



Our story starts with **Henry VIII**, who was determined to have a son to inherit the Crown of England. To do this he needed to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn, but the Pope wouldn't allow it. So Henry decided to make his own English Church, breaking away from the Pope. He made it illegal for anyone to still follow the Pope and punished Catholics as traitors.



THE BAR CONVENT

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Henry's daughter **Elizabeth** continued these rules against Catholics after she came to the throne, making it illegal for anyone to hide priests in their homes and fining people who didn't come to Church. People who refused to give up their faith were called '**recusants**'.



One important Catholic was **Margaret Clitherow**, who lived in the Shambles. One day her house was searched and though the priest escaped, she was arrested. She was sentenced to have weights pressed on her until she died. You can visit her shrine on the Shambles. The Bar Convent has its own priest hole in the exhibition you can hide in to see what it would have been like.



Mary Ward (1585-1645) was born in Mulwith, North Yorkshire. She founded the Congregation of Jesus in 1609. Mary was unusual for a nun of her time, as she wanted to be active in the world. She wanted to do missionary work, educate girls and help make the world a better place. She walked to Rome in 1621 to ask the Pope for his blessing, but the Pope thought her order was too controversial. In 1642 she came back to York and established a convent at Heworth before her death. She is buried at Osbaldwick.



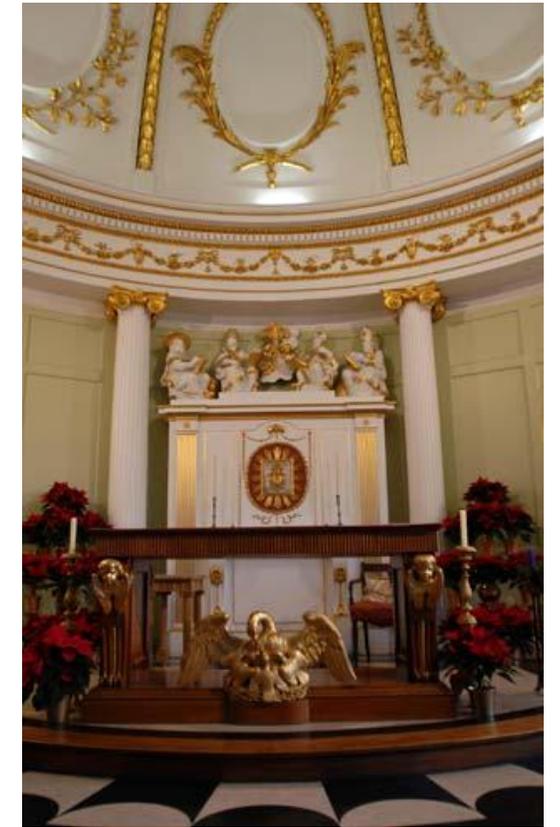
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Frances Bedingfield bought the original house in 1686 under the name of Frances Long, as she had to hide her religion to stay out of prison. Thomas Gascoigne gave her £450 to help, saying, "We must have a school for our daughters." But word got round and an angry mob of people came to attack the convent in 1695. The sisters prayed to St Michael, and legend says the mob silently went away, leaving the sisters in peace.



Ann Aspinal decided that the Bar Convent needed a new Chapel and in 1769 this opened. However it had to be kept a secret because of the laws against Catholics, so there were eight exits for people to escape and a priest hole to hide in if inspectors came.



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During **World War 1** the sisters looked after refugee children from Belgium and turned their school hall into a ward for injured soldiers, helping them get better. But in 1942, during **World War 2** the Convent was hit by a bomb and five sisters were sadly killed.



Sisters still live in the Bar Convent today – you might see some on your visit! They help the community in York and around the world, and you can learn about their work in our exhibition.