December 10th finally saw the official opening and blessing of the new chapel and convent at West Wickham. Just over 2 years after the community moved out and the old buildings were demolished we gathered to mark the new beginnings.
It was a real DMJ family celebration. Fr. Aidan Rossiter cj was the main celebrant accompanied by Fr. Richard Lear cj and several of the local clergy. Members of staff from the Emmaus Centre, Coloma Court Nursing Home and St. Joseph’s community were there as were the architect Richard Heath, the surveyor Peter Williams and representatives of those who worked on the buildings. The choir and organist came from Coloma School. DMJs from the local area and from Belgium were there along with Associates.

Sr. Felicé welcomes all.

Sr. Mary Goretti, Sr. Margaret Eason and Fr. Richard Lear cj proclaimed the Word of God.

The two Sr. Sheilas (Moloney and Barrett) led the intercessions.
Jo Cornish, Anne Wilkinson (associates), Srs. Noreen Murray, Cécile Walrave, Mary Hickey and Celia Beale, (below) Sr. Paula Spark, Marie Potter(associate) and Sr. Marie Antoinette Beel brought the offertory gifts.

Sr. Marie Antoinette originally commissioned the beautiful tabernacle, with its depiction of the last supper, (above) for the DMJ school in Aalst. When the last sister left the school it was entrusted to our sister congregation, the sisters of Mary and Joseph for safekeeping. They very graciously returned it to us for the new chapel.

At the end of mass Fr. Aidan and Sr. Mary Goretti went to bless the rest of the building while we enjoyed the choir’s singing. Then we all gathered for tea in the new community dining room.