

# Founder's Day

Our big feast day is January 20<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of Fr Alphonse's remarkable experience of Mary in a church in Rome. The Congregation and the school are called Our Lady of Sion in honour of Mary of Jerusalem. The Sisters ask all young people at Sion to pray with them for peace in Jerusalem.

## Avila House



Next door to the School in Avila House is a community of Sisters of Sion. Most worked in the school until they retired. You will see the Sisters at various events in the School calendar.

The Sisters pray in their chapel every day. They remember in their prayers the whole family of Sion which includes all young people in Our Lady of Sion School.



Find out more about the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion:

[www.sistersofzion.org](http://www.sistersofzion.org)

[www.notredamedesion.org](http://www.notredamedesion.org)

# The Congregation of Our Lady of Sion



*Fr. Theodore*

The Sisters of Sion were founded in France in 1843 by Theodore Ratisbonne. Theodore grew up in a Jewish family and came to the Christian faith as a young man. He was always conscious of the unique relationship between the church and the Jewish people. Whilst working as a priest in Paris he received news of the dramatic conversion experience of his brother Alphonse on January 20<sup>th</sup> 1842.

This event inspired Theodore to follow his intuition and to found the Congregation to witness to God's faithful love for the Jewish people. The congregation grew quickly, foundations being made in 10 different countries in Theodore's life time, and is now present in 21 countries around the world in North, Central and South America, Europe, the Middle East, Australia and the Philippines.



*Fr Alphonse*



*A world-wide community*

Fr Theodore and Fr Alphonse had a great love for the poor. Whenever they founded a Sion School they established an orphanage or a workshop for disadvantaged children.



*Fr Alphonse with orphans in Jerusalem*

## Sion in UK / Ireland

The Sisters of Sion first came to England in 1860 at the invitation of Cardinal Wiseman. They first settled in London and Worthing and opened schools there. Sion schools always welcomed pupils from every faith as respect for other beliefs and cultures has always been an important part of their philosophy. After the Second World War, and particularly after the Second Vatican Council in the Catholic Church, the work of the congregation expanded and developed. Smaller communities were established in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

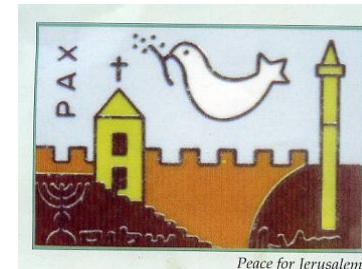
'We are based in towns and cities where there is a need for dialogue and reconciliation. We teach others about Judaism and other faiths. We try to overcome injustice and prejudice wherever we find them. Our school in Bayswater amalgamated in 1968 with Cardinal Manning School to become Sion-Manning School. Our Lady of Sion in Worthing is now under lay leadership.'

## Our Lady of Sion School

Young people at Our Lady of Sion School belong to the worldwide family of Sion. The school motto, "Consideration Always" means that we have a deep respect for all races, traditions and cultures both in the school and in the wider world.

Because our founders had a deep awareness of Judaism and the Church's relationship with the Jewish people we too try to develop the same awareness and share this with others. We are very conscious of the history of the Jewish people both in biblical and modern times. We learn about anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, study the practice of Judaism today and try to become aware of any prejudice against the Jewish people.

We learn about other faith traditions too including Islam and Eastern religions. Ignorance can lead to prejudice; knowledge helps us to understand other people and contributes to dialogue, peace and reconciliation.



*Peace for Jerusalem*

Like our founders we are concerned with the whole of society and work for the day "when justice and peace shall embrace" (Psalm 85). We try to help those in need in Worthing, as we have done since our beginnings, as well as those suffering in other parts of the world. We celebrate "difference" in our school and in the faith communities to which we may belong.

Christian, Jewish and other faith traditions teach that creation is sacred and should be cared for. We encourage our students to share this outlook at Sion.