accounts and reporting everything to the Prioress. She was also required to take as much care as she could with her spiritual life.

Rites for the dying: Following the exact ritual was important with the Confessor sent for at the appropriate moment. The sacrament of Extreme Unction (Holy Oils) was meant to help and comfort the dying sister. The *viaticum* was Holy Communion for the dying: literally food for the journey. Last rites were given to the dying by a priest who heard the person's final confession and then anointed them with oil. It was important that the dying person was conscious of receiving the sacrament and rites. Obits comment if part of the ritual could not be performed.

Sacristan: has full responsibility for the church. She would prepare the necessary items for the Mass to be celebrated by the priest. She was responsible for the candles, flowers in the chapel and for laying out the vestments worn by the priest, the linens placed on the altar, as well as setting out the communion hosts and wine. Also responsible for seeing that everything including the silver was kept in good order and repaired.

Tourriers - Tourrieres: lived outside the convent and looked after external tasks for the convent including making arrangements locally. They were not professed nuns; however, several Tourriers at Rouen served the convent so well and displayed such an interest in the religious life that they were known as 'Sister' in the Chronicle and were later professed.

Vicaress: at the Poor Clares was second in authority to the abbess. She served on the council with other discreets: it was an elected position for three years which could be renewed. One of her tasks was to organise the election of the abbess when there was a vacancy including writing out the ballot papers.

⁵ See *Rouen Chronicles Vol. 1*, Chapter 38, p.301.

Notes on the text

The Register of Deaths at Rouen 1647 – 1779 is still in the possession of the Community at Much Birch who have kindly given permission for it to be transcribed and made available here. The text, up to her death in 1736, can be attributed to one scribe (Cecily Joseph Cornwallis); however afterwards the scribe changed approximately every 2 years concluding with a substantial final entry for Abbess Margaret Teresa Vavasour in 1779. The obituaries serve to record the lives of every member of the community and were generally read to the whole community on the occasion of the anniversary of their death. The lives of earlier members in that way became part of the living history of the community.

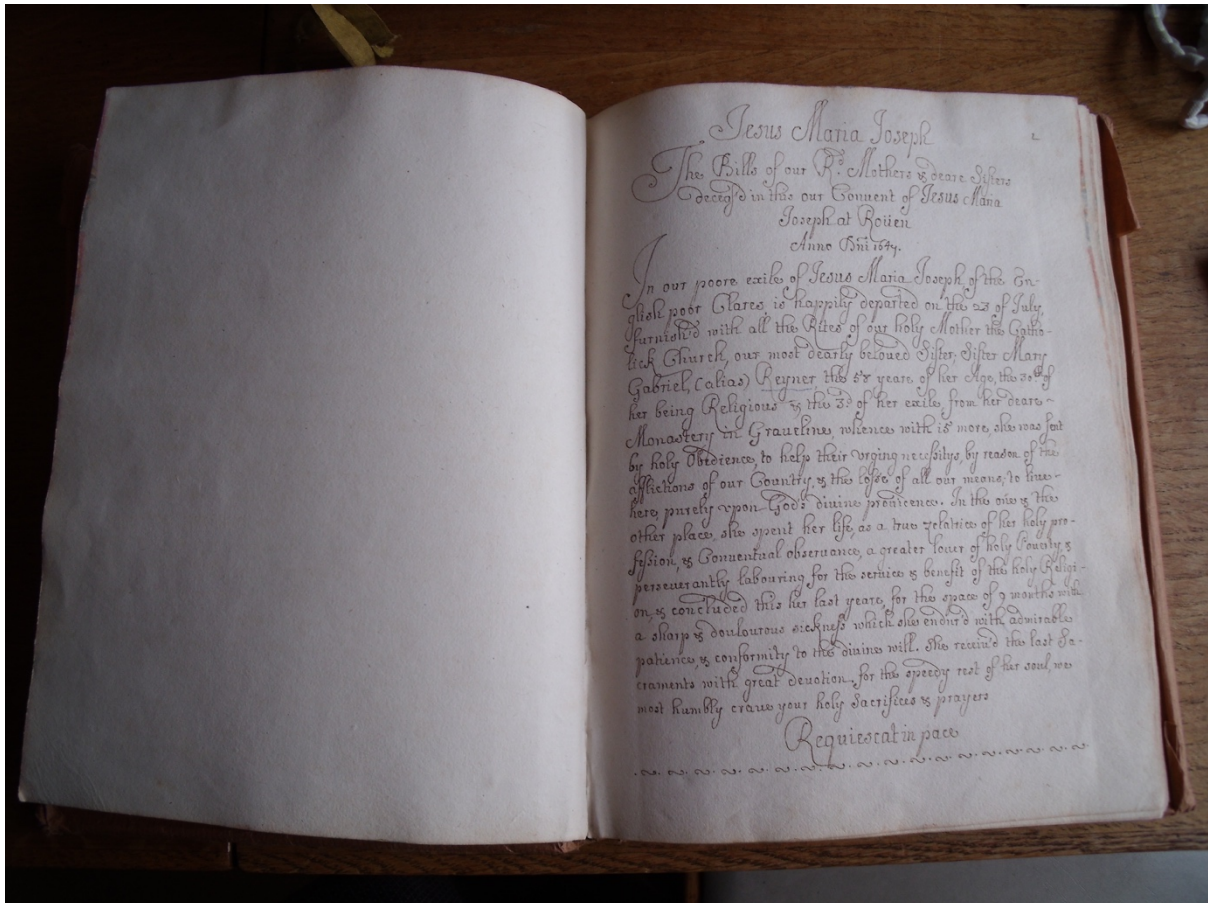
Minimal editorial intervention has been applied to the text. Small adjustments to the punctuation have been made in order to clarify meaning. All contractions have been silently expanded and archaisms such as *ys*, *ym*, *w^{ch}* or *wⁿ* have been modernised and expanded; otherwise the spelling is as in the original. Corrections and deletions have been placed in the text where they appear. Several scribes used capitals heavily, and in such cases the number has been reduced. Capitals have been retained for religious titles such as Mother, Sister and Brother in order to distinguish them from blood relatives. Underlining appears as given in the original.

Annotations are used to identify individuals, religious customs and terminology and to explain obscurities in the text. References to nuns give the Who were the Nuns? database identifying number and baptismal name. Biblical references are taken from the online version of the Douay-Rheims bible.

These obituaries follow their own pattern established at Rouen: each of the English communities developed its own way of recording the lives of its members. In some convents (as at the English Convent, Bruges) they are incorporated into the Chronicles, in others they follow the record of a candidate's profession. Here, at Rouen, they are separate in a book entitled in the archives pragmatically the "death register". Most of the entries interpret lives carefully and determinedly following the Rule. However, within this formula there are infinite variations. The other strongly represented element at Rouen is the individual's response to suffering through illness and their approaching death. By contrast to "obits" from other communities we learn little of individual skills and talents beyond the occasional reference to a "special talent for singing" or for making medicines.

Caroline Bowden,
Senior Research Fellow
School of History
Queen Mary University of London
March 2019

The text



(Opening 1- hand of Cecily Cornwallis)

<p.1>

Jesus Maria Joseph
The bills of our Reverend Mothers & deare Sisters
deceas'd in this our convent of Jesus Maria
Joseph at Rouen
Anno Domini 1647

In our poore exile of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, is happily departed on the 23 of July, furnished with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, our most dearly beloved Sister; Sister Mary Gabriel, (alias) Reyner,⁶ the 58 year of her Age, the 30th of her being Religious & the 3^d of her exile from her deare Monastery in Gravelines, whence with 15 more, she was sent by holy Obedience, to help their urging necessitys, by reason of the afflictions of our Country & the losse of all our means; to live here, purely upon God's divine providence.⁷ In the one & the other place, she spent her life, as a true zelatrice of her holy profession, & Conventual observance, a greater lover of holy Poverty & perseverantly labouring for the service & benefit of the holy Religion, & concluded this her last yeare, for the space of 9 months with a sharp & doulourous sickness which she endur'd with admirable patience, & conformity to the divine will. She receiv'd the last Sacraments with great devotion for the speedy rest of her soul, we most humbly crave your holy sacrifices & prayers

Requiescat in pace

<p.2>

Anno Domini 1650

⁶ Elizabeth Rayner (1618 – 1647), GP237

⁷ Sixteen nuns, led by Mary of St Francis Taylor, GP264, were sent from Gravelines in 1644 to establish the convent at Rouen to ease over crowding in the original foundation.

In the refuge of the English Poor Clares in Normandy is happily departed this mortall life, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Elinor Bradshaigh⁸ (alias) Sister Cicely Francis, on the 12th of August the 27 of her age, the 11th of her being religious & the 6th of her exile from our deare monastery in Graveline; She was a true, singular & constant example of all religious observance, & the love of her holy profession, very perticular in holy obedience, holy poverty, & prayer, in all conserving her first innocency, piety, & fervour to the edification of all. She render'd her soul, strengthen'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, with the same sweetness, & tranquility she had still lived in; for the full release of what humane frailty may have contracted, we humbly crave your holy sacrifices & prayers of charity

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1656*

In our convent of the English poor Clares in Roüen, is most happily departed this life, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July strengthen'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Magdalen, (alias) Paterson,<sup>9</sup> the 40<sup>th</sup> yeare of her age, the 12<sup>th</sup> of her exile from her deare monastery in Graveline & the 21 of her holy profession, in which as Almighty God, had from the beginning given her a singular grace, highly to esteem all that is for his holy service & honour, so did she faithfully cooperate, till the last moment in innocency & purity of hart, most exact regularity in all whatsoever was her holy rule, the practise of conventual observances,

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& her perticular obedience, assiduous in holy prayer, sweet in conversation, with humility & love serving her sisters, & tho' of a weak little body, she indispensably underwent the rigour of all observances, till her last sickness, which she endur'd with most exemplar patience, resignation & with the mildness, & sweetness she practis'd all her life, for what may yet in her soul remaine to be purify'd, we most humbly crave your holy suffrages, & prayers of charity

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1658

In our convent of the English poor Clares in Roüen is happily departed this life, on the last of March, strengthen'd with the rites of our holy Mother, the Catholick Church, our most deare sister; Sister Lucy Clare (alias) Perkins¹⁰ the 55 of her Age, & 39 of her being religious, & 14th of her exile, from her deare monastery of Graveline; she was a singular lover of her holy vocation, of holy poverty, of obedience & austerity of life, which she still express'd in her humble labours, patient sufferance of sickness, & cruell pains, with a perfect conformity to the divine will, & constant fidelity, to all she conceiv'd pleasing to God & the service of the holy religion; for the perfect repose of her soul, we humbly crave the assistance of your holy sacrifices & prayers.

Requiescat in pace

⁸ Ellenor Bradshaigh (1640 – 1650), Lancs. GP046

⁹ Mary Paterson (1636 – 1656), GP211

¹⁰ Ann Perkins (1620 – 1658), GP214



Mother Mary Francis Taylor, Abbess Rouen 1644-1658

Anno Domini 1658

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, the 8th of December, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of our blessed Lady, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, is most happily departed, amidst the teares, & prayers of her afflicted children; our first most venerable

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& dearly beloved Mother Abbess, Sister Mary Francis, (alias) Taylor,¹¹ the 62 yeare of her age, & 45 of her entry into religion; After having lived with great edification in our convent of Graveline; being there Mistress of the Novices 7 yeare, & Vicaress¹² 18, was by vertue of holy obedience, sent for the release of that poor house, with 14 other religious to this town of Roüen, entirely depending on God's providence, & theron repos'd as a firm pillar, by the help of which, she establish'd to the wonder of the world, this little convent, & was our first Foundress¹³; not only for the temporall fabrick, but for our best foundation in all true & solid vertue, in the zeal of which she consum'd all her corporall forces, & spent herself till the last moment of her life, wherin she sustain'd many long & painfull sicknesses, &

¹¹ Mary Taylor (1614 – 1658), GP264

¹² Vicaress: at the Poor Clares was second in authority to the abbess. She served on the council with other discreet: it was an elected position for three years which could be renewed. One of her tasks was to organise the election of the abbess when there was a vacancy including writing out the ballot papers.

¹³ Mary of St Francis Taylor led the group of nuns from Gravelines in 1644.

these last two yeare was a continall sickness full of dolours,¹⁴ pains, disgust of all food, without being able to taste anything, to refresh or sustain nature, which consum'd, & dry'd up her body & bowells like to a carkass, without flesh or moisture, all which she underwent with admirable patience, & conformity to the divine will; still thirsting to be disolv'd, & be with Christ, rejoycing to see the wall of her body broken in peeces, she practis'd her self, & labour'd to instruct us, in all religious disciplines, love of holy poverty, desire of living unknown in this world, & the right understanding of eternal truths; she was extreemly devoted to the most holy sacrament of the Altar, & had a high esteem, & lively faith of all the mysterys of our holy religion; for the repose of whose soul we of charity, most humbly beg the assistance of your holy sacrifices & prayers

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1659*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph in Roüen departed this life furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church, on the 12<sup>th</sup>

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of November, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Beatrix Clare (alias) Petre<sup>15</sup> the 15<sup>th</sup> week of her noviship,<sup>16</sup> & the 17<sup>th</sup> yeare of her age, by her maturity & her solidity in the practise of vertue, we may say she compleated many years in a small time, & gain'd the crown of long labours & altho her fervent love to God, & entire conformity to his most blessed will, both in life & death, giveth us evident marks of her present happiness, yet the divine judgments being unknown to us, we humbly crave for the repose of her soul, your holy sacrifices & prayers of charity

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1659

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph, of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 10th of December most happily departed this life, strengthen'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, our venerable & dearly beloved sister, Sister Magdalen Clare (alias) Browne,¹⁷ the 57 yeare of her age, & 42 since her entrance into religion, wherof she spent 27 in our deare convent of Graveline, where she endur'd many painfull infirmitys, with singular patience, & underwent many hard labours, for the service of the holy religion, she pass'd the term of Dispenseer & Sick Mother, & since her comming to Roüen hath with indefatigable labour assisted in the care of the building this house, & been for 12 yeare Portress,¹⁸ she hath all her life suffer'd much with an infirm body, without ever attending unto it, or sparing herself from the exercises of the holy religion, being a great lover & practiser of austerity, holy poverty, & zeal of her holy profession; for what may yet remaine in her soule to be purify'd, we most humbly beg, the assistance of your holy sacrifices & prayers of charity

Requiescat in pace

<p.6>

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*Anno Domini 1662*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poore Clares in Roüen is happily departed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Elizabeth Peter (alias) Salisbury,<sup>19</sup> the 64 yeare of her age, & 36 of her holy profession, wherof she spent 19 in our deare convent in Graveline, & both there & here, hath left singular examples of vertue, a great zeal of her holy profession, a strict observance of holy poverty, & an exact fidelity to the last, of every least ceremony of the holy religion, praising God with great

<sup>14</sup> painful grief; from Latin *dolēre*-to grieve

<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Petre, Essex, died novice, RP212

<sup>16</sup> The period of novitiate was generally one year. It began with clothing when a candidate put on her monastic robes as a novice, having completed the examination when she vowed that she entered of her own freewill. A candidate was required to be at least 16. She spent the year under the Novice Mistress who taught her everything she would need to become a full member of the community.

<sup>17</sup> Magdaline Browne (1619 – 1659), Oxon., GP051

<sup>18</sup> Portress: one of the three key officers of the convent. She spent the day in an open cell without a door in order to keep guard of the entrance gate. One of the discreets responsible for securing the sanctity of the enclosure. The doors were locked with two separate locks each with their own keys. Only workmen allowed into the enclosure or visitors who had received special permission.

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Salisbury (1626 – 1661), GP245

fervour & affection, night & day, without exemption or consideration of her little & weak body, which by the alacrity of her mind, made her also pass with great joy all the austerities of our holy rule & bore this her last long, & painful sickness with singular patience, & conformity to the will of God, insatiably longing to be dissolv'd & united to her heavenly spouse, yet the secret judgments of God being unknowne to us, makes us humbly crave the assistance of your holy sacrifices & prayers of charity

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1664

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poore Clares in Rouen is happily departed this life the 5th of October furnish'd with all the rites of our Mother the holy Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Francis Joseph, (alias) Simons²⁰ the 36 of her age, & of her profession 18, wherein she hath left us great examples of vertue, & of the love of her holy profession, with a great conformity to the divine will, in a continuall lingring consumption,

<p.7>

which she supported without complaint, & with an extraordinary courage for many years, and in a continuall preparation for her last end, & in this her long & painful sickness, hath given us great edification, by her humble submission, resignation, & confidence in God, we humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul, to your holy sacrifices, & prayers of charity

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1666*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poore Clares in Rouen, the 24 of January is happily departed this life, our deare sister, Sister Catherin Magdalen (alias) Boork,<sup>21</sup> of the Irish nation, who made her profession in her own country & since hath undergone many great afflictions, caus'd by the warrs which oblig'd all the community to depart from their convent of Bethlehem,<sup>22</sup> & were afterwards dispers'd, but this Sister, with 6 more & the Superiour went into Spaine, in hopes to have gotten a Convent to enclose themselves, & all the rest, but not finding the success they desir'd, neither in Spaine, nor in the low countrys, came into France where they lived 9 years in a secular house in the town of Diepe in Normandy, where this poor sister fell into a consumption which she endur'd for 4 years, & suffer'd very much, yet never omitted to come to the Quire with the rest, & was alwaies faithfull to perform all the dutys she was able both to God, & the holy Religion, & this fidelity we are confident hath purchac'd her many graces from God, & also that which she most desir'd, & perseverantly pray'd for, which was to dye & be buried in a Religious house which was granted her by Gods speciall & admirable providence for

<p.8>

making sute to this poor Convent, God moved the whole Community to so much pity, that they willingly admitted her about 3 months before her death, in which time, she hath given us very singular examples of sweetness in her most painful sickness, patience & great gratitude for the benefit receiv'd, she was singularly devoted to the most holy Sacrament & to our blessed Lady & made a most devout, & comfortable end of her pilgrimage in this world, the 40<sup>th</sup> yeare of her age, & the 22 of her Profession, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, & for the speedy rest of her soul, we humbly crave your holy suffrages & prayers of charity

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1667

²⁰ Margaret Simeon (1647 – 1664), Oxon., RP161

²¹ Catherine Boork, professed at Bethlem, Ireland, RP028

²² The Poor Clare convent, known as Bethlehem near Athlone, was attacked and destroyed in 1642 by Protestant troops in the Anglo-Irish wars and the nuns who had not already left to join the community at Galway were forced to flee. See, <https://www.poorclares.ie/our-lady-of-bethlehem-athlone-madonna> accessed Feb 14 2019. The website quotes the account by Mother Bonaventure Browne. For further details about the Poor Clares in Ireland, see Helena Concannon, *The Poor Clares in Ireland*, (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, 1929).

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën, is happily departed this life, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Anne Clare (alias) Yates,²³ on the 24 of January, the 65 of her age, & 47 of her holy Profession which she made in our deare Convent of Graveline, & was sent forth by holy Obedience for the beginning of this where she hath given great edification by her Religious comportments, singular sweetness, piety & devotion, wherin she was most exemplar, & even in this her last & painfull sickness, ended her life with great patience, & an entire conformity to the divine will. We most humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul, to your holy sacrifices & prayers of Charity

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1668*

In our convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor  
<p.9>

Clares in Rouën, strengthen'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Anne Wood<sup>24</sup> (alias) Sister Anne Collet, the 51 of her age, & 15 of her being Religious, wherin she spent her life, in indefatigable labour, having alwaies a great, & singular zeal of the good of the holy Religion perticularly in the practise of holy poverty & therefore never spar'd herself in any thing that might be serviceable to the house, notwithstanding she was troubl'd with divers infirmitys, before she was Religious she had to the great edification of the world serv'd without the monastery as Tourriere,<sup>25</sup> the space of 14 yeare, during all which time she testify'd her love to God, & fidelity to the holy Religion enduring much toylsome labour, hard, & dificile things, which were occasion'd by our being strangers, & new beginners in this towne. In all occurrences whatsoever, she shew'd a great conformity to the divine will, receiving all crosses as coming from the hands of the divine providence; & finally she happily consummated her course by embracing with all joy, willingnes, & promptitude her last Obedience which was to tend those that had the plague, of which she dy'd, giving her life most courageously for the love of God, & the service of the holy Religion we most humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul to your holy sacrifices & prayers of charity

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1669

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën, is most happily departed this life, strengthen'd with the rites of our holy mother the Catholick Church ^{the 29th of Oct} our Venerable Mother Jubilarian,²⁶ Sister Anne Raphael, (alias) Prow,²⁷ the 81 of her
<p.10>

age & 53 of her being Religious, of which she spent 27 yeares in our dear Convent of Graveline in indefatigable labours for the service of the holy Religion, & both there, & here was most faithfull & exemplar in the observance of all Religious & regular disciplin, & when her forces were by her great age, & Religious dutys exhausted; she spent the residue of her life in continuall prayer, & suffer'd for a long time most painful infirmitys, & continuall dolours, & finish'd her course with a lingring, & sharp sickness, which she endur'd with singular patience to the edification of us all, we most humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul to your holy sacrifices & prayers of charity

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1670*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën, the 6<sup>th</sup> of March is most happily departed this life, our most venerable and dear Mother Abbess, Sister Margaret Ignatious (alias) Bedingfield,<sup>28</sup> the 66 yeare of her age & 46 of her holy profession, twenty of which she praisably & exemplarly lived in our Convent of Gravelines, & from thence was sent by holy

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<sup>23</sup> Anne Yates (1621 – 1667), Berks., GP299

<sup>24</sup> Anne Wood (1655 – 1668), RP208

<sup>25</sup> Tourriers or Thouriers: lived outside the convent and were not professed nuns. However several Tourriers at Rouen served the convent so well and displayed such an interest in the religious life that they were known as 'Sister' in the Chronicle and were later professed.

<sup>26</sup> Jubilees celebrated 50 yeares in the convent as a professed nun.

<sup>27</sup> Ann Prow (1618 – 1671), GP229

<sup>28</sup> Margaret Bedingfield (1624 – 1670), GP027

obedience with 14 others to begin this our monastery at Roüen, the year 1644, & was chosen Vicaress<sup>29</sup> in the same year, for the assistance of our Venerable Mother Foundress, after whose death she was canonically chosen Abbess which charge she exercis'd eleven yeare in the practise of all vertues sutable therunto, her charity & compassion of others was singular, that we may say of her as of holy Job,<sup>30</sup> that mercy had grown with her from her infancy, she being continually solicitous how to do good to every one, & to comfort those she saw afflicted, by resigning them sweetly to the divine will, of which

<p.11>

she gave us all such great examples in her own person in all the accidents of this life, that she had as it were naturalized herself therunto, so perfectly that she wou'd often say in occasions that she cou'd find no opposition to any sufferance, all coming from the hand of God, & allwaies had these words in her mouth, his blessed will be for ever done; the like may be said of her humility, & singular neglect of herself, with a perfect disengagement from all things of this world, Infine all vertues in her seem'd to be practis'd in a manner above the common, which gives us great hopes of her present happiness altho her death was very sudden & unforeseen; so she was depriv'd of the benefit of the last Sacrament, but had been that very morning at the holy communion. We most humbly crave for her deare soul the assistance of your holy suffrages & prayers of charity.

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1670

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 8th of October is most happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary of Nazareth (alias) Mascy³¹ the 26 yeare of her age, & 8 of her holy profession; She was endu'd with vertues which render'd her both pleasing to God, & of great example & edification to the Community; as an extraordinary prompt obedience, to the least sign or will of her superiour, a singular sweetness & humble behaviour in her conversation, most exact in the very least ceremony of religion, a serious application of herself to whatsoever she conceiv'd wou'd make her most pleasing in the eyes of her heavenly

<p.12>

spouse, to which was joyn'd an inexplicable, tender love & devotion to our blessed Lady, & in her last sickness left us most singular examples of her piety, in consuming herself with continual acts of love, & resignation to the divine will, bearing her pains which were very great, with an admirable patience, & courage to the last, when her forces being wholly exhausted, she sweetly render'd up her soul, into the hands of her creatour, for the speedy repose of which, we humbly crave the assistance of your holy sacrifices & prayers.

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1672*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, is most happily <sup>departed</sup> this life, furnish'd with all the rights of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Beatrix Clare, (alias) Mawson,<sup>32</sup> the 28<sup>th</sup> yeare of her age & the 4<sup>th</sup> since her entrance into the holy Religion in which short time she hath compleated the merit of longer years by her constant fervour, & exact observance of all Religious dutys, perticularly in the love of holy poverty, & the neglect of her self & bore the sufferings of a long & languishing infirmity, with so great courage that she was never heard to complaine of any thing she suffer'd, ever making appeare a most sweet resignation to all God's holy wills, & wou'd alwaies say she desir'd nothing in this world, but the entire accomplishment therof, & in her last sickness, which tho' short was very painfull, hath left us great examples of her singular patience & sweetness. Yet least humane frailty may have contracted some spot that may retard her happyness, we most humbly beg the assistance

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<sup>29</sup> Vicaress: at the Poor Clares was second in authority to the abbess. She served on the council with other discreets: it was an elected position for three years which could be renewed. One of her tasks was to organise the election of the abbess when there was a vacancy including writing out the ballot papers.

<sup>30</sup> Job – from the Book of Job is the epitome of perseverance in suffering.

<sup>31</sup> Dorothy Mascy (1662 – 1670), Lancs., RP120

<sup>32</sup> Helen Mawson (1669 – 1672), RP125

of your holy prayers, & suffrages of charity

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1672

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën, the 20th of February, is most happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church, our most dearly beloved sister, Sister Francis Clare (alias) Hone³³ the 70th year of her age, & forty three since her entrance into religion, 15 of which she spent most exemplarily in our Convent of Gravelines, in indefatigable labours for the holy Religion, & from thence was sent by obedience with 14 others in the year 1644 to begin this monastery, for the best establishment of which, she ever applied herself with a constant zeale, to the last moment of her life & as God had from the first beginning prevented her with a singular grace in her Vocation, highly to esteem all that was to his holy service; so did she faithfully cooperate on her part to render herself in all things most pleasing to his Divine Majesty & hath left us most admirable examples of Obedience, a vertue she highly esteem'd, & would say it was the sure way to salvation her humility was no less exemplar which made her seek the worst & poorest of all things, being ever ready to take all faults upon herself & to excuse others, most sweet & mild in her conversation, charitable & compassionate of all, & in the sharp trials & sufferings both mind, & body wherewith it pleas'd God to prove her vertue, was most patient & sweetly resign'd to the divine will; yet because the secret Judgments of God are unknown to us, least any thing shou'd remaine to detain her speedy repose, we most humbly crave the assis-

<p.14>

tance of your holy Sacrifices & prayers

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1673*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën the 4<sup>th</sup> of December is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Cicely Joseph (alias) Bourne<sup>34</sup> the 24 of her age, & 7<sup>th</sup> of her being Religious, where she made so good use of her time, that she completed the vertue & merit of many yeares, which I forbore to particularize to fullfill the will of the dead, who alwaies endeavour'd to conceale them, & rather wish'd that her name might be written in the book of life, then her vertue rehears'd on earth; her last sickness was short & painfull, supported by her with most exemplar sweetness, patience & conformity to the divine will, but as the judgments of God are secret & unknown to us, least there shou'd remaine any thing that may retard her flight to those Eternal joys, we most humbly beg in her behalf the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1673

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën the 28 of December is most happily departed this life, furnish'd with the Sacrament of Extrean unction, our Reverend Mother Vicaress, Sister Mary Ignatious (alias) Bradshaigh,³⁵ the 55 year of her age & 34 since her entrance into Religion, wherof she spent 5 in our Convent of Gravelines, & both there, & here hath left us singular examples of piety, vertue & zeal of Religious observance to the

<p.15>

last moment of her life, being indefatigable in all that was for the service of the holy Religion, & the advancement both of herself & others in perfection; she was sweet & humble in her conversation, & most charitable to all, but that which gave the greatest lustre to her other vertues, was her high esteem, & practise of holy Obedience, with a most singular conformity to the divine will, which was very remarkable in her last, long & painfull sickness, which she supported the space of ten months with an admirable patience, which gives us great hopes she has already attain'd Eternal happiness, but least we shou'd be failing in our last dutys to the deceas'd; we most humbly beg the assistance of your holy Sacrifices & prayers of charity

Requiescat in pace

³³ Elizabeth Hone (1630 – 1672), GP158

³⁴ Cecily Bourne (1668 – 1673), RP029

³⁵ Ellen Bradshaigh (1640 – 1673), Lancs., GP045

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*Anno Domini 1674*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 22 of January is happily departed this life our Venerable Mother Jubilarian, Sister Margaret Winifred (alias) Sternehold<sup>36</sup> the 77 years of her age, & 52 since her holy Profession, wherof she spent 22 in our Convent of Graveline, & both there, & here hath been indefatigable in labours for the holy religion; she was most exemplar in the observance of all Religious & regular discipline <sup>a great lover</sup> of holy poverty & a singular contempt of herself, ever seeking & desiring the worst of all things for her use; she was most eminent in the practise of pittance & mortification, alwaies concealing her infirmitys, from the knowledg of others, as much as possibly she cou'd to the very last & which had been her practise all her life, being most rigid & severe to her own body, but most sweet & charitable to others, her last sickness was sharp & painfull, which she supported

<p.16>  
 with admirable patience & conformity to the divine will, all which gives us hopes of her present felicity, but least any thing shou'd be wanting on our parts, we humbly beg the assistance of your holy sacrifices & prayers.

*Requiescat in pace*  
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Anno Domini 1676

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen is most happily departed this life furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church the 29 March, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Luiza Clare (alias) Lancaster³⁷ the 40th year of her age & 17 since her entry into the holy Religion, wherin she hath render'd herself exemplar in all true & solid vertue, perticularly a great charity, which she exercis'd towards all in general, with an extraordinary love & compassion, being ever most sweet & humble in her conversation, respective & obedient to her Superiours, & most laborious in all that was for the service of the holy Religion wherin she persever'd to the last moment of her life, finishing it by a sharp & painfull sickness, which she bore with a singular patience & resignation to the divine will; her great fidelity to the service of God, both in the world & in Religion gives us reason to hope she is in a happy way soon to enjoy that eternal felicity for which she hath so faithfully labour'd yet least any thing shou'd be wanting to that great purity which is requisite to see God, we most humbly beg your holy prayers & sacrifices for her speedy enjoying therof

Requiescat in pace
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*Anno Domini 1676*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares  
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in Roüen on the 12<sup>th</sup> August is most happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Agnes of the Holy Ghost (alias) Blundel,<sup>38</sup> the 35 years of her age & the 17<sup>th</sup> since her entrance into the holy Religion, which time she spent with great edification in the practise of Religious observance, being endu'd with an extraordinary humility, patience & weakness, never loosing her first fervour, applying herself with great affection to all humble labours & had a great neglect of herself & fidelity to God, by a continual attention to his divine presence, supporting her last sickness with a constant resignation the space of 3 years, yet alwaies languishing to be disolv'd & to be with her heavenly Spouse, which at last she obtain'd on the feast of our glorious Mother St Clare,<sup>39</sup> which her self had begg'd & foretold having her judgment entire to the last confess'd & communicated with much devotion & an ardent desire <sup>to dy</sup> & half an hour after she sweetly repos'd in our Lord, we have great hopes that by the innocency of her life, ~~that~~ she is already enjoying the beatifical vision; yet since the judgments of God are inscrutable, we humbly beg the assistance of your holy sacrifices & prayers for the purifying of what may remaine soil'd in her by humane frailty

*Requiescat in pace*  
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³⁶ Margaret Sternhold (1623 – 1674), GP257

³⁷ Margaret Lancaster (1660 – 1676), RP110

³⁸ Jane Blundel (1660 – 1676), Lancs., RP020

³⁹ Feast day of St Clare of Assisi: 11 August.

Anno Domini 1676

In our convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 6th of october is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Elizabeth Baptist (alias) Lawson,⁴⁰ the

<p.18>

32 year of her age & the 6th since her entrance into Religion, which short time she spent and employ'd with extraordinary fervour & fidelity in her Religious dutys, to the great edification of all, that we have true reason to believe she hath compleated the merit of many years; she was very exemplar in the vertue of humility & obedience as the two chief vertues she constantly labour'd to practise, & had obtain'd in an eminent degree. She supported her last sickness with singular patience, sweetness & resignation to the divine will, which gives us great hopes she is in a happy way towards the enjoying her eternal happiness which that she may the sooner obtaine, we most humbly beg the assistances of your sacrifices & prayers

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1678

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 29 of September is suddenly, but most happily departed this life, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Ursula Francis (alias) Trivilian⁴¹ the 48 of her age, & 18 since her entrance into Religion, wherein she spent her time in a serious application, & exact performance of all her Religious dutys, with^{out} dispensing with her self in the least ceremony, was most constant, & assiduous in holy prayer, of which she had so high esteem, & was so singularly favour'd of God, that all the time she cou'd get, seem'd to her too little to employ therin, from that source it was, that she drew those other vertues of which she hath left us such edifying examples, perticularly of silence, recolection, admirable patience, & courage in sufferance, & very sharp tryalls, with which it pleas'd God to visit her, in all which & all other occasions she ever made appeare a very great conformity to the will of God, to which she was so entirely abandon'd that all things were indifferent to her; yet least any thing may hinder her speedy fruition of Eternall glory, the judgments of God being unknown we humbly crave your holy prayers, & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1680

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 25 of October, is most happily departed this life furnish'd with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Lucy Bruno (alias) Tucker⁴² the 17th yeare of her age, & 2^d of her being Religious; she was a soul over whom God seem'd to have had a perticular providence, having

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taken her from her heretical friends, by whom she wou'd have been infallibly corrupted, the short time she liv'd, God was pleas'd to lead her by the way of sufferance, by which his divine goodness went drawing her soul to himself, & by short labours patiently undergone & a sharp sickness sustain'd with a singular & exemplar patience put an end to her mortall life, to reign as we hope Eternally in heaven; to obtain her this happiness we humbly crave the help of your prayers & suffrages.

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1683

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Lawson (1671 – 1676), RP114

⁴¹ Ursula Trivilian (1661 – 1678), RP185

⁴² Eleanora Tucker (1679 – 1680), RP187

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 24 of June, is most happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church our most dearly beloved sister, Sister Catherin of Angels (alias) Masey⁴³ the 32 yeare of her age, & 15th since her entrance into the holy Religion. the time she liv'd, she was most faithfull in the service of the holy Religion, & the performance of what Superiours & Holy Obedience requir'd of her, sweet, & humble in her conversation, & very charitable to any that desir'd her help, which she never refus'd as long as her weak forces wou'd permit her; her sickness was long which she supported with great patience, & resignation to the divine will, & in the spirit of pennance. We most instantly beg the assistance of your holy Sacrifices, & prayers, for the speedy rest of her soule.

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1685*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor

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Clares in Roüen is happily tho' suddenly departed this life, the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Anne of the Nativity (alias) Yaxly,<sup>44</sup> the 58 yeare of her age, & 32 since her entrance into the holy Religion, in the service of which she consum'd her corporal forces & by extraordinary austerity, & pennance, making no more account of her body then if it had been some insensible thing, not belonging to her; she was indu'd with a great humility & contempt of herself, being ever severe towards herself & charitable to others, & wou'd never complaine of what she suffer'd, nor take any thing to solace or give her ease, tho' her sickness was a long & tedious consumption, which she supported with great patience still following the Community, till her forces were wholly exhausted & she worne to skin & bone, not taking up the infirmary till some few days before her death, which gave her happy soul passage to eternall life; yet least any thing shou'd retaine her speedy fruition of Almighty God, his judgments being unknown to us, we humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers, & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1685

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 8th of May, is most happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Elizabeth Francis (alias) Curtis⁴⁵ the 40th yeare of her age, & 10 since her entrance into Religion; before her being Religious, she serv'd the house with out, with great fidelity, for several yeares; in consideration of which, & her own humble request, she was admitted into the community; the short time

<p.22>

she liv'd she applied herself with great fidelity to her holy Vocation, was singular in charity & willingness to help any that had need of her assistance, & no less remarkable for her patience in occasions of sufferings & difficulty of which she gave us singular examples in her last sickness which tho' painfull & sharp was supported by her with great sweetness, & conformity to the divine will, & tho' naturally apprehensive in her life, most cour^agiously welcom'd death as the way that open'd to her Eternal felicity, for the speedy obtaining wherof, we humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1686*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poore Clares in Roüen the 24 of January is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy mother the Church, our dearly

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<sup>43</sup> Catherine Masey (1669 – 1683), RP119

<sup>44</sup> Anne Yaxley (1653 – 1685), RP211

<sup>45</sup> Elizabeth Curtis (1675 – 1685), RP062

beloved sister, Sister Clare of the holy Sacrament (alias) Masy<sup>46</sup> the 51 of her age, & 35 since her entrance into the holy Religion, she was a woman of very great parts, & was endu'd with an affable sweetness in her conversation, a perticular exactness in obedience & all religious dutys even to the least ceremony, with an extraordinary zeal for all that concern'd the good of the holy Religion, which she express'd by her indefatigable & faithfull performance of severall chief offices in the Community, to the satisfaction, & edification of all. her last sickness was short, but very sharp, which she bore with incredible patience & exemplar resignation to the divine will; she had her judgment to the last moment of her life & dispos'd herself ~~whi~~ with that piety & devotion which had ever accompanied all her actions during the whole course of her mortall pilgrimage, that she may more speedily attaine to the enjoyment of her heavenly spouse, we most humbly crave the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages. *Requiescat in pace*

<p.23>

*Anno Domini 1686*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poore Clares in Roüen the 16<sup>th</sup> of April is happily departed this mortall life, furnish'd with all the rites of our mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Clare Mary Anna (alias) Wileman [*sic*]<sup>47</sup> the 18<sup>th</sup> year of her age, & the 2<sup>d</sup> of her being Religious, the greatest part of the time she lived in the holy Religion was spent in the bearing of a most sharp & painfull sickness which she sustain'd with singular patience, suffering with much sweetness unknown & tormenting pains to the last moment of her life, & rendering her happy soul into the hands of her heavenly Spouse with much peace tranquility & sweetness, which gives us hopes she is in the way to eternal happyness, yet the divine judgments being unknown to us, we most humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers, & suffrages.

*Requiescat in pace*

*Anno Domini 1686*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 15<sup>th</sup> of August is happily departed this life strengthened with the holy Sacrament of Extreme unction our venerable & dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Anna Clare (alias) Martin<sup>48</sup> the 77 year of her age, & 49 since her entrance into Religion, 7 of which she spent in our monastery of Graveline, & was sent from thence with 14 others in the year 1644 for the foundation of this our Convent of Roüen in both places she has left us great examples of exactness in Obedience & all Religious dutys, piety & devotion to our Blessed Lady, silence & recolection, a solicitous care not to offend God in the least thing, patience & resignation to the divine will, in bearing the incommoditys of a weak body, & sickness, perticularly this last, in which she took great care not to

<p.24>

complaine tho' her pains were violent the space of 15 days, till her forces being wholly exhausted, & her body consum'd, her happy soule departed to Eternal rest, as we have all reason to hope; yet because the judgments of God are unknown & secret, we most humbly crave your holy prayers & suffrages in her behalf for her speedy obtaining what she so much sigh'd after.

*Requiescat in pace*

*Anno Domini 1688*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poore Clares, in Roüen the 13<sup>th</sup> of January is happily departed this life strengthen'd with the Sacrament of Extream unction, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Elizabeth Peter, (alias) Messenger,<sup>49</sup> the 60<sup>th</sup> of her age, & 18 since her entrance into Religion. She was eminent for her exactness in all Religious dutys, & had the true spirit of her holy profession, most exemplar in her charity & compassion of others, & had a great neglect of herself,

<sup>46</sup> Helen Masy (1652 – 1686), RP121

<sup>47</sup> Helen Wiseman (1685 – 1687), RP206

<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth Martin (1638 – 1686), GP188

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Peter Messenger (1671 –1688), RP126

laborious in the service of the holy Religion, & fearfull to offend God in the least thing, which gives us great hope of her Eternal happiness for the speedy advancement of which, we humbly crave the help of your holy prayers and suffrages.

*Requiescat in pace*

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*Anno Domini 1688*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen the 24 of April is happily departed furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Clotilda Francis (alias) Cuffaud,<sup>50</sup> the 24 of her age, & the 4<sup>th</sup> since her entrance into the holy Religion. Our Lord was pleas'd even from her young yeares till her <p.25.> death to give her a large portion of his suffering life by the pains she continually sustain'd in her little weak body, all which she bore with much patience & sweetness & by that means compleated in a short time, as we have all reason to hope & believe a high crown of glory in the Kingdom of heaven, her life upon earth having been a continuall payfull martyrdom; yet our ignorance of the things of the other world & our charitable duty to our deare deceased makes us most humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers & sacrifices.

*Requiescat in pace*

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*Anno Domini 1688*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen the 5<sup>th</sup> of October is happily departed this life furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Catherin Joseph (alias) Weston<sup>51</sup> the 52 of her age, & 34 since her entrance into the holy Religion, she was a zealous observer of all her Religious dutys, so farr as her weak body wou'd permit, enduring the infirmitys therof with great patience & little noise, avoiding to be troublesome by much complaining, was ready in all occasions to excuse the faults of others, & to conserve peace with all; her Innocent life gives us great hopes of her eternal happiness, for her speedy enjoyment of which, we humbly crave the assistance of your holy sacrifices & prayers

*Requiescat in pace*

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*Anno Domini 1693<sup>52</sup>*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the english poor Clares in Roüen, the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, is most happily departed this life furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church <p.26>

our Reverend Mother Vicaress Sister Maria Joseph (alias) Petre,<sup>53</sup> the 55 yeare of her age, & 38 since her holy Profession, she hath left us most singular examples of a true love & zeal of her holy Vocation peticularly in praising God day & night in the Quire, with great constancy, drawing strength from her weak forces, & many infirmities to go thro' with great courage, all the hardships of our holy Rule; carried on by a pious love to God, & zeal of vertue, which she frequently express'd by her tender feelings, & tears, when she heard any thing of piety, & devotion, & in her last sickness tho' short yet very sharp, hath left us great examples of her solid vertue, & resignation to the divine will, with a singular piety with which she dispos'd herself to meet her heavenly Spouse by all the ways she cou'd invent, & her painfull sickness wou'd permit, being still present to herself, till death sent her happy soul, to the enjoyment of a better life, as we have all reason to hope: yet that we may not faile in our charitable dutys to the dead, we most humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers, & suffrages.

*Requiescat in pace*

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*Anno Domini 1693*

<sup>50</sup> Clotilda Frances Cuffaud (1685 –1688), RP059

<sup>51</sup> Catherine Weston (1662 – 1688), RP193

<sup>52</sup> The number of deaths in January 1693 is discussed in volume I of the Rouen Chronicles, Chapter 43, pp. 340-58 without making it clear what the illness causing the deaths was. Smallpox and spotted fever affected the community later in the year.

<sup>53</sup> Mary Petre (1655 – 1693), Essex, RP142

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poore Clares, in Roüen, the 10<sup>th</sup> of January, is most happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Winifred Barthelmy<sup>54</sup> the 48 yeare of her age, & the 20<sup>th</sup> since her entrance into the holy Religion, during which time, she has left us singular examples of an Innocent piety & great & tender devotion, to our blessed Saviour, & his Blessed Mother, as also of great patience, sweetness, & resignation to the divine will, in supporting without complaint, many painfull infirmities, all her life, her last sickness was very sharp & dolou-

<p.27>

rous, yet she bore it with much patience, & with the same piety which had alwaies accompanied all her actions, in her life, languishing to dy to possess God, being most gratefull for the least thing they did about her; yet least she shou'd be detain'd from the fruition of Almighty God, by any spot; we most humbly beg for her the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1693

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 10th of January, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of the holy Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Francis (alias) Cary,⁵⁵ the 60th of her age, & the 33 of her holy profession, she was enrich'd with many solid vertues, as an ardent love to God, a languishing desire to dy, that she might possess him a singular compassion & charity towards any that stood in need of her help, which she ever afforded them, to the extent of her power, the necessitys of the poor gave her much to suffer, by reason that her great charity made all the sufferings of others her own, her love to Austerity was very extraordinary, as well as the contempt, & neglect she had of herself; she was likewise endew'd with a very great, & most admirable confidence in God, & in the merits of our blessed Saviour, & a most singular tender devotion to our blessed Lady: & as death is the echo of life so in her last sickness she redoubl'd her languishing sighs to go to God entertaining herself with much piety, in ardent & fervent aspirations to her last breath, which we hope gave her soul a happy passage to eternal joys; but because the judgments of God are unknown to us we humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul to your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

<p.28>

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*Anno Domini 1693*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 15 of January is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Magdalen (alias) Wilbe,<sup>56</sup> the 47<sup>th</sup> yeare of her age, & the 23 since her entrance into the holy Religion, in which she consum'd her forces with much piety & zeal, never sparing herself in any thing she thought was for the good & service of the Community, having a perticular love to holy poverty as a vertue most suting to her holy Profession, wherfore she labour'd not only to practise it self, but endeavour'd likewise to do her uttermost that it might be observ'd in the highest degree in all the employments holy Obedience put her in. her last sickness was very sharp yet she supported it with much patience, & piety to her very last, frequently calling upon God, having entirely abandon'd her self in to his hands, both for times & Eternity; & in this happy disposition she ended her mortall life, to reign as we hope Eternally in the next; & that it may be so, we most humbly crave your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1693

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 16th of January is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Agnes Clare (alias) Petre,⁵⁷ the 24 of her age, & 7 since her entrance into Religion, in which short time she compleated her crown, being alwaies pious, & zealous of her

⁵⁴ Isabell Price (1674 – 1693), RP148

⁵⁵ Lucy Cary (1660 – 1693), RP043

⁵⁶ Isabel Wilbe (1670 – 1693), RP198

⁵⁷ Bridgit Petre (1686 – 1693), RP138

<p.29>

own perfection, she was also very charitable & ready in all occasions to give a helping hand to any that stood in need of her assistance, & likewise as carefull to excuse the faults of others, & in praying for the souls in purgatory. her last sickness was very painfull yet she sustain'd it with great patience, & resignation to the divine will continually lifting up her hart to Almighty God, by sweet & fervent aspirations, languishing to see God, which that she may speedily do, we most humbly beg your holy prayers & suffrages.

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1693*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen the 18<sup>th</sup> of January is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Hellen of the Holy Cross (alias) Lancaster,<sup>58</sup> the 65 yeare of her age, & 26 since her entrance into Religion, in the service of which, she labour'd indefatigably, like another Jacob,<sup>59</sup> & confirm'd entirely her forces, using her body, as if she had been without feeling neither regarding heat, or cold, or any other suffrance, or in commodity when t'was question of serving the holy Religion, or doing a charity to another, having a great compassion of the sufferings of others, she was of a very innocent nature, & thought of nothing but of pleasing God & promoting the good of his holy Church, applying all her prayers & devotions for that end. her last sickness was short but very sharp & painfull which she supported with great patience & sweetness, & entertain'd herself continually in making most fervent & devout aspirations to God, & his blessed Mother, having her judgment to the very last,

&lt;p.30&gt;

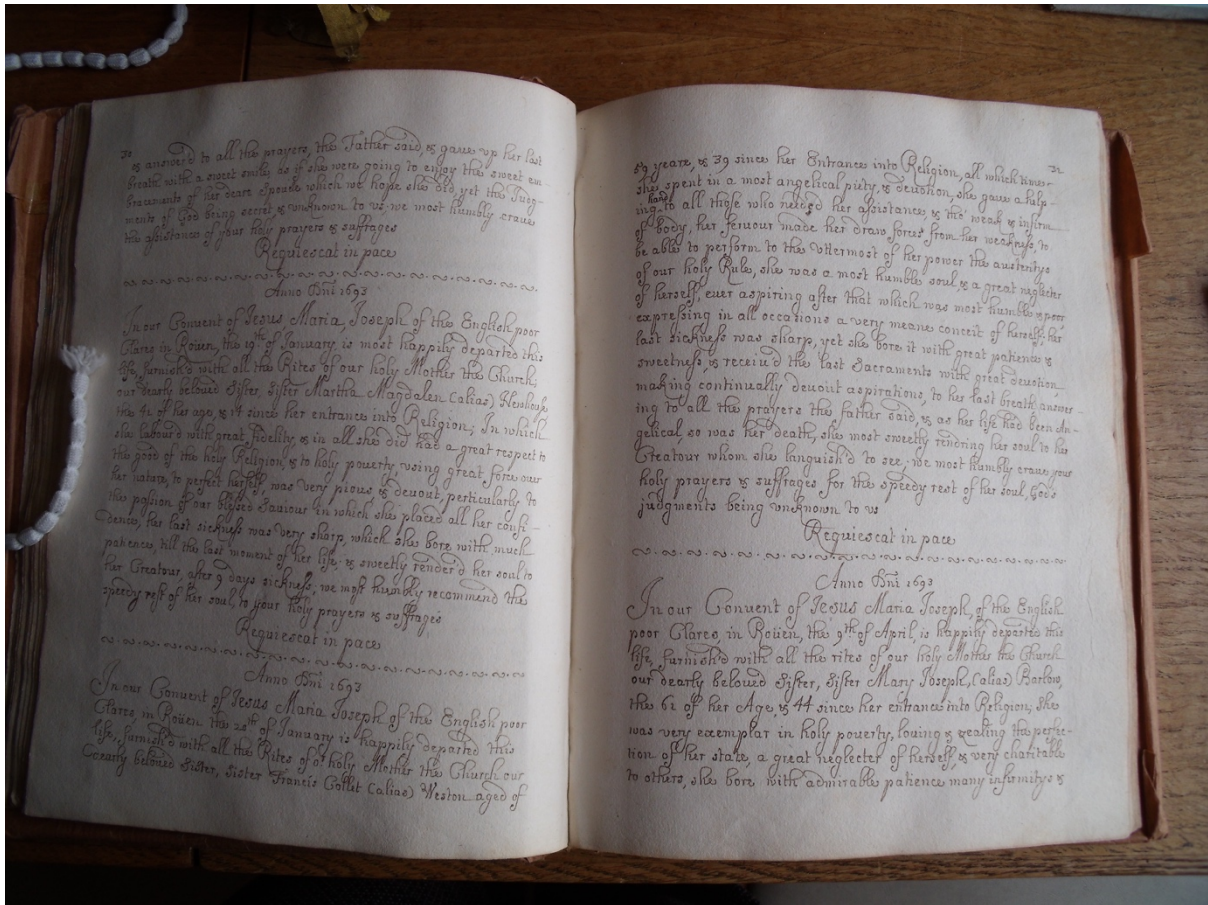
& answer'd to all the prayers, the Father said, & gave up her last breath with a sweet smile; as if she were going to enjoy the sweet embracements of her deare Spouse which we hope she did, yet the Judgments of God, being secret, & unknown to us; we most humbly crave the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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⁵⁸ Eleanor Lancaster (1668 – 1693), RP109

⁵⁹ The prophet Jacob honoured for his possession of patience, power and vision.



(Opening 30-31)

Anno Domini 1693

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 19th of January, is most happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church; our dearly beloved sister, Sister Martha Magdalen (alias) Newhouse,⁶⁰ the 41 of her age, & 14 since her entrance into Religion; In which she labour'd with great fidelity, & in all she did had a great respect to the good of the holy Religion, & to holy poverty, using great force over her nature, to perfect herself, was very pious, & devout, particularly to the passion of our blessed Saviour in which she placed all her confidence, her last sickness was very sharp, which she bore, with much patience, till her last moment of her life, & sweetly render'd her soul to her Creatour, after 9 days sickness, we most humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul, to your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1693

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen the 20th of January is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Francis Collet (alias) Weston⁶¹ aged of <p.31>

59 years, & 39 since her entrance into Religion, all which time she spent in a most angelical piety, & devotion, she gave a helping ^{hand} to all those who needed her assistance, & tho' weak & infirm of body, her fervour made her draw forces from her weakness, to be able to perform to the uttermost of her power the austerities of our holy Rule, she was a most humble soul, & a great neglecter of herself, ever aspiring after that which was most humble & poor, expressing in all occasions a very meane conceit of herself; her last sickness was sharp, yet she bore it with great patience & sweetness, & receiv'd the last Sacraments with great devotion making continually devout aspirations, to her last

⁶⁰ Alice Newhouse (1679 – 1693), RP133

⁶¹ Frances Weston (1662 – 1693), RP195

breath, answering to all the prayers the father said, & as her life had been angelical, so was her death, she most sweetly rendring her soul to her Creatour whom she languish'd to see; we most humbly crave your holy prayers & suffrages for the speedy rest of her soul, God's judgments being unknown to us

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1693

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen, the 9th of April, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Joseph (alias) Barlow,⁶² the 61 of her age, & 44 since her entrance into Religion; she was very exemplar in holy poverty, loving & zealing the perfection of her state, a great neglecter of herself, & very charitable to others, she bore with admirable patience many infirmitys & <p.32>

painfull sicknesses quietly to herself without complaining, till her forces wholly exhausted she fell into her last sickness in which with much piety & confidence in our blessed Lady which had been her constant practise during her life, she sweetly dispos'd herself for the happiness we hope she now enjoys, yet least we shou'd be failing in our duty, the judgments of God being unknown to us, we humbly beg your holy prayers, & suffrages for the happy repose of her soule

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1694

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 7th of December is happily departed this life furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary of the Passion (alias) Houghton,⁶³ the 55 of her age, & 23 since her entrance into the holy Religion. She was a soul prevented by a spetiall grace in her vocation, which carried her on with great courage & fervour in all her Religious dutys & perticularly in an indefatigable zeal to labour for the service of the holy Religion, wherin she consumed her forces, employing them to the full extent of her power in all the hardest labours of the house, & alwaies took care that Martha shou'd not deprive Mary of her due,⁶⁴ ever joyning prayer, attention to God, & other pious exercices, to her exterior employments, by which she endeavour'd to sweeten the hardships of her labours, till a long perseverance therin had exhausted her corporal forces, & cast her into a consumption which she bore with ^{great} patience & quiet of mind with all the hard circumstances of that painfull & languishing disease continuing to the end in a perfect resignation to the will of God, & edifying pa-

<p.33>

tiencie, which gives us great hopes of her Eternall happyness yet our ignorance of the things of the other life & the rigour of the judgments of God, makes us with great instancy have recourse to your charity to implore his mercy in her behalf

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1698

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 29 of October is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Grace Michael,⁶⁵ the 61 year of her age, & 22 since her entrance into the holy Religion; having left us most edifying examples, by her great exactness in holy Obedience never taking any remedy, or accepting any solace in her infirmitys without having first ask'd leave herself, & was never seen to transgress the very least ceremony of what she was, ~~first~~ taught at her first entrance into the holy Religion, most laborious & faithfull in all her works, still thinking the most painfull did belong to her, passing thus her life till it pleas'd God to send her a painfull rhumatisme &

⁶² Mary Barlow (1651 – 1693), RP010

⁶³ Jane Haughton (1672 – 1694), RP090

⁶⁴ For further details see Claire Walker, 'Combining Martha and Mary: Gender and Work in Seventeenth-Century English Cloisters', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30.2 (1999): 397-418. The roles of Mary and Martha are constantly referred to in conventual texts. Luke Chapter 10: Martha serves Christ by carrying out practical tasks whereas Mary attends Christ in worship and prayer. In the convents, choir nuns were held to reflect Mary and lay sisters were allied to Martha.

⁶⁵ Grace Haughton (1677 – 1698), RP092

gout which entirely took from her the use of her limbs many years before her death, all which time, she did not give us less edification by her patient, & quiet suffering, her charitable, & mild conversation the fervour, & zeal with which she desir'd, & made herself be carry'd to Mass, where she remain'd the greatest part of the morning without regarding her own weakness, supplying thus by her devotions, what she was not able to perform otherwise, yet the judgments of God being inscrutable we humbly commend her to your holy sacrifices & prayers

Requiescat in pace

<p.34>

Anno Domini 1699

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor clares in Roüen, the 27 of October is happily departed this life, strengthen'd with the Sacrament of Extream unction⁶⁶ our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary of the Conception (alias) Naylor⁶⁷ the 72 of her age, & 43 since her entrance into the holy Religion, she was prevented from her young years, with ardent desires of serving God to which grace she faithfully corresponded with, the time she spent in the world, & by her fidelity to God there, purchased the grace & meanes to serve God in a Religious state in which she persever'd to the last moment of her life in her first fervour, serving the holy Religion, with great exactness, in all hard & painfull labours, never sparing herself, treating her body with great rigour & mortification ever joyning labour with assiduous prayer & interiour exercises, that the one hinder'd not the other, she was a great lover of holy poverty, alwaies seeking & choosing the poorest & worst for herself, bearing with great patience & little noise a long infirmity, which so wasted her forces, that being wholly exhausted^{being} two days only in the infirmary, brought her to her long desired rest, & finish'd her vertuous life, by a happy death, for the speedy rest of whose soul, we humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1702

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 31 of August is happily departed this life our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Teresa (alias) Browne⁶⁸ furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy mother the Church, the 37 yeare of her age, & 20 since her entrance into the holy Religion wherin she hath left us singular^{examples of} piety, & extraordinary devotion to our blessed Lady, she was of a very sweet nature, & all her comportments were accompanied with much prudence & circumspection, her love to regular observance was

<p.35>

extraordinary & even above her strength, being all her life very sickly & infirm, perticularly this last yeare, being wholly worne away by a painfull consumption; all which she endur'd with admirable patience, courage, & silence, never complaining, or keeping her bed, till the doctour ordain'd her, her *Viaticum*⁶⁹ which she receiv'd with great devotion & presence of spirit, she had a long & painfull agony accompanied with violent convulsions & even 8 or 9 howers before her death Almighty God permitted her^{to fall} into violent agitations, & interiour conflicts, in which she utter'd words, which terrify'd those that were present. Reverend Mother Abbess,⁷⁰ with severall other sisters, said for her, the prayers of the passion,⁷¹ after which she return'd to herself, & about three howers after, she render'd up her spirit, with great sweetness & tranquility, & without any extraordinary motion, to receive as we have reason to hope the reward of her suffering life: yet least there shou'd remaine any thing to be purify'd; we humbly crave the assistance of your holy prayers, & sufrages

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1705

⁶⁶ Part of the Last Rites: it was the anointing with oil.

⁶⁷ Mary Naylor (1657 – 1699), RP131

⁶⁸ Mary Browne (1683 – 1702), Oxon., RP038

⁶⁹ Eucharist or communion administered as part of the Last Rites.

⁷⁰ In 1702 Reverend Mother abbess was Mother Mary Talbot Howard elected in December 1701.

⁷¹ Lenten prayers at the time of Christ's passion.

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen, the 11th of January, is most happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Anne Didacus (alias) Rose,⁷² the 81 year of her age, & 41 since her entrance into Religion; in which time she hath given great edification, by her singular fidelity in the service of the holy Religion, which she had served 12^{yeare} in quality of Tourriere⁷³ edifying by her civility, & sweetness all those that saw her; in consideration of which, Reverend Mother Bedingfield⁷⁴ admitted her into the community, partly to keep the first watch, which she did with an exact fidelity, the space of thirty yeare together; her charity made her ex-

<p.36>

ceeding gratefull to all, never sparing herself, when t'was question to serve the holy Religion, as long as her forces lasted, the 11 last years of her life she spent in the Infirmary edifying her sisters as much by her quiet & patient supportation of many painfull infirmitys, besides the incommoditys of old age, as she had before, by her charity, sweetnes, & other Religious vertues, so that being ripe for heaven, it pleas'd our dear Lord to call her to himself, on a sudden when we least expected it, tho' by a perticular providence of God, she receiv'd all the last Sacraments, & half an hower after sweetly yielded up her spirit to her creatour, to enjoy as we hope the reward of all her labours, yet least any thing shou'd retaine her speedy passage to the heavenly mansions, we most humbly crave the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1705*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph, the 4<sup>th</sup> of february, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Anne Laurence, (alias) Trivilian,<sup>75</sup> the 58 yeare of her age, & 23 since her entrance into the holy Religion, which time she spent in a most exact performance of all her Religious dutys, her recolection & silence was so extraordinary, that she was never heard in no time, to take occasion of unnecessary speech, which gave her a great facility in prayer, & we may truly say, her whole life was nothing elce but a continual prayer; her humility & obedience were not less eminent being a great neglecter of herself, & suffering with silence, many painfull infimty, her last sickness was short but sharp, having her lungs all canker'd, yet she supported all with singular patience

<p.37>

which gives us hopes she now enjoys him after whom she languish'd, yet because the judgments of God are inscrutable, least any thing shou'd still remiane to be purify'd, we most humbly crave your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1705

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 12th of July is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Bonaventure, (alias) Lancaster,⁷⁶ the 58 yeare of her age, & 40 since her entrance into Religion; she hath left us great examples of fidelity & exactness, in all that holy obedience enjoyn'd her, having a great zeal for all that concern'd the service of the holy Religion, it pleas'd God to try her patience, the 9 last years of her life, which she spent in the infirmary suffring with singular silence, sweetness & patience, a most dolourous infirmity in her bowells, they being all ulcer'd, which prepar'd her for the happiness we hope she now enjoys, but least any thing shou'd retard her speedy flight to the heavenly mansions as the judgments of God are unknown to us, we humbly beg in her behalf the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

⁷² Anne Rose (1665 – 1705), RP155

⁷³ Tourriers lived outside the convent and looked after external tasks for the convent including making arrangements locally. They were not professed nuns, however several Tourriers at Rouen served the convent so well and displayed such an interest in the religious life that they were known as 'Sister' in the Chronicle and were later professed.

⁷⁴ Mother Margaret Bedingfield was abbess at Rouen from 1658 until her death in 1670; GP027

⁷⁵ Anne Trivilian (1682 – 1705), RP184

⁷⁶ Margery Lancaster (1666 – 1705), RP111

Requiescat in pace~~~~~
Anno Domini 1706

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 26 of february, is happily departed this

<p.38>

life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Clare Margaret (alias) Blundel,⁷⁷ the 62 yeare of her age, & 45 since her entrance into Religion, in which time she hath left us great examples of all Religious vertues, a great fidelity in all that was enjoy'd her by holy Obedience, having perform'd with great satisfaction & edification of the Community, the offices of Dispenseer⁷⁸, Portress⁷⁹ & Mistriss of the Novices; her zeal for the holy Religion, & for the least ceremony was very remarkable, never sparing herself tho' she was very weak of body, & suffer'd a painfull infirmity, for many years, with singular patience, & silence, never complaining, but that she suffer'd nothing, & still follow'd the Community with the last exactness, till she was seiz'd with her last sickness, which in 7 days carried her to her long desir'd home, as we have reason to hope, she was present to herself to the very last & as in her life time, whosoever had met her still found her praying, so she continued this holy Exercise till death shut her mouth to open it as we have cause to believe for all eternity in the divine praises, which that she may speedily do, we humbly crave the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1706*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 3<sup>d</sup> of July is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Anne Eugenia, (alias) Fitzherbert<sup>80</sup> the 35 yeare of her age, & 18 since her entrance into Religion; she

<p.39>

was of a very sweet, & affable disposition, alwaies ready to give satisfaction to every one, & when she cou'd not do what was demanded of her, she refus'd it in so sweet a manner that, she gave as much content as if she had done what was desired of her; she perform'd the office of Dispenseer, with great charity & fidelity, & altho' she was of a very timorous conscience & very apprehensive of death, yet when she saw it was the blessed will of God, she sweetly resign'd to it, & thought of nothing but of preparing herself for that great passage; she receiv'd all the last Sacraments with great devotion, & after a painfull agony sweetly yielded up her soul to her Creatour to possess him, as we hope for all Eternity; yet the judgments of God being wholly unknown to us, least any thing shou'd delay her speedy passage to the heavenly mansions, we humbly crave the assistance of your holy prayers, & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1706

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen, the 16th of July is happily departed this life, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Winifred Magdalen, (alias) Cuffaud,⁸¹ furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, the 45 yeare of her age, & 28 since her entrance into the holy Religion; she was alwaies very exact in regular observance, as long as her forces wou'd permit her, it pleas'd God the 6 last years of her life to visit her, with a long & painfull infirmity being

⁷⁷ Margaret Blundell (1662 – 1706), Lancs. RP024

⁷⁸ Infirmarian, Sick Mother, Dispenser, Apothecary - nuns involved in managing the infirmary and care for the sick sisters of the community. Mostly they were choir nuns, but occasionally lay sisters with particular skills might serve in these capacities. Doctors were called for serious illness or when diseases such as smallpox were suspected.

⁷⁹ Portress: one of the three key officers of the convent. According to the Rule, she spent the day in an open cell without a door in order to keep guard of the entrance gate. She was one of the discreets responsible for securing the sanctity of the enclosure. The doors were locked with two separate locks each with their own keys. Only workmen allowed into the enclosure or visitors who had received special permission from the bishop.

⁸⁰ Anne Fitzherbert (1689 – 1706), RP070

⁸¹ Winifred Cuffaud (1679 – 1706), RP060

consum'd to skin & bone, by a tedious, & most dolourous consumption, which she sustain'd with singular patience & submission to the will of God, & as long as she cou'd dragg herself

<p.40>

along wou'd come to Mass, & go to the holy communion finding therein all her strength & comfort, she receiv'd with great piety all the holy Sacraments, & after three or fower hours painfull agony, sweetly gave up her soul to God, her long & suffering life gives us hopes there remains ~~to~~ little to be purify'd, yet the judgments of God being inscrutable, least any thing shou'd be wanting on our parts, we humbly beg in her behalf, the assistance of your prayers, & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1706*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen, the 23 of November is most happily departed this mortall life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our most Reverend most Venerable, & dearly beloved mother, Mother Winifred Clare (alias) Giffard<sup>82</sup> third Abbess of this monastery, the 90<sup>th</sup> yeare of her age, & 75 since her entrance into the holy religion, 12 of which she spent at Graveline, in an exact regularity, & in the practise of all Religious dutys, perticularly of silence, recolection, & abstraction, & was sent with others to begin this monastery, in which work she underwent many painfull labours, & difficultys, being a great help to our Venerable Mother Foundress, who employ'd her in all the chief offices of the house, after whose death, she was chosen Vicaress, which charge she perform'd with great charity, & zeale of regular observance, the space of 11 yeare, after which time she was chosen Abbess, & govern'd this house with singular zeal, charity & prudence, as long as her age, & infirmitys wou'd permit her, her confidence in the paternal providence of God, was truly admirable, from whence proceeded a most desinte-

<p.41>

ress'd charity never refusing any member for want of the pelf<sup>83</sup> of this world, as she us'd to call money; sustaining in several occasions very considerable losses, without the least disquiet or motion of trouble; the aversion she had for the praises & applauses of men was very remarkable, often saying that poor Clares ought neither to be known nor spoken of: the zeal she had for the holy Church was so great, that she regarded the interest therof, much more then her own, & t'was sufficient to tell her something that contributed to the advancement of our holy faith, to expell all sadness, & give her a sensible joy, how afflicted soever she were, her devotion to the most holy sacrament was very singular; she frequented that divine mystery every day whilst she was in superiority, which was an effect of her ardent love to God, & the deep sense she had of her miserys, & the great want she had of that divine food. Since the dimission of her charge<sup>84</sup> which was 5 yeare before her death it pleas'd God to purify her by sharp pains, & long & tedious infirmitys all which she supported with a most exemplar ~~piety~~ & patience, giving us great examples of humility, sweetness, & submission, & finally being ripe for heaven, some weeks before she dy'd she fell into a dropsy, which soon sent her to her desired home having receiv'd with singular piety, & presence of spirit all the holy sacraments of the Church, presently after which she fell into agony, & in a sweet slumber gave <sup>up</sup> her soul to her Creatour, as we have all reason to hope, yet since the judgments of God are unsearchable & unknown to us, least any thing shou'd remaine to be purify'd, we humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1706

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 4th of December is happily departed this life our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary of Angels (alias) Mascy,⁸⁵ the 24 of her age & 17 since her entrance into the holy Religion; she alwaies gave great edification by her

⁸² Winifred Giffard (1633 – 1706), Staffs., RP139.

⁸³ An old word for money.

⁸⁴ Dimission: Relinquishing or resigning; OED. Abbess Giffard was deposed in 1701 by a group of young nuns who were intent on introducing new doctrine into the convent; see *Rouen Chronicle Vol. I*, Chapter 47, pages 380 –89.

⁸⁵ Mary Mascy (1691 – 1706), RP122

sweetness & charity; never giving occasion of offence to any, alwaies ready to lend her hand to those who stood in need of her help. It pleas'd Almighty God, the last 6 yeares of her life, to send her a most painfull infirmity, which she sustain'd a long time in silence, & without making it known, till at last she was put into the Chirurgians⁸⁶ hands who made her a cruel incision, which she sustain'd with admirable courage & patience, & tho' she was never perfectly cur'd yet she was alwaies willing to do whatsoever it pleas'd holy Obedience to appoint her; by these & other vertues she prepar'd herself to meet her heavenly spouse who took her to himself after a violent sickness of some days which gave time only for the oyls having been at confession the night before, for she fell into an appoplexy, & after two howers painfull agony, render'd up her soul to her Creatour, to receive as we hope the reward of her long & patient sufferings; yet our ignorance of the things of the other life, make us humbly beg you will help to advance her that happiness, by your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1708*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen, the 10<sup>th</sup> of May is happily departed this life, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Margaret of the Visitation, (alias) Renolds,<sup>87</sup>  
<p.43>

the 45 yeare of her age, & 15 since her entrance into Religion. She had spent & wholly exhausted her forces in the service of the community, never sparing herself in any painfull & laborious work, she was employ'd the six last yeares of her life, in the service of the sick whom she serv'd with great care, patience, & sweetness, alwaies accompanying her actions with prayer, & devout aspirations, her sickness was short, but painfull, & accepted by her with great submission to the divine will, which gives us hopes, she will soon enjoy a plentiful reward of all her labours, the violence of<sup>her</sup> feavour depriv'd her of her judgment so she only receiv'd the holy oyls, we humbly commend the speedy rest of her soul to your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1709

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, on the 26 of February, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Catherin Constantia, (alias) Gay,⁸⁸ the 37 yeare of her age, & 20 since her entrance into the holy religion; she had been these several yeares in a very weak sickly, & languishing condition, but these three last months she has suffer'd like a little martyr, most cruel pains of the stone, & a continual vomiting, which she supported with great sweetness, & resignation to the divine will, she receiv'd with great piety all the holy Sacraments, & after a long & painfull agony of 2 days, sweetly gave up her soul to God, we have great hopes that since that it pleas'd Almighty God, to give her so great a share in his cross, her will also grant her a greater in his glory but because the Judgments of God are hidden & impenetrable, least any thing shou'd
<p.44>

still remaine to be purify'd that may hinder her speedy flight to the heavenly mansions, we humbly commend her to your charitable prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1709*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 26 of November, is most happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Francis Bernard, (alias) Bather,<sup>89</sup> the 26 of her age, whom it pleas'd God to call to himself after a fortnights sickness, which she sustain'd with admirable resignation, & abandonment into the hands of God, & tho' her sickness was sharp & violent, she never shew'd the least signe of impatience, or desire of any thing wholly leaving herself to the disposition of wholly obedience altho'

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<sup>86</sup> Here the reference is to the surgeon who has been brought in from the city to carry out an operation.

<sup>87</sup> Margaret Renolds (1694 – 1708), RP153

<sup>88</sup> Catherine Gay (1690 – 1709), RP071

<sup>89</sup> Juliana Bather (1707 – 1709), RP012

the time she liv'd amongst us was short, having been but three years amongst us, in the holy religion, yet I may truly say, she compleated in this little space, the perfection of many yeares being ever fervent in labour, assiduous in prayer, with which she sanctify'd all her actions, she had a high esteem & love for her holy Vocation, all which makes us hope she will soon enjoy her so much desir'd happyness; but because the judgments of God are unsearchable, & unknown to us least any thing shou'd still remain to be purify'd we humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

*Anno Domini 1710*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 25 of May, is most happily departed this life

<p.45>

furnish'd with all the Rights [*sic*] of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Angela Augustin (alias) Hamilton,<sup>90</sup> the 64 yeare of her age, & 48 since her entrance into the holy Religion, in which time she hath left us great examples of all Religious vertues, peticularly of patience, it having pleas'd Almighty God to try her by a long, tedious & languishing life, having been 35 yeare in the infirmary, suffering with a most exemplar patience, sweetness & resignation, many long, & grievous infirmitys; she was a woman of great parts, & capacity, extreamly handy in all kind of works & wou'd have been very serviceable to our Community but Almighty God whose designs over his Elect are rather to be ador'd, then search'd into, ordain'd otherwise, & wou'd have her be to us all, an example of patient suffering; she receiv'd all the last Sacraments with singular piety & devotion; her agony was long & painfull, accompanied with violent convulsions, & it was an astonishing thing, how a body so worne & extenuated, cou'd support such terrible agitations; but she was a pretious gold to be try'd in the furnace<sup>91</sup> of affliction to the very last, which gives us great hopes, she will not be long depriv'd of the fruition of her sovereign good, but because the judgments of God are unsearchable & unknown to us, least any thing shou'd still remaine to be purify'd we humbly beg your holy prayers & suffrages of charity

*Requiescat in pace*

*Anno Domini 1712*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 9<sup>th</sup> of October is happily departed this

<p.46>

life strengthen'd with the Sacrament of Extream unction our dearly beloved sister, Sister Christina Francis (alias) Jenkes,<sup>92</sup> the 62 yeare of her age, & 41 since her entrance into the holy Religion, she was but 5 days sick of a violent colick & vomitting which depriv'd her of the happiness of receiving her holy *Viaticum*,<sup>93</sup> but she had been at the holy Communion on the feast of our holy Father,<sup>94</sup> which was the day before she fell sick; she had been many years in a languishing sickly condition, she supported with singular patience & silence many painfull infirmitys & nevertheless had the care of the Apotichary,<sup>95</sup> which is a very laborious & toylsome office, notwithstanding she perform'd it with so great charity, goodness & compassion, that all our poor Community has a very great loss in her, she being extreamly beloved of all; her great humility, charity, & other vertues, together with her suffering life, makes us hope, she will not be long detain'd from the happy fruition of her sovereign good, yet the judgments of God being inscrutable, least any thing shou'd be wanting on our parts, we humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

<sup>90</sup> Anne Hamilton (1663 – 1710), Middx., RP084

<sup>91</sup> Referring to the intense heat to which the gold was subjected to test its purity: suggesting here that physical suffering was sent to test her fine qualities.

<sup>92</sup> Christian Jenks (1672 – 1712), RP107

<sup>93</sup> Part of the Last Rites when communion or eucharist is administered

<sup>94</sup> St Francis of Assisi's feast day, 3 October.

<sup>95</sup> The apothecary was responsible for the preparation of medicines often from herbs they grew in their own gardens.

*Anno Domini 1713*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën, the 11<sup>th</sup> of January, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Francis Euphrasia, (alias) Browne,<sup>96</sup> the 45 of her age, & 28 since her entrance into the holy Religion; it pleas'd Almighty God to call her to himself, after having purify'd her as gold in the furnace, the space of almost three

<p.47>

yeares by a most painfull & dolourous cancer in her leg <sup>which she bore</sup> with a most exemplar patience & little complaining, tho' she suffer'd most violent pains having been alwaies very hard to herself, & very laborious in humble works, whilst she had her health which makes us hope she will soon receive a copious reward for her long & patient sufferings, yet the judgments of God being unsearchable, & unknown to us, least any thing shou'd still remaine to be purify'd, we humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace**Anno Domini 1713*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën, is happily departed this life, the 13<sup>th</sup> of January our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Anna Joseph (alias) Bacon<sup>97</sup> the 47 of her age, & 27 since her entrance into the holy Religion; She was a soul specially favour'd by the divine providence, who gave her the courage to steale away from her heretical parents, & to embrace the state of a poor Clare, wherein she has left us singular examples of exactness in all Religious observance, whilst she had her health, which was not long, for it pleas'd God to try her as gold in the furnace of most sharp & cruel rhumatism pains, frequent loss of speech, & other dolorous infirmitys, which she supported with most edifying patience, & conformity to the divine will; her zeal for the divine office was so great, that tho' she cou'd not goe without two crutches, yet wou'd often come, & sit at the bottome of the Quire, to read the same with the Community; her charity for her Sisters was no less, for when

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any in the Infirmary stood in need of her help, she seem'd to forget her own pains, to give them all the solace, & assistance she cou'd; Infine after Almighty God had purify'd, & prov'd her by many pains & tribulations both interiour & exteriour, for the space of several years, he took her to himself as we have reason to hope, after having receiv'd all the rites of our holy Mother the Church: We humbly commend the speedy rest of her soul to your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace**Anno Domini 1713*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën the 20<sup>th</sup> of May is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our venerable & dearly beloved Mother Vicaress Sister, Lucy Francis (alias) Petre,<sup>98</sup> the 74 yeare of her age, & 56 since her entrance into religion; Almighty God had chosen her from her very infancy, for one of his peculiar servants having endew'd her, not only with an affable sweetness in her conversation, but also with an extraordinary piety, & attract to prayer, which was the motive of her coming to Religion, & altho' she was contrary to her inclinations alwaies employ'd in the chief offices of the house, she never lost it, but ever tended to recolection, silence & holy prayer, she was twice Mistriss of the Novices, also Dispenseer, Portress, & Vicaress<sup>99</sup> the space of 20 yeare; all which offices she perform'd with great integrity, & satisfaction both of superiours, & the

<p.49>

Community; she was a great neglecter, & contemner of herself, & a singular lover of holy poverty, never complaining of what she wanted, but alwaies of having too much, she never took in meat drink, & cloaths, but what was precisely necessary, & which she cou'd not leave without transgressing holy

<sup>96</sup> Frances Browne (1686 – 1713), Oxon., RP036

<sup>97</sup> Anne Bacon (1687 – 1713), RP008

<sup>98</sup> Lucy Petre (1657 – 1713), Essex, RP140

<sup>99</sup> For these offices see the Glossary.

obedience, her devotion to the holy Sacrament was very perticular, & she receiv'd great graces, & strength by that precious & divine food, she had likewise a tender devotion to our blessed Lady, & to our Seraphicall Father Saint Francis, & obtain'd money of her Father for the adornment of a little chappell we have of him in the dormitory; finally being ripe for heaven, she was seiz'd with a violent feavour & plurisy which soon put an end to her pilgrimage in this world; she receiv'd the last sacraments with singular devotion, had her perfect judgmdt to her last breath, & was continually expressing the ardour of her love, by fervent & amorous ejaculations, she most sweetly render'd up her soul, to her Creatour, to receive as have all reason to hope, a plentiful reward of all her labour & sufferings in his holy service; but beause his divine judgments are inscrutable, least any thing shou'd stop her speedy flight to the heavenly mansions, we most humbly crave the help of your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1713

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 22th of May, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Catherin Joseph, (alias) More¹⁰⁰ the
<p.50>

39 yeare of her age, & 19 since her Entrance into the holy Religion; in which time, she has left us, great examples of her piety & exactness in all religious observance, whilst she had her health, which it pleas'd God soon to deprive her of, sending her a painfull rhumatism in her brest, which she supported with singular patience, & without complaining; she was very charitable, & prudent in her words, never saying any thing that might give offence to any, & was a great lover of recollection & retirement, her last sickness was short but very sharp & painfull, which soon sent her to her long desir'd home as we have cause to hope, yet least any thing shou'd hinder her speedy passage to Eternal joys, we humbly crave the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1713*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our venerable Mother Jubilarian, Sister Mary Clare, (alias) Weston,<sup>101</sup> the 77 yeare of her age, & 61 since her entrance into Religion; She was one of the first of those to whom our Reverend Mother Foundress<sup>102</sup> gave the habit, & began with such an extraordinary fervour that she was a very great example to all the community, & above all was endew'd with a most profound humility, & true contempt of her self, & did in all occasions make appeare the deep root these vertues had taken in her hart, since she cou'd not support, that any shou'd render<sup>her</sup> the least respect, or give her what was so truly her due; She was so great a  
<p.51>

lover of holy poverty, that after her death, scarce any of her cloaths were fitt for any thing then the fire, so much were they piec'd & patch'd, the very books she us'd were of her own binding, & cover'd with some pieces of old raggs, she found up & down, the hardness & severity with which she treated her body was very extraordinary, tho' she was so antient, & subject to many infirmitys, yet scarce wou'd she eate any thing at her collation, but a crust of brown bread, & a cup of the smallest beere. She had a most perticular devotion to our Blessed Lady, & had acquir'd so good a habitude of praying in her employments, that she was almost continually saying her rosary; & dy'd as she liv'd in saying it; having not the least apprehension of death, tho' she knew she shou'd have a long & strong agony, as indeed she had, yet gave up her happy soul to her Creatour with great peace & sweetness, on the feast of blessed Saint Antony of Padua<sup>103</sup> her great patron, for the speedy rest of whose dear soul we humbly crave your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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<sup>100</sup> Catherine More (1695 – 1713), RP128

<sup>101</sup> Elizabeth Weston (1655 – 1713), RP194

<sup>102</sup> Reverend Mother Foundress was Mary Francis Taylor who professed three Weston sisters at Rouen.

<sup>103</sup> St Antony of Padua's feast day, 13 June.

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Anno Domini 1714

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares, in Roüen, the 2^d of January is happily departed ^{this life}, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Margaret Clare (alias) Nelson,¹⁰⁴ the 62 yeare of her age, & 42 since her entrance into Religion; during which time she hath left us singular examples of her great exactness in all Religious observance, & constant fervour in all laborious works, to the exhausting of her

<p.52>
 forces, never sparing herself, when t'was question of serving the holy religion, & performing what was enjoy'd her by holy Obedience: She supported with singular patience, & sweetness many great sicknesses & painfull infirmitys, & perticularly this last, which gave her soul passage to Eternal joys, as we have reason to believe there to receive from the just remuneratour, a plentiful reward of all her painfull labours in his holy service; yet our ignorance of the things of the next world, obliges us to implore the assistance of your holy prayers, & suffrages for the speedyer obtaining this happyness

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1714*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 9<sup>th</sup> of March, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Anne Bernardin (alias) Skelton,<sup>105</sup> the 54 yeare of her age, & 39 since her entrance into Religion; She has left us great edification, by her fervent zeal in all Religious observance, joyfull<sup>y</sup> embracing all laborious & humble works; tho' she was very sickly & infirm, she minded it not, when t'was question to serve her sisters, she perform'd three several times, the office of Infirmarian, with great care, charity, & compassion, undergoing all the toylsome labours belonging therunto with indefatigable courage, untill her forces were wholly exhausted, she receiv'd her last sickness with great joy & alacrity, out of the great & longing desire she had to be deliver'd from the bonds of her body, & possess him after whom she languish'd & had so faithfully serv'd, which was granted her as we have reason to hope after a short but sharp sickness; yet the Judgments of God being un-

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known to us least any thing shou'd delay her speedy fruition of eternall glory; we humbly crave in her behalf the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1714

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen; the 17th of November is happily departed this life, furnish'd with ^{all} the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Susanna Gabriel (alias) Prance¹⁰⁶ the 63 of her age, & 38 since her Entrance into Religion; In which time she has left us many examples of her great exactness in what holy Obedience enjoy'd her, she was very fearfull of doing the least thing in which she conceiv'd might be any offence to God, being of a very timorous conscience; It pleas'd Almighty God to prove her the last yeare of her life by sufferance the true touch stone of all vertue, sending her great pains of the gout, & rhumatisme which took from her the use of her hands, & feet, & which at last striking to her hart, fitted her for a better life, which that she may soon enjoy we most humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1714*

*Anno Domini 1714* [sic] In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 12 of December, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the

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<sup>104</sup> Margaret Nelson (1672 – 1714), RP132

<sup>105</sup> Anne Skelton (1676 – 1714), RP164

<sup>106</sup> Susanna Prance (1677 – 1714), RP147



Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Clare Francis, (alias) Blundel,<sup>107</sup> the 59<sup>th</sup> year of her age, & 40 since her

<p.54>

entrance into the holy Religion; which time she spent in labouring for the perfection of her state; being very exact in all Religious observance, & particularly in holy obedience, by an exact compliance with whatsoever it enjoyn'd her, her love to holy poverty was no less, never seeking or desiring any thing, which was unnecessary, or superfluous, the last years of her life it pleas'd God to prove her as gold in the furnace of affliction & sufferings, by a long, lingring, & painfull consumption, accompanied with other troublesome infirmitys: all which she supported with a constant, & most edifying patience, & sweetness to the end of her life, yielding up her spirit to her Creatour<sup>with</sup> so much peace & tranquility that she seem'd to fall into a sweet sleep: As it pleased God to give her a great share in his Cross, so we have reason to hope he will give her a greater in his glory, which that she may more speedily obtain we humbly beg the help of your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1715

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 30th January, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Collet (alias) Bourne,¹⁰⁸ the 63th year of her age, & 45 since her entrance into the holy Religion, wherin she has left us many examples of vertue, particularly a great love, & esteem of her holy Vocation; serving the Religion in which she was able to the very last; she sustain'd for many years with extraordinary sweetness, patience & silence, a most painfull infirmity, her

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resignation to the divine will, & perfect tranquility of her soul in all the different events of this life, was truly admirable, & seem'd to evidence the calm of all her passions, & as she had liv'd in the perfect conformity to all the wills of God, so did she end her life in the same disposition, which gives us great hopes she will soon attaine to the neverending joys of a happy Eternity, to the obtaining of which, we humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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Anno Domini 1716

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, the 16<sup>th</sup> of January is happily departed this life, furnish'd with the Sacrament of Extreme unction, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Teresa, (alias) Haffenden<sup>109</sup> the 27<sup>th</sup> year of her age, & 4 since her entrance into religion. In which short time she has given great examples of her fervent zeal in all regular observance, particularly in silence, & assiduity to the divine office, as well by night as by day, her sweet & modest behaviour in all occasions, was most edifying, & never was she seen to give or take offence from any it pleased God to try her as gold in the furnace by great pains & infirmitys, which she supported with singular patience & with little noise, being of a very quiet & mild disposition; but at last her evils getting the upper hand, she was forc'd to take her bed, & presently fell into a kind of agony, which depriv'd her, of her judgment, so there was only time for the holy oyls, & after 2 days only of sickness gave up her sweet soul to her creatour to enjoy as we have reason to hope the sweet embraces of her divine spouse; yet the judgment<sup>of God</sup> being unsearchable we humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul to your charitable prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1716

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen the 21 of Aprill is happily departed this mortall life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Elizabeth Francis, (alias) Wileman [*sic*]¹¹⁰ the 48th year of her age & 30 since her entrance into the holy Religion, which time^{she spent} in a great fidelity to her duty & faithfull

¹⁰⁷ Clare Blundell (1676 – 1714), Lancs., RP025

¹⁰⁸ Mary Bourne (1670 – 1715), RP030

¹⁰⁹ Elizabeth Haffenden (1713 – 1716), RP079

¹¹⁰ Elizabeth Wiseman (1686 – 1716), RP205

performance of the different employments holy Obedience put her in, never omitting her prayers or pious exercises, she underwent some years before her death several painfull infirmitys with an edifying patience, the continuation of which put a period to her mortall pilgrimage, her death was somewhat sudden yet not unprovided, she received all the Sacraments & a quarter of an hour after render'd up her soul to her divine Creatour for whose speedy flight to the heavenly mansions, we humbly crave your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1717

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën, the 8th of May is happily departed this mortall life, furnished with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church deare M^{rs} Mary Strickland,¹¹¹ one of our Convictrices¹¹² who came hither at the age of ten year old & seem'd to be a child perticularly prevented by grace, from the first moment she sett her foot into the house, she

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took so great an affection, & liking to us that she cou'd not ~~not~~ resolve ever to go out: She had the most ardent desire to be a poor Clare, had it pleas'd God to spare her life, her witt, capacity, & piety farr surpass'd her age, & was indeed too forward a child to live long in this world as its vaine pleasures, & empty satisfactions never had any place in her hart, so the divine spirit took an entire possession of it; she gave herself entirely to piety & devotion, was a great lover of prayer which she perform'd with such fervour & attention, as if she had seen Almighty God with her corporal eyes; her darling vertue was obedience, which made her the delight of her mistrisses, her exactness therin went even to scruple; a little before her happy death, she call'd for all her little companions & beg'd them to be very submissive & obedient to the'r mistriss & not to give her any paine; saying that obedience was the vertue ^{of the elect} & the secure way to heaven; She was of a very tender constitution, & was subject to sharp & violent colicks but in her greatest pains, she wou'd call upon our Blessed Lady, by that prayer which begins by those words: We fly to your patronage &c. & often confess'd she never said it, but she presently found ease: Infine this deare child being ripe for heaven, she fell into a painfull & lingring consumption, she supported all the troublesome consequences therof with so great a patience & cheerfulness, that to see her one wou'd have thought she suffer'd nothing, nevertheless she had a violent cough, a continual feavour & her body was worne away to skin, & bone, yet she told Father Confessour who was her uncle, that she had not had so much as one mellancholy thought all her ten months sickness; She had beg'd of Almighty God that when she was to dye, it might be on ^{the} feast of blessed Saint Michael, to whom she was very devout, & she obtain'd what she so much desir'd: She had receiv'd the last sacraments 8 days before, on the 8th of May:¹¹³ She said: this is Prince Michaels day, I shall dy to day in the afternoon as she did, a little before she

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dy'd she lifted up her trembling hands to God, & making the sign of the Cross she said: Into thy hands O Lord, I commend my spirit, my God I offer unto you my life in sacrifice, O God be propitious to me a sinner: now I am just going, & having said this she presently yielded up her sweet & innocent soul to her divine spouse the 14th yeare of her age. Altho' we have reason to hope she is now an Angel in heaven, yet the judgments of God being inscrutable we recommend her sweet soul to your charitable prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1717

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën, the 13th of June is happily departed this mortall life, our Venerable deare Mother Jubilarian Sister Cicely Clare, (alias) Arundell,¹¹⁴ the 82 yeare of her age & 55 since her entrance into Religion. She was the first that came

¹¹¹ Mary Strickland at fourteen was too young for profession: no candidates below the age of sixteen were permitted. She had arrived in 1713 aged ten. AD006

¹¹² The term convictrice was applied to young girls who came into the convent either for schooling or to try out the religious life. Here Mary Strickland was clearly a devout child bent on joining the community.

¹¹³ St Michael feast day, 29 September

¹¹⁴ Cecily Arundel (1663 – 1717), Wilts., RP002

to be Schollar¹¹⁵ here being then but 11 years old, & she took so great an affection to the house that altho' the Lord Arundell, her father took her afterwards away & put her into other monasterys in Flanders, she never lost the inclination & liking she had for us, she went afterwards into England where she had all the pleasure the world cou'd afford being extremely beloved of her father, yet she generously forsook the world & all its vaine pastimes & allurements & chose preferably to all others, the life of a poor Clare choosing rather to be an object in the house of God, then to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners tho' she was of a tender & weak constitution, yet she went thro' all the hardships of so strict a life, with an undaunted courage, without the least dispensation, which she wou'd never heare of, &

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it was almost to anger her to mention any such thing to her, & Almighty God was pleas'd to bless her with constant good health, untill some years before her death, when her poor body gave much exercise to her patience by the sensible pains, she felt therein, yet she beg'd a sister to pull her out of bed, & lead her to mattins, which she did many years, for she was a true model of regularity, & of exactness in little things: She had also the true spirit of our holy Founders, loving poverty in all she had for her use, never desiring any superfluous thing, but was alwaies content with what was given her, when she was Mistriss of the Novices, she ever exhorted them to a great disengagement of all earthly things, five year before her death she grew very lame & helpless, yet wou'd drag herself as well as she cou'd to the quire, & other regularitys, till her forces being exhausted, & her limbs unable to do her any service, she was was forc'd to yield & be confin'd to the infirmary, a month before she dy'd she suffer'd like a martyr, yet never complain'd, but endur'd all with silence. She had naturally a great apprehension of death & of the Judgments of God, yet some time before her death she wou'd often beg our Lord to take her, that she might not be in danger of loosing her patience, & offending him at last our Lord was pleas'd ~~at last~~ to heare her prayer; she receiv'd her holy viaticum the 20th of May which was her profession day, after which her pains much encreas'd as we guess'd by her gestures, for she never complain'd, she was annoy'd some days before her death, from which time she was in a kind of Agony, which was very long & painfull, we know not if she had her knowledg or no, for she lay with her eyes shut t'was an astonishing thing to see that a body so extenuated & worne to skin & bone shou'd ~~shou'd~~ struggle so long with death, yet she expir'd so sweetly that scarce cou'd we perceive the separating moment, so long a life, spent in penance gives us hopes she will not be long detain'd, from the fruition of Almighty God, yet his judgments being unknown to us, we humbly recommend her to your charitable prayers & suffrages.

Requiescat in pace

<p.60>

Anno Domini 1718

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan, is happily departed this mortall life, furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church the 20th of November our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Antony (alias) Hudson,¹¹⁶ the 57 years of her age, & 40 since her entrance into Religion. She had truly exhausted her forces in the service of the holy Religion undergoing many hard & painfull labours, & never sparing herself but being ever at the beck of whosoever wanted her help; her charity was universal to all, & she gather'd up together all the little things that were thrown about the house, to the end she might assist any who stood in need of any such like thing; her love & respect for her superiour was very great, & she wou'd willingly have given her life to save hers, thinking nothing too hard, when t'was question to render her service; She was most constant & assiduous in the quire both by night & ^{by} day, she was taken at the beginning of Advent¹¹⁷ with a painfull rhumatism in her leg, which meeting with other malignant humours in her body, soon put a period to her mortall pilgrimage, she received all the Sacraments with great devotion & presence of spirit, & after some howers of agony render'd up her happy soul into the hands of her creatour, with so much tranquility & indifferency, as if she did but step from one room into another. We most humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul, to your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

¹¹⁵ As with Mary Strickland above, the dividing line between being a schoolgirl and a potential nun is difficult to pin down.

¹¹⁶ Mary Hudson (1680 – 1718), RP102

¹¹⁷ Advent: Period of 4 weeks before Christmas: it was a time of preparation.

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Anno Domini 1719

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan, the 27th of March is most suddenly departed this mortall life, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Anne Clare (alias) Hawkins,¹¹⁸ the 41 yeare of her age, & the 25 since her entrance into Religion; we have a great loss in her, for having a very fine voice, she was the support of the Quire, & sung the divine praises with so much fervour that she much edified those that heard her, she seemed to think, & often said she shou'd not live long, so altho' her death was sudden & unexpected we hope it was not unprovided; She had had a little ^{cold} some days, which seemed not considerable, & at two a clock after mattins was very well, & said she had slept well, but about half an hower after, she arose, went to the Quire & lighted her candle, return'd into the Dortour¹¹⁹ to the cell of the Sister that lay overagainst ^{her} & told her she found herself very ill, & thought she shou'd dy, she was so stiff'd, the sister arose, as also Reverend Mother Abbess, & several others whom the noise awaked, they led her back to the quire dore, & made her sitt down, she repeated after Mother Abbess: my God have mercy on me my God forgive me my sins, then fell a vomiting a great deale of frothy water; the Father presently came in & asking her if she knew him? she looked upon him, but cou'd not speak, he then ^{gave her absolution &} went to fetch the holy oyls but she was dead before he came againe.¹²⁰ Altho' we hope Almighty God has judg'd her in his mercy yet his judgments being unsearchable, we recommend the speedy rest of her soul to your charitable prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

<p.62>

Anno Domini 1719

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan, is happily departed this mortal life, furnished with the sacraments of confession & extreamly Unction, the 16 of August 1719 our dearly beloved sister, Sister Winifred Anne Clifton¹²¹ the 61 of her age, & 44 since her entrance into religion. In which time she served the holy Religion with great fidelity in the different Offices that holy Obedience impos'd upon her, being very harty & compassionate towards the community when she was Dispenseer, & afterwards Portress,¹²² It pleas'd Almighty God about a yeare before she dy'd to deprive her of her sight, so that she cou'd not say the divine office, & some months after of her speech, & use of her right hand, & leg, by a dead palsey which was a great check & mortification to a temper so lively & active as hers was, yet she bore it with a most edifying sweetnes & patience at last the palsical humour striking to her hart, & bowels, soon fitted her for a better life, she went to confession some days before ^{her} death, as well as she cou'd by signs & receiv'd extream unction, for she cou'd not receive her holy *viaticum*, by reason she had not her knowledg, but a little by fitts, nor cou'd she swallow any thing; her agony was long & painfull, but her death most sweet & ~~pain~~ tranquil, the vertuous life she has led, & the patience which she shew'd in so painfull a sickness makes us hope Almighty God, has judg'd her in his mercy, yet his judgments being inscrutable, least any thing shou'd still remaine to be purified, we most humbly beg your charitable prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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Anno Domini 1719

¹¹⁸ Anne Hawkins (1695 – 1719), RP091

¹¹⁹ dortour: dormitory. Here the text makes clear that the area was sub-divided probably with curtains into individual cells.

¹²⁰ Here the concern is that the community had not been able to follow the normal procedure in death because because they were overtaken by the speed with Sister Anne Clare died.

¹²¹ Winifred Clifton (1676 – 1719), Lancs., RP052

¹²² Infirmarian, Sick Mother, Dispenser, Apothecary - nuns involved in managing the infirmary and care for the sick sisters of the community. Mostly they were choir nuns, but occasionally lay sisters with particular skills might serve in these capacities.

Portress: one of the three key officers of the convent. According to the Rule, she spent the day in an open cell without a door in order to keep guard of the entrance gate. She was one of the Discreets responsible for securing the sanctity of the enclosure. The doors were locked with two separate locks each with their own keys. Only workmen allowed into the enclosure or visitors who had received special permission from the bishop.

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan, is happily departed this life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, the 17th of August our dearly beloved sister, Sister Frances Dominick, (alias) Draycott¹²³ the 66 of her age & 40 since her entrance into Religion, she had been even from her childhood accustom'd to suffer, & Almighty God was pleas'd to sanctify her by giving her a large share in the cross of his Son, having endur'd with singular patience & silence most cruel fitts of the stone & other painfull infirmitys, without ever dispensing with herself from a perseverant following of the community in all regular observance. her Charity was universall to all, & she did with great pleasur^e assist the weak & infirm whensoever they stood in need of her help which she wou'd even press, & importune them to accept, but in such a willing & charitable manner, that it was more acceptable then the action it self; her dependance upon Superiours & her love for holy obedience, was truly edifying performing all it enjoyn'd with the greatest exactness, alwaies saying that holy Obedience gave her strength, what otherwise might seem impossible to her poor little weak & tender body; Infine it pleas'd God to crown all her vertuous actions with a happy tho' hard & painfull ~~agony~~^{death} for she lay three days in agony & seem'd by her pitifull groans ^{to suffer} ~~much~~ after which she took her flight to the never ending joys of eternal bliss as we have all reason to hope, yet being ignorant of the things of the other life, & knowing that Almighty God, examines even our justices with great severity, least any thing shou'd still retaine her speedy enjoyment of him for whom she was created, we humbly emprove your charitable prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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Anno Domini 1721

In our Convent of the English poor Clares in Roan of Jesus Maria Joseph is happily departed this mortall life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Francis (alias) Godbold¹²⁴ the 49 of her age & 24 since her Entrance into Religion. She was a soul perticularly Elected of God having been taken by his special providence from her heretical parents, & called to the state of holy Religion, in which she most piously lived exact in all Religious observance, & was of a very quiet disposition, offensive to none, most humble & laborious. It pleased God to afflict her with deafness, which she took with great patience & resignation to the divine will, as also a very sore brest which she sustain'd several years without saying any thing of it, & which was at last the cause of her death, for the humour thereof striking to her hart, gave passage to her pious soul to fly to the mansion of everlasting bliss as we have all reason to hope, yet the judgments of God being inscrutable & wholly unknown to us, least any thing shou'd still remaine to be purified, we most humbly beg your charitable prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1722

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen is happily departed this mortall life furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Winifred Bruno (alias) Hornyold,¹²⁵ the 53 of her age, & 34 since her Entrance into Religion. during which time she has left us great examples of all Religious vertues, as she begun with great fervour, so she never relented, but conserved it to the last moment, she was most eminent in all regular observance, most laborious in all hard & humble works never sparing herself, & concealing her own infirmitys, that nothing might hinder her from serving her Sisters, being

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most sweet & indulgent to all, severe to none but herself; she perform'd the office of Vicaress¹²⁶ 7 yeare, & was a great ease to Reverend Mother Abbess by her exactness in all regular observance she was twice Sick Mother,¹²⁷ which employment was truly her talent for she had so great tenderness &

¹²³ Francis Draycott (1681 – 1719), RP063

¹²⁴ Bridget Godbold (1698 – 1721), RP077

¹²⁵ Winifred Hornyold (1689 – 1722), Worcs., RP100

¹²⁶ Vicaress: at the Poor Clares was second in authority to the abbess. She served on the council with other Discreets: it was an elected position for three years which could be renewed. One of her tasks was to organise the election of the abbess when there was a vacancy including writing out the ballot papers.

¹²⁷ Infirmarian, Sick Mother, Dispenser, Apothecary - nuns involved in managing the infirmary and care for the sick sisters of the community. Mostly they were choir nuns, but occasionally lay sisters with particular skills might serve in these capacities.

compassion for the sick & infirm, & tended them with so much care, handyness & universall charity, that she was truly gratefull to all, & ^{is} extreemly regretted, her assiduity in prayer was no less edifying ever joyning Mary with Martha¹²⁸ & never neglecting the one for the other. She bore with admirable patience & silence an inward infirmity the space of 30 yeare, which was at last the cause of her death, for t'was thought that all her bowells were gangren'd which gave her infinitely to suffer, but sustain'd all with great sweetness continually making acts of love, & resignation to the divine will: her agony was long, hard & painfull, but her death so sweet & tranquill that scarce cou'd we perceive the passage: The vertuous & innocent life she has led, gives us great hopes Almighty God has judg'd her in his mercy, but his judgments being hidden & unknown to us least any thing shou'd delay her speedy passage to Eternal bliss We most humbly crave your holy prayers & suffrages Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1723*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan the 21 of January 1723 furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church is happily departed our dearly beloved sister, Sister Frances Clare (alias) Stafford<sup>129</sup> the 63 year of her age, & 46 since her entrance into Religion; during which time she has left us great examples of all Religious Vertues, a great esteem of her holy Vocation & an exact regularity; performing the works of holy Obedience with great care, she supply'd the office of Infirmarian almost a whole term, tho' she herself had more need to be tended then to tend others, having a very weak & tender body, which she never spar'd, & it was her practise never to decline or excuse herself from any thing that was ordain'd her by holy Obedience how painfull soever. Infine it pleas'd God to exercise, & try her as gold in the furnace<sup>130</sup> by a most sharp rhumatism several years before her death which oblig'd her to go with crutches, notwithstanding her fervour was such that in the very depth of Winter she wou'd come & sitt at the Quire dore from 5 a clock in the morning till 9 to be present at the divine Office, & at all the Masses which practise she constantly persever'd in, till a little before her death when her pains encreaing she

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 was no more able to come out of the Infirmary, she suffer'd much the time that remain'd till her death, but alwaies without ever complaining she being of a very quiet, silent & peacefull temper, till her forces being exhausted she took her bed, & receiv'd with great devotion Edification & presence of spirit ~~of spirit~~ all the last Sacraments, her last agony was long but peacefull & quiet in which peace & tranquility she sweetly yielded up her soul to the Creatour. The innocent & vertuous life she had alwaies led gives us great hopes she has found mercy with God, but his judgments being unsearchable & wholly unknown to us, least any thing shou'd delay her speedy flight to her heavenly Country we most humbly crave the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages. *Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1723

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan is most happily departed this mortall life furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church on the 12th of February 1723 our Venerable deare Mother Jubilarian Sister Frances Joseph (alias) Cornwallis¹³¹ the 75 yeare of her age, & 59 since her Entrance into Religion, It pleased God to Exercise her with great Interiour pains & scruples at her first coming to Religion, which cast her into a deep melancholy, but with the help of Gods grace & her confidence in Superiours, towards whom she was ever very docile, she overcame all these hindrances, & was in a state of rendring service to the holy Religion by several offices in which holy Obedience placed her, as of Portress, twice & Mistriss of the Novices¹³² which she perform'd with great Integrity & to the satisfaction of all, tho' her poor infirm body gave her much to

¹²⁸ The reference here is to the contemplative role of Mary commended by Christ in the gospels and the active work of Martha as practised by the lay sisters: see Claire Walker, 'Combining Martha and Mary: Gender and Work in Seventeenth-Century English Cloisters', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30.2 (1999): pp. 397-418. The roles of Mary and Martha are constantly referred to in conventual texts. See Luke Chapter 10: Martha serves Christ by carrying out practical tasks whereas Mary attends Christ in worship and prayer.

¹²⁹ Frances Stafford (1678 – 1723), RP173

¹³⁰ Referring to the intense heat to which the gold was subjected to test its purity: the theme of individuals being tested by God in this world as if in a furnace is a recurring one in these obituaries.

¹³¹ Frances Cornwallis (1666 – 1723), Norfolk, RP056

¹³² Novice Mistress: The nun responsible for implementing the education and daily routine of the Novices. Considered to be a senior role in the convent as she played an important role in setting standards for the community.

suffer: she was so exact in holy Obedience that she wou'd not have kept the value of a pin without leave, & her niceness in this point, made her almost troublesome to her Superiours, many years before
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her death she grew sickly & infirm, suffering very frequently most cruell colicks, & pains in her bowells, but as soon as the violence therof was over she wou'd presently return to the office, & Exercises of the Community, altho' she cou'd scarce draw her legs after her, some few years before her death being uncapable of any employment by reason of her infirmitys, she addicted herself wholly to prayer & recolection, placing all her care, study & application in preparing herself for death, she spent most of her time in the quire, & minded nothing of this world, about Christmas she went wholly to the Infirmary not being able to hold out any longer, some time after she receive'd her holy *Viaticum*, & Extream unction which she receiv'd with great devotion & ^{presence of} spirit: the day on which she dy'd she said she wanted only the recommendations of the soul & then she shou'd dye, she press'd much to have them so father come in, but told her he said them to satisfy her devotion but that she wou'd not dye that day, yes, said he I shall dye to day, after the recommendations were ended father went out but he was scarce gone a *miserere*¹³³ but they call'd him back againe, for she was just expiring, & looking upon a picture of her good Angel that hung at her beds feet she said: O my sweet Angel help me, & bowing down her head she sweetly gave up the ghost without the least Agony or pang; as it has pleas'd God to give her a great share in his Cross, so we hope he has judg'd her in his mercy, yet least any thing shou'd obstruct her speedy passage to the heavenly mansions, we humbly beg the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1723*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan, is most happily departed this mortall life, our Venerable Mother Jubilarian Sister Gertrude Clare (alias) Congrave<sup>134</sup> furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, the 25 of Aprill 1723 the 75 of her age, & 56 since her entrance into the holy Religion; It pleas'd Almighty God to send her some years after her profession a very painfull infirmity, the consequences wherof she supported with an edifying patience & sweetness; she was a true Child of providence being the only Catholick of her family, she was extremly handy in all kind  
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of works so she employ'd all her time in working for the Church & her state of infirmity rendring her incapable of greater labours, she was ever willing to do what holy Obedience, & charity towards her Sisters demanded of her, & towards the end of her life wholly employ'd herself in spinning of which she had the care & wou'd often pass whole days in this employment without distracting herself in minding any thing that concern'd her not. Infine having spent all her forces & abilitys in the Service of the holy Religion, she fell into a languishing infirmity which at last exhausted the small remainder of her strength; she receiv'd all the sacraments with great piety & devotion, her agony was painfull accompanied with convulsions but her death very peacefull & tranquill, we humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul to your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1724

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan is suddenly but happily departed this mortall life our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary Peter alias Draycot¹³⁵ the 68 yeare of her age & 44 since her Entrance into Religion, in which time she gave singular works of her piety & devotion, as also of courage in supporting many painfull infirmitys & tryalls, & altho' her death was sudden & unexpected yet we have reason to hope it was an effect of the infinit mercy of God towards her she having alwaies had a violent apprehension of death, she had been at Confession the night before, so we hope her death tho' sudden was not unprovided. We humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul to your charitable prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

¹³³ The *Miserere* is the first psalm of morning prayer and the length of time it takes to chant is dependent on whether it is sung in Latin or English. The time span referred to here is anything from 2 to 4 minutes.

¹³⁴ Gertrude Congrave (1668 – 1723), RP053

¹³⁵ Mary Draycott (1681 – 1724), RP064

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Anno Domini 1724

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan is happily departed this mortall life our dearly beloved sister, Sister Elizabeth Joseph (alias) Throckmorton,¹³⁶ the 52 years of her age, & 30 since her Entrance into Religion, in which time she has left us great examples of vertue, she having been from her first Entrance till the last breath of her life, a true mirrour & pattern of humility, mortification & penance, all her study was to humble & mortify her nature & all her delight to be with the lay Sisters, & to share in their labours, not regarding what she was, nor what she had brought to Religion; & one of them watching with her the night before she dy'd ask'd her if she knew her, she answer'd yes, yes, you are all my dears; her mortification was no less then her humility, she never wou'd grant herself the least ease or solace, she had a great knee which gave her much to suffer, & besides that a painfull rupture which made the carrying of any burthen an insupportable pain, notwithstanding she had taken, for her practise to carry 5 times a day 4 great billets¹³⁷ to the kitchen, she seldome or never warm'd herself in the sharpest colds but instead of that she wou'd go into the garden to the dunghill, & pick of bits of tyles which she thought might serve for any thing, or else sweep away the snow, infine the most painfull & abject employments were all her delight, & 'twas to afflict her even to tears if when any hard or painfull work was to be done she was not permitted to be at it, she had for a long time the care of the warmhouse¹³⁸ which office she perform'd with great content it being humble & laborious, & gave her occasion to practise a very extraordinary mortification for under pretence of making her fire before the office she carry'd up her collation bread to eate it there, which she did after having raked up the ashes with it, so that she might say with the royal prophet (*Quia panem tanquam cinerem manducabam*)¹³⁹ tis incredible what wayes she wou'd find out to mortify her self in her dyet, her watchings were not less admirable & tis an astonishing thing how she cou'd hold out with so little sleep, spending most of the night in prayer & in repeating

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her office about which she was scrupulously nice & exact, & on Communion Eves never went to bed after mattins: One day it happen'd that in mending her sandal she by chance thrust her needle into her finger to the very bone which afterwards grew so bad that it was put into the Chirurgians¹⁴⁰ hands, who cut & slash'd it from top to bottom, & took out two little bones, yet this patient & courageous soul never stirr'd nor so much as cry'd oh, but suffer'd all his painfull incisions with as great an indifferency as if as if she had felt no pain. So holy & penitential a life cou'd not choose but be terminated by a happy death, she had for 7 yeares together what weather soever it was, made a pilgrimage to St Michaels chappell in the garden to obtain a happy death which grace she obtain'd, ney I may say, her insatiable love for penance was the innocent cause therof, for it happen'd in the time of our wash, she had bin out of order some days, nevertheless nothing cou'd hinder her from going to it, when she came away the measles appear'd in her face, which faine she wou'd have dissembl'd that she might have gone to the rince,¹⁴¹ Mother Abbess having been advertis'd therof, oblig'd her to take her bed, tis likely the cold had struck the humour in by her too long resistance, for she fell into a violent feavour & great appression, which in 5 or 6 days put an end to her vertuous life, she suffer'd much but never complain'd, took all they gave her, but never ask'd for nothing, she receiv'd her holy *Viaticum* with great devotion, & preference of spirit, answering to all the prayers, & to prepare herself for extream unction said the 7 penitential psalms,¹⁴² with those that tended her, some time after the recommendations were read, & whilst the sisters were reading the psalms she sweetly render'd up her soul to God without the least agony or pang; the holy & penitential life she has led gives us great hopes she will soon enjoy the sight of him whom she has so faithfully serv'd yet the judgements of God being unsearchable, least any thing shou'd still remaine to be purify'd, we humbly crave your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

¹³⁶ Elizabeth Throckmorton (1695 – 1724), Warws. RP182

¹³⁷ OED: Thick piece of wood suitable for use on a fire.

¹³⁸ The Parlour was one the few places in the convent kept warm by a fire

¹³⁹ See Psalm 101:10, 'For I did eat ashes like bread'

¹⁴⁰ The surgeon came from outside the convent and was called in when an operation was needed.

¹⁴¹ It has not been possible to identify this

¹⁴² Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 and 143: Recited during Lent as a special source of prayer and reflection.

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The yeare 1725

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Rouën is happily departed this mortall life, furnish'd with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Catherin Clare (alias) Street¹⁴³ the 63 year of her age, & 46 since her Entrance into Religion; In which time she has left us great many examples of vertue by her assiduity in all religious observance, & exactness in all that holy Obedience demanded of her, in the different offices which she perform'd with great fidelity, & integrity, above all she was very singular in an universal charity towards all, every endeavouring to assist those that had need, leaving whatsoever she was about to give them satisfaction: It pleas'd God before she dy'd to purify her by a lingring disease the space of 5 months which she sustain'd with singular patience to the end, alwaies more attentive, & solicitous for others that were sick, then for what she herself endur'd, she had a singular devotion to the glorious apostle St Peter, to the end he might open her the gates of heaven, & the day before she dy'd, a Sister having told her that she thought she wou'd not last many days, she answer'd what do you think of to morrow-wont St Peter put me in his chaire?, it was the feast of the chaire of St Peter the 22 of February;¹⁴⁴ which even so happen'd, for that night her forces beginning notably to decay, she receiv'd with great attention & devotion the rites of our holy mother the Church, & in the afternoon, after ~~noon~~ a sharp but short agony, she sweetly render'd up her soul to her Creatour, altho' we have reason to hope, that St Peter has open'd her the gates of heaven, yet the judgments of God being unknown to us least any thing shou'd obstruct her speedy passage to eternal mansions, we humbly beg you will accelerate unto her this happiness by the prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1725

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan suddenly but most happily departed this mortall life our venerable deare Mother Jubilarian Sister Frances of the Passion (alias) Browne¹⁴⁵ the 4th of Aprill. She was the best sister

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of the house, & may well be called one of our first Foundresses having been profess'd by our Venerable Mother first Foundress of this monastery, she was a woman replete with all vertues, & it wou'd be hard to say in which she excelled most, She had a true love & esteem of her holy Vocation, & the true spirit therof, her zeal for holy poverty was truly remarkable, never seeking or desiring what was new, commodious, or handsome, making what she had for her use serve to the last extremity, yet very carefull & charitable towards others, that they shou'd want for nothing: her humility was no less, for she submitted herself to all, & was ever ready to accuse herself & excuse others; her Obedience was no less admirable, for she in all things submitted herself to her Superiour tho' much younger then herself, & alwaies excited others to doe the same both by word & example, She was Vicaress 17 yeare, & perform'd that office with great zeal, solicitude, & charity, & tho' she was sickly & infirm she wou'd straine herself above her forces to follow the quire & regular observance, untill her great age & infirmitys oblig'd Superiours to confine her to the Infirmary, then she gave herself wholly to prayer, silence, & recolection, & preparing her self for death, notwithstanding she omitted not manual work making all the tunicks of the community; She was very deaf, & wou'd often give God thanks for it, saying that it hinder'd her from hearing what might distract her from the holy presence of God, thus she lived till 87 yeare of her age & 71 of her holy profession. She fell sick on Easter Tuesday at night of a plurisy, the surgeon came the next day, ~~the next day~~, he found her very ill, & desir'd she might be remov'd to the Infirmary, but she beg'd she might stay in her cell, till next day, he let her blood, but said t'was time enough to give her the holy *Viaticum* the next day, but it pleas'd God to call her to himself before that time, for about eleven a clock they gave her an egg which choaked her on a sudden, & she dy'd immediately to the great sorrow & regrett of the community, who had a high esteem & veneration

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¹⁴³ Jane Street (1679 – 1725), RP177

¹⁴⁴ Feast of the Chair of St Peter: celebrates the choosing of Peter by Christ to be in a position of authority in the church.

¹⁴⁵ Anne Browne (1655 – 1725), Oxon., RP034

for her, she had been at Confession the night before, & at the holy Communion on Easter Sunday, Monday & Tuesday, which together with her holy & vertuous life gives us great hopes she is now with God, yet least any thing shou'd still remain to be purify'd by him who judges even our justice it self, We humbly crave the assistance of your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

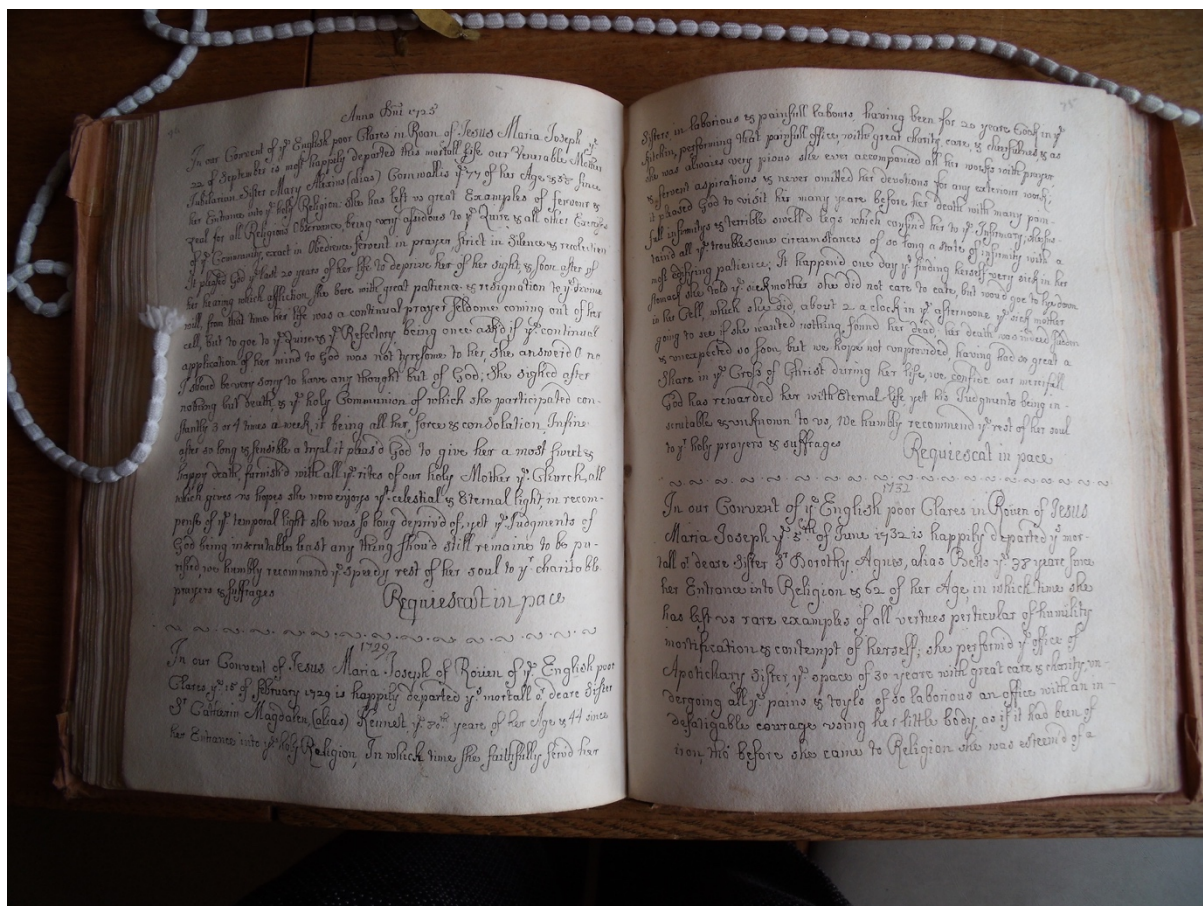
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*Anno Domini 1726*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan is most happily departed this mortall life the 20<sup>th</sup> January our most dearly beloved sister, Sister Anne Raphael, (alias) Sturdy,<sup>146</sup> the 70<sup>th</sup> year of her age, & 49 since her Entrance into Religion in all which time she gave singular marks of her piety & exactness in all religious observance; she exercised the office of sick mother twice, & of Dispenseer & Sacristin<sup>147</sup> with great fidelity, & to the satisfaction of all the Community, receiving the sick that were sent to her, <sup>in</sup> ~~with~~ so kind & sweet a manner, as t'was a great solace & encouragment to them; her zeal for the divine office was most remarkable; for in what employment soever she was in, She order'd her affairs so as seldome or ever was she absent from the divine office & perform'd it with great piety & devotion; Some years before she dy'd, it pleas'd God to send her a cancer in her leg, which was very painfull, & many yeares before she cou'd never lye in bed, but alwaies slept in a chaire not being able to doe it by reason of the cramp, which took her when she lay down, & t'was thought that might be the cause of the Cancer which took her afterwards, & that the humours of her body fell into her legs, she sustain'd it nevertheless with great patience; & resignation to the divine will, & seldome stay'd from the divine office for it, till at last the humour striking in soon brought her to her end, which her love to God made her ardently desire; she receiv'd her holy *Viaticum* & afterwards extream unction with great devotion, she lay 2 days in agony after which she sweetly & with great tranquility she yielded up her soul to God; her vertuous & suffering life makes us hope God has judg'd her in his mercy, yet his judgments being inscrutable least any thing shou'd still remaine to be purify'd we humbly crave your prayers & suffrages *Requiescat in pace*

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<p.74>

¹⁴⁶ Anne Sturdy (1676 – 1726), RP178

¹⁴⁷ Infirmarian, Sick Mother, Dispenser, Apothecary - nuns involved in managing the infirmary and care for the sick sisters of the community. Mostly they were choir nuns, but occasionally lay sisters with particular skills might serve in these capacities. Sacristan: the nun who would prepare the necessary items for the Mass to be celebrated by the priest. Responsible for the candles, flowers in the chapel and for laying out the vestments worn by the priest, the linens placed on the altar, as well as setting out the communion hosts and wine. Also responsible for seeing that everything including the silver was kept in good order and repaired.



(Opening 74-5)

Anno Domini 1725

In our Convent of the English poor Clares in Roan of Jesus Maria Joseph the 22 of September is most happily departed this mortall life our Venerable Mother Jubilarian Sister Mary Alexius (alias) Cornwallis¹⁴⁸ the 77 year of her age & 38 since her Entrance into the holy Religion: She has left us great Examples of fervour & zeal for all Religious Observance, being very assiduous to the Quire & all other Exercises of the Community, exact in Obedience fervent in prayer, strict in Silence & recollection. It pleased God the last 20 years of her life to deprive her of her sight, & soon after of her hearing which affliction she bore with great patience, & resignation to the divine will, from that time her life was a continual prayer seldome coming out of her cell, but to goe to the Quire & the Refectory being once ask'd if the continual application of her mind to God was not tyresome to her, she answer'd O no I shou'd be very sorry to have any thought but of God; She sighed after nothing but death, & the holy Communion of which she participated constantly 3 or 4 times a week, it being all her force & consolation, Infine after so long & sensible a tryal it pleas'd God to give her a most sweet & happy death, furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church, all which gives us hopes she now enjoys that celestial & Eternal light, in recompense of the temporal light she was so long depriv'd of, yet the Judgments of God being inscrutable least any thing shou'd still remaine to be purified, we humbly recommend the speedy rest of her soul to your charitable prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

1729

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of Roüen of the English poor Clares the 15 of february 1729 is happily departed this mortall our deare sister, Sister Catherin Magdalen, (alias) Kennet,¹⁴⁹ the 80th

¹⁴⁸ Blanche Cornwallis (1668 – 1725), Norfolk. RP054

¹⁴⁹ Catherine Kennett (1686 – 1729), RP108

yeare of her age & 44 since her Entrance into the holy Religion; In which time she faithfully serv'd her

<p.75

Sisters in laborious & painfull labours, having been for 20 yeare Cook in the kitchen, performing that painfull office, with great charity, care & cheerfulness, & as she was alwaies very pious she ever accompanied all her works with prayer & fervent aspirations, & never omitted her devotions for any exteriour work; it pleas'd God to visit her many yeare before her death with many painfull infirmitys & terrible swell'd legs which confin'd her to the infirmary; she sustain'd all the troublesome circumstances of so long a state of infirmity with a most edifying patience; It happen'd one day that finding herself very sick in her stomack she told the sick mother she did not care to eate, but wou'd goe to lye down in her Cell which she did, about 2 a clock in the afternoone the sick mother going to see if she wanted nothing found her dead, her death was indeed sudden & unexpected so soon, but we hope not unprovided, having had so great a share in the cross of Christ during her life, we confide our mercifill God has rewarded her with eternal life, yet his judgments being inscrutable & unknown to us, we humbly recommend the rest of her soul to your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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1732

In our Convent of the English poor Clares in Roüen of Jesus Maria Joseph of the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1732 is happily departed this mortall [life] our deare sister, Sister Dorothy Agnes, alias Betts<sup>150</sup> the 38 yeare since her Entrance into Religion & 62 of her age, in which time she has left us rare examples of all vertues perticular of humility mortification & contempt of herself; she perform'd the office of Apotichary Sister,<sup>151</sup> the space of 30 yeare with great care & charity, undergoing all the pains & toyls of so laborious an office with an indefatigable courage using her little body, as if it had been of iron, tho' before she came to Religion she was esteem'd of a

<p.76>

very weak & tender constitution, & so nice that she cou'd not go to bed without washing her feet in sweet herbs, yet after her coming to Religion she has often been seen going about the h house with the blood running about her heels, by the large chops<sup>152</sup> which the cold had made yet she minded it not, & t'was to afflict her even to tears to speak to her of any solace or dispensation, for all her endeavours & desires tended to get the mastery of her own body, which she had attain'd unto in an eminent degree & altho' she was ever busyed in the painfull office of the Apotichary, if the Community was employ'd in any hard work she was the first & last at it; she had often cruel fitts of the stone & other painfull infirmitys, yet was never heard to complaine but as soon as she could stand on her feet she was againe with the community; her death was indeed sudden being taken at three a clock in the morning with a violent colick & vomiting & twisting of the guts, so there was no room but for the holy oyls, for she was dead before twelve; The holy & penitential life she has led gives us great hopes she is now with God, yet his Judgments being unknown to us least any thing shou'd still remaine to be purified, we humbly beg the assistance of your prayers & suffrages of charity. *Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1733

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen is happily departed this mortall life, furnished with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church, the 29 of October the 76 of her age & 52 of her holy profession our venerable Mother Jubilarian¹⁵³ Sister Lucy Felix, alias Petre.¹⁵⁴ She seemed to be a soul perticularly chosen of God, for her Father having unfortunately left the Church, she stole away from him, against

<p.77> [page cut out - no missing text]

¹⁵⁰ Sara Betts (1695 – 1732), RP019

¹⁵¹ Apothecary Sister: Infirmary, Sick Mother, Dispenser, Apothecary - nuns involved manage the infirmary and care for the sick sisters of the community. Mostly they were choir nuns, but occasionally lay sisters with particular skills might serve in these capacities.

¹⁵² This affliction seems to refer to chapped and cracked heels

¹⁵³ Jubilarians were those who had achieved 50 years since profession

¹⁵⁴ Lucy Petre (1681 – 1733), RP141

his will & came over under pretence of coming to see her Aunts having 2 here,¹⁵⁵ & soon after embrac'd with great courage the life of a poor Clare, complying exactly with all her obligations, & was of a very sweet & quiet disposition, exact in all regular observance; She afterwards perform'd the offices of Dispenseer & Infirmarian¹⁵⁶ with great care & charity, & to the satisfaction of all: It pleased God 8 yeares before her death to afflict her with blindnes, & other infirmitys which she bore with a most edifying patience, & constant resignation to the divine will which was no small mortification to her active temper she spent the remainder of her life in continual prayer, & preparing her self for death. As it has pleas'd our deare Lord to give her a large share in his cross so we hope he will give her a greater in his glory, but the judgments of God being hidden & unsearchable, & wholly unknown unto us least any thing shou'd obstruct her speedy passage to the heavenly mansions, we humbly beg your prayers, & suffrages of charity

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini* 1733 the 26 of december in our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roan is suddenly departed this mortall life Sister Catherin Augustin (alias) Monington<sup>157</sup> the 31 yeare of her age, & 6 since her Entrance into the holy Religion in which short time, she compleated the vertue of many yeares by her great exactness in all regular observance, which proceeded from the ardent love she had for her Vocation, her zeale for the divine office was very perticular, she was extreamply belov'd of all, & did truly deserve it, for her constant cheerfull & obliging temper made her truly the treasure the joy & delights of all the Community, & a true comfort to her superiours being ever ready to do what they desir'd of her, without the least reply or difficulty; her death was very sudden & when we least ex-

<p.78>

pected it, she had had a violent feavour for some days, & at last fell into a sincope<sup>158</sup> which put an end to her mortall pilgrimage, to receive as we have reason to hope the reward of her vertuous life, yet the Judgments of God, going beyond our reach, least there shou'd still remaine something to be purified, we humbly beg your prayers of charity

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Anno Domini 1734 the 11th of July

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen, is happily departed this life, furnished with all the Rightes of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Elizabeth Clare (alias) Somerset¹⁵⁹ the 56 yeare of her Age & 38 of her holy Profession in which time she has left us great examples of patient & quiet suffering it having pleas'd Almighty God to give her the tryal of a sickly & painfull life which she supported with great courage & patience never complaining of what she suffer'd, taking indifferently whatsoever was given her thinking it better than she deserv'd out of her love for holy poverty, she was also ever ready to assist any that stood in need of her help, perticularly those who at any time might have given her occasion of offence t'was those she took most pleasure to oblige; her last illness ~~for~~ was an impostume in her throat¹⁶⁰ which tho' she suffer'd much yet she bore it with her usual courage, & took not her bed till scarce two days before she dy'd, she said to a Sister the day before she dy'd, tomorrow, said she, will be the last day of my life, tho' she seem'd not so neere, yet it prov'd so, she dying about twelve a clock after a painfull but short agony. As it has pleas'd God to give her a large share in his cross so we hope he will give her a great one in his glory, yet his judgments being unknown to us least any thing shou'd still remain to be purified we humbly crave your prayers of charity

Requiescat in pace

<p.79>

¹⁵⁵ Her aunts were Lucy Francis Petre (1657-1713) RP140 and Mary Joseph Petre (1655-1693) RP142.

¹⁵⁶ Infirmarian, Sick Mother, Dispenser, Apothecary - nuns involved in managing the infirmary and care for the sick sisters of the community. Mostly they were choir nuns, but occasionally lay sisters with particular skills might serve in these capacities.

¹⁵⁷ Catherine Monington (1728 – 1734), RP127

¹⁵⁸ OED: syncope: heart failure

¹⁵⁹ Elizabeth Somerset (1696 – 1734), RP171

¹⁶⁰ Impostume: A swelling or cyst



Mary of the Holy Cross (Talbot) Howard Abbess 1701-35

Anno Domini 1735 the 22 of March

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares is departed this Life furnished with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church our most venerable Reverend & dearly beloved Mother Sister Mary of the holy Cross (alias) Talbot¹⁶¹ the 82 of her age, & 60 of her holy Profession: She came to this house with no other commendation but that of her own merit, which soon charmed all the Community; She was a chosen Soul, who altho' bought up in heresy was by a sp^ecial providence of God brought into france & put into a french monastery where she was converted & made a firm resolution to be Religious[;] but finding herself call'd to a strict order came to this house where she was joyfully receiv'd, her sweet & aimable temper making her truly lov'd & cherish'd of all, she was most exact & punctual in all regular observance, most faithfull in all the Offices & employments holy

¹⁶¹ Mary Howard (1675 – 1735), Also known as Mary Talbot Parnell Howard, RP101. Her biography was written by A.B., [Alban Butler] *A short account of the life and virtues of the venerable and religious mother, Mary of the Holy Cross, abbess of the English Poor Clares at Rouen*, (London: 1767) see also *Firmly I believe and truly: The Spiritual Tradition of Catholic England*, eds. John Saward, John Morrill, & Michael Tomko, (Oxford: OUP, 2013) pp. 293-96.

Obedience impos'd upon her, to wit of Quire Mistress,¹⁶² second & first Portress,¹⁶³ & infine for her great merit, was the yeare 1701 canonically chosen Abbess, the 23 of december, & exercis'd^{it with} that charity, piety, zeal, humility & sweetnes that she truly gained the harts of all who were so happy to know her, & to be under her conduct. she had an universal charity & was a true refuge & comfort to all in affliction, all her endeavours & thoughts tended to no other thing then the advancement & spiritual good of her poor children which made her continually inventing little sweet devotions for their comfort & practise; She govern'd & maintain'd this house in great peace union & charity the space of 33 yeare, wh & had receiv'd to religion 34 persons. It pleas'd Almighty God to purify her as gold in the furnace by many painfull infirmitys, but especially the last 7 months of her life not being able to stir out of her chamber or even to set her foot to the ground, so prodigiously was her body swell'd^{with a dropsy} all which she endur'd with the sweetnes & patience of an Angel & lest not still to think of all her poor children & to provide for all their necessitys with the true hart of a Mother; her sicknes still increasing, she receiv'd all the Sacraments with great devotion & presence of spirit, after she had receiv'd

<p.80>

her holy *Viaticum*, tho' she were reduc'd to the greatest extremity of weaknes yet she wou'd speak to every Sister of the Community in perticular saying she cou'd not dye contented unles she did; she asked every one pardon for all the pain she might have given them & then gave them some good advice according to every ones necessity, which even burst their harts with grief to think they were going to loose so sweet, & so aimable a Mother, soon after she lost her speech & fell into agony which was long & painfull, after which she most sweetly yielded up her happy soul to her Creatour, in the midst of the sighs & tears of her poor Children after having been to them the best of Mothers the space of 33 year 3 months, to receive as we have all reason to hope from the hand of the just remuneratour a plentiful reward of so holy & vertuous a life, but because the judgments of God are unknown to us, least anything shou'd detain her speedy flight to the heavenly mansions, we humbly crave your holy prayers & suffrages

Requiescat in pace

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*Anno Domini 1735 the 6<sup>th</sup> of June*

In our Convent of the English poor Clares in Rouën is happily departed this mortall life furnished with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1735 our dearly beloved Sister, Sister Agnes Clare (alias) Blundel,<sup>164</sup> the 36 of her age & 16 of her Entrance into Religion, in which time she has left us great examples of humble labour, in which she never spar'd herself till 3 or 4 yeare before her death when it pleas'd God she fell into a painfull consumption which she endur'd a long time without complaining being as serviceable to her Sisters as her forces wou'd permit, till at length the evil getting the upper hand, she was forc't to go to the sick house tho' much against her will seeing herself unable to serve her sisters, she suffer'd much, but alwaies with an edifying patience, she begged of Almighty God at the beginning of the January before she dy'd that she might suffer five months longer to honour the 5 sacred wounds of

<p.81>

Jesus Christ which was alwaies the object of her great devotion, it pleased God to grant her what she demanded, for she dy'd at the end of the 5 months, after having received with great devotion & presence of spirit the last Sacraments, Altho' we have reason to believe Almighty God has judg'ed her in his mercy yet his judgments being unknown to<sup>us</sup> least any thing shou'd still reaine to be purified, we humbly crave your holy prayers & suffrages

*Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1735 the 25 of July

In our Convent of the English poor Clares in Rouën is happily departed this mortall life, furnished with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church the 25 of July 1735 our dearly beloved sister, Sister

¹⁶² Probably chantress: Chantress: responsible for the performance of the liturgy, selecting music, choosing cantors and readers, supervising singing practices and ensuring all the correct books are in place and in good order.

¹⁶³ Grate sister: also known as Portress who acted as guardian of access to the cloister making sure that only those with special permits could enter the enclosure and that time spent in the speak house was monitored to avoid gossip and social gatherings. The grate or grille sealed the aperture in the wall was where lay people came to talk to members of the community.

¹⁶⁴ Margery Blundel (1719 – 1735), RP021

Collet Clare (alias) Skelton¹⁶⁵ the 72 yeare of her age & 55 since her Entrance into Religion which she has spent in a faithfull compliance with all her dutys & a constant regularity, her fidelity in all the Employments holy Obedience put upon her was very Extraordinary, she having been in all the hardest offices of the house as Portress, Dispenseer, Sacristine,¹⁶⁶ & was actually Mistriss of the Novices which office she exercised above 20 yeare, teaching them more by her example then by words, having alwaies been very hard to herself & has truly exhausted her forces in the service of the holy Religion, till at last she was forc't to yield to the orders of her Superiours & goe to the sickhouse, where soon after she was taken with a palsey which took from her the perfect use of her speech & she cou'd not pronounce a word without great paine which was a great mortification to her, yet she bore nevertheless with an equal sweetness & serenity, never letting appear by the least sigh or groan that she desir'd any other thing than to fullfill the will of God, the palsey afterwards fell on her left side, depriving her of the use of her members, yet she bore all with an equal patience & tranquility, but finding her evils to encrease, she received the last holy Sacraments

<p.82>

with great devotion & presence of spirit, & some days after, fell into agony which was but short, & then sweetly render'd up her ~~her~~ spirit into the hands of her Creatour, as we have all reason to hope, yet the Judgments of God being unsearchable least any thing shou'd still retaine her speedy flight to the celestial mansions, we humbly crave your prayers & suffrages. *Requiescat in pace*

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*Anno 1736 [the 8 of June]<sup>167</sup>*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen is happily departed this mortall life, furnished with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister Sister Mary Joseph (alias) Hales,<sup>168</sup> the 57 yeare of her age & the 40<sup>th</sup> of her holy Profession. It pleas'd God few yeares after to afflict her with sickness, & terrible convulsions which was follow'd by an infirmity which took from the use of her limbs, & render'd her bedrid the space of 25 yeare, all which she endur'd with great patience, employing her time in doing little works for the Service of the Community as long as she was able, she receive'd all the Rites of the church with great devotion & presence of spirit & happily gave her soul to God the 8<sup>th</sup> of June. As it has pleas'd Almighty God to give her a great share in his Cross, so we hope he has given her a greater in his glory notwithstanding as the judgments of God are wholly unknown to us, least any thing shou'd remaine to be purify'd that may hinder her from enjoying the fruition of her heavenly Spouse, we humbly recommend her to your prayers & suffrages *Requiescat in pace*

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Anno Domini 1736 [the 3^d of September]¹⁶⁹

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of poor Clares in Roüen is happily departed this mortall life furnished with the Sacrament of Extream unction¹⁷⁰ our dearly beloved sister, Sister Mary of the holy Sacrament (alias) Ravenscroft¹⁷¹ the 61 of her aage [sic] & 44 since her Entrance into Religion, her chief design in embracing so strict an Order was her great desire of doing pennance but her weak & tender condition permitted her to keep her Observance, but very few yeares the rest of her life she spent

¹⁶⁵ Eleanor Skelton (1679 – 1735), RP163

¹⁶⁶ Grate sister: also known as Portress who acted as guardian of access to the cloister making sure that only those with special permits could enter the enclosure and that time spent in the speak house was monitored to avoid gossip and social gatherings. The grate or grille sealed the aperture in the wall was where lay people came to talk to members of the community.

Infirmarian, Sick Mother, Dispenser, Apothecary - nuns involved manage the infirmary and care for the sick sisters of the community. Mostly they were choir nuns, but occasionally lay sisters with particular skills might serve in these capacities. Sacristan: the nun who would prepare the necessary items for the Mass to be celebrated by the priest. Responsible for the candles, flowers in the chapel and for laying out the vestments worn by the priest, the linens placed on the altar, as well as setting out the communion hosts and wine. Also responsible for seeing that everything including the silver was kept in good order and repaired.

¹⁶⁷ Added in another hand

¹⁶⁸ Elizabeth Hales (1696 – 1736), Kent. RP083

¹⁶⁹ Added in another hand

¹⁷⁰ Extreme Unction was the final anointing of the dying person: it is mentioned here because Sister Mary had probably not received the Eucharist or *viaticum*.

¹⁷¹ Mary Ravenscroft (1693 – 1736), RP151

in the Infirmary suffering for forty years many painfull infirmitys with a most edifying patience, so that she had her desire of doing pennance tho' not

<p.83>

in the manner she intended, the last week of her life she suffer'd like a martyr & some yeares before she fell down & broke the bone of her neck which altho' it was well sett, it gave her ever after ~~after~~ much to suffer, so she has ever been a child of the Cross, of which she has made her profit, & gives us reason to hope she will enjoy as great a crown in the next life, but the judgments of ^{God} being unsearchable & wholly unknown to ^{us} least any thing shou'd obstruct her speedy passage to eternal happiness we humbly crave your prayers

Requiescat in Pace

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*Anno Domini 1736 [the 28 of October]*<sup>172</sup>

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen is happily departed this mortall life furnished with all the Sacraments of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved Mother Jubilarian Sister Dorothy Joseph (alias) Hanford<sup>173</sup> the 72 year of her age & 53 since her Entrance into Religion wherin she has been a true edifying example of regularity & Religious dutys even to a tittle,<sup>174</sup> going in a constant even path in all observance, neither turning to the right hand, or the left, & being so habituated therin that these two last years of her sicknes she cou'd scarce be brought to leave them, when she was in the greatest weaknes; She also was extreamly laborious, & humble, never spar'd herself in any hard work, but took a delight in all such things; her last sicknes cou'd not be defin'd what it was, the Doctours thought it was a polipe that was framing over <sup>her</sup> hart, but it did afterwards degenerate into a kind of a dropsy,<sup>175</sup> & then into wasting of all her body, & in many places no skin to cover the bones, all this, she bore with admirable patience, & was present to herself to the very last when she render'd up her happy soul to her Creatour

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Requiescat in pace

<p.84>

*Anno Domini 1736 the 24 of September*¹⁷⁶

In our Convent of the English poor Clares in Roüen is happily departed this mortal life, furnish'd with the Sacrament of Extream unction our dear Sister Ursula Methilda (alias) Sadleir¹⁷⁷ the 66 yeare of her age & 48 since her entrance into Religion: She was prevented¹⁷⁸ by Almighty God, from her young yeares with piety & ^a vocation to be a poor Clare which her father did all he cou'd to divert her from, ^{he} ~~it~~ being extreamly fond of her to whose perswasion & flattery she wou'd never yield, but undertook our manner of life with great fervour, & went on several years in a most exact regularity, but Almighty God whose judgments are different from ours was pleas'd to permit ^{her} ~~us~~ to have a great weaknes in her head & judgment all the rest of her life, but in the midst of all her extravagances one might see in her a great fund of goodness, piety, & regularity & alwaies an ardent ^{desire} of the holy Communion, which was sometimes permitted her, her last sicknes was a dropsy in her stomach & a st'ong feavour which caused her a violent agony, in which she render'd up her soul to her creatour where we hope she enjoys Eternal happynes, but least any ^{thing} should retard her speedy passage we humbly beg your prayers of charity

~~~~~  
*Requiescat in pace*

[New hand]<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Added in another hand

<sup>173</sup> Dorothy Hanford (1684 – 1736), Worcs. RP086

<sup>174</sup> tittle: to the smallest point.

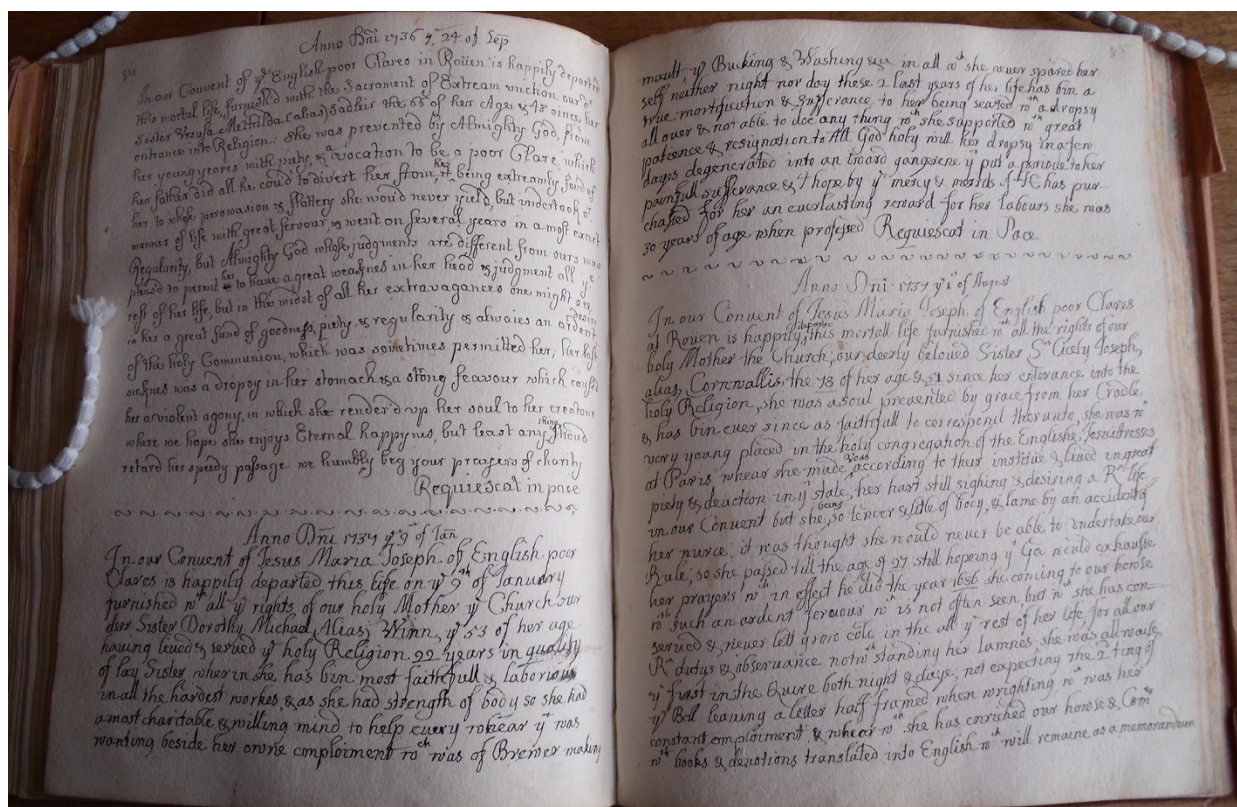
<sup>175</sup> Dropsy: fluid retention

<sup>176</sup> Added in another hand. This is the last entry in Cecily Cornwallis' hand.

<sup>177</sup> Elizabeth Sadleir (1689 – 1736), RP156

<sup>178</sup> OED: God's grace provided her with piety and a vocation which predisposed her to become a Poor Clare.

<sup>179</sup> The previous entries were written in the impeccable rounded hand of Cecily Cornwallis. In her final entries, errors crept into spelling and more corrections appeared, although the hand remained clear and unmistable to the end.



(Opening 84-5)

Anno Domini 1737 the 9<sup>th</sup> of January

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of English poor Clares is happily departed this life on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church our deer Sister Dorothy Michael (alias) Winn,<sup>180</sup> the 53 of her age having lived & served the holy Religion 22 years in quality of Lay Sister, wher in she has bin most faithfull & laborious in all the hardest workes, & as she had strength of body so she had a most charitable & willing mind to help every whear that was wanting beside her owne employment which was of Brewer<sup>181</sup> making

mault, the Bucking<sup>182</sup> & Washing &c in all which she never spared her self neither night nor day these 2 last years of her life has bin a true mortification & sufferance to her being seized with a dropsy all over & not able to doe any thing which she supported with great patience & resignation to Almighty God holy will her dropsy in a few dayes degenerated into an i[n]ward gangrene that put a periode to her painfull sufferance & I hope by the mercy & merits of Jesus Christ has purchased for her an everlasting reward for her labours she was 30 years of age when professed

*Requiescat in pace*

Anno Domini 1737 the 1<sup>st</sup> of August

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of English poor Clares at Rouen is happily departed this mortall life furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church; our dearly beloved sister, Sister Cicely Joseph (alias) Cornwallis,<sup>183</sup> the 78 of her age & 51 since her entrance into the holy Religion,

<sup>180</sup> Dorothy Winn (1715 – 1737), Caernarvon, Wales. RP204

<sup>181</sup> The role of the Brewer was essential as water was not fit to drink and the common drink among all citizens was 'small beer'. This was a weak form of beer sterilised through the process of fermentation and brewing.

<sup>182</sup> OED: to steep or boil in an alkaline lye as a first process in buck-washing or bleaching.

<sup>183</sup> Elizabeth (in baptism) Cornwallis (1688 – 1737), RP055, was the scribe for 50 years at Rouen. She left a substantial number of manuscripts on a range of topics in an impeccably neat hand. These obituaries were written by her until her death in 1737. Her sister Cecily remained with the Institute of Mary, otherwise known colloquially as the Jesuitesses. The Mary Ward Sisters opened a house with a school attached in Paris in 1650 but no documents have survived from the community. The Institute had well-regarded schools, providing most of the teaching themselves: they did not observe enclosure.

she was a soul prevented by grace from her Cradle & has bin ever since as faithfull to correspond therunto, she was when very young placed in the holy congregation of the Englishe Jesuittresses at Paris, whear she made vows according to their institu[t]e & lived in great piety & devotion in that state, her hart still sighing & desiring a religious life in our convent but she being so tender & litle of body, & lame by an accident of her nurce: it was thought she would never be able to under[t]ake our Rule;<sup>184</sup> so she passed till the age of 27 still hoping that God would exhauste her prayers which in effect he did the year 1686 she coming to our howse with such an ardent fervour which is not often seen, but which she has conserved & never lett grow cold in the all the rest of her life, for all our Religious dutys & observance notwithstanding her lamnes, she was allwise the first in the Quire both night & daye, not expecting the 2d ting of the bell leaving a letter half framed when wrighting which was her constant emploiment<sup>185</sup> & whear with she has enriched our howse & Community with books & devotions translated into English which will remaine as a memorandum

<p.86>

of her capacity & a treasure to all that comes after us; she had a most charming voyce for singing which drew a vast concourse of poeple[sic] into our Church upon great feastes on[e] might then both heer & see the ardor of her Soul upon her lipps by the force of & Emphasy which she gave to her voice which was most wonderfull in such a litle body but scarce ever past it without spitting blood, she had made her self a victim to honor the most adorable Sacrament of our Aulter which the better to accomplish she ever went as soon as it rung to matines to prostrate before it & sought all occasions & devotions to animate others to the same. God Almighty did favour her in especial manner which the Guift of piety & Prayer in which she spent all the spare moments that she could contrive but with out the least disorder in her Obedience or Regularity in which she was constantly faithfull & fervent to that her last day; the 4 or 5 last years of her life God was pleased to favour her with a continual attention to his divine presence in such a perticular manner that in all her works & affaires of Portresse<sup>186</sup> which she was then, did never distract or take away the intimecy of it from her hart or thoughts, her last sickness was a decay of nature but which in her wishes<sup>it</sup> did not goe on so fast as she desired for the languishing she had to be with deerly beloved Lord Jesus Christ & had nothing elce in her mouth. When will my Lord Jesus Come. infine the hower of her desired releacement came & her happy soul departed upon the 30 of July 1737 she was aged of 78 & 51 in Religion

*Requiescat in pace*

~~~~~  
Anno Domini 1737 the 5 of December

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of English poor Clares att Roüen is happily departed this life furnished with all the right of our holy Mother the Church our deerly beloved Sister Catherin Agnes alias Hales,¹⁸⁷ the 47^{of her age} & 39 since her enterance into the holy Religion. God Almighty brought her hither at the age of six year old & when of competent age embraced our institute tho' of an weak & infirme constitution, & has ever since had a very sickly life which

<p.87>

she has sustained with wonderfull patience living in the Infirmary, with such a cordiall charity to all that wear ther that she was a true help & support to em in all their necessitys & wants taking from her self what she thought might be proper & needfull to them & never sparing her self in the most vile & lothsome things about the sick or to help the infirmariens; not alone did her charity extend to the sick in the infirmary but to the whole Community & whosome ever wanted her help & assistance either by night or day she never refused or spared her self in the least rather neglecting her owne wants when she saw others stand in need of hers, she was seized on with a most painfull Dropsy over all her body some months before her death not being able to help her self with out 4 or 5 Sisters to assist her, & received all the last Sacraments with an entire presence of spirit & answering to the recommendations

¹⁸⁴ It was thought that the austerity of the Poor Clare Rule would prove too much for her because of her fragile state of health.

¹⁸⁵ As the scribe for the convent Cecily Cornwallis spent most her time writing. Several thousand pages have survived in her meticulous hand.

¹⁸⁶ Portress: one of the three key officers of the convent. According to the Rule, she spent the day in an open cell without a door in order to keep guard of the entrance gate. She was one of the discreets responsible for securing the sanctity of the enclosure. The doors were locked with two separate locks each with their own keys. Only workmen or medical men were allowed into the enclosure or visitors who had received special permission from the bishop.

¹⁸⁷Catherine Hales (1698 – 1737) Kent, RP082

of the Soul to the last Amen that one could scarce perseave when it departed, which was upon 5th December aged of 57 & in religion 39

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1738 the 17 of January

In Our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of English poor Clares att Roüen is happily [departed] this life furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved Sister Martha Magdalen alias Elizabeth Mathews¹⁸⁸ a Lay Sister[.] she has bin a faithfull servant both to God & man & a most excelent Religious having a high esteeme of her ^{vocation} & a never ending acknowledgment & gratitude for the favour we had don her in receaving her as she termed it to be a Religious woman of which she had had all her life such an ardent desire of & has employed her self most faithfully in all that holy Obedience ordained, but allwise joined Magdalin to Martha¹⁸⁹ having received of God the favour of a most intence application & atention to the presence of God & particulary in the most adorable sacrament of the Aulter. she kept the morning watch ever since

<p.88>

came allwaies rising att 2 of the Clock kneeling or prostrate before it till 5 a clock unless that any Sick required her help which she was willing to give at any time ther she poored out her hart & affection & prepared her self every day to comunicate Sacramentaly if her Superiour thought ^{fit} or that ther wanting any one to make the number of dayly Comunio[n].] she was all wise ready prepared; she had for employment since the death of Lady Strickland¹⁹⁰ who she waited upon, to sweep & rub the Quire which she did with so much devotion [&] attention as if she had seen our Blessed Saviour visibly[.] the rest of the day was employed in spinning which she did very delicatly so that we never bought any thread of any sort[.] the 2 last years of her life she was seized with a violent cough which never left her night nor day till she was worne away to skin & bone but never left her ordinary work & employment till 3 months before she dyed her forces being entirely decayed she was forced to be carried to the sick howse where she spent the rest of her life in entertaining her self with God[.] the last week she had violent pangs that one thought every one to be ^{the} last all which she suffered with great patience, infine the moment was come that Almighty God had designed the Agony was most violent in which she rendred up her Soul to her Creator for to enter as we hope into eternal rest & receive the reward of her labours & vertueuse life[.] she dyed the 17 of Jan 1738 aged of 57 & 27 in Religion being 30 year old when she came to Re[ligion]

Requiescat in pace

[New Hand]

Anno Domini 1738 the 27 of March

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares in Roüen is happily departed this mortal life furnished with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church our dearly beloved sister Sister Catherin Rosalia (alias) Browne.¹⁹¹ she has allwaies bin a most fervent & faithfull Soul to

<p.89>

Allmighty God & the holy Religion, though a very infirme body her fervour still carrying her on to a constant Regularity in all duties & employments perticularly the Quire in which she has left us most edifying example never desiring to exempt herself but when compelled by Obedience, & has this several years drag'd her poor lame limbs both night & day to the divine Office which she did performe with a most intence application tho' many times she had not bin able to lye in bed all night for pain, her last sickness was an entire decay of nature, her forces being wholly exhausted she kept her

¹⁸⁸ Elizabeth Matthews (1710 – 1738), RP123

¹⁸⁹ Here referring to the association of the name of Mary Magdalen with penitence joined with her commitment to the practical service of Martha.

¹⁹⁰ Lady Winifred Strickland, wife of Sir Thomas of Sizergh, Westmorland a privy councillor, was governess to the Prince of Wales, James Francis at the Jacobite court in exile in St Germain-en-Laye. She retired to the Poor Clares at Rouen on the death of Mary of Modena in May 1718. She lived there for 7 years and is buried in St John's Chapel in Rouen with her husband and son Walter (d: October 1715). She is now mainly remembered for assembling the most important private collection of portraits and relics of the exiled Stuarts in France. She died on 17th April 1725. For the career of Lady Strickland, see Edward Corp, *A Court in Exile: The Stuarts in France, 1689-1718*, (Cambridge, 2004). See also Bowden, *Rouen Chronicles* Vol. II, [p. 75-96] in *English Convents in Exile 1600-1800*, pp. 229-40.

¹⁹¹ Catherine Rosalea Browne (1690 – 1738), Oxon. RP035

bed about a month before her death, in so weak a condition that the Doctours thought one could not give her the last Sacraments soon enough, which notwithstanding she received with extraordinary attention & application making most devout acts unto Allmghty God after which she fell into a letargike sleep which continued for a whole day in which she gave up her happy Soul that one cou'd not perseave it but she left of breathing, she was aged of 66 & 48 of her Religious Profession

Requiescat in pace

~~~~~  
*Anno Domini 1738 the 8<sup>th</sup> of April*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of english poor Clares in Roan is happily departed this mortal life furnished with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Francis Joseph (alias) Baudin.<sup>192</sup> She was a Soul who seemed to be Elected of God from her cradle when loosing her father & mother who were good Catholicks before the Age of 5 year old, her Uncle & Aunt took her to them selves to bread her up a Catholik all her other relations were perverse Prodistants being descendants of the french hugonitts that was banished out of France by Louis the 14<sup>th</sup><sup>193</sup> she was pentioner<sup>194</sup> here for some years when God was pleased to give her a vocation for a Religious life to which her Prodestants friends did oppose very strongly & wou'd not give her which was her dew of her Father & Mother so she was Novice allmost 2 years but persevering constant in her desires she at last made her Profession & with great fervour apply'd herself to her Religious dutys being most timorous & fearfull of offending Allmighty God which

<p.90>

gave her much to suffer in her mind[.] she had a most Angelical charming voice for singing but God was pleased very soon to put an end to that for 2 years before she dyd, she fell into a Consumption by a continual cough both night & day which was caused by the sharpness of rheume that fell continually upon her brest & which weare her poor body to skin & bone all which she bore with extraordinary patience & resignation to the will of God, often Sacrificing her self unto his Divine Majesty with devout acts of love & was perfect to herself to the very last moment that she rendered her happy Soul on tewsdays in Easter week being aged of 34 & 14 in Religion

*Requiescat in pace*

~~~~~  
Anno Domini 1738 the 15 of August

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph at Roüen of the English poor Clares is happily departed this mortal life furnished with all the Rights of our holy Mother the Catholick Church on the 15 of August our dearly beloved sister Sister Eugenia Clare (Alias) Jeane Hales¹⁹⁵ aged of 60 & in the holy religion 42[.] she was sister twin to Sister Mary Joseph¹⁹⁶ & was ^{sent} heither by their Father Sir Edward Hales¹⁹⁷ at the age of 9 year & when of sufficient years took the holy Habit & was Profest the year 1696 & applied her self most exactly to all her Religious dutys both night & day & was extreamly handy at all works that holy Obedience put her to doe & very Charitable to any that required her help, some few years past her Sister twin fell into violent convultions, fitts or falling Sickness & could never be left night nor day for above 30 years[,] so Superiours thought fitt for the ease & content of them both that she should take the entire care of her Sister which was a very mortifying & laborious employment which she performed with all the fidelity & Charity requisit never sparing her self at any

¹⁹² Margaret Baudin (1726 – 1738), RP013

¹⁹³ In 1685 Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes which had allowed Huguenots to worship freely. Protestants were now forbidden to worship in public and other harsh sanctions were imposed on them. Thousands fled to neighbouring Protestant countries including England.

¹⁹⁴ Pentioner or boarder: a number of convents permitted lodgers, generally quiet respectable devout widows to live on convent premises in return for contributions to convent expenses. The Poor Clares tended to have fewer lodgers than other communities, and were probably already connected to the convent in some way.

¹⁹⁵ Jane Hales (1696 – 1738), Kent, RP084. Although she entered the convent as a child, she had to wait until at least the age of sixteen before being allowed to profess.

¹⁹⁶ Her twin sister was Elizabeth (in religion Mary Joseph) who died in 1736, RP083. Two other sisters also joined convents: Catherine (RP082) and Anna who joined the Augustinian Canonesses in Paris in 1695 (PA074)

¹⁹⁷ Sir Edward Hales, Jacobite 1st earl of Tenterden; see ODNB <https://0-doi-org.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/11910> accessed 15 March 2019. His wife was Frances Windebank 1645-1694 kept by her husband in a Paris convent for 2 years from 1686. It is likely that this convent was the Augustinian convent: Cedoz in his history, *Un couvent de Religieuses Anglaises a Paris*, p. 171 gives Mrs Frances Hales as the daughter of Sir Edward, but it is more likely that she was the wife (Frances Windebank) from whom he separated.

time tho she was of a tender made body & very infirme, after the death of her sister she grew still more infirme & lame could but just Crall about which was for 2 years[.] Almighty God was pleased to end her sufferings & take her forth of the world upon the Assumption of our Blessed Lady to whom she had allwaies bin very devout so I hope by the Powerfull intercession of this Sacred Queen she will obtaine soon everlasting happyness, for whom I also beg your Pious Assistance

Requiescat in pace

<p.91>

Anno Domini 1738 the 23 of September

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of English poor Clares at Roüen is happily departed this mortal life furnished with all the Rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church on the 23 of September our dearly beloved sister Sister Marguerit Winifred (alias) Attmore¹⁹⁸ who has bin a very serviceable member to the holy Community having bin endowed by Almighty God with great Capacity & understanding for busyness joyn'd with an extraordinary Charitable & compationate disposition, but above all with a solide & well grounded vertue which appeared in all her actions & employments, at her first entrance into Religion she pressed much to be a lay Sister being strong made & having no voice for the Quire she thought she could do more service in that Station,¹⁹⁹ which in effect at that time she was employed for everal years in all hard labours & works, there being but 2 or 3 lay Sisters all which she performed with such fidelity fervour & compliance to her helpers that it was most edifying & gained the harts of all that was with her after some years Reverend Mother Abbess took her to help in temporal & money affaires of the house which she took by Obedience & performed it entirely herself for above 30 years, in which time her health impared dayly by the hardness of the times in which all the Kingdom of France²⁰⁰ was involved & amongst the rest our poor maintenance was overthro[w]n which put her in such perplexety & anxiety that her hart was broke with care, & not being willing to afflict her Superiour with her sentiments & trouble, kept all to herself which made it take more impression upon her health, so she was entirely overwhelmed & could but just do & with pain what was absolutely necessary, so that these last 20 years has bin in a continual suffering & sickly life which she has sustained with wonderfull patience still acting as she was able in her busyness till the year before she dyed wherin she gave up her books,²⁰¹ thus she has served the holy Religion to the great satisfaction of the holy Community, her forces stil decaying that she had nothing left upon her poor body but the skin, & that shriveld up like a dry blather[.] the skin of her belly clung to the back bone which was not known til after her death, she never complaining of what she suffered but preparing for her last passage which gave her soul its

<p.92>

liberty out of this miserable world to possess for ever I hope everlasting Joys & reward for all her faithfull labours & vertuous life, she was aged 66 & 47 in religion

Requiescat in pace

[New hand]

Anno Domini 1738 the 30 of December

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph at Roüen English poor Clares is happily this mortall life furnished with all the rights of our Mother the holy Church on the 30th of December our deerly beloved Sister, Sister Mary Catherin, Alias Vavasour,²⁰² who was prevented by Almighty God from her very craddle with an extraordinary Piety & devotion[.] she was sent hither by her Parents very young & carryed on with such an ardent desire of being Religious that she took the holy habit at 15 years of age not considering her tender body, so Superiours wear forced to consent ther unto, she soon

¹⁹⁸ Margaret Attmore (1691 – 1738), RP007

¹⁹⁹ This refers to the calling of the lay sister. She felt she was strong and able to cope with the manual labours required of lay sisters.

²⁰⁰ The War of Polish Succession (1733-7): the French were involved because Louis XV's wife was the Polish, Maria Leszczinska. During this period a register of wealth was imposed requiring the population to register themselves. In order to avoid being taxed, donations to charities and convents were severely reduced in an effort not to appear rich. It does not appear that harvests were particularly bad in this period. We are indebted to Dr Roger Mettam for this footnote.

²⁰¹ Sadly these books do not appear to have survived. In normal circumstances the Procuratrix would have been responsible for the bursiness of the community: however, it was a job for a Choir nun, holding senior rank in the convent. As a lay sister Sister Winifred's position was most unusual: and she is recorded as a "Discreet" (senior advisor to the abbess) in 1737: see "Rouen Chronicles" Vol. II, p. 114.

²⁰² Catherine Vavasour (1728 – 1738), RP190

made appear the great fervour of her mind by such an exactnes in all religious dutys that her Mistress say'd of her that she would prove a true Cerimony Book²⁰³ which indeed she was in all her actions & conversation never having bin seen to transgress therin, but the fervour of her spirit soon weakned her tender & young body, so she fell into a Consumption which last 4 years wherin she wore away like a dead Carkass the skin as well as the flesh drying up & Clung close to the bone[.] the Doctors say'd they had never seen such a kind of Consumption, the Spirit of fervour still continued or rather augmented as her body wasted, that she followed the Quire both night & day & would never be exempted but when ordered by Obedience & when one would not not let her stand at the Office it being to much for her weaknes she would keep upon her knee all the lenth of time & whole hower & even half days without sitting downe or leaning allways saying she was well enough to doe it, though by her looks one would have thought she was half dead, she was allwaies most humble serviceable & Charitable[.] one could not doe her a greater pleasure then to emploie her in some humble & laborious work still thinking her forces more then indeed they wear & her charity was universall allwaies saying others wanted more then her self & would allwaies have them prefered & served before her tho' she was in extremity of weaknes; infine she was a true pattern of vertu who had by God Almighty grace compleated her crowne in ten years,²⁰⁴ her last Agony was long or rather a sweet sleep for the space of 5 or 6 howers when she left of breathing & gave up her happy soul to her dear Creator the 26 of her age & 10 since her holy Profession

Requiescat in pace

<p.93>

[New Hand]

Anno Domini 1742 the 21 of June

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph English poor Clares at Roan is departed of mortal life ^{21 of June} furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church our Dearly belov'd sister Sister Catherine Francis (alias) Petre²⁰⁵ who from her entrance into religion was examplar by her fervour & regularity it pleas'd God to bless her with good health which she fail'd not making her profit of by a strict observance of her Religious dutys perticularly in the quire from which she never exempted her self by night nor day unless ordain'd by holy Obedience, God endow'd her with a special talent for singing which for the space of 50 year she upheld with infatigable toil & labour & with the fervour & devotion which prouved how much she was punctuated with respect for the great majesty whose praises she sang, she was of a most affable & agreeable temper ever ready to oblige & serve any one in need her charity was general & no excepter of persons she was extreemly belov'd of the poor having had occasion of excercising her charity towards them when chosen Portress in which post she was placed 2 several times & acquitted herself therof with great fidelity, it pleas'd God to deprive us of her when wee least though on't being seiz'd with a violent fever & defluxion on her heart which soon put her in possession of a better life our loss having ^{undoubtedly} prouv'd her gain but least any thing shou'd remain to be purifi'd earnestly beg your pious prayers & suffages for her speedy delivrance aged of 72 & 54 in Religion

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1743 the 2^d of January

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph at Roan is happily depart'd this mortal life ^{2 of Jan} furnish'd with all the rights, of our holy mother the Catholick Church our dearly belov'd sister Sister mary Clare Wilbraham,²⁰⁶ she was a chosen & elect'd soul by Almighty God, her Father being a protestant & her mother a catholick, who mary'd for a 2^d husband an other protestant, which a sister of her seeing, & being much concern'd thereatt, being a holy & wise woman, she took her neece, from the mother, at the age of 9 years old, & brought her up as her own child, in all Christian dutys, till about 19 or 20 years old, Almighty God took her aunt from her, who left her neece, what fortune she could for her future

<p.94>

²⁰³ The implication is that Sister Catherine was so exact in the performance of her duties that she was as good as having instruction from the Ceremonials which were texts describing every aspect of life in the convent.

²⁰⁴ Suggesting here that her qualities had won her the crown of everlasting life in only ten years.

²⁰⁵ Catherine Petre (1689 – 1742), RP139

²⁰⁶ Mary Wilbraham (1716 – 1743), RP199

maintainance, she being now left of that suport, & comfort of her Aunt thought how she might steer her course & settle her self. God inspir'd her a desire of a religious life, & help'd her on by persons to whom she address'd her self, & assist'd her in that affair, she was 22 year of age, & hearing of our howse proposed to come unto it & with an extraordinary fervour & courage, refuse'd all other proposals but with a strong resolution by the help of Gods grace to stick at no hardship what ever, which she did though she had been used to great nicetys & liberty, but having a solide right judgment in what was for her happyness, passed on with great courage resolution & alacrity in the ~~most~~ hardest mortifications to her nature & in all humble & hardest labour where she was alwise the first & the last never desisting but most faithfull indefatigable & even taking a delight therin but Almighty ^{God} who knows what is fitting for the sanctification of souls turn'd the sean after some few years she was attacked with violent colicke & pain in her thigh which was cased by a fall which she had in coming from Flandres hether which she never spoke of till the violence therof spoke for it self but too late for a cure as both doctors & surgions did attest the pain dayly increasing that she could but just creep which she did for a long time force her self to doe by a most heroick cour^age which God gave her, it was a most sensible cross to her not to be able to labour with the community at common works she was employ'd in other works of obedience never loosing her time or desisting from the order prescrib'd her or her Religious dutys suffering patiently her pains which were frequently very sharp & all other mortification of her nature ~~of her nature~~ for above 20 years often lifting up her hart & eyes to heaven saying her sins did truly deserve such a punishment not with standing she was so overwhelm'd with pain & infirmity, the 8 last years of her life being about her superiour was continually apply'd to get help for others whom she thought stood in need therof being most tender & charitable in their behalf infine the time being come when God did intend to crown his mercy in her & release her from her suffrance her thigh & leg swelled, the skin broke & run & her bowels & stomack drown'd & overwhelm'd with water

<p.95>

and humor joyn'd with a strong feavour & most invincible patience she sweetly render'd her soul to her creator present to her self to the last moment aged of 49 and 27 in Religion

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1743 the 8th of May

In our convent of Jesus Maria Joseph English poor Clares at Roüen the 8th of May is most happily departed this mortal life furnish'd with all the rites of our holy Mother the Church our dearly love'd sister Sister Clare Maria (alias) sharp²⁰⁷ lay Sister, she has employ'd her life in a most faithfull correspondance to her vocation by her continual labour & charity therin, never sparing her self by day nor by night when there was question of any thing to be done, being generally charitable to all, especially to those who were most reserv'd & backward in asking for help, she most serviceable & agreeable to the community & as pleasing to Almighty God for her fidelity to his devine majesty in a most humble & sincere disposition which she had in acknowledging her faults in plain & innocent terms which was most edif'ing taking all the fault upon her self when any thing happy^en'd as if she was the only guilty, she was most repectfull & cordial to her superiours giving an exact account of all she say'd & did; for ten years together she had care of Mother Abbess who was so lame she cou'd not stir out of her room, she lay upon the ground by her Reverence to help her which was frequently the greatest part of the night, never repin'd at it but was always willing & cheerful taking her sleep when she could, it she was also most faithful to God in her devotions & Communion, joyning Martha & Mary together that one may justly say she was a most virtuous religious woman humble, obedient & charitable, the 2 last years she has been attack'd with an asthma & dropsy ~~she~~ which was a hinderance

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to her labour, which notwithstanding she did not leave till 2 months before her death when she could no longer stand, her last fortnight was very painfull & every moment was expected to be her last but her soul depart'd in a most sweet & tranquil manner I hope to receive the reward of her good life, aged of 61 & in Religion 54

Requiescat in pace

 [New Hand]

Anno Domini 1744 the 15th of May

²⁰⁷ Mary Sharp (1709 – 1743), RP159

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph English poor Clares at Roüen is happily departed this mortal life furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church our Venerable Jubilarian & sister Sister Magdalin of Saint Clare (alias) Elizabeth Yates,²⁰⁸ who from her Birth was a Child of Providence, her father dyeing before she was borne, & her mother 2 months affter, who gave her into the care of her owne brother who took her as his owne child & att the age of 8 year old placed her in this our Convent, & when she came to be of sufficient age resolved to setle heer for all her life, though her uncle offered & promised to take care of her & of her fortune which was from the Crowne of England that was due to her father, upon the same account as to the Pendrils,²⁰⁹ but she rather choose to stay in the howse of God then into the world which she knew litle or nothing of, so gave up to her uncle by writting all her due which was 50 pound sterling yearly during her life, so att the age of 18 year old she made her proffession, Almighty God permitted or ordained for her greater good & sanctification of her ^{soul} as he knows best for his elect to passe a great many years, or even all her life in an estate of great humiliation for her interiour & which appeared allso outwardly to which onely God alone could give remedy, she had talents fitt for any employments being extream handy & serviceble to doe what so ever was ordained, & had an excelent voyce both for reading & singing for the which she never spared her self night nor day as long as she was able & was allwise most obedient & respectfull to Superiours & Charitable to her Sisters[;] the 5 or 6 last years of her age she fell ill of great infirmitys

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caused by an eresipulos humour²¹⁰ with which she had often bin attacked in her legs which caused a gangeraine in her body & which to hinder the progres had severall painfull incisiones made by the Cirurgien all which she bore with wonderfull patience untill the end of her life the humor still augmenting & overflowing which att last putt a periode to her long peregrination in this world she was present to her self to the last moment ceasing to breath which was the onely signe we had her soul was departed & we hope to receive eternall rest of her heavenly Father having never had any upon earth, she was aged 75 & 57 since her religious profession

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini 1745 the 23 of January

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph English poor Clares at Roüen is happily departed this Mortall life furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Henrietta Maria (alias) More,²¹¹ who has left us great subject of Edification by her most patient Suffering of an entire dislocation of her members which grew upon her by degrees for severall years which sufferance she never complained of but allwayes say'd it was to litle for what she deserved in satisfaction for her sins & infidelitys, she had bin a very servisable religious in all occasions & places whear Obedience placed her, being most faithfull, humble & Charitable never sparing her self in all labours & humble works, God was pleased to permitt in her begining to be assaulted with dangerous troubles & temptations which lasted some years but she did not fail of humbling her self & to doe what she could to draw God Allmightys grace, which he did at last power [pour] upon her & she ever after was most faithfull in following ^{it} & past her life ever since in praying & bitter bewailling her sins & past faults, & growing unable for any labour by reson of her decripednes was allwise at her prayers from one Aulter to an other never convercing with any one but just for necessity & was most perticularly devoted to our Blessed Lady & Saint Joseph the salvation of her body caused a dropsy in her stomack & bowells which she had endured some time with a most edifying patience till it pleased God to take her on a sudden with out any agony or convoultion when Father Confessor was saying masse for her, she was aged of 67 & in religion 49 wanting only 8 months of her Jubly which I hope by the Mercy & Merits of our deer Saviour she will Celebrate in the Celestial Kingdom of heaven

Requiescat in pace

²⁰⁸ Elizabeth Yates (1687 – 1744), RP210

²⁰⁹ It has not yet been possible to identify the parents of Elizabeth Yates. The death of both her parents would have led her property being passed to the crown under the institution of wardship. This would then be handed over to the person who became guardian: in this case her guardian was her uncle. The system of dealing with Catholic orphans changed with the abolition of the Court of Wards in 1656. However, it is not clear what replaced the system. Wardship is discussed by Lucy Underwood in *Childhood, Youth, and Religious Dissent in Post-Reformation England*, (Basingstoke: Pgrave Macmillan, 2014), Chapter 4. There was a family of Pendrils among the Franciscans in Bruges. See Frances Pendril BF180

²¹⁰ Erysipelas: a skin infection (now called cellulitis)

²¹¹ Henrietta More (1696 – 1745), RP129

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Anno Domini 1745, the 29 of May

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph English poor Clares att Roüen is happily departed this Mortall life with the Sacrament of Extreme Unction our deer sister, Sister Magdalin of the Cross (alias) Le Hont,²¹² whom inspired by God & assistance of frein^eds desire to come hether to made her self Religious for to secure her Salvation out of the miserable world in which she was exposed to danger her Father & Mother being dead, she came with great fervour & begune her Noviship with entire exactitude & made her Proffession in the same good disposition; after which som litle ~~time~~ time ther was perseaved some alteration in her intelects & manners, so remedys wear apply'd by able Phisitia[n]s but with out successe she still growing worse, so she was sequestred from the Community taken care of with all Char[i]ty possible, 3 days before she dy'd it was perseaved she was ill but she did not or could tell what she felt the Doctor ordained imediatly the holy Oiles, the next day she fell into her last agony which lasted 5 or 6 howers, breathing forth her soul I hope into the mercyfull hands of God, she was aged of 53 & 25 since she made her religious profession

Requiescat in pace

[New Hand]

Anno Domini 1745 the 8th of October. In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares at Roan is most happily departed this life furnished with all the rites of our holy Mother the Catholick Church our dear sister, Sister Mary Gabriel (alias) Hoges²¹³ who has been a very serviceable member to our Community by her constant & charitable works, never sparing her self night nor day with question of giving help or solace to any one that wanted it, being employ'd for above 20 year

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in the care of the Chirurgeri which humble & mortifying office she perform'd with pleasure & great fidelity, mingling her prayers with s^e every remedy she apply'd, besides severall other serviceable works in which she was indefatigable, she was very neat & handy, having adorn'd our Church & Chappels with fine flowers, God was pleas'd six months before her death to reduce her to such a weaknes as unabled her to do any thing which was a great sufferance to her but the Almighty was pleas'd some days before to restore her her former tranquillity and devotion. a cancerous humour diffus'd it self over her body & caused a dropsy which put a period to her life sooner than was expected, tho' wee hope well prepared God having polish'd her by sharp sufferance fitt for himself whom wee have reason to thing she now enjoys

*Requiescat in pace**Anno Domini 1748*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares at Roüen is happily departed this Mortal life the 23 of February our dear Sister Clare Joseph (alias Helen Martin)²¹⁴ whom Almighty God was pleased to bring to the true faith all her family being protestants and also favoured her with a vocation to a Religious life to serve him & his family which she faithfully perform'd for 25 years never spareing her self in the hardest labours to which she joyn'd

<p.100>

continual prayer, she was charitable to all perticularly in her conversation, 4 years before her death she had a great fall of a ladder which caused her violent pains to which Phisitians & remedys could give no solace nor she any mitigation to her austerytys or assiduity to the quire & other exorcises[.] she went to the infirmary 3 days before she dy'd which she spent in praising God for his mercys to her, she had violent & frequent convulsions which put a period to her life being furnish'd with the rites of the church being aged of 54 and 25 since her entrance into religion

*Requiescat in Pace**Anno Domini 1748*

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares at Roüen on the 11th of October suddenly departed this mortal life our dearly beloved sister Sister Francis Bonaventure alias Margaret

²¹² Magdalen Le Hunt (1720 – 1745), RP115²¹³ Sara Hoges (1713 – 1745), RP096²¹⁴ Helen Martin (1722 – 1748), RP117

Carnaby,²¹⁵ yet tho her death was sudden t'was not unprovided having been at the holy Communion the day she dy'ed & for several years had that happyness three times a week which she received as her *viaticum*[.] she spent the greatest part of her time in prayer conversing much with God but little with creatures[,] was perseverant in regularity both night and day never absenting her self from the quire tho she could hardly stand for pains in her limbs which she bore with great patience[.] her death was the more surprising haveing past that day in her usuall exercises served at table after vespers went to our holy father's altar his octave day²¹⁶ being the next she sat & made a noise like hard breathing & leaning downwards ready to fall and that was passing by took hold of her thinking she was a sleep but God Almighty

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had taken her[,] there being no more signs of life[.] I hope in his mercys to reward her vertuous life with eternal happyness but as God's judgements are inscrutable wee must always watch & pray for our selves & others she was aged of 61 & 30 in religion

Requiescat in pace

[New Hand]

1749 8 of Jan

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of the English poor Clares at Roüen on the 8th of January, is happily departed this mortal life, furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church, our dear Sister, Frances Colet, alias Phoebe Plumerdin,²¹⁷ the 80 year of her age, & 51 in Religion which she spent in a very penitential maner, in particular 32 years, to satisfy for an extravagancy against her incloser, which the weakness of her head made her commit, but which by the mercy of God she deplored the rest of her life, & gave great edification by her patience, humility, & continual mortification, her end was an entire decay of nature, but sensible to the last & gratfull in a great degree for the mercy Almighty^{God} show'd her, who I hope has received her into his heavenly mansions.

Requiescat in pace

1749

December 18th

In our Convent of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, of English poor Clares at Roüen, 18th of December departed most happily this mortal life, furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church, our dearly beloved sister, Sister Ann Frances alias Betts,²¹⁸ whom Almighty God brought here, at the age of five years old, & chose^{her} to himself; in our Religious order when at suffitient age, which she embraced with wonderfull fervour, & has ever since retain'd it, in a con-

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stant perseverance, even to the least custome, & seremony, being possest with the true spirit of her holy vocation, she was Vicaris²¹⁹ 13 years, where she truly made appear her zeal, which she had for the good, & honour of our house, & all regularity; being sometimes so unable by her infirmitys, as she could hardly stand, yet would she force her self to all regular observance with an admirable courage, this last 8 or ten years, has been particular suffring to her having been seised with a loss of blood, yet was she chosen Portresse,²²⁰ which she performed with an entire fidelity & care, till her forces were quite spent, & suffer'd most violent pains, not being able to find the least solace in any posture,

²¹⁵ Margaret Carnaby (1719 – 1748), RP042

²¹⁶ St Francis of Assisi. The Octave day is 8 days after his feast day of October 3rd.

²¹⁷ Phoebe Plumerdin (1698 – 1749), RP144

²¹⁸ Ann Betts (1718 – 1749), RP016. Following the death of her mother, Anne Trinder in 1704, her father, James placed his three young daughters with the nuns at Rouen and became a Carthusian at Nieuport. See *London Charterhouse, its monks and its martyrs with a short account of the English Carthusians after the dissolution in March 1783*, Dom Lawrence Hendriks, (London: Kegan Paul, 1889), pp. 329-30.

²¹⁹ Vicaress: at the Poor Clares was second in authority to the abbess. She served on the council with other discreets: it was an elected position for three years which could be renewed. One of her tasks was to organise the election of the abbess when there was a vacancy including writing out the ballot papers.

²²⁰ Portress: one of the three key officers of the convent. She spent the day in an open cell without a door in order to keep guard of the entrance gate. One of the discreets responsible for securing the sanctity of the enclosure. The doors were locked with two separate locks each with their own keys. Only workmen and medical men were allowed into the enclosure or visitors who had received special permission.

neither up nor in bed, which she bore with great mildness & patience, her mind & desire being ever bent upon God & the desire of enjoying him, which he has pleased to grant her after having spent 33 years in his holy service, she was aged of 49

Requiescat in pace

1750

In our Convent of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, of the English poor Clares at Rouen is most happily departed, our dearly beloved sister Sister Helene Agathe alias Gifford,²²¹ the 14 of January 1750, whom it has pleased God, to keep this many years in a languishing condition, for her sanctification, she has been of great Edification both in sickness & health, & a very serviceable member, being always most faithfull in all the works & employments the holy Religion employ'd her in, which was many, & was of so sweet, & agreable a temper, as it was a pleasure to be

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in her company, & tho Almighty God did send her the cross of not being able to serve the community ^{the last years of her life} yet wou'd she still be doing some little service as ^{her} forces would permit her, till the age of 75, when her forces being quite spent, she sweetly renderd her happy innocent soul, well prepared we have all reason to hope, tho by accident without the sacraments, ^{the} 58 in Religion

Requiescat in pace

1751

In this our convent of Jesus Mary Joseph is happily departed furnished ~~furnish~~ with all the rights of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, upon the first of May 1751 our dear Sister Clare Beatrix alias Lidia Chambers,²²² who by the great goodness of our Lord was drawn out of the sink of heresy, and as soon as she had the light of faith she ardently desired to give her self to Almighty God in a religious life, which she happily accomlis'd amongst us and served God with all her hart, and after being try'd by many infirmitys which she bore very patien[t]ly till she ended her mortal pilgrimage to enjoy God she so much sighed after, she was aged 52, an[d] 31 in religion

Requiescat in pace

In this our poor convent of Jesus, Maria, Joseph, upon the 5th of August 1751 is happily departed our dear sister, Sister Mary Magdalen alias Betts²²³ aged of 79, in holy religion 57 her last sickness was a violent colick with vomitting which deprived her of her viaticum and ⁱⁿ a few hours of her mortal, she was present to her self till the last moment, suported her terrible pains with great patience and we may truly say, we lost in her a living rule

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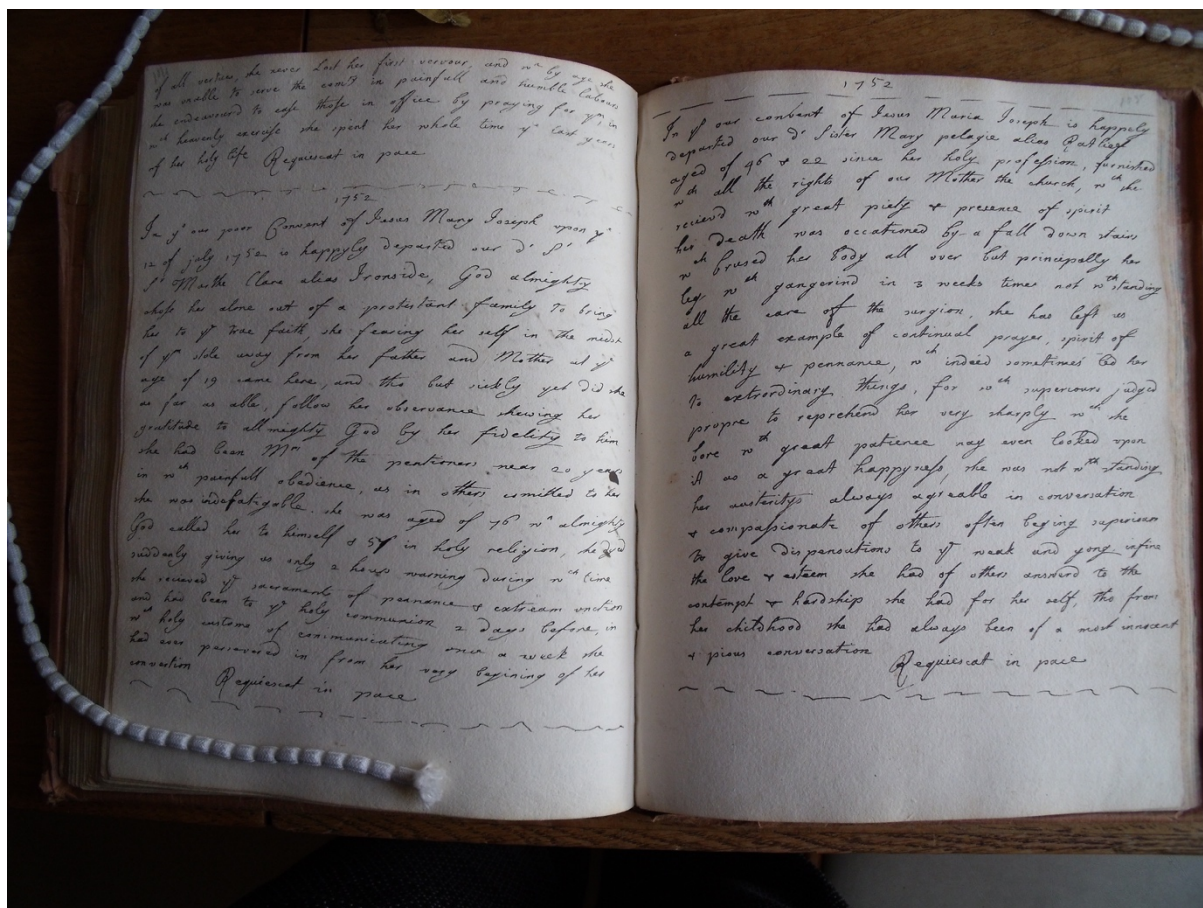
of all vertues, she never lost her first vervour, and when by age she was unable to serve the community in painfull and humble labours she endeavoured to ease those in office by praying for them, in which heavenly exercise she spent her whole time the last years of her holy life

Requiescat in pace

²²¹ Helene Giffard (1695 – 1750), RP073

²²² Lydia Clare Chambers (1721 – 1751), RP050

²²³ Mary Betts (1695 – 1752), RP018. She was sister Sara Betts (RP019) and Aunt of Anne, Frances and Dorothy.



(Opening 104-5)

1752

In this our poor Convent of Jesus Mary Joseph upon the 12 of July 1752 is happily departed our dear sister Sister Marthe Clare alias Ironside,²²⁴ God Almighty chose her alone out of a protestant family to bring her to the true faith, she fearing her self in the midst of them stole away from her father and mother at the age of 19 came here, and tho but sickly yet did she as far as able, follow her observance shewing her gratitude to allmighty God by her fidelity to him she had bean Mistress of the Pentioners near 20 years in which painfull obedience, as in others comitted to her she was indefatigable she was aged of 76 when Almighty God called her to himself & 57 in holy religion, she dyed suddenly giving us only 2 hours warning during which time she received the sacraments of pennance & extream unction and had been to the holy communion 2 days before, in which holy custome of communicating once a week she had ever persevered in from her very begining of her conversion

Requiescat in pace

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1752

In this our convent of Jesus Maria Joseph is happily departed our dear Sister Mary Pelagie alias Ratlief [Ratcliffe]²²⁵ aged of 46 & 22 since her holy profession, furnished with all the rights of our Mother the church, which she reciev'd with great piety & presance of spirit[,] her death was occationed by a fall down stairs which brused her body all over but principally her leg which gangerind in 3 weeks time not withstanding all the care of the surgion, she has left us a great example of continual prayer, spirit of humility & pennance, which indeed simetimes led her to extraordinary things, for which superiours judged propre to reprehend her very sharply which she bore with great patience nay even looked upon it as a great happyness, she was not with standing her austeritys

²²⁴ Martha Ironside (1695 – 1752), RP104

²²⁵ Martha Ratcliffe (1730 – 1752), RP150

always agreable in conversation & compassionate of others often beging superiours to give dispensations to the weak and yong[,] infine the love & esteen she had of others answerd to the contempt & hardship she had for her self, tho from her childhood she had always been of a most innocent & pious conversation

Requiescat in pace

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1752

23 of October [8ber] 1752, in this our convent of Jesus Maria Joseph is happyly departed our dear Sister Mary Terese Booker²²⁶ laic²²⁷ she came late to the holy Religion but had been Reverence [sic] in desire from her young years, upon which account & her strength of body, humble & pious disposition of mind we over looked her age,²²⁸ and she run her course with great fervour piety & gratitude to the Community for the favour done her, her happy death happen'd by the smal pox[,] she was furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church which she received with usial devotion – aged of 51 and three since her entrance into the holy Religion

Requiescat in pace

10 of November [9ber] 1752 in this our convent of Jesus Maria Joseph is happely departed furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church, our dear Sister Mary Elizabeth alias Crag²²⁹ aged of 28 & since her holy profession 11, most of her life was sickly which she bore with great patience & cheerfullness always seeking to render what service she was able being of a very charitable disposition which joyn'd to her young years made her generally regretted

Requiescat in pace

20th of August 1754 in this our convent of Jesus Maria Joseph, is happely departed, furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, our dear sister, Sister Ann Felix, alias Witty²³⁰ of the number of the bead sisters²³¹ which her love of humility made her prefer to the quire, tho offer'd a fortune by a friend in the world, again the same offer of being a quire Sister was made her, at her arival here, for her excellent parts, but she constantly preffered her state of humility, in which she

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persever'd untill death, being allways faithfull both to God and man, never was there a better Religious, nor a more serviceable member, she underwent many painfull infirmitys with great patience which joyn'd to her other vertues makes us hope she now enjoys the object she so much sythed [sighed?] after

Requiescat in pace

she lived praiseably 33 years in the
holy religion being aged of 67

1755

The 15th of June 1755 in this our convent of Jesus Maria Joseph is haply departed our dear Sister Ann Colette alias Brigit Harryson,²³² of the number of bead sisters, furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, aged 61 she was quite wore out with labour, in which she had ever been indefatigable for the service of the holy religion and a mother to each one in particular, she was but fiveteen days in the infirmary which time was most painfull and sufferring, yet never once did she ever seem to mind her self, but all her consern was for the poor

²²⁶ Teresa Booker (1751 – 1752), RP027

²²⁷ Laic: Lay Sister

²²⁸ In her late 40s when she joined the convent, it was an unusually late age to be accepted to carry out heavy manual work. It suggests that the community recognised other qualities as well as her strength.

²²⁹ Elizabeth Cragg (1741 – 1752), Chester, RP057

²³⁰ Anne Witty (1721 – 1754), RP207

²³¹ Anne Witty was one of a small number of women who chose to become lay sisters out of humility in spite of qualifying as a Choir sister, having a dowry and suitable education.

²³² Bridget Harrison (1717 – 1755), RP087

Sisters, this charity joynd to her other vertues I confide in the mercys of God has made her hear, that comfortable word come you Blessed of my father I was hungry and you gave me to eat &c

Requiescat in pace

she lived 37 years prasebly in the holy
religion

1756

The 22 of April 1756 in this our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph is happyly departed, furnished with all the rights of our holy Mother the Catholick Church, our dear Sister Winefred Joseph alias Ursula Parry,²³³ aged of 76 she liv'd praisebly 46 years in the holy Religion in quality of lay Sister, she was singularly devoted to our dear Savior in the most holy sacrament, indefatigable in labour, till her age render'd her unable, after which she render'd what little service she could & spent the rest of her time in ^{the} quire sigthing after the enjoyment of our Lord

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unveil'd who there she ador'd hidden under the sacrament of love

Requiescat in pace

[New Hand]

²³³ Ursula Parry (1710 – 1756), RP135



Mother Francis Benedict Clifton (1683-1756)

August 23 1756

Happyly departed this life, furnish'd with all the rites of the holy catholick church, our venerable and dear mother, Mother Frances Benedict Clifton,²³⁴ Abbess, Jubilarian; in the 91st year of her age, 75th of her religious profession, and 21st of her exemplary government of this community. She was sent pensioner to this our convent of Jesus, Mary and Joseph at eleven years of age, preferring even at that time, through an early impression of Divine grace the concerns of her soul to an honourable place offer'd in the Arch=dutchess' ²³⁵court. The Catholics in England were then under great difficulties, severe penalties being unjustly afflicted on every one known to have harbour'd a Priest. Mrs Clifton her mother whose zeal and charity were above the fear of danger, underwent an ignominious whipping at a horses tail, for having screen'd [hidden] a minister of God in

²³⁴ Frances Clifton (1683 – 1756), RP051

²³⁵ Mother Francis Benedict Clifton professed as a choir nun aged 17 in 1683.

her house. These glorious sufferings of a mother, doubtless drew down from the hand of God so singular a mercy and inspiration in favour of a child, and obtain'd her correspondence thereto, during the long course of years it pleas'd the divine goodness to reserve her for our edification and conduct. Having leave to follow her pious inclinations, at the age of 16 she beg'd the habit, which was immediately granted her with the same pleasure, as receiv'd by herself. At the end of her Noviceship wherein she had charm'd the whole Community with her steady practice of every religious duty, she was profess'd, and soon after chosen Apothecary Sister. In this office, as in the several others to which she was successively call'd her obedience and compliance were truly religious, daily renewing the sacrifice of her will and labours in behalf of her sisters, whom she sincerely respected as the spouses of Jesus Christ, with the most earnest desire to serve him in their

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persons. Yet this obedient and tender sollicitude in her exterior employments, was ever so season'd with inward recollection of soul, that she justly might be said to unite the functions of Mary with those of Martha in all her actions. It pleas'd Almighty God to reward these virtues of his servant with an eminent spirit of prayer which she assiduously nourish'd by denials of herself and the most exact attendance to all public duties of the quire,²³⁶ never permitting even the least unnecessary dispensation to keep her from that angelical occupation, where her example alone was sufficient to inspire devotion. This religious deportment drew upon her the votes of the Community for the charge of Vicaress, wherein, during fifteen years continuance she was never absent from the least regular observance, unless confin'd to her bed by sickness. She was 70 years of age when this poor family lost its most worthy Abbess Mother Mary of the Holy Cross;²³⁷ its grief was almost inconsolable, yet not without hopes of finding in Mother Benedict Clifton a tender support; and accordingly made choice of her in spite of all the opposition her humility could suggest. Her election being the free and pure choice of the Community, She submitted to it as to the will of God, and began to reDOUBLE her ardour and attention to regular discipline, but authority was alwaies the last resource she employ'd to enforce the duties of our holy rule, endeavouring principally to engage its observance by the gentle and persuasive means of her own example. But Almighty God whose trials are mercies in favour of his elect permitted her to be seiz'd with a very great deafness soon after her election, however this incommodity was to her Reverence a subject of real joy, often saying in a holy transport that her redeemer had only incapacitated her conversing with creatures, to converse more intimately with him alone. That these were the unfeigned sentiments of her heart appear'd visibly from her constant cheerfulness,

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whereas melancholy or a suspicious uneasiness for the general part attends so sensible an affliction. Her resignation moreover was so perfect, as never to make the least enquiry what it was that diverted when she saw the Sisters laugh around her at their innocent recreations. However on this account, and the infirmities of her age, which in some years confin'd her to her room, she earnestly desir'd to be released from her great charge, but could never prevail with the Community, on which her patient sufferings and exhortations had no less influence, than her example could have had by the most regular attendance at every duty. Her desire was to have consecrated the remaining moments of her life to holy obedience as a private religious; but considering this refusal of her voluntary demission²³⁸ as a repeated mark of Gods holy will, she once more submitted with an humble confidence that he would supply her inabilities by his own powerfull grace. In effect her sollicitude for the spiritual advancement of the Community seem'd to increase with her very infirmities, and to omit no means that might inflame each one with a sincere love of God, and promote a faithfull observance of our holy rule. But the time approaching to receive the crown of her labours in this mortal life, she was taken with a great hoarseness on Saint Mary Magdalen's day²³⁹ it was hop'd at first to be only a cold, but our fears were soon alarm'd by the visible decay of her Reverence's strength, which was both to herself and us, an undoubted mark of her death being near at hand. Yet what was our affliction, was her comfort and joy, confidently hoping that she should now soon be admitted into the blessed

²³⁶ The public duties of a choir nun were to perform the divine office in the chapel or quire with the other choir nuns.

²³⁷ Mother Mary of the Holy Cross was Mary Howard elected Abbess in 1701 and died in 1735 (RP101)

²³⁸ At the Poor Clares abbesses were elected for life. Here Abbess Clifton submitted to the desires of the community to remain in office.

²³⁹ St Mary Magdalen's feast day: July 22

mansions of her heavenly spouse. About the end of July Her Reverence received the sacred ~~sacred~~ *Viaticum* and holy oils; after which seeming to recover a little, she desir'd to assist at the
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high mass on the feast of our Blessed Lady of Angels²⁴⁰, at the end thereof, did a low mass which she successively heard, she went to our Lady's altar in the quire to gain the indulgence, but suddenly became so weak and faint that we apprehended she would then have expired, it pleas'd indeed Almighty God to continue her life some few daies longer, and to afford her the comfort of the sacred viaticum a second time on the Sunday following. We truly believe her moments were thus prolong'd, that she might be entirely purified by sufferings in this world, and her heart prepared by a more ardent charity. for as her dissolution drew nearer, her thoughts were so fix'd on God as to take little notice of any thing about her. She embrac'd her crucifix almost every moment, expressing in that tender manner the strong sentiments of love in her soul, and how much she desir'd to unite her pains and death with those of her belov'd Jesus. Father Confessour²⁴¹ had now at her request continued to pray by her for several half daies without interruption, herself answering to the pious aspirations he suggested and recommendations of her to the Divine Mercy. At length falling into a kind of lethargick sleep, she breath'd her happy soul into the hands of her Creator, whose glory alone she had sought with all humility in so many years of religion and penance.

Requiescat in pace

[New Hand]

Anno Domini 1761

In this our Convent of Jesus Mary Joseph of the English poor Clares at Roüen the 11 of July is happely departed this mortal life our dear sister Sister Frances Clare alias Elis Gibson²⁴² furnish'd with all the rights of our holy Mother the Catholick church. she was of a very obliging charitable disposition, had a great faith in the presence

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of Jesus Christ in the holy sacrament wherfore when Sacristain delighted much in having the quire extreamly clean and modestly well adorn'd, it seem'd to her (as indeed it is) a most shamfull thing for us, who have the happyness of the Blessed Sacrament in the quire, not to behave with all imaginable respect & love, she had also a great fear of God. it pleas'd his divine majesty, to lead her by the way of many interieur difficultys, and at last to visit her with a painfull sickness of a tumour which grew in her throat and hinder'd her from swallowing any norishment, besides her lungs was corrupted. it pleased the divine saviour of our souls to afflict her also in a most sensible manner by the departure of our extraordinary Mr Hind²⁴³ who then was going for England, all which she bore with admirable resignation and even desired him not to stay one day on her account for that she desired to make an entire Sacrifice of all that was agreeable to her along with her life, thus purify'd like gould in the furnace she ended her mortal pilgrimage the 50 year of her age and 31st since her entry into the holy religion

Requiescat in pace

1762 6th October

In this our Convent of Jesus Mary Joseph at Roüen of English poor Clares is happily departed this mortal life our dear sister, Sister Frances Teresa alias Frances Gildon²⁴⁴ she was most exemplar for fidelity in all that Obedience recommended to her care, and exact in the holy customes of the Religion, so that what ever occations of mortifications or troubles that befel her, she never omitted the least thing nor so much as thought it possible to do contrary

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²⁴⁰ Our Lady of the Angels' feast day: August 2

²⁴¹ Father Confessor in 1756 was Francis Kennedy (1723-1791) a secular priest who acted as Chaplain then Confessor for 42 years (1750-1791).

²⁴² Elizabeth Gibson (1730 – 1761), RP072

²⁴³ Father Francis Hind[e] was Extraordinary Confessor at Rouen 1759-61. He left the convent saying the air did not agree with him. See Rouen Chronicles Vol. II, p. 159. Mr Hinde was in 1762 appointed to the Augustinian Canonesses at Bruges where he proved to be controversial, and managed to divide the community. He resigned and became vice-president of St Omer, see ed. Caroline Bowden, *The Chronicles of Nazareth (The English Convent) Bruges 1629-1793*, (Woodbridge: Catholic Record Society and Boydell, 2017) pp. 364-85.

²⁴⁴ Frances Gildon (1727 – 1762), RP075

nor made any change, in twenty years she had care of the trunk²⁴⁵ in her other obediences she practised the same, she was very near in holy poverty, and had a great fear of the judgments of God all her life, but when her end aproached she abandon'd her self with entire calmness into the hands of God, and was always admiring his goodness to so poor a creature, and would say tho she was the greatest of sinners, yet was never tempted with any thought of dejection, knowing how good God is, and fill'd with sentements of gratitude and humility, she was present to her self till the last moments, often receiv'd the holy Communion in her last sickness, which was of the liver, very long and suffring, which she bore with great patience and resignation till being worne out with pains and sickness she ended her mortal life furnish'd with all the rights of our holy Mother the Catholick Church the 6th of October 1762 aged of 74 and 47 since her entrance into the holy Religion.

Requiescat in pace

1763 1st April

In this our Convent of Jesus Mary Joseph at Roüen of English poor Clares is happely departed this mortal life, our dear Sister Francies Bruno alias Betts,²⁴⁶ furnish'd with the holy Sacraments of pennance and extrem unction and had been to the holy Communion some time before with intention for her holy *viaticum*, but the nature of her illness was such that she could not receive it at her death, this dear sister was sent here at the age of three years old, with two other little sisters, their father recommending them to the protection of Saint Nicoles,²⁴⁷ then

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put his two sons to Doway²⁴⁸ after which and his wife being dead he made himself a Carthusian,²⁴⁹ all his children took to Religion, our dear sister did not decline from the piety of her famely, but was always most exemplar in it, she was sickly almost all her life, and not able to serve the holy religion according to her talents, but she repair'd this loss by spending most of her time in prayer, till being purify'd by many humbling infirmetys and a very Suffring life, she ended it on Good Fryday, just as the clock struck twelve, when present to her self an hour before, she sweetly smil'd, at her being put in mind of the happyness of dying at the moment we commemorated the passion of our dear Saviour Jesus Christ and that she would goe to heaven with the good thief, she was aged of 59 and in religion 44.

Requiescat in pace

1766

In this our convent of Jesus Mary Joseph at Roüen of english poor clares, the first of February 1766 is happely departed this mortal life (furnish'd with all the rights of our holy Mother the Church) our dear Sister Marthe Frances, alias Marthe Richards²⁵⁰ of the number of the bead sisters,²⁵¹ she was cook from her novice year and always continued in that painfull & laborious office never sparing her self

<p.115>

till seized with her last illness which was an inflamation on her breast, which she bore without the least complaint but often saying she deserved to suffer much more, her death was rather to be envied

²⁴⁵ Care of the trunk: responsible for taking care of the money and valuables.

²⁴⁶ Frances Betts (1721 – 1763), RP017. She was one of three sisters sent to the convent as young girls who all joined the Poor Clares. Joseph Betts (baptised James) professed at the English Carthusian convent at Nieuport, after the death of his wife in 1704. Elected Prior in 1722 after a difficult period in the history of the house, he was responsible for building works and restoration. Betts also left several manuscript spiritual works. He died from yellow fever in 1729. See *London Charterhouse, Its Monks and Its Martyrs with a Short Account of the English Carthusians after the Dissolution in March 1783*, (London: Kegan Paul, 1889) pp. 329-30.

²⁴⁷ St Nicholas was particularly associated with kindness to children.

²⁴⁸ Many English Catholics attended school or university at Douai which had been established in the sixteenth century. A seminary known as the English College, Douai was established in 1569. John and Joseph Betts were sent to school at Douai. John became a priest, but Joseph died at Douai.

²⁴⁹ Joseph Betts (baptised James) professed at the English Carthusian convent at Nieuport, after the death of his wife in 1704. Elected Prior in 1722 after a difficult period in the history of the house, he was responsible for building works and restoration. He also left several manuscript spiritual works. He died from yellow fever in 1729. See *London Charterhouse, Its Monks and Its Martyrs with a Short Account of the English Carthusians after the Dissolution in March 1783*, (London: Kegan Paul, 1889) pp. 329-30.

²⁵⁰ Martha Richards (1725 – 1766), lay sister, RP154

²⁵¹ Bead sisters; also known as lay sisters.

then regretted, sensible to the last breath she seem'd to dye in an act of the love of God a recompence we may hope of her constant charity which she exercised to all, not contenting her self only to help those sent to her, but sought out all in necessity, to this charity towards her neighbour she joyn'd a most sincere piety praying devoutly at her work, she never neglected any necessary thing for to get to the quire, but when she could get there tho never so wearied, & tired she was quite over joy'd and fill'd with admiration that so great a favour was bestow'd on so unworthy a creature as she esteem'd her self, thus she lived 42 years praiseably in the holy religion being aged at her happy death 66

Requiescat in pace

Anno Domini

1766

The 12th of October is happily departed this mortal life our dear sister. Sister Mary Joseph alias Chadwick²⁵² aged of 46 and 30 since her entrance into the holy religion, her end was sudden tho preceded by a violent fever, the

<p.116>

doctors said she was not in present danger, till about 8 o'clock at night the 7th of her illness, she was on a sudden apparently worse, and they bid us administred her immediatly, which we had but just time to do, before she fell into her last agony, she had been preparing her self all the time of her illness, and had been to the Sacrament of penance²⁵³ 2 days before, for she her self thought she shou'd dye, she was always very pious, assedious to come to the divine office, and when not able to come, ever said it, with singular care and devotion, was always sensibly touch'd with admiration at our Blessed Saviours goodness in receiving poor sinners, which devotion seem'd wholly to occupy her, in her last sickness, which joyn'd to her charity to her sisters, and other vertues, we confide in the same goodness he has recieved her into the arms of his infinit mercy for all Eternity

Requiescat in pace

[New hand]

Anno Domini 1770

In our Convent of Jesus Maria Joseph of English poor Clares at Roüen is happily departed this life furnish'd with the rites of our holy Mother^{the} Church our dearly beloved sister, Sister Francis^{Bernard} Harrison,²⁵⁴ She had a

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high esteem of her Vocation she was in quality of a Lay Sister, & had a singular capacity for all employments regarding her station. She was a strong well made woman & truly employed her forces in hard labour & ever wished to do more, she was always ready to give a helping hand to any one that desired her, her Charity & Compassion was very extraordinary ever neglecting her self to help others in distress, was no excepter of persons, & when thro' age & infirmitys she could no longer labour she took up spinning in which she render'd great service all her zeal being to serve the holy religion[.] she was very assiduous to her spiritual dutys, & when she laboured Mary never left Martha, she was humble in acknowledging her faults, exceeding gratefull to the Community, patient in infirmitys edifying to all, & I doubt not but pleasing to God who crown'd her labours even in the world by a most happy tho' suffering end which happen'd on the 2nd of May, aged 74 & 52 since her entrance into the holy religion

Requiescat in pace

[New Hand]

Anno Domini 1772

²⁵² Mary Chadwick (1737 – 1766), RP048

²⁵³ Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. It consists of four elements, three on the part of the penitent (contrition, confession and satisfaction) and one on the part of the minister (absolution)

²⁵⁴ Francis Harrison (1719 – 1770), lay sister, RP089. As before, emphasizing in this lay sister the particular combination of the two strands of the religious life: the manual domestice work of Martha with the contemplation and prayer of Mary which was difficult to achieve in a lay sister's timetable.

In our Convent of Jesus Mary Joseph, the 25th of October 1772 is happily departed this mortal life, our dear sister Lucy Clare, alias Jane Mathews,²⁵⁵ aged of 79 years, of which she pass'd 52 in the holy Religion, in quality of lay sister

<p.118>

leaving us a great example of exactitude in all duty, even to the least tit[t]le which proceeded from her great fear of the judgments of almighty, and terrour, of being Eternally deprived of the enjoyment of his divine presence, as she said for her great sins in the world, and ingratitude since her entry into the holy Religion, tho her life was singularly edifying to us all, and we have all reason to believe it was so, to her neighbours in the world, as she was of a family of Saints, yet she was used often to say, with great sincerity, its enough for me, to hope to get to heaven by the day of judgment and that I do hope for; but we confide in the mercys of God, she very soon enjoy'd her wish'd for happiness, her illness was a great fever, tho she never went to bed for it (to the great astonishment of the doctour) her time was spent between the infirmary and quire in her last sickness preparing for her last moment, saying to all that went to see her, Dear Sister pray for me, for a happy death sweet Jesus grant me a happy death which no doubt but she obtain'd for the quite sudden, not unprovided, the morning being Sunday she went to the holy Communion, according to custom with the rest of the Sick, about one o'clock after dinner went to pray in the quire, there passing her after none as usual, at the quarter past two she went out of the quire, no sooner had she enter'd the upper infirmary but she fell down and expired sweetly ^{in about a quarter of an hour} both our Confessors and the Community present

Requiescat in pace

<p.119>

Anno Domini 1773

26 of February in this our Convent of Jesus Mary Joseph is happily departed our dear Sister Mary of Angles alias Ashby,²⁵⁶ aged of 64 years, & 48 since her entrance into the holy religion, she reciev'd all the rights of our holy Mother the Church, to her own comfort, and our edification it seem'd as if almighty God brought her to her self, for to give her that holy defence against her spiritual ennemys, for the violence of her illness had deprive'd her a long time of part of her reason, which as soon as she reciev'd, she express'd her desire of her holy *Viaticum*, and remain'd sensible till within an hour, or two before she gave up the ghost, which she very calmly did, in taking holy water, left us great example of patience in suffering, and other solid vertus, *requiescat in pace*

Anno Domini 1773

20th of may, on the Solemn feast of the glorious assention in this our Convent of Jesus Mary Joseph is happily departed this mortal life our dear Sister Mary Christina alias Elec [Alice] Trotter²⁵⁷ of the number of the Lay Sister[s] in the 65th year of her age, & forty 3 since her entry into the holy religion, in the service ^{of which} she spent her forces, as far her poor

<p.120>

health did permit, and when she could not labour she spent her time in spinning, praying with her companion, at the same time, they labour'd with their hands, she was very devout spent all the Sundays, & holy days, in the quire frequented three, or four times, a week the holy Communion for her greater tryal almighty God permitted her infirmitys not to be esteem'd so very considerable, even to the last so when she asked for the last Sacraments, it was not thought necessary, but she persisting in her desire of receiving them in her full senses, the doctour granted ~~her~~ her request and it appear'd she knew best, for the day after she reciev'd her holy *Viaticum*, she had a little de[c]line, then came to her self and receav'd the extream unction in her full senses, went out imediatly after & came no more to her self till some hours before she dy'd, her illness was a dry cancer, she was so extremely wore away that her bones pierced her skin and she had a great wound on her crapper bone²⁵⁸ which bled & corrupted before she dy'd, all which she bore with great patience, as well as her agony which was Violent at last sweetly expired gave us all reason to confide her purgatory was accomplish'd here, at least in part.

²⁵⁵ Jane Matthews (1721 – 1772), lay sister, RP124

²⁵⁶ Margaret Ashby (1725 – 1773), RP004

²⁵⁷ Alice Trotter (1731 – 1773), lay sister, RP186

²⁵⁸ It has not been possible to identify this bone.

Requiescat in pace

<p.121>

[New Hand]

Anno Domini 1778

In this our Monastery of Jesus Mary Joseph of the English poor Clares at Rouën the 12th of May happily departed this life our dear Sister Catharine Francis (alias Browne)²⁵⁹ strengthened with all the rites of the Church the 51st year of her age, & 25th & a half since her entrance into holy religion. The Community lost in her a common Mother & exemplary religious, her devotion being as conspicuous as her tender charity to all which seraphic virtue. It seemed Almighty God rewarded even in this life by granting her the most heroic patience during her 7 years months confinement to her bed under the acutest pains, her left arm & whole body being swelled to an enormous size, no physicians could account for her evil, but in the end it proved an universal mortification. She sweetly expired between 3 & 4 in the morning the above day, amidst the tears & regrets of all her sisters

Requiescat in pace
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<p.122>

Anno Domini 1778

In this our Convent of Jesus Marie Joseph of English poor Clares in Rouen, happily departed this life the 22nd of June our dear Sister Anne Clare alias Ashby²⁶⁰ aged 66 and 50 of Holy Profession, her death was sudden being taken at the end of the Conventual Mass with a vomiting, in the same instant was deprived of speech & judgment; tho' she survived in a kind of agonizing sleep until 12 oclock of the following day at which time she breathed forth her happy soul into the hands of her Creator strengthened with the sacraments of extreme unction, & every other help of holy Church except that of Holy *Viaticum*, tho' we hope our merciful Lord supplied her want of that heavenly food; the fervour, piety and devotion with which she prepared for the Solemnizing her Jubilee, of which she only just lived to complete, was most edifying nor was her zeal for regular Observance her love & practice of holy Poverty less so, as also self abnegation. She was always the

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first at all humble laborious works, never sparing herself until her poor body was quite exhausted, her charity & compassion was so universal as it extended to all. In these dispositions we have reason to confide she terminated her suffering course. It appearing to us the Almighty was pleased to conduct this His Servant the chief part of her life in the constant path of Calvary so we hope she does or will soon enjoy that portion of Heavenly bliss prepared for the true disciples of the Cross of Christ

RIP
~~~~~*Anno Domini - 1778*

In our Convent of Jesus Mary & Joseph of English Poor Clares in Rouen happily departed this life the 27<sup>th</sup> October our dear Sister Francis Joseph (alias Willis)<sup>261</sup> aged 66 and of religious profession 38, her illness was a Phlematick complaint, from which issued a great oppression of spirits, the Almighty so permitting for her greater increase of virtue, & sensibly touched with so great a trial, yet our Merciful Saviour not only

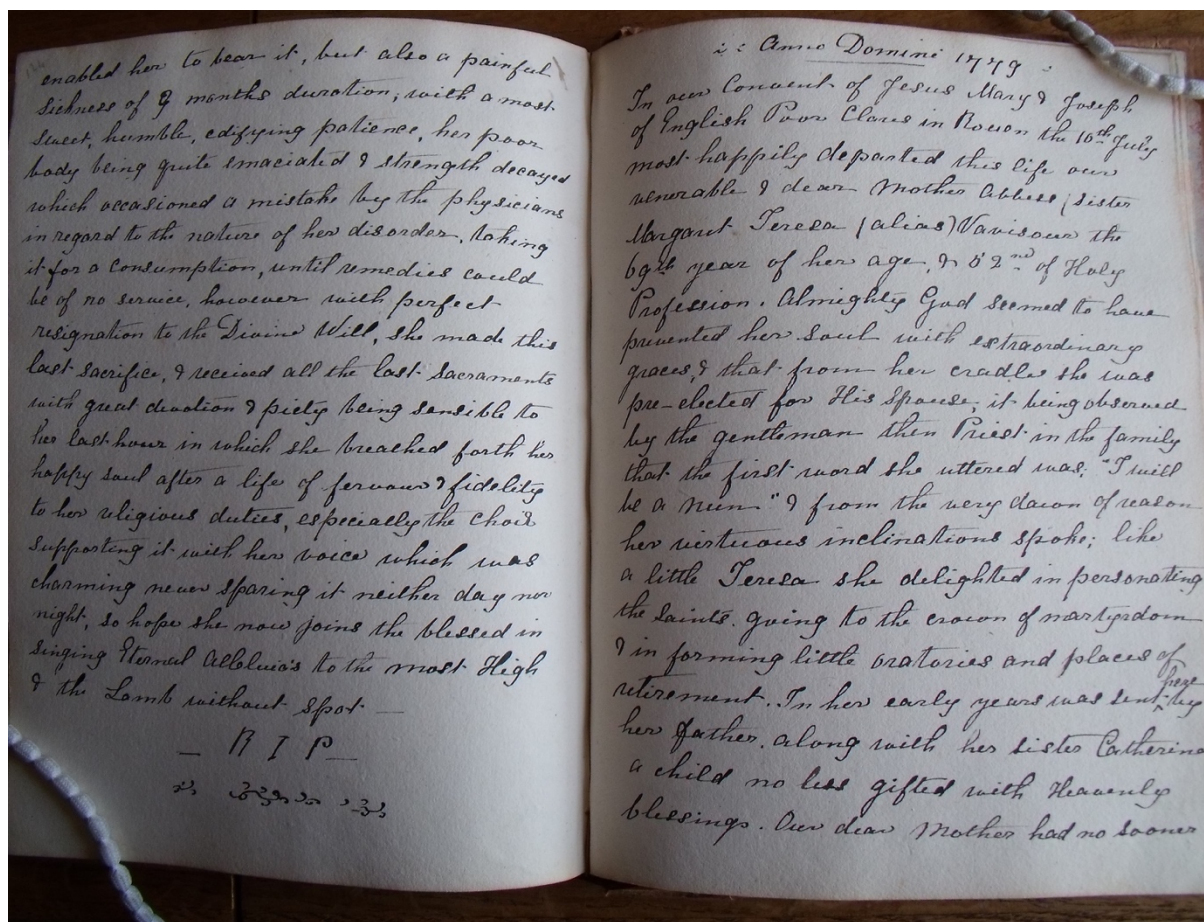
&lt;P.124&gt;

enabled her to bear it, but also a painful sickness of 9 months duration, with a most sweet, humble, edifying patience, her poor body being quite emaciated & strength decayed which occasioned a mistake by the physicians in regard to the nature of her disorder, taking it for a consumption, until remedies could be of no service, however with perfect resignation to the Divine Will, she made this last sacrifice, & received all the last sacraments with great devotion & piety being sensible to her last hour in which she breathed forth her happy soul after a life of fervour & fidelity to her religious duties, especialy the choir supporting it with her voice which was charming never sparing it neither day nor night, so hope she now joins the blessed in singing Eternal Alleluia's to the most High & the Lamb without spot

- RIP -

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<sup>259</sup> Catherine Brown (1752 – 1778), RP033<sup>260</sup> Ann Ashby (1729 – 1778), RP003<sup>261</sup> Frances Willis (1741 – 1778), RP201



(Opening 124-125)

&lt;p.125&gt;

~ Anno Domini 1779 ~

In our Convent of Jesus Mary & Joseph of English Poor Clares in Rouen the 10<sup>th</sup> July most happily departed this life our venerable & dear Mother Abbess; Sister Margaret Teresa (alias) Vavisour<sup>262</sup> the 69<sup>th</sup> year of her age, & 52<sup>nd</sup> of Holy Profession. Almighty God seemed to have prevented her soul with with extraordinary graces, & that from her cradle she was pre-elected for His Spouse; it being observed by the gentleman then Priest in the family that the first word she uttered was: "I will be a nun" & from the very dawn of reason her virtuous inclinations spoke; like a little Teresa<sup>263</sup> she delighted in personating the saints giving to the crown of martyrdom & in forming little oratories and places of retirement. In her early years was sent <sup>here</sup> by her father along with her sister Catherine<sup>264</sup> a child no less gifted with Heavenly blessings. Our dear Mother had no sooner

&lt;p.126&gt;

entered this holy asylum, but the sweetness and benevolence of her temper attracted not only the attention of her mistresses, but also that of the whole Community, her piety went on increasing with years, as did also the ardent desire of consecrating herself irrevocably to Jesus Christ. At the age of 16 she had the comfort of seeing herself revested with the habit of the Order, performing the term of probation with so great fervor as made her be readily admitted the following year to Religious Profession, by the unanimous notes of the Community: pronouncing her solemn vows on the feast of

<sup>262</sup> Margaret Vavsour (1727 – 1779), Abbess 1756-1779, RP191. For an account of her election in 1756 see Rouen Chronicles Vol. II, pp. 273-4.

<sup>263</sup> The reference here is to Teresa of Avila who showed early signs of wanting to become a religious and join a convent.

<sup>264</sup> Mary Catherine Vavasour (1728-1738), RP190: Obituary notice p. 92 above.

the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>265</sup> thus consummating her sacrifice in great sentiments of gratitude, love humility & fervour. Some few years after was chosen second, afterwards first Portress<sup>266</sup> - in which employ she kept a strict watch over herself, and was ever most attentive in keeping recollection, and an interior converse with her God. After having passed several years in this troublesome office to the edification of externs, and general satisfaction of all, it was judged expedient to remove her to the charge of Vicaress,<sup>267</sup> for the comfort and

<p.127>  
 assistance of our dear Venerable Mother Clifton<sup>268</sup> who tho' loaded with virtue and every merit, yet great age rendered unable to support longer the heavy weight of superiority, so the whole burden thereof, fell upon our dear Mother, which soon destroyed her constitution. At the death of her worthy predecessor, she was canonically elected Abbess, which charge she exercised 23 years in the practice of every virtue. Her motherly care towards all was very great, but singularly such to the sick & infirm: those in danger of death she scarce left but continued praying & comforting them in that last passage, her solicitude and compassion stopped not here, but extended itself towards her necessitous neighbour, so that we may truly say: Charity characterized all her actions, & as of holy Job – that mercy had grown with her from her youth. Her invincible meekness & sweetness under constant trials was most conspicuous, and when even duty called upon her to reprehend did it with great reluctance, frequently repeating with the holy Bishop of Geneva,<sup>269</sup> in case my weakness prompts me to exceed I had rather it be by too much lenity than severity

<p.128>  
 She was ever closely united with her crucified Saviour, & He mercifully despatched unto her a large share of His Holy Cross – not only by a long series of continued infirmities but also in many sharp trials she experienced: amongst which her last illness was not the least: tho' we looked upon it as sent by the Almighty, for increase of merit, & at the same time to purify her precious soul from all dross of imperfection. The disorder was regarded by physicians, as a lethargic palsy: which in great measure deprived her of speech, but thanks be to God, her judgement continued good, which caused her frequently to feel the weight of his avenging arm, tho' never without His merciful support, for in measure as the thorn was driven deeper into her soul, He sweetened the edge thereof by fresh increase of holy love, with which her heart seemed frequently to glow. Her entire resignation to the Divine Will was no less perfect, as appeared in all events of life, but now particularly in the sickness which terminated her happy course. From the day of her being taken ill, which was on the feast of All Saints<sup>270</sup> her fervent acts of love

<p.129>  
 and resignation to the Will of her Heavenly Spouse were almost as frequent as her breathings. The two first months of her sickness may be counted the sharpest part of her sufferings: being deprived that space of time from receiving the Bread of Life, in which she found her strength, comfort & support. She was ever sighing after that angelic food, as the thirsty deer after the fountain of clear waters<sup>271</sup> & like unto the groaning turtle<sup>272</sup> in deep solitude, was ever bemoaning her loss which she would often express by a flood of tears, & in some moments her grief was so lively as to force from her these words. "Oh! tis cruel, cruel!" but then immediately added with hand & eyes lifted up to heaven "holy Will of God" charming; tis well! tis well. Indeed in these very instants, the sweetness of her countenance, bespoke the great serenity of her soul. After the Almighty had tried this His servant in her most sensible part: He was pleased to manifest the integrity of her judgments which until then

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<sup>265</sup> Feast day of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary: September 8

<sup>266</sup> Portress: one of the three key officers of the convent. She spent the day in an open cell without a door in order to keep guard of the entrance gate. One of the discreet responsible for securing the sanctity of the enclosure. The doors were locked with two separate locks each with their own keys. Only workmen allowed into the enclosure or visitors who had received special permission.

<sup>267</sup> Vicaress: at the Poor Clares was second in authority to the abbess. She served on the council with other Discreets: it was an elected position for three years which could be renewed. One of her tasks was to organise the election of the abbess when there was a vacancy including writing out the ballot papers.

<sup>268</sup> See obituary notice on pp. 108-111, above.

<sup>269</sup> Most likely, the reference is to St Francis de Sales (1567-1622), ordained bishop of Geneva December 1602, whose books were widely read in the English convents.

<sup>270</sup> All Saints' feast day: November 1.

<sup>271</sup> Douay-Rheims Bible: 'As the hart panteth after the fountains of water': Psalm 41. Verse 2

<sup>272</sup> Descriptions of moaning doves appear which mirror the moaning of the faithful in exile.



had been questioned by some, which was not so surprising, the disorder being singular. However the remaining months in this

<p.130>

vale of tears were passed with more consolation having had the happiness of receiving the Blessed Sacrament frequently which was mostly every Sunday & Holyday. The morning she died, she received her Holy *Viaticum* and Extreme Unction & every other help of the Church, some few hours after, she sweetly breathed forth her happy soul, amidst the sighs & tears of her afflicted children, and the Father Confessor also was present. Her truly virtuous life gives us all reason to hope that thro' the merits of her saviour she already enjoys the Vision of the Holy Lamb & that we may say of her!

*"In Eterna memoria erit justus"*<sup>273</sup>

*Requiescat in Pace*

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²⁷³ Psalm 111, v. 7. The just shall be in everlasting remembrance: part of the Gradual from the Mass for the Dead.



Abbess Margaret Teresa Vavasour, Abbess 1756-1779

The end



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