

BISHOP ENGLAND'S SISTERHOOD, 1829-1929

by

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DIGEST

The Most Reverend John England, first Bishop of Charleston, South Carolina, founded the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in December, 1829. The first three members, Sister M. Joseph (O'Gorman), Sister M. Martha (O'Gorman), and Sister M. Teresa (Barry), had been born in Ireland, but had lived in Baltimore for a number of years. Bishop England wrote a simple rule for them based upon the rules of Saint Vincent de Paul. When Bishop England died, April 11, 1842, there were thirteen professed Sisters and six novices in the Community. They were conducting an academy for girls from middle class homes, a free school for girls from poorer families, an orphanage, and a school for free Negroes. In addition, the Sisters cared for the sick poor in their homes, especially during the periodic yellow fever epidemics which afflicted Charleston.

During the Episcopate of the Most Reverend Ignatius Reynolds, Bishop England's successor, the Community opened branch houses in Savannah, Georgia, and Columbia, South Carolina. The former establishment became independent of the motherhouse two years after its foundation. In 1858, the Most Reverend Patrick N. Lynch,

third Bishop of Charleston, brought the Sisters in Columbia, South Carolina, back to Charleston to conduct a boys' orphanage.

The Civil War interrupted the normal development of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. At its end the Community, like Caesar's Gaul, was divided into three parts. Some of the Sisters were stranded in Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, site of the Confederate General Hospital they had staffed during the war years. Others were located in Sumter, South Carolina, where they had taken the orphans and boarders under their care during the shelling of Charleston. A third segment was in Charleston, living in the home of a benefactor. Yankee shells had rendered their convent and orphanage uninhabitable.

The story of Bishop England's Sisters during the late 1860's and 1870's records their efforts to rebuild and reopen their prewar institutions. In gratitude for the care and attention the Sisters had bestowed upon the Union soldiers in the Confederate hospitals and prisons in Charleston during the war, the United States Congress granted them an appropriation of \$12,000.00. The Sisters also received support and financial assistance from the carpetbag governments then in control of the city and state legislatures.

In 1869, the Sisters opened a house in Wilmington, North Carolina. Three years later, these Sisters sought and obtained independence from the motherhouse. Toward the end of the nineteenth century the Sisters in North Carolina, and those in Savannah, Georgia, amalgamated with Mother McAuley's Sisters of Mercy.

During the second fifty years of its history, 1880-1929, Bishop England's Sisterhood doubled its membership and broadened the scope of each of its apostolic activities. In 1929, the eighty-six professed members of the Community were conducting the only Catholic hospital, the only Catholic nurses' training school, the only Catholic orphanage, the only Catholic social service center, two of the four private academies for girls, and six of the eleven parochial schools in the diocese. During its first one hundred years there had been no phase of diocesan works of charity or education with which the Bishop England Congregation had not been associated.

INTRODUCTION

John England, the founder of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, grew up in Ireland in an age of change. Three years after his birth in Cork on September 23, 1786, the Paris mob stormed the Bastille. The American States, their independence achieved, moved from Confederation to Constitution. The people of Ireland, freed in 1782 from part of the hated Penal Code that had oppressed them for two centuries, would move on towards religious liberty and at least some human freedoms in John England's lifetime. The politico-religious ideas and developments of the time made a deep impression upon the youth and were significant in shaping his adult attitudes.

Forbidden for so long from educating their children by Britain's penal laws, Irish Catholics were only beginning to open schools of their own when John England reached school age. Hence, his father placed him in one of the Protestant schools in Cork City. At the age of fourteen, having completed his primary training, he studied law for two years, but in 1802 he abandoned his legal studies for the priesthood. For the next six years John England was a seminarian at Saint Patrick's

College, Carlow. On October 11, 1808, by special dispensation of Pope Pius VII, the twenty-two-year-old seminarian was ordained. Then followed twelve years of extraordinary activity and experience as a priest in the Diocese of Cork.

As one of his many duties, Father England in 1813 accepted the trusteeship of the Cork Mercantile Chronicle, then an almost bankrupt newspaper. In its columns, the young priest, a born journalist, achieved national fame as the defender of Irish rights. The propriety of permitting the British government to nominate the Catholic Bishops of Ireland--commonly known as the Veto Question--was the topic of the day. Under Father England's guidance the Chronicle was decidedly anti-vetoist. The paper attacked some of the Irish Catholic Bishops and even the Pope himself whenever either appeared willing to conciliate the Vetoists. The noted Church historian, the late Monsignor Peter Guilday, biographer of John England, states that the veto controversy developed John England's character better than anything else for the great field of labor that lay across the Atlantic.¹

¹Peter Guilday, The Life and Times of John England (New York: The America Press, 1927), I, 123.

In 1817, Father England resigned his trusteeship of the Chronicle and accepted the pastorship of the Church of Bandon, a town about sixteen miles southwest of Cork City. While the young pastor was devoting himself to his new duties, schism was racking the Church in faraway Charleston, South Carolina. As the particulars involve a long and complicated story, suffice it to say that lay trusteeism and rampant nationalism had combined to produce the scandalous situation. Put simply, the schism occurred in 1816 when the lay trustees of Saint Mary's, the only Catholic congregation in Charleston, refused to accept as their pastor the French-born Father J. P. DeCloriviere appointed by the Archbishop of Baltimore. The Archbishop placed Saint Mary's under interdict. Father DeCloriviere then opened a chapel on Cannon Street and Ashley Avenue for the members of the congregation willing to submit to the Archbishop's authority. Matters came to a head in 1819 when the schismatics promoted a scheme to establish an Independent Catholic Church with an Irish priest consecrated by the Jansenist Bishop of Utrecht as its head. The Archbishop of Baltimore, the Most Reverend Ambrose Marechal dispatched Father Benedict Fenwick, S.J., the future Bishop of Boston, to Charleston to remove the interdict as soon as the trustees would submit to authority. Father

Fenwick managed to restore some semblance of peace and unity, yet the attempt to form an Independent Church convinced Rome that something more had to be done. Acting upon Archbishop Marechal's suggestion, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda decided to detach the Carolinas and Georgia from the Archdiocese of Baltimore and form them into a new Diocese with the Bishop's residence in Charleston. In June, 1820, having studied the problem for a year, the Sacred Congregation recommended and Pope Pius VII approved the erection of the See of Charleston with John England as its first Bishop. The Bishop-elect, one of the most courageous, most zealous, and eloquent of all the Irish clergy, was consecrated in Saint Finbar's Cathedral, Cork City, on September 21, 1820.

The thirty-four-year-old prelate arrived in Charleston on December 30, 1820. John England made his presence felt immediately. One week after his arrival he wrote and distributed a pastoral letter, the first of its kind in the history of the American Church. The following week he began a visitation of the chief Catholic centers in his three-state Diocese. In South Carolina he found approximately two hundred communicants; in Georgia, one hundred fifty; in North Carolina, twenty-five--a total of three hundred and seventy-five (375)--

less than in his home parish in Ireland. Most of these people were poor and subject to prejudice on the part of their non-Catholic neighbors. In the entire diocese there were only four priests on whom the Bishop could depend to care for this widely-scattered flock. The prospects would have discouraged most men, but Bishop England was one of those rare individuals who see what has to be done and find a way to do it.

It is significant, however, that before initiating any measures for his own diocese, Bishop England appealed to Archbishop Marechal to convoke a Provincial Council where all the Bishops might consult and establish uniform disciplinary regulations for the Church in the United States. Trips to Baltimore, Richmond, Philadelphia, and New York during the summer and fall of 1821 convinced Bishop England that much of the confusion and disorder prevailing in those dioceses resulted from lack of unity and cooperation among the hierarchy. Bishop England viewed the Church as one and the welfare of each diocese in some measure the common concern of the whole. He had little sympathy for a system which rendered every American diocese a popedom.

To Bishop England's astonishment, the Archbishop of Baltimore did not deem a Provincial Council necessary. In later years Bishop England's efforts won him the

title "Father of Provincial Councils," but his repeated pleas never altered Archbishop Marechal's decision. The task of convoking the First Provincial Council fell to the Most Reverend James Whitfield, Archbishop Marechal's successor.

Bishop England's differences with Archbishop Marechal went deeper than the question of calling a Provincial Council. The historian Theodore Maynard expressed it well when he said: "John England was from the outset an American in a sense that Ambrose Marechal and some of his colleagues could never hope to be or perhaps wanted to be."²

Bishop England considered the Americans a religious people but warned that they would not embrace a religion apparently incompatible with American ideas and institutions. He repeatedly implored bishops and priests to familiarize themselves with American history and to live by American customs if they desired the confidence of American citizens. He further advocated a knowledge of American law and adapting ecclesiastical customs to those laws.

Finding little support or encouragement for his ideas in Baltimore, Bishop England determined to

²Theodore Maynard, The Story of American Catholicism (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1941), p. 233.

organize the Diocese of Charleston as he thought best. Priests were his paramount need. In January, 1822, therefore, Bishop England opened a diocesan seminary in Charleston. Although the Bishop advocated a native clergy and hierarchy, native vocations were slow to materialize. Hence, the Bishop recruited promising young Irish students and personally supervised their training. Though never on a sound financial footing, the seminary remained in existence until 1851--nine years after Bishop England's death. In all about sixty priests were trained there. Four became bishops. Most of the remainder spent their lives as missionaries tramping the roads of Georgia and the Carolinas.

Bishop England considered the need for some common organ of communication among Catholics second only to the need for a properly trained clergy. In June, 1822, therefore, he founded this country's first real Catholic newspaper, The United States Catholic Miscellany. Purportedly a diocesan paper, the Miscellany was actually national, and to some extent, international in scope. Through the Miscellany, Bishop England sought to awaken Catholics to the privileges of their faith and their American citizenship. He was particularly anxious to persuade them that there was no need to assume the posture of second-class citizens. Simultaneously, he

tried to convince his Protestant readers that Catholicism and democracy were perfectly compatible. His method consisted in presenting Catholic teachings and refuting calumnies, simply and straightforwardly, rather than inveighing against Protestantism. He desired to convert his detractors, not offend them. In the opinion of the noted Church historian, Monsignor John Tracy Ellis, the founding of the United States Catholic Miscellany was Bishop England's greatest single contribution to the American Catholic community.³

In 1823, Bishop England wrote a constitution providing a unique system of government for the Diocese of Charleston. The document recognized and reaffirmed the Bishop's position as head of the Church in the Diocese and acknowledged his exclusive authority over purely spiritual or ecclesiastical concerns, such as doctrine, discipline, and clerical appointments. Yet it also provided for annual conventions where the bishop met with representatives of the clergy and the laity (sitting as separate houses) to review and discuss the temporal concerns of the Church in the diocese. The houses, primarily an advisory body, were granted some

³John Tracy Ellis, "The Diocese of Charleston in American Catholic History," The Catholic Banner, Official Newspaper of the Diocese of Charleston, December 4, 1960, p. 8A.

legislative power. No act was considered valid unless it was passed by a majority of both houses and approved by the bishop. There was, however, no provision for overriding the bishop's veto.

Most of Bishop England's peers in the American hierarchy considered the constitution a dangerously democratic document calculated to give too much power to the layman. Actually, the reverse was true. It empowered the layman to cooperate but not dominate. In effect it laid the ax to the trustee problem and brought peace and unity to the Diocese of Charleston.

Bishop England's plans for his diocese included the introduction of religious communities of women to teach his flock and perform the corporal works of mercy. In 1825 he appealed to the Ursulines of Boston. For want of numbers, the community had to refuse. When diocesan difficulties ruled out his plans for a trip to Ireland in the spring of 1829, his hopes of obtaining a colony of Irish Ursulines ended in frustration. The following fall, however, while in Baltimore attending the long hoped for First Provincial Council, Bishop England met four young women willing to give themselves to the service of the Church in the Diocese of Charleston. There is no indication in any of the Bishop's extant correspondence that he was thinking of founding a

sisterhood. Yet that is what he did. Those four young women became the first members of Bishop England's Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. From their inception until the present day, the history of the sisterhood has been inextricably linked to the history of the Diocese of Charleston.

All that has been said in the foregoing pages is prologue. The constitution of the diocese fell into disuse shortly after Bishop England's death; the seminary closed its doors in 1851; and the United States Catholic Miscellany disappeared in 1861. Of all Bishop England's works and institutions, only the sisterhood remains. It is the living link with the first Bishop of Charleston. The following pages will attempt to record the story of its growth and development. In the words of the Most Reverend Emmet Walsh, Bishop of Charleston in 1929, the Centennial of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy:

The story of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy is a simple narrative of service to the sick and wounded, to the orphan and the prisoner, to the poor and distressed, in peace and war, in calamity and pestilence. . . . It tells of missionaries . . . who taught the Negro and the white, slave and free, in grammar schools and high schools, in city and country, in parish and mission. They taught and served wherever their Bishops directed.

CHAPTER I

IN THE DAYS OF THE FOUNDER

The history of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy begins in Baltimore in the fall of 1829. From October 3 until October 18 that city was the scene of the First Provincial Council of the Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States. The Most Reverend John England, Bishop of Charleston, South Carolina, the youngest, yet the most eloquent of the six prelates attending the Council, arrived in Baltimore on or about September 23. He remained in the city and its environs until November 12. Sometime during that interval, the Bishop met four young women who wanted to become religious and were willing to form a community under the Bishop's direction. Unfortunately, no one recorded the particulars of that important meeting. It is difficult to tell whether the Bishop contemplated founding a religious community before he met the young women, or whether their offer suggested the idea to him. Nevertheless, he encouraged them to return to Charleston with him. They sailed from Baltimore on November 12 or 13 and reached Charleston

on November 23, 1829.¹

Miss Mary O'Gorman, the eldest of the four, was then thirty-four years old. Her sister, Honora, was twenty-nine; and their niece, Miss Mary Teresa Barry, was only fourteen and a half. All three had been born in Cork, Ireland, and had lived in Baltimore for a number of years. The fourth member of the group, twenty-three-year-old Miss Mary E. Burke, was a native of Baltimore, Maryland.²

Bishop England rented a small house for them on

¹The Charleston Courier, November 24, 1829, p. 4.

²Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, Charleston, South Carolina. The Archives contain a handwritten account of the history of the community from 1829 to 1856. The account is unpaginated, and the writer, anonymous. It is located in the Council Minutes Book. Hereafter this book will be referred to as Community History, 1829-1856.

The Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy contain no information relative to how Bishop England met the first members of the congregation. The United States Catholic Miscellany, the diocesan newspaper and first Catholic weekly in the United States, reported Bishop England's actions while he was in Baltimore attending the First Provincial Council. Nowhere, however, does it mention his meeting the four young women who became the first members of the congregation. The records of the Catholic parishes in existence in Baltimore in 1829 were examined, but revealed no information about these women. Neither did the files of the Baltimore Cathedral Archives, or the files of the Charleston Diocesan Archives.

Hereafter the Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy will be referred to as ASCLM. The Baltimore Cathedral Archives will be referred to as BCA. The Charleston Diocesan Archives will be referred to as CDA. The United States Catholic Miscellany will be referred to as USCM.

Friend Street (now Legare), near the old wooden cathedral.³ There, in December, 1829, he established the four young women in community under the title of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Miss Mary O'Gorman received the name of Sister M. Joseph and was appointed Superioress of the group. Miss Honora O'Gorman became Sister M. Martha; Miss Barry, Sister M. Teresa; and Miss Burke, Sister M. Augustine. It is likely that all four received the religious habit at this time, though that fact is not recorded. The first habit worn by the community was the traditional black widow's dress and cap worn by Mother Seton's Sisters at Emmitsburg. Tradition maintains that the first habit was sent to Charleston from Emmitsburg. Neither Charleston, nor Emmitsburg, however, has a record of that event.⁴

The year 1830 was one of probation for the four young women. Modern parlance would probably designate their novitiate experience as "on the job training." In

³Directory and Strangers' Guide for the City of Charleston for the Year 1830 (Charleston: Morris Goldsmith, 1831), p. 109. The listing on p. 109 states: "Mary O'Gorman, teacher, 11 Friend Street."

⁴The Sister Archivist of the Daughters of Charity, Mt. St. Joseph Provincial House, Emmitsburg, Maryland, assured the writer that the Archives there contain no mention of Bishop England securing a religious habit from Emmitsburg. However, he may have requested the favor verbally on one of his many visits to Mt. St. Joseph.

January, 1830, they opened a school in their Friend Street house. Young Sister M. Teresa (Barry), and Sister M. Augustine (Burke) shared the responsibility of teaching the six pupils who then constituted the entire student body. The Bishop assigned Sister M. Martha (O'Gorman) to supervise the household concerns of the diocesan seminary.⁵ At the end of their first month's service in the Diocese of Charleston, Bishop England informed his friend, Father Simon Brute, the future first Bishop of Vincennes, Indiana, "The women I brought from Baltimore go on well as yet and are doing some good."⁶

The following month Bishop England wrote his friend, Judge William Gaston of North Carolina:

The Sisters whom I am endeavoring to establish will not be a band of those at Emmitsburg nor dependent on them, as I do not wish to make my institutions depend upon Superiors over whom I have neither control or influence. Hence, I shall try what can, within the diocese, be done upon the same principle. I have four who cost me very little and do much service.⁷

In May, 1830, Bishop England forwarded an

⁵ASCIM, Community History 1829-56.

⁶CDA 3E2, Bishop England to Rev. Simon Brute, January 30, 1830.

⁷Records of the American Catholic Historical Society (Philadelphia: American Catholic Historical Society, 1908), XIX, 147-48. Hereafter this source will be listed as RACHS. The letter quoted was written by Bishop England to William Gaston, February 25, 1830.

official notification of the foundation and nature of the Institute to the Cardinal, Prefect of Propaganda.

In Charleston four nuns are living a religious life under a rule which I drew up for them. They were established towards the end of last year under the title of Our Lady of Mercy, and they desire to take simple vows each year and to dedicate themselves to the work of teaching young girls, of instructing the negro slaves in faith and morals, and of caring for the sick and infirm.⁸

Bishop England wrote this letter while journeying up the Mississippi en route to Bardstown for the consecration of the Right Reverend Francis F. Kenrick, Coadjutor-Bishop Elect of Philadelphia.⁹ Trips of this nature, in addition to his annual visitations of the mission stations throughout his vast diocese, necessitated long absences from the city of Charleston. This, among other reasons, led the Bishop to appoint an Ecclesiastical Superior for his infant congregation of sisters. The first assigned to this office was Father Jeremiah F. O'Neill.¹⁰

⁸Peter Guilday, The Life and Times of John England (New York: The America Press, 1927), II, 135.

⁹Ibid., pp. 134-35.

¹⁰Father Jeremiah F. O'Neill was born in Cork, Ireland; ordained in St. John the Baptist Diocesan Seminary, Charleston, in 1826; and sent to Savannah, Georgia, six years later. His parish, St. John the Baptist, Savannah, embraced one-third of Georgia. He served the Diocese of Georgia until his death in 1870 at the age of eighty.

While the Bishop was away, Miss Ellen Rugan and Miss Rose Hughes entered the sisterhood. Both young women were Irish-born, but had lived in America for some time--Miss Rugan, in Baltimore; Miss Hughes, in Charleston. In December three more Irish-born residents of Baltimore joined the community: twenty-seven-year-old Catherine McKenna, twenty-four-year-old Ellen Clarke, and thirty-five-year-old Marie Kennedy.¹¹

On New Year's Day, 1831, the Sisters entered upon their first retreat. Although the newly ordained Father Jerome McCool¹² conducted it, Bishop England gave the Sisters daily talks in his own library. On Sunday morning, January 9, 1831, at the eight o'clock Mass in old Saint Finbar's Cathedral, Sister M. Joseph (O'Gorman), Sister M. Martha (O'Gorman), Sister Teresa (Barry), and Sister M. Augustine (Burke) knelt before the Blessed Mother's altar and pronounced for the first time the simple annual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. After each had made her vows, she received Holy Communion.¹³

¹¹ASCLM, The Community Register.

¹²CDA 3E6, Bishop England to Rev. Simon Brute, Charleston, August 24, 1830. This letter contains the following reference to Father McCool: "Mr. McCool has been preparing for ordination. He will receive tonsure on next Monday and will probably be a priest before three months."

¹³USCM, January 13, 1831, p. 5. See also,

The following January (1832) the Bishop himself conducted the Sisters' retreat. At its conclusion the first four members renewed their vows; while those who had entered in May and December, 1830, promised poverty, chastity, and obedience for the first time. Miss Rugan became Sister M. Francis; Miss Hughes, Sister M. Rose; Miss McKenna, Sister M. Aloysius; Miss Clarke, Sister M. Ignatius; and Miss Kennedy, Sister M. Bridget. About this time Sister M. Martha (O'Gorman) succeeded Sister M. Joseph (O'Gorman) as Superioress of the Community. Sister M. Rose (Hughes) and Sister M. Aloysius (McKenna) replaced Sister M. Martha at the seminary. Bishop England reported to the Ninth Annual Convention of the diocese that the Sisters' services to the seminary (described in the Convent Annals as "very laborious"), had reduced operating costs considerably.¹⁴

In the spring of 1831 the Bishop rented a larger house for the Sisters. While the move enabled them to take in a few boarders and orphans, it also increased their expenses. School tuition, their chief source of income, was not always paid promptly or fully. The

Guilday, p. 136.

¹⁴ Ignatius Reynolds (ed.), The Works of Right Reverend John England, First Bishop of Charleston (Baltimore: John Murphy and Co., 1849), IV, 335.

only written record of these early years states:

The Community had at this time much to contend with, not only from the unhealthfulness of the climate but from pecuniary wants. They were at this time even in doubt as to whether they would be able to succeed, when they were joined by Miss Datty.¹⁵

Miss Julia Datty, sixty-six years old when she entered the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, was literally a God-send. She brought to the Community a fortune, talent, experience as a teacher, and an interesting personal history. Born of a wealthy family on the island of San Domingo (now Haiti), Julia Datty received her education in Paris. When she completed her schooling she returned to San Domingo, only to flee the island during the terrible native uprising of 1792. With her family she set sail for Boston but adverse winds forced the ship into Charleston's harbor. Sometime after her arrival in Charleston Miss Datty went to work as a laundress in the home of Mrs. William Heyward, one of the leading families in the city. Mrs. Heyward, amazed at Miss Datty's refinement, soon learned her story and transferred her from family laundress to family governess. Little by little, Miss Datty's reputation as a teacher spread. One home became too small to accommodate those who desired her services. Hence, Miss Datty opened

¹⁵ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

a school in Charleston.¹⁶

Julia Datty's school soon became one of the most fashionable in Charleston. In her article, "Early Schools in South Carolina," Martha B. Washington states:

Miss Datty must have been a woman of rare character, combining firmness and gentleness in a marked degree. Her pupils always spoke of her with the greatest affection and respect. She was a devout follower of the Roman Church, and while she made no effort to influence the belief of her pupils, she so impressed them with her earnest efforts to live worthy of her own faith, that they would often in after years when hearing aspersions against the Roman Church, say, "It isn't so; Miss Datty would never have believed it."¹⁷

Besides conducting one of the best schools in Charleston, Julia Datty spent countless hours visiting the sick, consoling the grief-stricken, and assisting the needy. Despite her age, therefore, Julia Datty's experience rendered her well-suited to live the life of

¹⁶ ASCIM, Joan B. Williman, "Miss Datty, Her Identity and a Short Sketch of Her Activities in Charleston," unpublished manuscript compiled by Mrs. Williman, a resident of Charleston, South Carolina, May 20, 1940.

Of Miss Datty's family, Mrs. Williman states: "How many comprised the Datty family, no accurate information is now available, but there was Marcus Datty, whom we take to be her father, and it is almost certain that a sister, whose married name was Marsan, was also of this group, bringing with her some children, one of whom afterwards married M. Andrew Talvande, and became the well-known Madame Ann Marsan Talvande, whose school was celebrated here."

¹⁷ I.M.E. Blandin, History of Higher Education of Women in the South Prior to 1860 (New York: Neale Publishing Co., 1909), chap. xxiii.

a Sister of Our Lady of Mercy. For all practical purposes, she had been doing just that for years. For this reason, and because Bishop England wished to receive her vows before he left for Europe, Miss Datty was dispensed from the usual probationary period and pronounced her vows on July 4, 1832, in the Cathedral in the presence of the Bishop, his clergy, and the entire Community of Sisters. She received the name of Sister Benedicta.¹⁸ As Father J. P. O'Neill was then visiting Ireland, Bishop England appointed Father Andrew Byrne, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Sisters.¹⁹

Bishop England sailed for Europe on July 10, 1832. He planned to visit Ireland, Paris, and Austria hoping to secure priests and money for his large diocese. He did not return to Charleston until November, 1833.

In January, 1833, while Bishop England was in Rome, Father Byrne, complying with the unanimous wish of the Community, appointed Sister M. Benedicta (Datty) Superioress of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. "The House," the records state, "began to assume now a new

¹⁸ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

¹⁹Father Andrew Byrne was born in Ireland; studied for the priesthood in St. John the Baptist Diocesan Seminary, Charleston; and was ordained in 1827. He later became the first Roman Catholic Bishop of Little Rock, Arkansas.

aspect. Everything appeared to be in a more prosperous condition. The day pupils and the boarders had increased, which enabled the Sisters to take a few more orphans."²⁰ Father Byrne deserves at least partial credit for producing this change. In addition to his other priestly duties, Father Byrne found time to visit the school daily, to teach a class in Church music; to prepare pupils for First Holy Communion, and to visit the Catholic parents in the city and encourage them to send their children to the Sisters' school. In order to attract more pupils, he permitted the Sisters to teach French, music, and dancing.²¹

Father O'Neill returned from Ireland early in November, 1833. Accompanying him were Miss Margaret Cagney and Miss Eliza Kennedy, formerly of Cork City, Ireland, who became the thirteenth and fourteenth members of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Bishop England had personally selected these young women while he was visiting his native land. Although Miss Kennedy did not persevere, Miss Cagney, a well-educated woman, became one of the most useful members of the early Community.²²

Bishop England reached Charleston a week or so

²⁰ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

after Father O'Neill. That he was pleased with the condition of the Sisterhood after his absence of almost a year and a half is evident from his remarks to the delegates attending the Tenth Convention of the Catholic Church in South Carolina.

The Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy has met my most sanguine expectations; not only have they been exceedingly useful for the purpose of education, but they had generously offered their services at a time when it was feared that the cholera would bring its desolating influence upon us, to attend in whatever way the Board of Health of this City might deem most useful. I hope that as their institution becomes better organized, their great utility will be more fully developed.²³

The Bishop also informed the Convention that, at the request of Pope Gregory XVI, he had accepted the difficult post of Apostolic Delegate to the Government of Haiti to attempt to effect a resumption of official relations between that Government and the Holy See. Realizing that the Haitian mission would necessitate long absences from Charleston, Bishop England emphasized that he would gladly have forgone it, if it were not the expressed wish of His Holiness, Pope Gregory XVI. The Bishop could not foresee then that the mission he accepted so reluctantly would last for almost five years.

Before sailing for Haiti, Bishop England dispensed Sister Augustine (Burke) from her vows. The

²³Reynolds, IV, 340.

records state simply that Sister Augustine, one of the first members of the Community, was a convert who felt that she could accomplish greater good among her Protestant relatives than she could in the convent. Hers was the first departure the Community experienced.²⁴

Bishop England sailed for Haiti in December, 1833; returned to Charleston on March 28, 1834, and three weeks later, April 19, sailed for Rome to discuss the Haitian mission with Pope Gregory XVI. The day before he left Charleston, however, he received Miss Cagney's vows and gave her the name of Sister M. Veronica.²⁵

The Bishop remained abroad until late in November, 1834. During his absence Father Byrne, Ecclesiastical Superior, rented a larger house for the Sisters on Beaufain Street, one door west of Cummin Street. There for the first time the Sisters had a small chapel and the privilege of having the Blessed Sacrament under their own roof. They also had a good deal of hard work. The records state:

The Sisters had to labor much at this time not having means to pay servants, and having not only to do the heavy duties of cooking, baking, and washing for their own house but also had to perform some of

²⁴ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

²⁵Ibid.

those laborious duties for the Seminary, which was also at this time very limited in means.²⁶

A group of Ursuline Nuns from Blackrock Convent, Cork, Ireland, and five young Irish women who desired to enter the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy accompanied Bishop England to Charleston late in November, 1834. The Bishop installed the Ursulines in a house on Broad Street near the Cathedral. There, in January, 1835, they opened an academy for young ladies.²⁷ The candidates for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy were Miss Catherine Leahy, the future Sister M. Scholastica; Miss Eliza Mahoney, the future Sister M. Vincent; Miss Eliza Flynn, the future Sister M. John; Miss Eliza Fagan, the future Sister M. Agnes; and Miss Joanna Dunn, the future Sister M. Xavier.

To his dismay the Bishop discovered that a general deterioration and confusion had crept into the diocese during his absence. He described the conditions to his friend Father Michael O'Connor, Vice-Rector of the Irish College in Rome:

I found that I owed \$1,600 to the merchants who managed my business for advances made by them to uphold my institutions. I found various small debts to at least an equal amount. I found the Churches and Seminary deeply involved, so that \$7,000.00

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Guilday, II, 147.

would not pay the claims upon me and all here under the impression that I was bringing at least \$20,000 from Europe. I also found . . . a spirit of discontent and jealousy creeping in. The efforts of Protestants against us were prodigious; our poor miserable churches wanted repairs, and one more year would have upset the diocese. . . . I had to restore discipline, and the heaviest and most difficult part, to find the means of feeding and clothing those I had in various places. . . .²⁸

The Sisters shared in the general disciplinary and organizational crisis besetting the diocese. Bishop England described their state as one of "confusion and disorder."²⁹ Community records do not provide much more information except to state that reports reached the Bishop that the house had been maladministered during his absence, and that some of the Sisters had been in-subordinate. No names were mentioned.

During February and March, 1835, the Bishop visited the convent several times and held interviews with the Superior and with the subjects in an attempt to resolve differences. At one point, according to the record, Bishop England considered dismissing some of the Sisters, but reconsidered judging it "more prudent to make another trial, as there might have been faults on

²⁸RACHS, VIII, 205-06. Bishop England to Rev. M. O'Connor, March 7, 1835.

²⁹RACHS, VIII, 210. Bishop England to Rev. M. O'Connor, April 7, 1835.

both sides."³⁰ He then drew up a new code of rules and promised to give the Sisters a constitution at a later date. Father Byrne resigned as Ecclesiastical Superior and the Bishop assumed that post himself. In March, the Bishop reappointed Sister Benedicta (Datty), Superioress, with Sister Magdalen (Bartley)³¹ her assistant. A month later the Bishop appointed the first Community Council members--Sister Benedicta (Datty), Sister Magdalen (Bartley), Sister M. Aloysius (McKenna), Sister Teresa (Barry), and Sister Veronica (Cagney). The last mentioned was also appointed first mistress of the school.³² On April 7, 1835, in a second letter to Father Michael O'Connor describing all the troubles that had beset the diocese, Bishop England said of the Sisters:

I have by great application framed their Rules, and re-established them in peace, charity, regularity and piety. I have admitted several of them to renew their vows which are annual, after I had for three months refused to receive them until they should

³⁰ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

³¹Sister Magdalen Bartley, the former Elizabeth Bartley, entered the Community in 1832; was professed in 1833; and died on August 24, 1858. Before entering the Community, Miss Bartley was the devoted friend and servant of Mrs. Jane Corcoran, mother of Father James Corcoran who became a priest in the Diocese of Charleston. In later years Father Corcoran became confessor and chaplain to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy; editor of the United States Catholic Miscellany; Bishop Gibbons' Theologian at Vatican Council I; and editor of the American Catholic Quarterly Review.

³²ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

become regular. They are now exceedingly useful.³³

In the summer of 1835 Bishop England opened a school for the free colored children in Charleston. He appointed two seminarians to teach the boys and assigned Sister M. Martha (O'Gorman) and Sister M. Vincent (Mahony) to the girls' department. The Bishop's action was completely in accord with the laws of South Carolina. Although the laws forbade the education of slaves, they did not prevent the education of free Negroes. Some Protestant sects had previously established similar schools in the city. Bishop England maintained that these schools were drawing the free Negroes from the Catholic Church.

Bishop England's school had over eighty pupils in a matter of weeks. About this time, however, abolitionist societies in the North were jamming the mails for Southern states with antislavery tracts. The arrival of these pamphlets in Charleston incensed the majority of the white citizens. A committee, self-styled the Committee of Twenty-one, formed to devise measures to prevent any further importation of abolitionist literature.³⁴ Members of the Committee approached Bishop

³³RACHS, VIII (1897), 210. Bishop England to Rev. M. O'Connor, April 7, 1835.

³⁴The Charleston Courier, August 11, 1835, p. 8.

England and requested him to close his school for the free Negroes. The Bishop replied that he would close his school only if the other denominations in the city closed theirs, though he disapproved of the proceeding.³⁵ Thus, all the schools for the free colored in Charleston were closed. On the morning of August 10, 1835, the clergy who had suspended their schools were publicly thanked at a meeting held at City Hall.³⁶

Had Bishop England acted contrary to the desires of the local citizenry he would have placed himself and his infant institutions in a very unfavorable, even unsafe position. Catholics were tolerated in Charleston, but it is doubtful whether Catholics suspect of being abolitionists would have been. Nor had Bishop England any desire to be associated with the abolitionists whom he considered as anti-Catholic as they were antislavery. When popular passions cooled, Bishop England would open his school again.

While Bishop England was in Rome in 1834, he had asked His Holiness, Pope Gregory XVI, to be relieved of the Haitian mission. Instead, the Holy Father suggested the appointment of a coadjutor-Bishop for Charleston.

³⁵ Guilday, II, 152.

³⁶ The Charleston Courier, August 11, 1835, p. 8.

On October 28, 1834, Rome named Father William Clancy to this post. Father Clancy, formerly a professor at the College of Carlow and one time student of Bishop England's in the seminary at Cork, was consecrated at Carlow on December 21, 1834.³⁷ For a variety of reasons, however, Bishop Clancy did not reach Charleston until November 12, 1835.³⁸ In retrospect, his delayed arrival appears to have been providential. It forced Bishop England to remain in the diocese and afforded him time to re-establish his institutions on a firmer basis. Bishop Clancy remained in the diocese until 1837.

The Haitian mission nearly ruined Bishop England's attempt to incorporate the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and the Ursuline Community. When he presented his petition for incorporation to the South Carolina Legislature in the fall of 1835, a friend informed the Bishop that some of the members of the House of Representatives would oppose his request simply to demonstrate their disapproval of his mission to Haiti. Through friends, however, the Bishop obtained an invitation to address the Senate. The same friends persuaded members of the House to attend. After a two-hour address during which

³⁷ Guilday, II, 324-25.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 333.

Bishop England begged the representatives "not to de-grade Carolina by placing it by the side of Massachusetts," his bills passed without any opposition.³⁹ The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy were incorporated for a period of fourteen years.

Bishop England sailed for Haiti about the middle of April, 1836. Although he returned to the diocese early in June, he had to leave again on the twenty-fourth of that month to report his progress to Pope Gregory and, hopefully, to bring his mission to that troubled island to a close.⁴⁰ Not until January, 1837, did he return to Charleston.

The Sisterhood experienced a very serious loss during Bishop England's absence. From August until November, 1836, a cholera epidemic ravaged the city of Charleston. While attending the victims Sister Benedicta (Datty), Superioress of the Community, contracted the disease. On the morning of October 3, 1836, she arose as usual and said morning prayers with the Community, but became ill during Mass. The Sisters sent for the doctor who pronounced her case hopeless. Shortly after she received the last sacraments, Sister Benedicta called the Community in to give them her last blessing.

³⁹Ibid., p. 297.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 309.

At half-past seven that evening, Sister Benedicta died.⁴¹

Bishop Clancy celebrated the funeral Mass in the Cathedral the next morning. Sister Benedicta's body remained in the church until four that afternoon. Then a procession consisting of the Bishop, clergy, the Sisters, and the children from the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy followed the coffin through the streets to Saint Mary's Churchyard where Sister Benedicta was buried. Although the Sisters made no public statement, the annalist stated that no language could describe the grief and anguish which pervaded the whole house.⁴²

In the interim between Sister Benedicta's death and Bishop England's return to the diocese in January, 1837, Bishop Clancy appointed Sister Magdalen (Bartley) Superioress of the Community. The records state that Bishop Clancy visited the house weekly, celebrated Mass in the Sisters' chapel every Tuesday, and looked over the accounts monthly. He also assigned the Sisters to take charge of the Cathedral choir and urged three or four Sisters to study music so that they might teach it to their students.⁴³

Bishop England returned to the diocese in

⁴¹ ASCIM, Community History 1829-56.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

January, 1837. He confirmed Sister Magdalen (Bartley) as Superioress of the Community; named Sister Aloysius (McKenna) her assistant; and Sister M. Veronica (Cagney), Secretary. He disapproved of so many Sisters devoting their time to music and forbade all but Sister Teresa (Barry) to continue.⁴⁴ In February, though he would have preferred to remain in Charleston, Bishop England had to leave again for Haiti. This trip, however, brought his mission to an end. When he presented documents from the Holy See to the President of Haiti, that gentleman refused to continue negotiations.⁴⁵ Thus, failure crowned Bishop England's five years of labor outside his diocese.

From Haiti, Bishop England proceeded to Baltimore to participate in the Third Provincial Council (April 16-23, 1837). There he experienced another sort of defeat, for the majority of the Bishops in attendance did not accept his views. His correspondence reveals that he felt increasingly at variance with most of the other members of the American hierarchy. A failure abroad, rejected by his peers at home, Bishop England had but one desire at that time, namely, "to be permitted

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Guilday, II, 312.

to rest quietly within my own borders and be occupied only with the care of my own Diocese."⁴⁶ The noted Church historian, Monsignor Peter Guilday, in his biography of Bishop England, states that the Bishop spent the five years between the completion of the Haitian mission and his death (1837-1842) "in repairing the forced neglect of the House of God in the Southland, rather than, as they should have been, the successful completion of his unflagging zeal and devotion."⁴⁷

The Bishop opened and conducted a retreat for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in November, 1837. The records relate that "He came to the House every morning at half-past five; read the morning's meditation and at seven o'clock celebrated Mass. He returned again at 12:00 at which time he lectured for nearly an hour."⁴⁸ Upon examining the accounts, Bishop England discovered that the boarders owed \$901.00. The Community might reasonably expect to collect only \$300.00. Therefore, he told the Sisters to raise the boarders' tuition from \$100.00 to \$150.00 per year. The Sisters feared that

⁴⁶BCA 23G4, England to Archbishop of Baltimore, January 4, 1837. See also BCA 24T3, England to Archbishop Eccleston, February 27, 1837.

⁴⁷Guilday, II, 274.

⁴⁸ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

the higher rates would reduce their student body and consequently reduce the Community income. This, in turn, would render the Community more dependent upon public charity. Nonetheless, the Sisters submitted to the founder's wishes with, in the words of the annalist, "all the resignation they possibly could."⁴⁹

At this juncture Bishop England removed the Cathedral choir from the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and placed it under the direction of the Ursuline Community. He also forbade his own Community to teach French and music in the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, although he granted that he might permit them to do so at a later date. It would seem that the Bishop wished to clearly delineate the functions of the two Sisterhoods he had introduced into the diocese. The Ursulines (usually referred to as the Nuns, while the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy were called simply, the Sisters), were to bestow the "most respectable and accomplished education" upon young ladies from the higher social classes; while the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy were

to provide for the solid and plain education of those young females whose means do not permit, and whose prospects do not require their attention to the higher accomplishments of their sex.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Reynolds, IV, 375. Bishop England's Address to the Fifteenth Convention of the Catholic Church in South Carolina, December 1, 1838.

In the fall of 1839 the Sisters opened Saint Mary's Free School for the elementary education for girls from families who could not afford the tuition paid by the students attending the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy.

A yellow fever epidemic ravaged Charleston from mid-August until early November, 1838. In those days it was called "strangers' fever" because so many victims were recent immigrants. Most of the immigrants were laborers, often Irish Catholics, forced to live in already overcrowded boarding houses in wretched accommodations. These laborers were generally distrustful of public hospitals and unwilling to go to them when sickness occurred. Realizing this, on July 22, 1838, Bishop England founded a society called the Brotherhood of San Marino. Its object was

to bring to mutual acquaintance and mutual aid, the well-conducted portion of the working men of the city of Charleston and its vicinity together with such friends as may be disposed to enter into their views . . . as also to procure comfort and aid for the members in time of sickness, and to look after the orphans of the deceased.⁵¹

To implement the objectives, Bishop England rented and converted a house in Queen Street into a hospital for the members of the society. He appointed Sister M. Aloysius (McKenna), the Superioress of the

⁵¹USCM, August 25, 1838, p. 4.

Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy since the previous January, Superintendent of the hospital. On August 15, 1838, Sister M. Aloysius (McKenna) assigned Sister M. Ignatius (Clarke) and Sister M. Vincent (Mahony) to work in the hospital. The convent records state:

In a short time the house was crowded with patients, so much so, that the Sisters had not an apartment to themselves and were therefore greatly inconvenienced, not only for want of accommodations, but also for want of assistance to perform even menial offices, as servants, either white or colored, could scarcely be got to attend the hospital so much afraid were they of contagion.⁵²

Sister M. Vincent (Mahony) and some of the other Sisters (whose names are not recorded) contracted the disease, but, providentially, no fatalities occurred. The hospital remained in existence for the next three years (1838-41) and perhaps would have remained longer had it not been for the illness and death of Bishop England in the spring of 1842. During these epidemics the Sisters also visited the sick poor in their homes, providing whatever services they could.⁵³

On August 8, 1839, the lease for the house serving as the hospital expired. The Brotherhood of San Marino did not have sufficient funds in its treasury to rent it for another year. About this time the Bishop

⁵² ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

⁵³ USCM, April 6, 1839, p. 6.

had purchased a lot near the west end of Queen Street as the site of a new home for the Sisters and the orphans. There was a house upon the lot. Hearing of the plight of the Brotherhood, the Sisters offered the society the use of the house rent free until the end of the year. This house served as the hospital for the members of the Brotherhood of San Marino during the epidemic of 1839.⁵⁴

The yellow fever epidemic of 1839 did not afflict Charleston as seriously as it did the inland city of Augusta, Georgia. Augusta was totally unprepared for a yellow fever epidemic. On October 4, 1839, when writing to Bishop Blanc of New Orleans, Father John Barry, pastor of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Augusta, stated:

We had no Hospital to which any person afflicted with the epidemic would go. Whilst misery, suffering and distress thus afflicted us on every side, I applied to our Mayor and proposed to him the propriety of opening a new Hospital. I offered my house for the purpose and promised to write to Dr. England for Sisters of Mercy to conduct it provided the city would defray expenses. He cheerfully adopted the plan. I wrote to the Bishop. He sent us three Sisters and a Priest and we have a Hospital opened about a month.⁵⁵

⁵⁴USCM, July 27, 1839, p. 4.

⁵⁵Rev. John Barry to Bishop Blanc, October 4, 1839. This letter is located in the Archives of the University of Notre Dame, V-4-1. Hereafter this source will be referred to as UNDA.

Bishop England informed the Mayor of Augusta that when he asked for volunteers for Augusta, every Sister asked to go.⁵⁶ He chose, however, only three-- Sister M. Aloysius (McKenna), Sister Francis (Rugan), and Sister M. Vincent (Mahony). The Sisters left Charleston in early September and remained on duty in Augusta until the end of October. "The number attended in the Hospital was nearly seventy, of whom about twenty died."⁵⁷

On November 2, 1839, the Sisters, in perfect health, returned to Charleston accompanied by Father Barry. Two days later the members of the Board of Health of Augusta passed a resolution thanking Bishop England, Father Barry, and "in particular the three Sisters of Charity from Charleston, who have so long and with such constant care, skill and kindness, taken charge of the Hospital."⁵⁸ The Mayor offered Father Barry money to pay for the transportation of the Sisters but Father Barry informed him that

He was instructed not to receive it as the Catholics of Charleston felt that in the affliction of their

⁵⁶ Guilday, II, 169. Bishop England to Mayor Cumming of Augusta, Georgia, November 11, 1839.

⁵⁷ USCM, November 16, 1839, p. 4.

⁵⁸ USCM, November 16, 1839. See also, Guilday, II, 168.

sister city, they ought not at least make any charge for charitable aid, and the more especially as a great portion of the patients were Roman Catholics.⁵⁹

These epidemics left in their wake a number of orphans and half-orphans among the Catholic population. Charleston had an Orphan House operated by the city, but according to the United States Catholic Miscellany:

The children . . . are either taught that all forms of religion are equally good, or they are instructed in the tenets of some one of the Protestant denominations. . . . It is true that Catholic clergymen have been invited to preach in their turn in the chapel of the Orphan House, but they have been refused permission to teach the Catholic catechism to the children of Catholic parents who may be in the House, and a Protestant catechism was, and perhaps still is taught by one of the Commissioners to all the children who are capable of learning.⁶⁰

After the epidemic of 1838, therefore, Bishop England initiated a campaign to raise money to build a Catholic orphanage. To the campaign contributions the Bishop added \$3,651.75, the proceeds of a fair held in April, 1839.⁶¹ On May 25, 1839, the United States Catholic Miscellany reported that the Bishop had collected \$4000.00 of the \$5000.00 he needed to pay for the lot he had purchased. It would take twice that amount to erect the necessary buildings.⁶²

⁵⁹ Guilday, II, 168.

⁶⁰ USCM, October 27, 1838, p. 6.

⁶¹ USCM, May 25, 1839, p. 4.

⁶² Ibid.

The Bishop also had in his possession at this time about \$3000.00 donated by the Catholics of Charleston for the purpose of building a suitable convent for the Sisters. Sometime before November, 1839, Bishop England decided to combine this money with that raised for the orphans. Instead of erecting two buildings, he determined to build one to serve both purposes.

Bishop England was supposed to lay the cornerstone of the new convent on March 25, 1840, the day the Sisters renewed their annual vows. A torrential storm, however, forced him to postpone the ceremony until the following afternoon. A crowd composed of members of the clergy, the Ursuline Sisters, the building committee, the laity, the Sisters, boarders and orphans, processed from the Cathedral to the building site on Queen Street. While the Bishop laid the cornerstone, the students of the Academy sang the Magnificat. The founder hailed the event as one of the happiest in the city's annals and expressed his hope that "Charleston will bountifully sustain and enlarge an Institution thus commenced under the auspices of charity."⁶³

On November 8, 1840, Bishop England informed the delegates to the annual convention of the Church in the

⁶³USCM, March 28, 1840, p. 4.

diocese that he intended to re-establish the school for free colored children and assured them that he would "avoid anything that can disturb the peace and good order of society, or violate the laws of those states whose exclusive jurisdiction on this subject we religiously acknowledge."⁶⁴ As in 1835, the Bishop asked the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy to undertake this work. During Christmas week he conducted a retreat for the Sisters. At its conclusion he chose Sister M. Teresa (Barry), Sister M. Francis (Rugan), and Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) for the new mission. He appointed Sister M. Teresa (Barry), Superioress of the mission, and Father Timothy J. Sullivan, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community.⁶⁵ The United States Catholic Miscellany of January 2, 1841, reported:

Three Sisters have been selected . . . who will enter into their new establishment (a temporary one in Queen Street opposite the Medical College) on next Monday morning, under the patronage of St. Joseph.⁶⁶

Actually, then, although this house was only across the street from the new motherhouse and orphanage, it constituted the Community's first branch establishment. According to convent records the school opened on

⁶⁴ Reynolds, IV, 432.

⁶⁵ ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

⁶⁶ USCM, January 2, 1841, p. 4.

February 1, 1841, with an enrollment of seventy (70) pupils. The curriculum consisted of the three R's plus religious instruction.⁶⁷ Contrary to the popular reaction to the Bishop's school of 1835, the opening in 1841 did not arouse any protest.

The remainder of the Community, numbering ten professed Sisters and four postulants, moved from Beau-fain Street into the new four-story brick convent on Queen Street on February 16, 1841.⁶⁸ From that date until 1901 this building served as the motherhouse of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. For many years it also housed the orphanage and the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy. Twenty orphans and twenty-four boarders accompanied the Sisters when they moved in, in 1841. On Thursday morning, February 18, 1841, Bishop England celebrated Mass in the new convent and blessed it.⁶⁹ Sister M. Aloysius (McKenna) was then Superioress of the Community, Sister M. Vincent (Mahony), Assistant, Sister M. Veronica (Cagney), Secretary, Sister Magdalen (Bartley), Infirmarian, Sister Ignatius (Clarke), in charge of the orphans, and Sister Martha (O'Gorman),

⁶⁷ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹USCM, February 20, 1841, p. 4.

housekeeper.⁷⁰

Bishop England sailed for Ireland in May, 1841. As on previous occasions, he hoped to obtain money, students for the seminary, and candidates for the Ursuline Community and for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. According to Dr. Peter Guilday, Bishop England's biographer, the Diocese of Charleston had never been in a more precarious financial condition.

Everywhere, in spite of the growing economic prosperity of the South, he met with little more than apathy from his flock in his appeals for financial support. . . . He was carrying a very heavy debt on all the church properties and the interest alone was a formidable burden.⁷¹

The Bishop remained abroad for five months. Accompanying him upon his return were Mother Borgia McCarthy, Superioress of the Ursuline Sisters in Charleston, with seven candidates for that Community; his nieces, Miss Nora England and Miss Mary Ann Barry; and four candidates for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. They all arrived in Philadelphia on November 1, 1841.⁷² Bishop England, his nieces, and the Ursuline Sisters

⁷⁰ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

⁷¹Guilday, II, 531.

⁷²Letter from Bishop England to William Read, November 20, 1841. This letter is located in the Archives of the University of Georgetown, Washington, D.C. Hereafter this source will be cited as UGA.

remained in Philadelphia for the next three weeks. The four postulants for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy-- Miss Mary J. O'Gorman, Miss Jane Frances Sullivan, Miss Mary Anne Curtin, all from Cork, and Miss Amelia Shanley of Dublin--travelled ahead to Charleston. Accompanying them was a Father Andrew Doyle.⁷³ Miss Mary Ann Curtin, then only seventeen, later recorded her memories of her arrival in Charleston. In her account she describes the motherhouse as it was then.

Some short time before we came, the Sisters had moved from their first cradle, a rented house, to a new one built for themselves, the same square building still in front with 16 large rooms, so constructed that though it might be added to can never be changed. It was clean, new and spotless, without carpet or drapery, having no ground or garden attached save a small strip in front covered with shells, a small yard to the rear, and a narrow passage on each side. On the left as you entered there was a nice house, garden and good stretch of ground belonging to a Protestant Minister. On the right was a colored family.⁷⁴

When Bishop England reached Charleston on December 9, 1841, he was a sick man. For the next three months he lived in semiseclusion. From January until mid-March the United States Catholic Miscellany issued periodic bulletins reassuring the public that the

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Archives of the Sisters of Mercy, Belmont, North Carolina, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin), unpaginated. These Archives will be hereafter cited as ASMB.

Bishop's condition was improving. However, on the Feast of the Annunciation, the day the Sisters should have renewed their vows, Father Patrick N. Lynch, a future Bishop of Charleston, notified the Archbishop of Baltimore that there was very little chance of the Bishop's recovery.⁷⁵ On April 5, the doctors pronounced his case hopeless.

There are no references to the last days of Bishop England in the Archives of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Years later, however, an eye witness at the Bishop's deathbed stated that the Sisters visited their founder the Saturday before he died, i.e., April 9, 1842. He was so weak and overcome with emotion that he spoke but a single sentence:

"You know what I would say, if I could. Fulfill your obligations." Each received the sign of a special blessing and retired.⁷⁶

Bishop England received the last sacraments on Sunday, April 10. All the clergy in the city were present. Despite his weakness, Bishop England wished to speak to them. His words are perhaps the most moving he ever uttered. Having apologized for any harshness,

⁷⁵BCA 25T15, Rev. P. N. Lynch to the Archbishop of Baltimore, March 25, 1842.

⁷⁶ASCLM, Brochure, "Recollections of Bishop England" (Charleston: Washington Light Infantry of Charleston), p. 23.

impetuosity, or unkindness to them during his lifetime, the dying Bishop admonished the clergy to be with the people and win them to God. He asked them to be particularly watchful of the infant institutions in the diocese.

There are among you several infant institutions, which you are called on in an especial manner to sustain. It has cost me a great deal of labor to introduce them. They are calculated to be eminently serviceable to the cause or order, of education, of charity; they constitute the germs of what, I trust, shall hereafter grow and flourish in extensive usefulness. As yet they are feeble, support them, embarrassed, encourage them, they will be afflicted, console them.⁷⁷

At five o'clock the next morning, Monday, April 11, 1842, Bishop England died. The people of Charleston, of all religions and races, went into mourning. Father Jeremiah J. O'Connell, author of Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia, then a seminarian, stated:

The shipping in the harbor and the public buildings lowered their flags to half-mast. Business was suspended, the bells in all the Protestant Churches were tolled.⁷⁸

The press, Catholic and secular, eulogized him. Bishop England was one of those great men who won the admiration of all. In his death the American Church lost, in the words of the noted historian John O'Kane Murray, "a

⁷⁷ Guilday, II, 539.

⁷⁸ Jeremiah J. O'Connell, Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia (New York: D. J. Sadlier, 1879), p. 86.

Bishop of vast intellect and apostolic zeal, a great scholar, an eloquent preacher, and a powerful writer."⁷⁹
The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy lost their founder, friend and spiritual guide. Their memories of the untiring, unselfish efforts of Bishop England were to sustain them in the difficult days ahead. And, in the Sisterhood, something of Bishop England's dogged endurance in the face of formidable obstacles has lived on.

⁷⁹Joseph L. O'Brien, John England, Bishop of Charleston (New York: Edward O'Toole Co., Inc., 1954), p. 215.

CHAPTER II

ANTEBELLUM DAYS

The See of Charleston lay vacant for two years after the death of Bishop England. These were trying years for the diocese and for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. At the time of the Bishop's death there were thirteen professed Sisters and six novices in the Community. They were conducting the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, a boarding and day school for girls from middle-class families; Saint Mary's Free School for girls from poorer families; and the school for the free Negroes. According to the Metropolitan Catholic Almanac for 1841, there were eighteen boarders and sixty day students attending the Academy; and about thirty girls enrolled in Saint Mary's Free School. There is no record of the number of free colored children under their instruction at that time. They also had in their care twelve orphan girls. In addition to these responsibilities, the apostolate of the Sisterhood embraced "the care of a hospital for the destitute sick; the solace of the poor sick in their own dwellings, and generally such other works of mercy as may be designated by the

Bishop."¹ Although the Sisters had neither the solace of a retreat nor the privilege of renewing their vows in 1842 or 1843, they continued to perform all these duties. Sister M. Charles (Curtin), then a postulant, wrote years later that many of the Sisters might have left during this two-year period had it not been for the advice of confessors and the evident importance of the work.²

In retrospect, it appears that Bishop England had not completed his plans for the internal organization of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy at the time of his death. Although he had spoken of giving them a constitution on several occasions, he died without doing so. According to Sister M. Charles (Curtin) Bishop England intended bringing his sister, Mother Catherine England, a Presentation Sister, to this country to assist him in governing the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Sister M. Charles stated:

In 1841, when he made his last visit to Rome, he (i.e., Bishop England), got authority from Pope Gregory XVI to bring out his own sister, who was a Presentation Nun, to superintend and train the Community. Speaking to me she said, "I am not going

¹The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory For 1841 (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, Jr.), p. 170.

²ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin), unpaginated.

as Bishop Murphy (being then Bishop of Cork) would not consent. My brother could take me, but he does not like to act against the Bishop's consent." Bishop England, however, decided to take the young persons, who were to accompany her, among whom was the writer.³

The Annals of the North Presentation Convent, Cork City, support Sister M. Charles' (Curtin) account. However, they state that Mother Catherine England was to establish a convent of the Presentation Order in Charleston.⁴ Perhaps Bishop England wanted the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy to adopt the rules and constitutions of the Presentation Community, and wished his sister to supervise the transition. Mother Catherine, however, never came to America, and Bishop England was too ill upon his return in 1841 to attempt anything along those lines.

Speaking of this trying two-year period, the Community records state simply that

The Sisters . . . were almost without a guide except the assistance afforded them by the gratuitous kindness of the Rev. T. J. Sullivan whom an all-ruling Providence had raised up to assist them in the midst of difficulties. The Vicar General (i.e., Father Baker) whose duty it was to see what might be done paid no attention whatever.⁵

Father Timothy Joseph Sullivan was born in County

³Ibid.

⁴ASCLM, Notes taken from the Annals of the North Presentation Convent, Cork City, Cork, Ireland.

⁵ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

Cork, Ireland; studied for the priesthood in Bishop England's diocesan seminary; and was ordained about 1838. Shortly afterwards the Bishop had appointed him assistant in the Cathedral and Superior of the seminary.⁶ In 1841 Bishop England added to his duties the Ecclesiastical Superiorship of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. He retained that position until 1844, and from 1845 until his death in 1865. Sister Charles (Curtin) described Father Sullivan as follows:

Father Sullivan was not a man of shining qualities, but he was all the priest, in spirit and in deed; respected by everyone for his sterling qualities and untiring, unflinching discharge of his ministerial duties. . . . He was of medium stature, well-built, of grave and gentlemanly and priestly appearance with features regular and not unpleasing. He was a poor preacher but at times he spoke with a certain dignity when he gave advice or expressed the promptings of his convictions. . . .⁷

In May, 1842, Father Sullivan brought the Sisters home from the building Bishop England had established as the colored school, and attached that school to the mother-house.

Despite the hardships the Community endured between Bishop England's death and the installation of his successor, the Most Reverend Ignatius Reynolds, all the

⁶O'Connell, p. 311.

⁷ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin), unpaginated.

Sisters persevered except Miss Shanly, one of the postulants Bishop England had brought with him from Ireland in the fall of 1841. There were, however, two deaths in the Community during this interval. Miss Mary J. O'Gorman, a postulant, died on September 1, 1842, after a sixteen-day battle with an intestinal inflammation. Five months later, on January 3, 1843, the first Superior of the Community, Sister Mary Joseph (O'Gorman) died. Although only forty-six years old, consumption had made Sister M. Joseph a semi-invalid for the last two years of her life.⁸ Both Sisters were buried in Saint Mary's cemetery, Hassel Street.

On December 15, 1843, Rome chose Father Ignatius Reynolds, Vicar-General of the Diocese of Bardstown (Louisville), as Bishop England's successor. A Kentuckian by birth, the Bishop-elect had studied at Saint Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, and was ordained in 1823. During his twenty years of service in Kentucky he gained a reputation for piety, administrative ability, and financial expertness.⁹ He was consecrated in the Cathedral of Cincinnati on March 19, 1844. Two weeks later, April 3, 1844, he took possession of his See.

⁸ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

⁹O'Connell, pp. 105-06.

Bishop Reynolds visited the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy shortly after his installation. Sister M. Charles (Curtin) states that he "immediately looked with a favorable eye upon our Community. He seemed to see in it just the thing that would aid him in advancing religion in Charleston."¹⁰ However, he also found the house somewhat disorganized and ordered the Sisters into retreat. On Ascension Thursday the Sisters previously professed renewed their vows. At the same ceremony five novices pronounced their first vows. The new Sisters were: Sister Mary Patrick (Collins), Sister M. Joseph (O'Connell), sister of Father Jeremiah J. O'Connell, author of Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia, Sister M. Peter (Sullivan), Sister M. Charles (Curtin), and Sister M. Augustine (Dunne).¹¹

After the vow ceremonies the Bishop called the Sisters together and prepared them to elect their own Community officers according to the rules and constitution he had drawn up for them. At this first election Bishop Reynolds declared all the Sisters equally eligible for any office. The principal Community offices at that time were the Superioress, the Assistant, the Treasurer,

¹⁰ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin), unpaginated.

¹¹ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

and the Procuratrix (housekeeper). Each professed Sister might vote for any other professed Sister whom she considered qualified to hold office. The voting went on for hours without coming to a decision. Finally, the Bishop took the names having equal votes for each office and proposed them to the Community. In this manner Sister Teresa (Barry) was elected Superioress. Sister M. Vincent (Mahony) became Assistant Superioress, Sister M. Veronica (Cagney), Treasurer, and Sister Martha (O'Gorman), Procuratrix. The Bishop appointed Father Jeremiah F. O'Neill, Ecclesiastical Superior, and Father Sullivan, Confessor.¹²

Bishop Reynolds based the rules and constitution he wrote for the Community upon Bishop England's rules and upon those of the Sisters of Charity in America. Although the Sisters gained the privilege of voting for their own officers, the new rules did not greatly alter the governmental structure of the Community. The Bishop as first Superior of the Community had the final word on all matters. He, however, appointed a priest of the diocese to act as Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community. The Ecclesiastical Superior presided over all Community Council meetings. In case of a tied vote, he

¹² Ibid.

had the right to cast the deciding vote. He might also veto any resolution passed by the Council members. In such a case the Mother Superior had the right to refer the matter to the Bishop whose decision was final.¹³ Actually, then, Bishop Reynolds' rules granted the Bishop and the Ecclesiastical Superior more power over the Community than the Mother Superior and her Council combined. Nonetheless, the Sisters gained a greater say in their own affairs than they had had under Bishop England. All the evidence suggests that the Community welcomed Bishop Reynolds' rules and constitution and were satisfied with them.

The principal object of the Community, as stated in these rules, was "to honor our Lord Jesus Christ by the practice of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy."¹⁴ Indeed, charity was their hallmark--charity among the Sisters, charity towards the sick and poor, charity towards the orphans and the school children. Although they did impose a rather strict horarium upon the Sisters, these rules did not impose any unusual penances, mortifications, or customs. While they

¹³ASCIM, Constitutions and Rules Governing the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in the Diocese of Charleston, S.C., from 1845-1949, p. 9.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 5.

stressed the importance of prayer in the spiritual life, they warned the Sisters not "to be scrupulous in changing the hours of some religious exercises or even of omitting them when a higher duty, as one of charity, may necessitate it."¹⁵

Bishop Reynolds presided at the first Council meeting, held on May 20, 1844. He directed the Sisters to discontinue the boys' school and to remove the colored school from the motherhouse grounds.¹⁶ Earlier Community records do not mention a boys' school. Apparently, it came into existence after Bishop England's death and was probably located in the Queen Street house originally the site of the colored school. In compliance with the Bishop's wishes, the Sisters closed the boys' school. The following November the Community moved the colored school from Queen Street to "two rented rooms in King Street."¹⁷

In April, 1845, Bishop Reynolds informed the Sisters that he considered the Community well enough organized to permit six Sisters to open a branch establishment in Savannah, Georgia. Apparently, the Bishop

¹⁵Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁶ASCIM, Council Minutes, May 20, 1844.

¹⁷Ibid., November, 1844.

and Father O'Neill, the Ecclesiastical Superior, had been considering this move for some time. In July, 1842, Father O'Neill, also pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church in Savannah, had applied to the City Council of Savannah and obtained three lots on the southeast corner of Liberty and Abercorn Streets to build a convent for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. So intent was Father O'Neill, that he sold his own house and boarded with a French family in order to raise the money for the convent.¹⁸ Thanks to the proceeds from the fairs and picnics which the Catholics of Savannah sponsored and supported, the convent was ready for occupancy in May, 1845. The newspapers described the new building as "elegant and commodious." The architect, Charles B. Cluskey, noted for his Greek Revival houses, had also designed the governor's mansion in Milledgeville, and the domed medical college in Augusta.

The Sisters chosen for the Savannah mission were Sister M. Vincent (Mahony), Superioress, Sister Magdalen (Bartley), Sister M. Agnes (Fagan), Sister Evangelist (Smythe), Sister M. Patrick (Collins), and Sister M.

¹⁸Archives of St. Vincent's Academy, Savannah, Georgia, Old Notebook entitled, "Notes on the Different Foundations of the Sisters of Mercy in Georgia from June 13, 1845," pp. 7-8. Hereafter these Archives will be cited as ASVA.

Augustine (Dunne). They left Charleston on June 13, 1845, accompanied by Father O'Neill. Ten days later they opened a boarding and day school, an orphan asylum, a free school, and began visiting the sick throughout the city of Savannah.¹⁹ Little wonder that Mother Vincent had to sit up until 11:00 P.M. to find time to write Mother Teresa a letter inviting the Charleston Sisters to Savannah. Warning her Sisters not to be scandalized, Mother Vincent said, "if I did not write at this hour I might wait another month and not have one moment to myself."²⁰

Father O'Neill soon discovered that his duties as pastor in Savannah and his superiorship of the Sisters there did not permit him to pay much attention to the Sisters in Charleston. Therefore, in December, 1845, he resigned as Ecclesiastical Superior of the Charleston Community. Before resigning, however, he asked for three more Sisters for Savannah. The Community granted his request. On December 28, 1845, Sister M. Aloysius (McKenna), Sister M. Joseph (O'Connell), and her younger sister, Miss Joanna O'Connell, a postulant, returned to Savannah with Father O'Neill. The following February

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰ASCLM, Letter from Mother Vincent (Mahony) to Mother Teresa (Barry), July 7, 1845.

(1846) Sister Magdalen (Bartley), whose health had been failing, returned to Charleston. Father Timothy Sullivan replaced Father O'Neill as Ecclesiastical Superior of the Charleston Community.

In December, 1846, Mother Teresa (Barry) received a letter from Mother Vincent (Mahony) Superioress of the Savannah Community, containing rather surprising news. Mother Vincent stated:

You, no doubt, have been apprised before now of an intention on the part of the Bishop and our Rev. Superior to make the Motherhouse in Charleston and our Branch of it at Savannah independent one of the other.²¹

It is clear from Mother Teresa's reply that she did not know of the proposed separation. Although she expressed her willingness to comply with the Bishop's wishes, Mother Teresa indicated that she regretted the separation. The constitution, however, provided for the formation of independent houses. According to its provisions, the Sisters of the branch house were required to send a petition to the Mother Superior and Council of the motherhouse. If any of the Sisters in the branch house wished to return to the motherhouse, they had the right to say so. No Sister was bound to become a member of the separate establishment unless she consented to do

²¹Ibid., December 3, 1846.

so. The Motherhouse Council voted upon the matter. Then they submitted their decision to the Bishop whose judgment was final.²²

The only members of the Savannah Community who voted to return to Charleston were Sister M. Evangelist (Smythe) and Sister M. Patrick (Collins). Both Sisters had been ill much of the time they were in Savannah. The Charleston Community accepted them willingly. Mother Vincent (Mahony) had hoped that the Charleston Community would send two Sisters to Savannah to replace Sister M. Evangelist and Sister M. Patrick. In justice to the Charleston Community, Mother Teresa felt she could not comply with this request and informed Mother Vincent to that effect. On July 7, 1847, Mother Teresa informed the Sisters in Savannah that they were officially an independent establishment.²³ Bishop Reynolds and Father Sullivan approved the action. The Savannah Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy functioned as an independent Community until the 1890's. Then they amalgamated with Mother McAuley's Sisters of Mercy.

The separation of the Savannah House reduced the

²² ASCLM, Constitutions and Rules Governing the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in the Diocese of Charleston from 1845 to 1949, pp. 33-34.

²³ ASCLM, Council Minutes, July 7, 1847.

Charleston Community to twelve. There were in the novitiate, however, eight promising novices: Sister M. Baptist (O'Reilly), Sister M. DeSales (Brennan), Sister M. Paul (Harris), Sister M. Joseph (Kent), Sister M. Gertrude (Murkardt), Sister M. Bernard (Frank), Sister M. Gabriel (Walsh), and Sister M. Stanislaus (Coventry).

Bishop Reynolds proved himself a real friend and benefactor to the orphans under the care of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. On January 1, 1845, he founded the Saint Vincent's Ladies Society, whose members sought to obtain donations in money and provisions for the orphans. Some of the ladies in the Society formed themselves into a Management Committee to aid the Sisters in finding jobs for the orphans when they were old enough to be released from the orphanage. Other women in the Society formed a Sewing Committee to assist the Sisters with that ever-present task. Periodically, the Society arranged parties, picnics and other outings for the orphans. In 1846 the Society contributed \$529.76 toward the support of the orphans, while in 1847 and 1848 the Society collected over \$600.00.²⁴ Bishop Reynolds usually contributed between \$100.00 and \$200.00 a year from his own pocket for the support of the orphans.

²⁴ ASCIM, Catholic Orphans' Society, Secretary's Book, unpaginated.

This income, plus the proceeds from the Sisters' day school, the proceeds from the fairs, picnics, musicals and other benefits, as well as the periodic donations from the three city parishes, enabled the Sisters to care for a larger number of orphans each year.²⁵ In 1847 there were twenty-six (26) little girls in the orphanage. In 1849 the number had risen to thirty-two (32); and by 1853 the number had doubled to sixty-five (65).²⁶

Simultaneously, there was an increase in the number of boarders attending the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy. One of the factors promoting this growth was the closing of the Ursuline Academy and the departure of the Ursuline Sisters from the diocese in June, 1847. Thereby, the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy became the only Catholic institution for young ladies in South Carolina. The United States Catholic Miscellany of May 8, 1847, carried the following resolution voted by the Bishop and the clergy of the diocese:

Resolved that the departure of the Ursuline Nuns from the Diocese is to us a subject of deep regret and that we will second any efforts that may be made

²⁵USCM reported fairs and benefits for the orphans, May 25, 1844; April 17, 1847; and December 25, 1848.

²⁶The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory, 1849-1853 (Baltimore: Fielding & Lucas Publishing Co.).

by the Bishop to supply their place by any institution under care of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.²⁷

In practice, this meant that the Bishop encouraged the Sisters to broaden the Academy curriculum to include courses in French, music, and the other accomplishments likely to attract young ladies from the higher social classes. In compliance, the Sisters hired a Mr. Gleeson to give instructions on the organ, piano, and guitar, and to train a choir among the Sisters and pupils.²⁸ A Professor De Leaumont was employed to teach French to both the students and to the Sisters--to the latter in the afternoons.²⁹ Painting, drawing, ornamental needlework, embroidery, and dancing were also included in the course of studies. Parents or guardians selected the subjects they wished their children to study. Hence, not all pursued the same course, and therefore, tuitions varied. The school year at this time ran from the first Monday in September until the fourteenth of August, with a week's vacation at Christmas and at Easter.³⁰

²⁷USCM, May 8, 1847, p. 4.

²⁸ASCLM, Council Minutes, January 10 and 18, 1848.

²⁹ASCLM, Community History 1829-56.

³⁰The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac for 1848,
pp. 114-15.

On May 12, 1848, Father T. J. Sullivan, Ecclesiastical Superior, summoned a special Council meeting to consider whether to continue the colored school. The Minutes state:

After a long discussion in which all participated and having heard the views of the Sister in charge of the school on the subject the Council came to the resolution of discontinuing said school for the present, but before doing so, that an effort should be made to get in the arrears of the debt due thereto.³¹

It would be interesting to know whether this action was prompted by the renewed and increasingly heated national debate over slavery. The phrase "for the present" could be interpreted to mean that the Sisters considered the action a temporary rather than a permanent one. At any rate, the school for the free colored children was closed at this time. The Catholic Almanac for 1849 notes that the

Sisters . . . conduct besides the Academy, a Free School with 40 pupils; an orphan asylum with 32 orphans; and give religious instruction to colored persons four evenings during the week.³²

This was the first mention the Almanacs made of the last activity. Perhaps the Sisters inaugurated the work to compensate for closing the school for the free colored

³¹ASCIM, Council Minutes, May 12, 1848.

³²The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac for 1849,
p. 104.

children. In November, 1848, the Sisters separated the orphans from the Free School children.³³ Up to this time both groups had been educated in Saint Mary's Free School. After this time, the orphans received their schooling in the orphanage.

In June, 1849, the Most Reverend Andrew Byrne, the first Bishop of Little Rock, Arkansas, formerly a priest in the Diocese of Charleston, and Ecclesiastical Superior of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy from 1832 until 1835, inquired about the possibility of obtaining a group of the Sisters for his diocese. Mother Teresa (Barry) and the Council members, eager to aid their old friend, resolved to send three Sisters to establish a house in his diocese. But, when they attempted to select the three Sisters, they found it impossible to do so without injuring the Academy and the other schools in Charleston. The unpleasant task of refusing Bishop Byrne fell to Sister Veronica (Cagney), who notified him to that effect on June 8, 1849.³⁴

On March 25, 1849, Sister M. Baptist (O'Reilly), Sister M. Paul (Harris), Sister M. Joseph (Kent), Sister M. Gertrude (Murkhardt), Sister M. DeSales (Brennan),

³³ ASCIM, Council Minutes, November 7, 1848.

³⁴ Ibid., June 4, 5, and 8, 1849.

and Sister M. Bernard (Frank) pronounced their first vows. The Community of professed Sisters then numbered eighteen. Although ten years had not elapsed since the Sisters had moved into their four-story Queen Street convent, the house was fast becoming too small to shelter the increasing number of Sisters, orphans, and boarders. In December, 1848, the Sisters explained their difficulties to the ladies of the three parishes in the city (Saint Mary's, the Cathedral, and Saint Patrick's). As a result, the ladies agreed to conduct a Fair in April, 1849, to raise the money needed to enlarge the Sisters' crowded and contracted residence.³⁵

The Sisters wanted to buy the lot to the west of theirs, near the corner of Mazcyk (now Logan) Street, which Sister M. Charles (Curtin) called "the Minister's place." Apparently, the owner did not wish to sell to Catholics. According to Sister M. Charles, Bishop Reynolds found a way to get around the Minister's prejudice.

After a while the Minister's place was for sale by auction, but as parties knew the Bishop wanted to purchase, every effort was made to keep the property out of Catholic hands. The Bishop got a friend of his to come over from Kentucky to attend the sale as a speculator against our representative. So as to prevent our getting it, they knocked it down quite reasonably for the Kentuckian and great was

³⁵USCM, December 25, 1848, p. 5.

the astonishment when the titles were drawn out in our name. Some Protestants were pleased, for the Sisters had many well-wishers among them.³⁶

Between 1849 and 1851, Bishop Reynolds purchased other lots (apparently north and west of the convent) for the Sisters. On August 11, 1851, he deeded all the property to the Community, including the convent in which they had been living and working for ten years.³⁷ The house, formerly called "the Minister's place," became the orphanage. The building Bishop England had erected for the Community continued to serve as the motherhouse and the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy.

With their new property, the Sisters acquired a debt amounting to \$9,000.00.³⁸ Through their own exertions, the generosity of friends, some liberal bequests, and fairs, the Community raised enough to liquidate the debt by May, 1857.³⁹

The struggle to pay off the debt was but one phase of Community history during the 1850's. During

³⁶ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin), unpaginated.

³⁷ASCIM, Conveyance of City Lots to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

³⁸ASCIM, Council Minutes, December 29, 1851, and January 6, 1852.

³⁹ASCIM, Letter from Mother M. Veronica (Cagney) to Mother M. Paul (Harris), May 21, 1857.

the fall of 1852, 1854, and 1858, yellow fever spread through Charleston. The Sisters, as they had in 1838 and 1839, closed their schools for the duration of the epidemics (usually three months) and devoted themselves to caring for the fever victims throughout the city.

The epidemic of 1852 is particularly memorable in the Community's history. Bishop Reynolds was in New York when the disease made its appearance. Fearing that the Bishop would contract the fever if he returned to Charleston, Father Patrick N. Lynch, Vicar-General of the diocese, notified him to remain in the North.⁴⁰ On August 30, Father Lynch, realizing that the disease had reached epidemic proportions and that the city was unprepared to handle it, determined to open a Relief Hospital. On the corner of Queen and Mazyck (now Logan) Streets, across the street from the convent and orphanage, stood the newly built Roper Hospital.⁴¹ It had not yet opened its doors to the public. Father Lynch applied to the hospital trustees for the use of a portion of the new building. On September 1, 1852, the trustees granted the Vicar-General permission to convert the

⁴⁰BCA 31G16, Bishop Reynolds to Archbishop Eccleston, September 18, 1852.

⁴¹"Roper Hospital," Year Book of the City of Charleston, S.C., 1880 (Charleston: The News and Courier Book Presses, 1881), pp. 47-50.

second story of the building--sixty beds--into a Relief Hospital.⁴² Father Lynch christened this section of Roper, Saint Mary's Relief Hospital. The city appropriated the third story of the building and dubbed it City Relief Hospital.

Father Lynch asked the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy to staff Saint Mary's Relief Hospital. The first six patients were admitted on September 2. From then until the fever subsided in early November, 314 patients received care in Saint Mary's. Two hundred sixty-six (266) of these people were Irish, and probably Catholics. In his report to the city authorities, Father Lynch mentions that the Relief Hospital also treated several Protestant and one Jewish patient.⁴³

The Sisters took turns nursing the sick in the hospital and throughout the city. Modern day nurses would probably call it "working shifts." Mother Teresa (Barry) apparently stationed herself at the hospital from its opening. On October 17, 1852, Father Sullivan told the Council members that the Bishop desired "the Superioress to return from the Hospital and resume her

⁴²CDA 12C, Two Reports: Rev. P. N. Lynch to C. D. Carr, Chairman of Select Committee; and Rev. P. N. Lynch to the Hon. T. L. Hutchinson, Mayor of the city of Charleston.

⁴³Ibid.

duties at home, yet to visit the Hospital twice a day, morning and evening."⁴⁴ At this meeting Sister Martha (O'Gorman), Sister M. Paul (Harris), Sister M. Bernard (Frank), Sister M. Augustine (Kent), Sister M. Gertrude (Murkhardt), and Sister Stanislaus (Coventry) were assigned to the hospital. Sister M. Joseph (Kent), Sister M. De Sales (Brennan), Sister M. Ambrose (Pinckney), and Sister M. Regis (Larkin) were appointed to attend the sick in the city. Unfortunately, none of the Sisters left a description or an account of her personal experiences. Probably, no one had time to do so.

For the most part, the Sisters' efforts in Saint Mary's Relief Hospital won them the respect and admiration of the people of Charleston. Yet in the spring of 1853, the Reverend John Bachman, a Lutheran Minister, in his book, Defense of Luther and the Reformation, implied that the Sisters were reluctant to permit him to visit Protestant patients in Saint Mary's Relief Hospital.⁴⁵ Another Protestant Minister, the Reverend Whiteford Smith, supported Dr. Bachman's charges. In a letter to Father Lynch, Dr. Smith stated:

⁴⁴ ASCIM, Council Minutes, October 17, 1852.

⁴⁵ John Bachman, Defense of Luther and the Reformation (Charleston: William Y. Paxton, 1853), pp. 449-52.

I must add in justice to the Rev. Dr. Bachman that I was the "brother clergyman" alluded to on p. 449 of his book, who accompanied him in his effort to see the German, and that I was by no means satisfied with the obstructions made to his reasonable request. We were told that the condition of that patient was extremely critical and his physician's directions were that he should be entirely quiet. I accompanied Dr. Bachman to the office of Dr. Fitch of whom we inquired if such was the case, and were informed that the patient was better and that there could be no objection to our visiting him.⁴⁶

Taking up the cudgels for the Sisters, Father Lynch replied:

I regret that you were by no means satisfied with the replies of the Sisters to Doctor Bachman . . . when you asked to see Christian Nielson, a Catholic German as Dr. Bachman found him to be. The statement made to you . . . was accurate and is sustained by the written statement of the physician himself-- and the man died soon after. Had the man been a Protestant . . . any clergyman he desired would have been sent for two days before. As it was in referring the application in that case to . . . Dr. Fitch, not Dr. Bellinger or myself, the Sisters strove to avoid the responsibility of violating the medical instructions repeatedly and earnestly given. . . .⁴⁷

Apparently this letter did not silence the detractors. In the July 9, 1853, issue of the United States Catholic Miscellany, Father Lynch publicly refuted all of Dr. Bachman's accusations and stated unequivocally that "not a single Protestant died in the Hospital that had not seen and conversed with a

⁴⁶CDA 7R2, Rev. Whiteford Smith to Rev. P. N. Lynch, May 9, 1853.

⁴⁷CDA 7R3, Rev. P. N. Lynch to Rev. Whiteford Smith, May 9, 1853.

Protestant Minister."⁴⁸ Moreover, the Vicar-General warmly praised the Sisters for the services they rendered "by day and by night and through all the inclemencies of the season."⁴⁹ He reminded the readers that "no portion of the aid given by the city or of the means received from other sources, went into their hands."⁵⁰

Father Lynch was pleased with the results achieved in Saint Mary's Relief Hospital. In his report to the city authorities he estimated that only one-fifth of the yellow fever patients admitted to Saint Mary's died. He maintained that, according to the statistics of the day, usually one-third, and frequently one-half of those who contracted the disease, died.⁵¹

Saint Mary's Relief Hospital was a temporary expedient. It ceased to exist once the epidemic of 1852 disappeared. During the subsequent epidemics, 1854, 1856, and 1858, the Sisters cared for the fever patients in their homes. In wet weather they simply tied up their cloaks and habits, donned large boots, and waded through muddy streets lugging baskets filled with food and medicine for the sick poor.⁵² During the epidemic

⁴⁸USCM, July 9, 1853, p. 6.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹CDA 12C, Report from Rev. P. N. Lynch to C. D. Carr, Chairman of Select Committee.

⁵²P. Felix, O.S.B., "Bishop England's Institute

of 1858, however, a Mrs. Trout, Mrs. Bull, and Mrs. Michel placed their carriages at the Sisters' disposal.⁵³ The Sisters also received assistance from the Howard Society of Charleston, an association formed during the epidemic of 1854 by a group of Protestant gentlemen to help the yellow fever victims. The Society frequently gave the Sisters alms to distribute to the sick and paid nurses who worked under the Sisters' directions.⁵⁴

Despite their exposure to the disease, the Community suffered only one fatality during all these epidemics. Sister M. Aloysius (Dogue) a twenty-two-year-old novice from Queen's County, Ireland, died of yellow fever on October 27, 1854. She pronounced her vows three days before her death.⁵⁵

Midway between the epidemics of 1852 and 1854, on February 27, 1853, the Community held an election to

of Sisters of Mercy," Part II, American Ecclesiastical Review (May, 1899), p. 457. Father Felix received his information from an "aged Sister in North Carolina." The Sister was very likely Sister M. Charles (Curtin). In September, 1869, Sister M. Charles (Curtin), Sister M. Augustine (Kent), and Sister M. Baptist (Sheehan) established a convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Wilmington, N. C. The foundation later separated from Charleston. Sister M. Charles (Curtin) spent the rest of her life in North Carolina. She died on March 4, 1910, at the age of eighty-six.

⁵³USCM, January 15, 1859, p. 5.

⁵⁴Felix, pp. 457-58.

⁵⁵ASCIM, Community Register.

fill the offices of Mother Superior, Treasurer, and Procuratrix. Mother Teresa (Barry), Sister Veronica (Cagney), and Sister Martha (O'Gorman), by special dispensation of Bishop Reynolds, had held these respective offices since 1844--a total of nine years. Although the second election in the Community's history, the election of 1853 was the first conducted according to the rather complicated procedure outlined in the Constitutions. The four Community Councilors, including the outgoing members, nominated two candidates for each vacant office and presented these names to the professed members of the Community. The professed Sisters then voted for one of the two nominees for each office.⁵⁶ In this manner the Sisters elected Sister M. Peter (Sullivan), Mother Superioress, and Sister Xavier (Dunn), Treasurer. Sister Martha (O'Gorman) was permitted to continue in the office of Procuratrix by a special dispensation from Bishop Reynolds.

A month after Mother M. Peter's (Sullivan) election, Father Jeremiah J. O'Connell, pastor of the Church in Columbia, South Carolina, asked for Sisters to establish a boarding academy and day school for young ladies in Columbia. Father O'Connell specified that he wanted

⁵⁶Community elections were held in this manner until the early 1930's.

six Sisters capable of teaching music, French, drawing, and painting. He emphasized that "this is essential for . . . as there are not a sufficient number of Catholic children here to maintain a school, patronage must be earned from others by competent teaching."⁵⁷

Mother Peter (Sullivan) and her Council were willing to accommodate Father O'Connell as soon as he could provide a suitable house for the Sisters.⁵⁸ On December 11, 1853, Father O'Connell notified the Bishop and the Sisters that he had bought a house and expected it to be ready for occupancy on January 1, 1854. Father O'Connell paid \$3,000.00 of the purchase price and asked the Sisters to assume the responsibility of an additional \$500.00.⁵⁹ With Bishop Reynolds' permission, Mother Peter and her Council agreed to this arrangement and selected Sister M. Veronica (Cagney), Sister M. Paul (Harris), Sister M. Ignatius (Clarke), Sister M. Gonzaga (Curtin), and Sister M. Anne (Dowd) for the new mission.⁶⁰ On December 29, 1853, the Council appointed Sister M.

⁵⁷CDA 7W5, Rev. J. J. O'Connell to Rev. T. J. Sullivan, March 23, 1853.

⁵⁸ASCIM, Council Minutes, November 24, 1853.

⁵⁹CDA 7Y1, Rev. J. J. O'Connell to Bishop Reynolds, December 11, 1853.

⁶⁰ASCIM, Council Minutes, December 16 and 20, 1853.

Veronica, Superioress, and Sister M. Paul (Harris), Assistant Superioress of the Columbia mission.

On the morning of January 2, 1854, the Sisters left Charleston for Columbia by train. The trip, according to Sister M. Veronica (Cagney) was a very pleasant one. At Branchville they met a Colonel King, "an old friend of Bishop England's."⁶¹ When they arrived in Columbia they found Father O'Connell waiting to drive them to their new home on the corner of Richland and Richardson Streets.⁶² The people who had owned the house were still living in it, but they vacated the next day. "We suffered no inconvenience from their stay," said Sister Veronica, "as we had furnished rooms to ourselves."⁶³ Moreover, some of the ladies of the parish had prepared a reception for the Sisters and others volunteered to help them furnish the convent. Mr. Patrick O'Connell, Father Jeremiah O'Connell's father, had made benches and desks for the Sisters' school with his own hands.⁶⁴

⁶¹ASCLM, Letter from Mother M. Veronica (Cagney) to Mother M. Peter (Sullivan), January 4, 1854.

⁶²The Daily South Carolinian (Columbia, S.C.), January 4, 1854, p. 2.

⁶³ASCLM, Mother M. Veronica (Cagney) to Mother M. Peter (Sullivan), January 4, 1854.

⁶⁴Ibid., February 1, 1854.

One week after their arrival, the Sisters opened the Academy of the Immaculate Conception, a boarding and day school for young ladies. The curriculum, as Father O'Connell had requested, included French, music, painting, needlework, and embroidery, in addition to the three R's, history, geography, and what the nineteenth century termed natural philosophy. Dancing was an extra, taught during the winter season each year. The Academy welcomed non-Catholic students provided they were willing to comply with the rules of the school. The Sisters assured the non-Catholic applicants that there would be no interference with their religious beliefs.⁶⁵

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy conducted the Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Columbia for the next four years. Protestant students did come despite the warnings of their Ministers. Yet the total school enrollment was never very large. The number of boarders fluctuated between eight and twelve; the number of day students, between twenty and thirty each year. Too often tuition was not paid promptly, or in some cases, not at all.⁶⁶ This placed the Sisters in an embarrassing

⁶⁵The Daily South Carolinian, January 4, 1854,
p. 2.

⁶⁶ASCLM, Correspondence between Mother M. Veronica (Cagney), Mother M. Peter (Sullivan), and Mother M. Paul (Harris), 1854-58.

position, for the school tuition constituted their sole income. They depended upon it for their own necessities, the maintenance of the house, and to help them pay their debts. In addition to the \$500.00 they owed toward the house, they had to meet payments on two pianos they bought for the school. As in Charleston, they resorted to fairs and the sale of fancy work to help them make ends meet. In July, 1857, Mother Veronica reported that they owed only \$50.00, while others owed them "some hundreds."⁶⁷

Sister M. Veronica described Columbia as a prejudiced and bigoted place.⁶⁸ This is not surprising, for a wave of anti-Catholicism swept the country during the 1850's. Large numbers of Irish and German Catholic immigrants had arrived in the United States during the previous decade. As has happened repeatedly in American history since then, the native Americans blamed all the ills of the day upon the newcomers. In 1854 a political party, popularly known as the Know-Nothings, was organized to devise means of keeping foreigners, especially Catholics out of the country. They aimed to preserve

⁶⁷ASCIM, Mother M. Veronica (Cagney) to Mother M. Paul (Harris), July 23, 1857.

⁶⁸ASCIM, Mother M. Veronica (Cagney) to Mother M. Peter (Sullivan), January 3, 1855.

America for the Anglo-Saxon white Protestant majority. The party experienced a brief period of success in the mid-1850's but began to lose support as the sectional conflict over slavery claimed the attention of the nation. The atmosphere Sister Veronica (Cagney) encountered in Columbia was, at least to some extent, the local manifestation of a national phenomena. Nonetheless, it caused the Sisters some anxiety.

On April 1, 1855, Father Jeremiah J. O'Connell penned a rather alarming description of the anti-Catholic prejudice then prevalent in the State Capitol. Among other things he said:

. . . I have today received confidential intelligence through a know-nothing channel and (I forgot to mention that the Know-Nothings are banded against us and that they are numerous) which we believe to be the fact--that one stone of St. Mary's will not be left upon another and that assassination will take place. . . .⁶⁹

Although the expected attack never materialized, Mother Veronica (Cagney) confided to Mother Peter (Sullivan), one month later, that the Sisters had been afraid either to go to Church or to remain in the house during Holy Week. As for herself, she said, "I felt that there was not the least danger and tried to do away with their fears reminding them that we never had been in the least

⁶⁹CDA 9A6, Rev. J. J. O'Connell to Rev. P. N. Lynch, April 1, 1855.

annoyed since we came here, and . . . with the blessing of God, we never would be."⁷⁰

In July, 1855, there was an election for District Sheriff in Charleston. Mr. J. E. Carew, a Protestant, and a member of the Know-Nothing Party defeated Mr. C. E. Kanapaux, a Catholic. During the campaign the Sisters were accused of going about the city extorting money from Catholics and Protestants to raise a fund for the Catholic candidate under the pretext of visiting the sick and dying.⁷¹ While such misrepresentation constituted an embarrassing annoyance, it did not inflict any serious damage upon the Community. Aside from their fears neither the Sisters in Columbia nor those in Charleston suffered any real harm during the Know-Nothing era.

A true calamity befell the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in the death of Bishop Reynolds on March 6, 1855. He had given them a constitution, helped them to organize their schools, contributed to the support of the orphans, and in short, had done everything he possibly could to promote their spiritual and temporal welfare. The Sisters looked upon him as a second founder.

⁷⁰ASCIM, Mother M. Veronica (Cagney) to Mother M. Peter (Sullivan), May 1, 1855.

⁷¹USCM, July 14, 1855, p. 4.

Writing years later, Sister M. Charles (Curtin) stated:

I remember a visiting clergyman to say Bishop Reynolds will be lost between his predecessor and his successor. But I shall join those who say that Bishop Reynolds was more practical than either and better calculated to manage the limited means of a poor diocese--though he did not make the same noise in the world as the eloquent gifted England, or the scholarly, scientific Lynch. . . .⁷²

In accordance with the wishes of Bishop Reynolds, Father Patrick Lynch was appointed Administrator of the Diocese. He occupied that post until March 14, 1858, when he himself was consecrated Bishop of Charleston. On March 1, 1856, while the future third Bishop of Charleston was still Administrator of the Diocese, the Sisters elected Sister Paul (Harris), Mother Superioress; Sister M. De Sales (Brennan), Treasurer; and Sister M. Patrick (Collins), Procuratrix.

Mother Paul (Harris) governed the Community for only two years. Yet those two years contain one of the most significant episodes in the Community's history, namely, an attempt to amalgamate Bishop England's Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy with Mother McAuley's Sisters of Mercy of New York. The initiative for this step seems to have come from Mother Paul herself. She must have written to the New York Sisters of Mercy toward the end

⁷² ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin).

of June or the beginning of July, 1857, inquiring about the possibility of uniting the two Communities. In a reply dated July 16, 1857, Mother M. Agnes (O'Connor), Superioress of the New York Sisters of Mercy, described the rules and constitutions of the New York Sisters, the nature of their vows and of their Community government.⁷³ In a second letter, dated August 1, 1857, Mother M. Agnes (O'Connor) invited Mother M. Paul (Harris) to New York to discuss practicalities. Mother M. Agnes wrote: "Yours is the only instance which I have known of an Institution long established, and having certain customs of its own, that has ever applied for filiation to any House of our Order."⁷⁴ The records in Charleston do not contain any hint as to why Mother M. Paul selected the New York Sisters of Mercy.

Mother M. Paul (Harris) accepted Mother M. Agnes' (O'Connor) invitation. On November 27, 1857, Mother M. Paul accompanied by Sister M. Joseph (Kent) arrived at Saint Catherine's Convent, New York City. They remained there until January 2, 1858, studying the rules and

⁷³ASCIM, Council Minutes Book, Letter from Sister M. Agnes (O'Connor) to Mother M. Paul (Harris), Feast of Our Lady of Carmel, 1857.

⁷⁴Ibid., Feast of St. Peter's Chains, 1857.

customs of Mother McAuley's Sisters of Mercy.⁷⁵

When Mother M. Paul (Harris) and Sister M. Joseph (Kent) returned to Charleston they informed the other two members of the Council, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) and Sister M. Patrick (Collins), that the two Communities could be united if the following conditions were fulfilled:

1. That a Convent and Chapel be provided so that the Sisters may carry out their Rule.

2. That three Sisters be sent from the Charleston House to spend a Novitiate in New York (which with the Pope's permission can be abridged to fifteen months), and to return simple members, with a Sister of that Convent who will act as Superioress and Mother of Novices for six years.

3. That on their return, all the Professed Sisters here serve a Novitiate of fifteen months and then be permitted to perpetual vows and to all the privileges of vocal and choir Sisters, if during their Novitiate it is found that they are called to the Sisters of Mercy.

4. That one hundred dollars a year be paid for each Sister who makes the Novitiate in New York.

5. The Superioress says she will send on a Sister who will act as Superioress, but will not bind herself to do so.⁷⁶

On the evening of January 8, 1857, the Council members met and voted: "That this Community be as soon

⁷⁵Archives of the Sisters of Mercy, Mount Mercy-on-the Hudson, Dobbs Ferry, New York, Annals of old Saint Catherine's Convent, New York City.

⁷⁶ASCLM, Council Minutes, January 7, 1858.

as practicable united to the Sisters of Mercy in New York."⁷⁷ Two days later, however, Father Patrick N. Lynch, Administrator of the diocese, notified Mother M. Paul (Harris) and the Council members that he could not sanction their action. Father Lynch objected strongly to the provision calling for a new convent and chapel for the Sisters. He maintained that such a building would cost at least \$20,000.00. The diocese, debt ridden as it was, could not permit the Sisters to incur such an expenditure. He also pointed out that no provisions were made for those Sisters unwilling to enter the other institute, or for those who might not be accepted. He cautioned that the rights of Sisters who had spent years in the Charleston Community might thereby be jeopardized.⁷⁸

Father Lynch's statement also implied that the desire for amalgamation sprang from a misunderstanding of the comparative standing of the two Sisterhoods in the Church. He stated:

It is thought that the Sisters of Mercy as in New York, are more entitled to the rank of a Religious Order than the Sisters in Charleston. This is entirely an error. The Canonical status of the two Houses, their rank in the Church is the same. They are both Religious Congregations with simple vows.

⁷⁷Ibid., January 8, 1858.

⁷⁸ASCLM, Letter from Rev. P. N. Lynch to Sister M. De Sales (Brennan), Community Secretary, January 10, 1858.

. . . The approval at Rome of the body of Rules of any Institute does not give that Institute a different character in any way.⁷⁹

The question of who were and who were not "Religious" in the canonical sense of the term was to appear again in the history of the Community during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

When Mother M. Paul (Harris) learned that the proposed amalgamation could not be effected, she resigned as Mother Superioress and left the Community. With the permission of the future Bishop Lynch and of Archbishop Hughes of New York, she entered the New York Sisters of Mercy as a postulant on January 18, 1858.⁸⁰ Sister Augustine (Kent), Assistant Superioress of the Charleston Community at the time of Mother M. Paul's departure, assumed the duties of Mother Superioress until the

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Archives of the Sisters of Mercy, Mount Mercy-on-the-Hudson, Dobbs Ferry, New York, Annals of old Saint Catherine's Convent, New York City. These Annals relate that the former Mother M. Paul (Harris) of Bishop England's Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, received the name of Sister M. Paula (Harris) in the New York Community. She was professed on May 31, 1860. During the Civil War, Sister M. Paula and five other Sisters of Mercy of the New York Community took charge of a military hospital at Beaufort, North Carolina. After the war Sister M. Paula was stationed at Greenbush convent, Albany, New York. When this house separated from the Community in New York City, Sister M. Paula was made Mother Assistant. She died in Albany, New York, on January 31, 1901.

Community elected Sister M. Teresa (Barry) to that office on March 3, 1858. Sister M. Charles (Curtin) was elected Assistant Superioress. Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) and Sister M. Patrick (Collins) retained their respective offices as Treasurer and Procuratrix. On March 25, 1858, all the Sisters renewed their vows before the Most Reverend Patrick N. Lynch, who was consecrated Bishop of Charleston on March 14.

Four months after his consecration, Bishop Lynch informed his diocesan consultors that he was planning to open a boys' orphan asylum in Charleston and to re-establish the Ursuline Nuns in the diocese. To facilitate both projects the Bishop decided to bring the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Columbia back to Charleston to take charge of the proposed boys' orphanage. He could then place the Ursulines in Columbia in charge of the Academy of the Immaculate Conception there.⁸¹ Evidently Madame Baptiste Lynch, Bishop Lynch's own sister, Ellen, and the Superior of the six Ursulines coming to the diocese, knew of these plans as early as April, 1858.

⁸¹CDA 23C9, Letter from Bishop Lynch to the Diocesan Consultors. See also, CDA 10D3, Bishop Purcell to Lynch, March 12, 1857. In this letter, Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati informed Lynch, then Administrator of the Diocese of Charleston, of the possibility of obtaining a group of Ursuline Nuns from Brown County, Ohio. Father Lynch's reply is located in UNDA II-4n, Lynch to Purcell, March 18, 1857.

On the twenty-seventh of that month she wrote her brother, the Bishop, suggesting that she and her Sisters be permitted to come to Columbia, South Carolina, in July or August to afford them time to prepare for the opening of school.⁸²

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, however, were not informed of the proposed change until August 3, 1858. At a Council meeting held that day, Father Sullivan, their Ecclesiastical Superior, told the Sisters of the Bishop's wishes and directed Sister M. De Sales (Brennan), Council Secretary, to notify the Bishop that the Council "would cheerfully endeavor to meet his wishes as made known to them by his respectful communication."⁸³

In reply Bishop Lynch wrote:

The action of the Council is what I expected from the spirit of religion and devotedness to the cause of God which I know and have ever felt to swell in your House. I cannot but be gratified.⁸⁴

Actually, the Sisters had no choice in the matter. The Bishop was their first Superior and they had to obey him even if his action was somewhat high-handed and showed little appreciation for the sacrifices they had made to

⁸²CDA 13A2, Madame Baptiste Lynch to Bishop Lynch, April 27, 1858.

⁸³ASCIM, Council Minutes, August 3, 1858.

⁸⁴Ibid., August 5, 1858.

establish the school in Columbia.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy left Columbia on Friday morning, August 20, 1858. The United States Catholic Miscellany of August 28, 1858, reprinted an article from a Columbia newspaper commenting upon the Sisters' departure:

Their constant attendance on the sick and poor, the large and increasing concourse of pupils to their school, and their abilities as teachers, which their last annual exhibition fully proves, had made them so dear to the people, that their departure was well calculated to cause universal regret.⁸⁵

Construction of the boys' orphanage was begun in April, 1859. According to the agreement between Bishop Lynch and the contractor, the building should have been completed in November of that year.⁸⁶ For reasons not apparent, however, it was not. An article in the United States Catholic Miscellany of April 21, 1860, indicated that it was still unfinished at that date.⁸⁷ All that is known about this institution is that it was in existence in December, 1861, when a destructive fire swept Charleston and burned it to the ground. The Sisters, however, did not take charge of the boys' orphanage

⁸⁵USCM, August 28, 1858, p. 6.

⁸⁶CDA 23W2, Agreement between Bishop Lynch and Contractor James Kenny.

⁸⁷USCM, April 21, 1860, p. 4.

until after the Civil War. On the eve of that war there were thirty Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy (counting the Novices) in Charleston. They were conducting the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Saint Mary's Free School, and the girls' orphanage. Little did they realize that some of them would spend the next three years of their lives in a military hospital in the mountains of western Virginia.

CHAPTER III

THE CIVIL WAR

At four-thirty in the morning of April 12, 1861, the booming of cannons awakened the Sisters. The Confederate batteries on Fort Johnson, James Island, had opened fire upon the United States forces stationed on Fort Sumter under the command of Major Robert Anderson. The "cold war" which had existed since South Carolina issued her Ordinance of Secession on December 20, 1860, had at last reached a climax.

"The people of Charleston," wrote Sister M. Charles (Curtin), "were in the utmost state of excitement. The battery and every spot where they could get a view of the gunning was thronged."¹ For nearly forty hours the Confederate guns on Morris Island, James Island, and Sullivan's Island pounded the Fort in the harbor. On the evening of the thirteenth, Major Anderson agreed to surrender. General Pierre G. T. Beauregard, commanding the Confederate forces at Charleston, permitted Major Anderson, his friend and former artillery

¹ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin).

teacher, to salute the United States flag and march his garrison out of the fort with all the honors of war. On Sunday, April 14, the Union Commander and his men sailed away on one of the Federal relief ships which had arrived too late to help him defend the fort.

According to Sister M. Charles (Curtin), Mrs. Anderson visited the convent the day after the bombardment. Unfortunately, no one preserved the details of her visit. Sister M. Charles described her as "an elegant lady and a good Catholic."² Perhaps it was to this visit that Senator Sawyer of South Carolina referred ten years later on March 3, 1871, when imploring the United States Congress, he said:

Mr. President, let it be remembered that in 1861, when it was thought dangerous for any person who adhered to the national Government to remain in Charleston, these Sisters of Mercy went to the wife of one of our honored generals and offered her asylum in this very building which fell under our shot and shell.³

The day after Fort Sumter fell, President Lincoln called upon the governors of the loyal states to supply 75,000 men to oppose the South. This action caused Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee to

² Ibid.

³ U.S., Congressional Globe and Appendix, 41st Cong., 3d Sess., March, 1871, Part 3, p. 2009. The story of the Sisters' appeal to Congress for financial assistance is related in the following chapter.

follow South Carolina and the other states of the deep South out of the Union. In July, Virginia became a battleground. Not until November, 1861, however, did the United States Government again open operations against South Carolina. In the interim, while the South Carolina Legislature and the Constitutional Convention were organizing military forces, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy were in their classrooms in the Academy, Saint Mary's Free School, and the girls' orphanage.

The students and teachers in the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy spent the summer preparing flags--one for the Irish Volunteers in South Carolina, and the other for the Irish Volunteers for the war in Virginia. The latter group, mustered into service on June 27, 1861, was ordered to Richmond, Virginia, on July 19, two months before work on the flag was completed.⁴ On September 11, Father James Corcoran, chaplain and confessor to the Sisters, blessed the finished product in the convent chapel. The flag was of green and white silk with the Palmetto, emblem of South Carolina, on one side; the Harp of Erin, on the other. The Irish Volunteers received the flag at evening dress parade on Monday,

⁴"The Irish Volunteers--Memorial Meeting and Military Hall Festival, October-November, 1877," South Carolina Pamphlets, VI, No. 4 (Charleston: The News and Courier Book and Job Presses, 1878), 14.

September 23, at Suffolk, Virginia, where the regiment was encamped. This flag was to remain at regimental headquarters in Richmond until the evacuating Confederates burned the building in the last month of the war.⁵

The flag prepared for the Irish Volunteers of South Carolina was blessed by Bishop Lynch in the Cathedral on Monday afternoon, September 16, 1861.⁶ It is not known whether it survived the war or suffered the same fate as its counterpart in Virginia.

These flag-making activities would suggest that the majority of the Sisters supported the cause of the men who carried their flags. Indeed, it would have been surprising if it had been otherwise. The Community had originated in the South. Most of its members in 1861, though Irish-born, had never lived north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Their founder, Bishop England, although personally opposed to slavery, was equally hostile to the Abolitionists whom he considered bitter enemies of the Church. Moreover, the sentiments of his successor, the Most Reverend Patrick N. Lynch, third Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston, were decidedly pro-South. This

⁵Ibid., p. 16; see also, Charleston Catholic Miscellany, September 28, 1861.

⁶Charleston Catholic Miscellany, September 21, 1861, p. 4.

is not to say that Bishop Lynch desired secession or war. He did not. However, he did believe that the war had been forced upon the South by the antislavery forces in the North. In a letter to Archbishop Hughes of New York, written on August 4, 1861, Bishop Lynch stated:

We, as Catholics, might everywhere smile at this additional attempt to "reform" the teachings of our Savior. . . . But when they carried it into politics, gaining one State Government after another, and defining their especial policy by unconstitutional laws and every mode of annoying and hostile action, and finally, with increased enthusiasm and increased bitterness, carrying the Presidential election in triumph, and grasping the power of the Federal Government, what could the South do but consult its own safety by withdrawing from the Union? What other protection had they?⁷

Bishop Lynch urged the North to accept secession as a fait accompli and avoid a needless and bloody war.

More belligerent even than Bishop Lynch was Father James Corcoran, editor of The United States Catholic Miscellany, and chaplain and confessor to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. In an editorial, published on December 22, 1860, two days after South Carolina had issued her Ordinance of Secession, Father Corcoran stated:

⁷Letter from Bishop Patrick N. Lynch to Archbishop John Hughes, August 4, 1861. This letter is printed in John Tracy Ellis, Documents of American Catholic History (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 359-60.

The Ordinance . . . severing all connection with the Federal Union was framed, pondered, and passed in a calm, solemn, and dignified manner, which will claim the admiration of posterity. South Carolina is henceforth not only our Mother but our only Sovereign who has the sole right to our allegiance. The whole, undivided loyalty of our heart and conscience, (we speak not only as a Carolinian, but as a Catholic theologian) must be hers and hers only. May the God of peace guide her counsels and bless her with ever-growing prosperity.⁸

The testy editor removed what he termed those "two obnoxious words"--United States--from the paper's mast-head. The first Catholic weekly in this country went to press as the Catholic Miscellany on December 29, 1860, and was rechristened the Charleston Catholic Miscellany on January 5, 1861.⁹

Undoubtedly, the Sisters were influenced by these opinions. The fact that Bishop Lynch sanctioned the southern cause must have reassured the Sisters that their natural loyalties were perfectly compatible with the Catholic faith. Indeed, most southern Bishops accepted the coexistence of slavery and Christianity.¹⁰ Moreover, most southern Catholics gave their loyal

⁸Charleston Catholic Miscellany, December 22, 1861, p. 4.

⁹Mother M. Charles, "The United States Catholic Miscellany," The Catholic Banner, Official newspaper of the Diocese of Charleston, December 4, 1860, p. 11A.

¹⁰Benjamin Blied, Catholics and the Civil War (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1945), p. 69.

support to the Confederacy.

In the fall of 1861 the war returned to South Carolina. Federal forces, on November 7, seized Port Royal, one of the state's best harbors located about sixty miles south of Charleston. The victory afforded the Union forces access to the sea islands from which they could attack the city of Charleston. The afternoon after the capture of Port Royal, November 8, 1861, Bishop Lynch summoned the Council members of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. He stated:

In consequence of the invasion of South Carolina by the enemy, it was more probable that a hospital for the sick and wounded would be established in some part of the State. . . . He therefore thought it advisable to have the Sisters hold themselves in readiness and be prepared to go wherever their services were needed.¹¹

Not quite one month later, on December 3, 1861, the Bishop called another Council meeting. He told the Sisters that he had received a letter from Bishop McGill of Richmond, asking for Sisters to take charge of a Confederate hospital at White Sulphur Springs in western Virginia. Bishop McGill had also sent Bishop Lynch a letter from Miss Emily Mason, a convert, then in charge of the hospital at White Sulphur Springs. Miss Mason's letter emphasized the necessity of obtaining competent

¹¹ASCLM, Council Minutes, November 8, 1861.

nurses to care for the large number of sick and wounded men in the hospital. Bishop Lynch informed the Sisters that the Confederate Government would defray all their travel expenses, and that he would give them one hundred dollars (\$100.00) to buy clothes suitable for the cold climate.

Apparently, there was not much discussion about the matter. The Bishop selected five Sisters for the new mission: Sister M. Ignatius (Clarke), Sister M. De Sales (Prennan), Sister M. Bernard (Frank), Sister M. Helena (Marlowe), and Sister Isidore (Barry). The Council agreed to all but Sister Isidore (Barry) whose musical talents were needed in the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy. Sister Stanislaus (Coventry) was chosen instead. The Bishop asked Mother Teresa (Barry) to accompany the Sisters and remain with them for some weeks.¹²

Bishop McGill asked the Confederate War Department to provide a Catholic chaplain for the hospital at White Sulphur Springs. "Our Sisters," said the Bishop, "can find plenty of work where they can practice their religion; and if they give their services for the benefit of the country, . . . provision should be made for

¹²Ibid., December 3, 1861.

their having Mass and the Sacraments."¹³ Pencilled on the Bishop's request are the instructions: "Make out appointment as Chaplain for Reverend Lawrence O'Connell to act with sick at the White Sulphur Springs."¹⁴ The Confederate Senate confirmed Father O'Connell's appointment on September 26, 1862.¹⁵

Mother Teresa (Barry), the Sisters, and Father O'Connell intended to leave Charleston for Virginia on Thursday, December 12, 1861. On the evening of the eleventh the Sisters prolonged their usual hour of recreation "thinking that it would be a long time 'ere they would be together again."¹⁶ Shortly before they retired they heard the fire bell and saw flames in the lower part of the city. According to Sister M. Charles (Curtin):

¹³U.S., National Archives, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Letters received by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-65, Number 8791, December, 1861, Letter from Bishop J. McGill of Richmond, Va., to Colonel Chilton, War Dept., received by the War Dept., Dec. 21, 1861.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵U.S., National Archives, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Service Record of Rev. Lawrence J. O'Connell, Confederate Archives, Chapter 1, File No. 86, p. 368.

¹⁶ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin).

The Bishop came to the gate and told us there was going to be a big fire; that nearly all the men were in camp, and there was not sufficient force in the city to fight the fire. The wind blew high and about 11:00 o'clock we saw the fire advancing steadily toward us. . . . At last the men came from the camp, and their most earnest efforts seemed to be directed towards saving the Convent. Never was more devotion shown than that which actuated the men of Charleston that night. The . . . Protestants and Catholics alike, if anything the Protestants predominated in their earnest unselfish sympathy. They moved all our furniture to the Normal School, a fine, new building, out of range of the fire; took down shutters, blinds and everything that might catch the sparks. . . . They took the law into their own hands and blew up the surrounding buildings. The beautiful Cathedral went without an effort to save it. . . . Some men were heard to say, "Let us try to save the Church." Others replied, "We cannot save both, and the Sisters have first claim." . . . The Church being stone, the people thought it would not burn, and filled the basement with beds and other things that caught the sparks. . . .¹⁷

When the sun rose on the twelfth, one-sixth of the city of Charleston was in ruins. About 600 homes, places of business, and public buildings were destroyed by the fire whose cause is still disputed. The insurance on the Cathedral had lapsed through an oversight and no part of the estimated \$200,000 could be recovered.¹⁸ Hardship prevailed among the parishioners of the Cathedral parish.

By comparison with their neighbors, the Sisters

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸John Foltz, "Story of a Cathedral," The Catholic Banner, December 4, 1960, p. 15A.

were well-off. The almost superhuman exertions of the citizens and soldiers of Charleston had saved the convent and orphanage though both buildings needed repairs. All the outbuildings, however, had perished, and the firefighters had found it necessary to blow up the Sisters' kitchen and the orphans' refectory in a last ditch effort to save the whole. Saint Mary's Free School on Queen Street was a total loss. The school, built at a cost of \$9,000.00 had been in session to the day of the fire. According to the Charleston Catholic Miscellany, "the tables, desks, seats and books which it contained were all consumed. These fixtures were new and valuable and will prove a serious loss to the good Sisters of Mercy."¹⁹

The Sisters, orphans, and boarders were "displaced persons" for three months after the fire. The convent and orphanage, though standing, were uninhabitable. Realizing this, the Commissioners of the Public Schools offered the Sisters the use of several rooms in the Normal School, Saint Philip's Street. The Community accepted and, apparently, moved in immediately after the fire.²⁰ Approximately one week later, however, they

¹⁹Charleston Catholic Miscellany, December 14, 1861, p. 4.

²⁰Ibid.

moved from the Normal School into a large house on the corner of King and Vanderhorst Streets. The owner, a Mr. Schachte, permitted the Sisters to live in this house, rent-free until the first week of March.²¹ In a letter dated March 10, 1862, Mrs. Mary Teresa Allemong, a resident of Charleston, wrote, "The Sisters have got back to their House about a week ago."²²

During their temporary exile the Sisters received two hundred thirty-one dollars (\$231.00) from the Irish Volunteers encamped at Suffolk, Virginia. The money constituted part of the proceeds from a theatrical benefit which had been given for the Volunteers. They sent another \$200.00, the remainder of the proceeds, to the General Relief Fund.²³

One week after the fire, on Thursday morning, December 19, 1861, Mother Teresa (Barry), the five Sisters selected for the Virginia mission, and Father Lawrence O'Connell boarded the train for Richmond, the first stop in the journey to White Sulphur Springs. One of the passengers complained that the train was so slow

²¹ASCLM, Council Minutes, December 15, 1861.

²²CDA 27B2, Letter from Mrs. Mary T. Allemong to Mrs. McKenna, March 10, 1862.

²³CDA 26S4, Letter from Captain Edward McGrady to William McBurney, December 20, 1861.

that they would not reach Richmond for a week!²⁴

In Richmond the Sisters stayed with the Daughters of Charity who, in the words of Mother Teresa (Barry), "spared neither time nor trouble in contributing to our happiness and comfort in every respect."²⁵ One of the Richmond Sisters had run the blockade. Of her, Mother Teresa (Barry) wrote,

She has charge of the City Hospital and one, just suited for such a station. She is indeed a true daughter of Vincent de Paul. I only wish we had such a person on our mission.²⁶

The Sisters visited three hospitals while in Richmond. This gave them a chance to see and hear accounts of the works of mercy that other Religious were accomplishing. Mother Teresa (Barry) was pleased to discover that the hospital her Sisters had operated in Charleston during the yellow fever epidemic of 1852 compared favorably with the hospitals they visited in Richmond. "Consequently," she wrote, "we feel quite satisfied and now will do the best we can for the honor and glory of God trusting that He will bless our humble efforts in His work."²⁷

²⁴ASCIM, Letter from Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, December 21, 1861.

²⁵CDA 26S7, Letter from Mother Teresa (Barry) to Bishop Lynch, December 23, 1861.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

Two hundred miles lay between Richmond and the Sisters' destination, Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs. At seven o'clock on the morning of December 24, the Sisters and Father O'Connell began the second lap of their journey.²⁸ They travelled by train from Richmond westward to Staunton, in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. En route they crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains and approached the Alleghenies. Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) wrote,

The scenery round and over the Alleghenies is magnificent and must indeed be charming in the Spring. . . . You pass through three tunnels coming out here, one of them seven-eighths of a mile in length. While passing through the lamps are lit.²⁹

At Staunton they transferred from the train to a stage coach for the last thirty-two miles of the trip. Sister De Sales described the ride to Bishop Lynch as follows:

We were really packed like sardines. Why, think, nine persons inside a stage scarcely as big as a Mills House Carriage. At last we got into such a state that we could not move, so Father O'Connell thought he would get the stage driver to make some change. He began calling, "Captain, Oh, Captain," until he almost deafened all in the stage. At last Sister Ignatius suggested to call him General. Captain was too insignificant a title now a days!³⁰

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ ASCIM, Letter from Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, December 31, 1861.

³⁰ Ibid.

The exact date of the Sisters' arrival at Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs Hospital remains unknown. However, Sister M. De Sales' (Brennan) letter to Bishop Lynch indicates that they had reached their destination a few days before December 31, 1861. On that date Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) informed the Bishop that:

We have not found the sick and matters in general in as bad a condition as we anticipated. The prevailing diseases are typhoid fever, pneumonia, and some few cases of consumption. I had the gratification of baptizing a few days ago a young Georgian, who died the next morning. . . . Father O'Connell . . . empowered me to baptize him, but after the business had been done he became seriously alarmed as to whether I knew how to administer baptism or not. However, when he catechized me on the subject, I think I succeeded in allaying his fears and scruples on that head.³¹

Sister De Sales' letter would indicate that there were very few, if any, wounded men in the camp at this time.

When the Sisters left Charleston for Virginia they were under the impression that they would have complete charge of the nursing services in the hospital at Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs. Upon arrival, however, they discovered that they were to work under the directions of Miss Emily Mason, whose letter Bishop Lynch had read to them in Charleston. The situation disturbed and displeased them. On January 11, 1862, Father O'Connell informed Bishop Lynch:

³¹Ibid.

The Sisters especially the Superioress is anything but satisfied . . . with the place and the position they occupy. I am inclined to believe that this dissatisfaction is not wholly without reason but yet I am of the opinion that patience . . . in a short time would bring matters to suit their notions. The bone of discontent consists in their not having supreme government over the hospital and the stores connected therewith. The second cause exists in their not having been lodged in the hospital, and this I am willing to admit is a great inconvenience to the Sisters more especially in a climate as this.³²

Fearful that some unpleasantness might occur, Father O'Connell advised the Sisters to forbear until Bishop Lynch could come to examine and rectify the matter.

Mother Teresa (Barry) informed the Bishop of her dissatisfaction on January 15. Yet, she, too, considered patience the wisest course to follow. She expressed special concern for the spiritual welfare of the patients: "We can do very little with any of the patients in the way of religion excepting those who have never been baptized and when spoken to on the subject generally admit its necessity."³³ Of Miss Mason and her assistant, a Mrs. Upshur, Mother Teresa (Barry) said:

The good ladies are residing together and are regulating for us in their own way, but unfortunately cannot assume confidence enough to offer their plans. . . . I hope after a time that we will be

³²CDA 26W7, Rev. Lawrence O'Connell to Bishop Lynch, January 11, 1862.

³³ASCIM, Letter from Mother Teresa (Barry) to Bishop Lynch, January 15, 1862.

better situated and able to do more good.³⁴

Mother Teresa (Barry) estimated that there were only one hundred fifty (150) patients in the hospital at that time. The weather she described as piercingly cold.

The hospital at Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs had been a hotel in prewar days. Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) informed Bishop Lynch that her ward was once the ballroom. In fact, the dance program was still nailed at its entrance. She told the Bishop that she "would have put it under the protection of . . . St. Francis De Sales, but was afraid of alarming the people out here."³⁵ Instead, she called it Beauregard Ward.

Mother Teresa (Barry) returned to Charleston in early March, leaving Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) in charge of the Sisters in Virginia. Mother Teresa's term of office had expired while she was at White Sulphur Springs, but the Community had postponed the election. On March 29, the Sisters re-elected Mother Teresa (Barry) Superioress of the Community. Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) was elected Treasurer, and Sister M. Gertrude (Murckhardt), Procuratrix.³⁶ Sister M. Joseph (Kent)

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ ASCIM, Letter from Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, January 26, 1862.

³⁶ ASCIM, Council Minutes, March 29, 1862.

continued to fulfill the responsibilities of Mother Assistant.

On March 30, 1862, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) notified Bishop Lynch that Miss Mason had left Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs to take charge of a hospital in Charlottesville. Consequently, the Sisters had been given as much control in the hospital at the Springs as they desired.³⁷ If there was any exultation, it must have been short-lived. During the first weeks of April the hospital began to fill up rapidly. The Sisters had little time for anything but their duties. These consisted in dressing wounds, distributing medicines, and supervising the kitchen and linen departments. The prevailing diseases were typhoid, pneumonia, and measles.³⁸ In her letters, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) does not refer to the presence of any wounded men.

The war, however, was moving closer to the hospital. On April 6, 1862, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) informed Bishop Lynch that the Confederate forces were expected to retreat to Greenbrier Bridge--only two miles from the hospital. "As I write," she said, "there are

³⁷CDA 27C2, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, March 30, 1862.

³⁸ASCLM, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Mother M. Teresa (Barry), April 8, 1862.

some three hundred (300) with an immense train of wagons wending their way to Lewisburg."³⁹ About the middle of the month, the Sisters received a dispatch from Confederate Major-General Henry C. Heth requesting that all surplus hospital stores be moved to Union Monroe County. It was concluded that the hospital was to follow. In that event the Sisters were told that they would be sent to the Sweet Sulphur Springs.⁴⁰ On May 16, 1862, Union forces occupied Lewisburg, approximately ten miles west of the hospital at Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs. Confederate forces tried to dislodge them, but were defeated. Hence, Lewisburg and the surrounding area, including Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs, passed into Yankee hands.⁴¹

An account of the happenings at the hospital as the Federal forces advanced would make interesting reading. Unfortunately, however, none has been preserved. Having fled before the Union forces reached Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs, the Sisters relocated at the

³⁹CDA 27C4, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, April 6, 1862.

⁴⁰CDA 27D1, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, April 22, 1862.

⁴¹Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence C. Buel (eds.), Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (New York: The Century Co., 1887), II, 278-81.

Montgomery White Sulphur Springs General Hospital, on the western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains about six miles from Christiansburg, Virginia.⁴²

In Charleston rumors circulated that the Yankees had captured the Sisters, Father O'Connell, and Bishop Lynch who was visiting the hospital at the time of the evacuation. Letters from the Bishop and from Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) contradicting these reports reached Charleston during the last week of May. In reply to the Bishop's letter, Father Corcoran wrote:

The Sisters here were delighted to learn . . . that you were the means of saving the effects of the Sisters in Virginia at the time of their flight. . . . Before they were in great doubt and fear that the Sisters had left everything behind, a prey to the Yankees.⁴³

The war was moving closer to Charleston too. On May 29, 1862, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) sent a description of the city to the Sisters in Virginia. It was not very cheering. Sister M. Agatha wrote:

Could you give a look upon dear old Charleston at present you would scarcely recognize it. I suppose that fully two-thirds of the usual number of inhabitants have left and the stampede still continues.

⁴² Interview with Father Richard Madden, Pastor of St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church, Myrtle Beach, S.C., November 27, 1965. Father Madden, historian of the Diocese of Charleston, visited this location during the summer of 1965.

⁴³ CDA 27E3, Father James A. Corcoran to Bishop Lynch, May 29, 1862.

Our school has dwindled to a mere skeleton and the number of pupils is decreasing daily. Some weeks since my pupils numbered twenty-five; today I had only five, and the other classes have decreased in like proportions. . . . The enemy's gun boats draw near us daily. Our ears are sometimes dimmed by the report of the big guns for they aim to destroy everything in their way.⁴⁴

There were reports spreading through Charleston at this time that the Sisters also intended leaving the city. Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) assured those in Virginia that such stories were false. Her explanation of their origin is best related in her own words:

Doctor Corcoran amused me by telling me that Doctor Moore said to him a few days since that the Sisters certainly were leaving the city, and to prove the truth of his assertion told him that he saw a quantity of furniture being removed from our house. Well, I will tell you the origin of that phenomena. There is a certain woman living in our vicinity named Judy--Judy what, I know not. Perhaps you will know who I mean when I tell you that she gave the Sisters a very nice cup of coffee on the morning of the fire. Well, Judy, a short time ago got a vocation--I think from fear of the Yankees who were approaching! . . . After some deliberation Mother Teresa allowed her to come. . . . No sooner was the privilege granted than she began and moved bag and baggage, cows, chickens, and all. . . . But, alas! . . . in one short week . . . she lost her vocation, and bag and baggage, cows, chickens, were all removed to the old homestead again, and Judy is going on in the same old track. It was the removal of

⁴⁴CDA 27E4, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Sister M. De Sales (Brennan), May 29, 1862. Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) entered the Community in May, 1858, and was professed on November 21, 1860. In 1878 she was elected Mother Superioress. Sister M. Agatha's sister, Eliza MacNamara married John Lynch, a brother of Bishop Lynch.

those things which mislead Dr. Moore.⁴⁵

The "enemy's big guns," mentioned in Sister M. Agatha's letter, were then shelling the Confederate forces on James Island. If the Union forces had gained control of James Island, southeast of Charleston, they would have been in a position to control the inner harbor and to fire directly upon the city. The authorities in Charleston were in fact preparing for that possibility. Father John Moore, future Bishop of Saint Augustine, Florida, informed Bishop Lynch that they were digging rat holes along Meeting Street for sharpshooters. Father Moore, whose sister, Sister M. Alphonsa (Moore) was a member of the Community, voiced his particular concern for the safety of the Sisters and orphans. "If the city is shelled," he said, "they must leave."⁴⁶ On June 16, 1862, however, Confederate forces on James Island repulsed the enemy. This defeat convinced Union

⁴⁵CDA 27E4, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Sister M. De Sales (Brennan), May 29, 1862.

⁴⁶CDA 27G1, Rev. John Moore to Bishop Lynch, June 6, 1862. Father John Moore was born in Ireland. He began his studies for the priesthood in the Seminary of St. John the Baptist, Charleston, during Bishop England's lifetime. During Bishop Reynold's administration, Father Moore was sent to Rome to complete his studies. In 1863 he became pastor of St. Patrick's parish, Charleston. He held that post until his appointment to the See of St. Augustine, Florida, in 1877.

commanders that the James Island route to Charleston was impregnable. They, therefore, began to study the possibility of an approach via Morris Island.⁴⁷ The city was thereby spared a shelling for almost another year. Not until the fall of 1863 were the Sisters and orphans obliged to seek shelter outside Charleston. Even then, not all the Sisters left.

In July, 1862, Dr. J. Lewis Woodville, formerly on the staff of the hospital at Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs, was appointed Surgeon-in-charge of the General Hospital at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, Virginia. The appointment pleased the Sisters. They found in Dr. Woodville a friend who had confidence in their abilities. There were at this time other parties in the hospital who were very much opposed to the so-called "Catholic influence." They became particularly indignant when Dr. Woodville appointed Father O'Connell Chaplain for the Post. According to Sister M. De Sales (Brennan), a Doctor Anderson informed the Inspector General of Hospitals, Doctor T. C. Madison, that the duties of the Protestant Chaplain, also a Mr. Madison, had been usurped by Father O'Connell and herself. The Inspector General is said to have replied, "The Hospital was the best

⁴⁷Johnson and Buel, IV, 21.

organized and best kept in his circuit and he considered the Rev. Mr. Madison a very fortunate man to have his business so well done for him."⁴⁸ Thereupon, the Reverend Mr. Madison resigned and Doctor Woodville discharged Doctor Anderson. Before resigning, the Minister accused Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) of refusing a Methodist Minister to a young man whom Father O'Connell had baptized. Sister M. De Sales flatly denied the accusation. When writing to Bishop Lynch, she said:

Dr. Woodville denied that such could have been the case for he knew me to ask him at the Greenbrier White to send him miles for a Minister. . . . I have sent for Madison himself. The fact is that they are frantic at the influence we have over the men and at the number that have been baptized, all of whom have died save one who went of himself to Father O'Connell; became instructed and has received baptism and Holy Communion. There are three others studying the catechism and asked for themselves.⁴⁹

Conflicts of this nature consumed less attention as the hospital became more crowded. On August 27, 1862, with over four hundred patients in the hospital, Doctor Woodville ordered Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to be prepared for a possible three hundred more. Sister De Sales (Brennan) informed Mother Teresa (Barry) and the Bishop that she needed at least one other Sister.

⁴⁸CDA 27P5, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, August 27, 1862.

⁴⁹Ibid.

To Bishop Lynch she wrote:

But for Lizzie Kelly, one of the girls you brought from Lynchburg, my ward would be altogether neglected. With all the other troubles, I am about to lose her and three others of these girls. They have become dissatisfied with the wages given them and will not remain for less than \$12.00 which the Doctor says the Surgeon General will not allow. . . . He has offered to allow \$10.00 (i.e. per month), but they are not satisfied with it.⁵⁰

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, Mother Teresa (Barry) and the Council, with Bishop Lynch's approval, chose Sister M. Alphonsa (Moore) and Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) for the Virginia mission.⁵¹

Unaware that the Bishop had acted upon her request, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) wrote again to assure him that whoever would come would have enough to do. "Yesterday's report," she said, "was 639 and several cases came in today. We are crowded. A number sleep in the Ten Pin Alley on the floor. . . . The Sisters are all quite well, save Sister Ignatius (Clarke) who is looking badly."⁵²

Bishop Lynch planned to accompany Sister M. Alphonsa (Moore) and Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Montgomery White Sulphur Springs. Before leaving

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹ASCLM, Council Minutes, September 24, 1862.

⁵²CDA 27T4, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, September 20, 1862.

Charleston, however, the Bishop received a dispatch from Father Thomas F. Murphy, pastor of Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, Wilmington, North Carolina, begging for Sisters to assist him in caring for yellow fever patients in Wilmington. The disease had reached epidemic proportions there. At a meeting on September 28, 1862, the Council, with Bishop Lynch's approval, voted to send Mother Teresa (Barry), Sister M. Augustine (Kent), Sister M. Peter (Sullivan), and Sister M. Patrick (Collins) to Wilmington. The Bishop assigned Father Corcoran to accompany them.⁵³ They set out the next morning, probably the first Roman Catholic Sisters to tread the streets of Wilmington, North Carolina.

The epidemic raged for two weeks causing a total of 447 deaths--one-tenth of the population of Wilmington. The Wilmington Journal of October 18 reported that both Father Murphy and Father Corcoran were prostrated by the disease. Both, however, recovered. By the second week in November all those who had gone from Charleston had returned. On November 10, 1862, the Howard Association of Wilmington publicly thanked Father Corcoran and the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy for their services during

⁵³ASCLM, Council Minutes, September 28, 1862.

the epidemic.⁵⁴

In her doctoral dissertation, "James Andrew Corcoran, Editor, Theologian, Scholar," Sister M. Marcian Lowman, O.S.U., states that between October 14 and November 13, 1862, Father Corcoran baptized twelve persons in Wilmington. In a number of instances Mother Teresa (Barry) and Sister Augustine (Kent) acted as sponsors.⁵⁵

Bishop Lynch, Sister M. Alphonsa (Moore), and Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) reached Montgomery White Sulphur Springs sometime in October, 1862. A few weeks after their arrival, a case of smallpox made its appearance in the hospital. Even though the patient was removed from the hospital building and put "in the house outside the fence on the right hand going up to the depot,"⁵⁶ most of the hospital personnel and patients were panic stricken. In a letter to Bishop Lynch, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) wrote, "I wish you could have

⁵⁴Richard Madden, "History of the Diocese of Charleston," Unpublished manuscript located at Father Madden's residence, St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church, Myrtle Beach, S. C., unpaginated.

⁵⁵Sister Marcian Lowman, O.S.U., "James Andrew Corcoran, Editor, Theologian, Scholar" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, St. Louis University, 1958), p. 212.

⁵⁶CDA 28C7, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, November 14, 1862.

seen Dr. Bradley vaccinating this evening. . . . Over a hundred men standing in a swarm around him, holding out bare arms, calling out, 'Doctor, here!, here!'"⁵⁷ Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) and Sister M. Bernard (Frank) were the only Sisters who had to be vaccinated. All the others had had smallpox.

As Christmas, 1862, approached, there was a reduction in the number of patients admitted to the hospital at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs. The New Year, however, brought a sharp increase. On January 9, 1863, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) reported the arrival of five new cases of smallpox. This time the appearance of the disease initiated a controversy between the pro- and anti-Woodville factions at the hospital.

Doctor John Hunter, Medical Director for the District of Southwestern Virginia, had ordered a physician to be quarantined with the smallpox patients in a house apart from the hospital. Each of the four contract physicians whom Doctor Woodville sent to that post, however, refused to attend. Fearing that some man would die without baptism, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) asked Sister M. Helena (Marlowe) to quarantine herself with the patients. A Catholic girl and two male nurses were

⁵⁷Ibid.

assigned to assist her.⁵⁸

Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) attributed the refusal of the four contract physicians to cowardice. The physicians, however, maintained that they had acted as they did because Doctor Woodville had manifested favoritism in passing over a commissioned surgeon and assigning them--four noncommissioned surgeons--to the unpopular duty. Furthermore, they informed the Confederate Surgeon General, Doctor Samuel Moore that:

There has been ever since the establishment of the Hospital a dissatisfaction on the part of a majority of the surgeons . . . because of favoritism shown and authority given to a religious party placed in the Hospital who are permitted to have control of everything. . . . Mr. O'Connell, a Catholic Priest and seven Sisters of Mercy together with all of their order they succeeded in gathering around them consisting of Quarter Master, clerks, and nurses is the party referred to above.⁵⁹

Three of the contract physicians--Doctor Isaac White, Doctor W. H. Keffer, and Doctor M. E. Daughtry--signed this protest. The fourth, a Doctor Williams, refused to do so.

On January 12, 1863, Surgeon General Moore notified Doctor Woodville that he had annulled the contracts

⁵⁸CDA 28K4, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, January 9, 1863.

⁵⁹CDA 28K3, Letter from Drs. Isaac White, W. H. Keffer, and M. E. Daughtry to Dr. Samuel Moore, Surgeon General, C.A.C.S., Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, January 9, 1863.

of the four physicians who had refused to attend the smallpox victims.⁶⁰ The next day, January 13, 1863, Confederate Major General Sam Jones, commanding the department of Western Virginia, notified Doctor Woodville to "impose no restrictions on the movements of the Chaplain or Sisters of Mercy, except such as are absolutely required by a due regard to the safety of the patients and attendants."⁶¹ Acting under the authority conferred upon him by this command, Doctor Woodville, on January 21, 1863, issued the following order:

The Sister of Mercy in attendance upon the Smallpox Hospital, is released from Quarantine restrictions, and the room occupied by her, will be appropriated to the sick. She will continue as heretofore, in attendance upon the smallpox patients, avoiding strictly all intercourse with the General Hospital.⁶²

⁶⁰U.S., National Archives, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Service Record of Surgeon J. Lewis Woodville, p. 53. This record contains 205 handwritten pages of testimony of the Court Martial Trial of J. Lewis Woodville held in April, 1864. The letter from Surgeon General S. P. Moore, C.A.C.S., was admitted as evidence for the defense.

Hereafter, other letters found in the trial testimony will be cited as U.S., National Archives, Court Martial Trial of J. Lewis Woodville, Staff Officers File.

⁶¹U.S., National Archives, Court Martial Trial of J. Lewis Woodville, Staff Officers File, p. 55, Special Order No. 13, by Command of Major General Sam Jones to Surgeon Woodville, January 13, 1863.

⁶²U.S., National Archives, Court Martial Trial of J. Lewis Woodville, Staff Officers File, p. 55, Special Order No. 5 from J. L. Woodville, Surgeon Commanding the Post, Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, January 21, 1863.

This directive undoubtedly relieved Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) of some anxiety in view of the fact that she had received a letter from Mother Teresa (Barry) disapproving the quarantining of Sister M. Helena (Marlowe).

The issue seemed settled, but on March 7, 1863, Confederate Captain D. P. Graham, newly appointed Post Commandant, issued new and stricter quarantine regulations.⁶³ In view of her instructions from Mother Teresa (Barry), Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) withdrew Sister Helena from the smallpox hospital. Doctor Woodville required her to write him a formal notification of the withdrawal, which she did.⁶⁴ In Doctor Woodville's opinion, the new regulations were unnecessary and designed to remove the Sisters of Mercy from the hospital.⁶⁵ Three of the assistant surgeons then on the staff-- Doctor G. W. Archer, Doctor R. T. Ellett, and Doctor R. G. Holloway--wrote a letter supporting Doctor

⁶³U.S., National Archives, Court Martial Trial of J. Lewis Woodville, Staff Officers File, p. 56, Special Order from D. P. Graham, Commanding the Post, Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, March 7, 1863.

⁶⁴U.S., National Archives, Court Martial Trial of J. Lewis Woodville, Staff Officers File, p. 56, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to J. L. Woodville, March 7, 1863. A copy of this letter may also be found in CDA 28S1.

⁶⁵U.S., National Archives, Court Martial Trial of J. Lewis Woodville, Staff Officers File, p. 55, Dr. Woodville's explanation for submitting the documentary evidence already mentioned.

Woodville's position.⁶⁶ Doctor Woodville then forwarded this letter with that from Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Major General Sam Jones.

Upon receipt of these letters, Major General Jones ordered an investigation. The investigator seconded Doctor Woodville's views. As a result General Jones ordered Captain D. P. Graham, then Commandant of the Post, "not to require the Sisters of Mercy who nurse smallpox patients to sleep in the Smallpox or Suspected Hospital."⁶⁷ On March 18, 1863, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) wrote Bishop Lynch:

We have never had on this mission better prospects for peace and quietness. The three most influential physicians together with Doctor Woodville and General Jones are determined to support us.⁶⁸

The whole controversy simply became too much for Father O'Connell.⁶⁹ With Bishop Lynch's approval, Father

⁶⁶U.S., National Archives, Court Martial Trial of J. Lewis Woodville, Staff Officers File, pp. 57-59, Letter from Surgeons Archer, Ellett, and Holloway, to Dr. Woodville, March 7, 1863.

⁶⁷U.S., National Archives, Court Martial Trial of J. Lewis Woodville, Staff Officers File, Order from Headquarters, Dept. Western Va., Dublin, Va., March 13, 1863, signed by Charles Stringfellow, A.A. General for Confederate Major General Jones.

⁶⁸CDA 2885, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, March 18, 1863.

⁶⁹CDA 28R7, Father L. P. O'Connell to Bishop Lynch, March 6, 1863.

O'Connell left Montgomery White Sulphur Springs for South Carolina on March 18, 1863. Nearly six weeks passed before Bishop Lynch secured another chaplain for the Sisters. On April 18, the Bishop appealed to Colonel Lucius Northrop, Commissary General of the Confederate States of America.

My Dear Colonel,

When the Sisters went to take charge of the Hospital in Greenbrier White Sulphur, subsequently established at the Montgomery Springs, it was with the promise, (and the proposition came from Richmond) that a priest who would be with them should be made a Chaplain in the Army. I sent Rev. L. P. O'Connell who was appointed.

Two winters in the mountains have pretty well broken him down and he has had to come home and does not feel at all able to stand it longer. . . . I wish to send the Rev. Charles J. Croghan there to take his place, and I write to know if he can be appointed Chaplain, just as the Rev. L. P. O'Connell was. The Sisters receive no remuneration whatever, and have asked for none. I have had to spend something for their vesture, etc., and such articles of food as are not comprized in the rations they receive, and the additional expense of supporting a clergyman there would be unreasonable and beyond my means.

Will you drop me a line to the Montgomery Springs or if the Commission be made out have it sent to the Rev. C. J. Croghan, Charleston, S.C. . . .70

On the bottom of this letter, written in red, is the following:

Respectfully referred to the Secretary of War. The writer is the Bishop of Charleston. The Sisters

⁷⁰U.S., National Archives, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Service Record of Rev. Charles J. Croghan, Chaplain, Letter from Bishop Lynch to Col. L. B. Northrop, April 18, 1863.

will not remain without a Chaplain. Economy is advanced by yielding their wish.

L. B. Northrop⁷¹
CGT

The red-pencilled "economy" worked wonders. Father C. J. Croghan, pastor of Saint Paul's Church, Charleston, since April, 1862, received his commission as Chaplain in the Confederate Army on April 25, 1863.⁷²

Mother Teresa (Barry) and Sister M. Gertrude (Murkhardt) accompanied Father Croghan to Montgomery White Sulphur Springs the first week in June. They remained until the middle of the month. During this time Mother Teresa conducted a visitation. On June 25, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) informed Bishop Lynch: "Mother Teresa leaves us on Monday and is leaving all things well and in a better condition. . . . Mother Teresa has drawn the reins much tighter than even I imagined she would do."⁷³

The summer of 1863 was a rather peaceful one for those serving at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs. The

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²U.S., National Archives, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Letters Received by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General, 1861-65, Letter from Rev. C. J. Croghan to General S. Cooper, February 18, 1865.

⁷³CDA 2906, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, June 25, 1863.

aggregate number of patients treated in the hospital dropped from 733 in June to 584 in July, and to 405 in August. No deaths are recorded for the month of July, and but one for August.⁷⁴ The new Protestant chaplain, a Reverend Mr. Smith, was "extremely polite to the Sisters."⁷⁵ The rapport between the Sisters and doctors had also improved considerably. On July 30, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) fearing possible changes among the doctors, wrote Bishop Lynch, "I would regret very much that there should be any change. We have all gotten on so well with the present corps of physicians."⁷⁶

In later years those Sisters who served at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs must have looked back on the summer of 1863 as the proverbial calm before the storm. Elsewhere in the Confederacy, however, the storm had almost spent its fury. On July 3, after the three-day bloody and costly battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, General Robert E. Lee was forced to retreat into

⁷⁴U.S., National Archives, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Medical Dept. Statistical Report of Hospitals in the Dept. of Va., Medical Director's Office, Richmond, Va., Vol. CLI, chap. vi, p. 124.

⁷⁵CDA 29G3, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, July 18, 1863.

⁷⁶CDA 29H4, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, July 30, 1863.

Virginia. The following day, the Confederate Army in Vicksburg, Mississippi, surrendered to Union General U. S. Grant. The invasion of Pennsylvania had failed. The Mississippi River was in Union hands, splitting the South in half; it was the beginning of the end for the Confederacy.

For the Sisters in Charleston, the spring and summer of 1863 was a time of mounting tension. On April 7, 1863, strange looking warships sailed into the harbor headed for Fort Sumter. All along the Charleston waterfront crowds gathered to witness the world's first salt-water action by an iron-clad fleet.⁷⁷ The bombardment continued for more than two hours during which the monitors hit Fort Sumter several times, but inflicted few casualties. Late in the afternoon Admiral S. F. Du Pont, commanding the United States Naval forces, concluded that Charleston could not be taken by the Navy alone and refused to resume the attack. The decision cost him his command, but afforded Charleston and the Confederacy time.⁷⁸

The Sisters may or may not have been among the throngs watching the historic bombardment. They did,

⁷⁷Bruce Catton, Never Call Retreat (New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 127.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 122-32.

however, receive a share of the spoils. On May 13, Colonel Alfred Rhett, Commander of the Confederate forces on Fort Sumter during the attack, sent the following notification to Brigadier General Thomas Jordan, Chief of Staff:

HdQrs. 1st Regt S.C. Arty
Fort Sumter, May 13, 1863

General,

By request of General Beauregard I have the honor to send by this morning's boat a specimen of a fifteen inch shell fired by the Monitor Fleet at this Fort on April 7, 1863 to be given to the Sisters of Mercy.

Very Respectfully,

Your Obedt. servt.,

Alfred Rhett, Colonel Commanding

To Brig. Gen. Thomas Jordan, Chief of Staff

The specimen will be found at General Ripley's office.⁷⁹

The arrival of the ironclads prompted the Sisters to make plans for their safety. While the attack was in progress Mother Teresa (Barry) and the Council members, with the approval of Father Timothy Sullivan their Ecclesiastical Superior, voted:

1. to remove all the orphans and some of the Sisters to some place of safety, either in Columbia or Sumter, when a suitable house could be purchased.
2. to draw the money from the St. John's Bank for the purpose of supplying the exigencies of the time. Furthermore, the Treasurer was directed

⁷⁹ASCLM, Document located in Box 4, History of the Community.

to lay in provisions for the Community.⁸⁰

This was the last time the Council members met for the duration of the war.

The defeat of the ironclads instilled new hope into the residents of Charleston. On May 20, 1863, Mother Teresa (Barry) informed Bishop Lynch, then visiting the Sisters in Virginia, that

Our poor refugees are flooding in daily delighted at returning once more to their respective houses. God grant that they may not be obliged to leave again. So far all things appear perfectly quiet.⁸¹

Things did not remain perfectly quiet for long. From July until September, 1863, United States land and sea forces bombarded Fort Sumter and the Confederate Fort, Battery Wagner, on Morris Island.⁸² On August 21, 1863, Union General Quincy A. Gillmore, Commander of the armed forces, notified Confederate General Beauregard that if Morris Island and Fort Sumter were not evacuated, he would open fire upon Charleston. General Beauregard protested the bombardment of a city filled with old men, women, and children, but the Union General was

⁸⁰ASCLM, Council Minutes, Tuesday, April 7, 1863.

⁸¹CDA 29A3, Mother Teresa (Barry) to Bishop Lynch, May 20, 1863.

⁸²Catton, p. 222.

not influenced.⁸³ In his account of the siege, General Gillmore stated:

The demand being refused, . . . the "Swamp Angel" opened fire on the night of August 31. The gun burst on the second night at the 36th round. . . . Firing on the City was subsequently resumed from Cumming's Point.⁸⁴

The convent and orphanage on Queen Street were in the path of the falling shells. Hence, in September, 1863, under the direction of Sister M. Joseph (Kent), the boarders, orphans, and some of the Sisters moved to Sumter, an inland city about one hundred miles northwest of Charleston in the sandy pine belt region of South Carolina. In her Annals, Sister M. Charles (Curtin) wrote:

Large numbers of refugees, among whom were many good Catholics went also to Sumter. I did not go with the first lot but was sent to join them afterwards. The Sumter people refused to rent to the refugees, so that all were obliged to purchase. The idea of the Sumter people seemed to be to sell dear and buy back their places cheap. No one thought then that Confederate money was to become useless. A place was purchased for the orphans and a Charleston gentleman presented a very nice property to the Sisters. . . . The same place where the Convent of Sumter now stands. Here the Sisters opened a boarding and day school.⁸⁵

⁸³General P. G. T. Beauregard, "Defense of Charleston," in Johnson and Buel, IV, 17.

⁸⁴General Quincy A. Gillmore, "The Army before Charleston in 1863," in Johnson and Buel, IV, 66.

⁸⁵ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin).

Mr. Edward Lafitte was the Charleston gentleman who gave the Sisters the property that later became Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter.⁸⁶ The original house, however, was not very large. "With my assisting Sisters and a constantly increasing number of girls," said Sister M. Joseph (Kent), "we were very uncomfortable."⁸⁷ The same parlor was used for morning Mass, breakfast, dinner, supper, class all day, and sometimes music lessons!⁸⁸ Most of the students from Sumter were "Protestant young ladies of good social standing."⁸⁹ The school soon had more girls than it could accommodate comfortably. Therefore, wrote Sister M. Charles (Curtin):

A long temporary dormitory was put up and the piazzas were used as classrooms. Still, as nearly all the Colleges were closed, pupils came and came until we had to publish no more room. Even after this some begged for a corner so we had to rent a house not far from the school for them to sleep in. . . . All this was in summer and fall. Before winter we put up a three story wing to the cottage using Confederate money of which we had plenty. As we could

⁸⁶ ASCIM, Old Record Book entitled, "Various Items." In this book the following entry is listed: "April 6, 1864--House purchased by our benefactor, Mr. Edward Lafitte in Sumter, S.C., for our (in trust) Community. Recorded in the Register Book of the District Book R, pp. 139-40."

⁸⁷ ASCIM, Sister M. Joseph's (Kent) story as told to Uranie Lege.

⁸⁸ ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

only get poor workmen, it was badly put up. We had good servants that came with us from Charleston; and plenty of good bedding and furniture--in a word, all that belonged to the boarding school in Charleston --the gathering of many years was sent to us.⁹⁰

Sister M. Joseph (Kent) secured the lumber and nails used in building the three-story wing. Having heard that two merchants in Sumter were going to dispose of these supplies rather than let them fall into Yankee hands, Sister M. Joseph (Kent) begged the owners to give them to her instead. In return, she offered to educate any girls in their families. The lumber dealer brought two daughters and a niece; the owner of the nails, four daughters. Six more young ladies received an education when the Sumter convent received its first coat of paint--two daughters of the painter, two nieces, and the child of a friend away at war.⁹¹

Father Timothy Sullivan, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, was assigned to Sumter in late October or early November, 1863.⁹² He remained with the Sisters there until his death in 1865.

On November 21, 1863, a shell exploded in the

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹ASCLM, Sister M. Joseph's (Kent) story as told to Uranie Lege.

⁹²CDA 29T3, Father T. J. Sullivan to Bishop Lynch, October 27, 1863.

convent yard in Charleston. Shortly thereafter, according to Sister M. Charles (Curtin), the Sisters moved into a house in the upper part of the city in an area entirely out of the reach of the enemy's fire. There they opened a day school. Few, if any, of the other schools in Charleston were in session at this time. Hence, the Sisters' school soon became too small for the numbers who wished to attend. The Community, therefore, "took another place for the school which belonged to a Mrs. LeBleu. . . . The location was near the water, the classrooms were light and airy; the gardens spacious and delightful."⁹³ The names of the Sisters who taught in this school during the shelling of the city have not been preserved.

Not everyone who remained in Charleston, however, was engaged in teaching. Each day some of the Sisters made the rounds of the Confederate prisons and hospitals in the city.

The prisoners of war brought into Charleston were placed in one of four locations--the Jail Yard, the Work House, Roper Marine Hospital, or the Race Course (sometimes called the Fair Grounds Prison). The Jail Yard, Work House, and Roper Marine Hospital, located on

⁹³ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin).

Queen and Logan Streets across from the convent and orphanage, were in the direct line of Federal fire. The buildings constituted a square, each separated from the other by brick walls about fifteen feet high making several courtyards. The courtyards of the Jail and Work House also served as quarters for Union prisoners.⁹⁴

The Race Course Prison, today the site of Hampton Park, Charleston, was then situated on the outskirts of the city, embracing an area of about forty acres. A former prisoner described it as follows:

Although in itself a beautiful spot and surrounded by overhanging trees, which afforded a pleasant and delightful shade, the location of the prisoners was such in the center of the camp as to deprive them entirely of the luxury. The prison was without shelter, except such as might be constructed from garments and blankets. . . . The dead-line was formed by the turning of a furrow--scarcely visible and at night indistinguishable by the prisoners. The usual terrible penalty for its invasion was not, however, omitted.⁹⁵

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy paid daily visits to all four prisons before, during, and after the shelling of the city. They brought food and clothing to the

⁹⁴U.S., National Archives, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Adjutant General's Office, Confederate Archives Administrative Files, Data Relating to Confederate and Union Prisoners, Box No. 1, Envelope No. 2, Charleston, S.C., C.S. Military Prison.

⁹⁵U.S., Congress, House, The Treatment of Prisoners of War by the Rebel Authorities during the War of Rebellion, 40th Cong., 3rd Sess., Rept. 45, Serial No. 1391, 1869, p. 195.

prisoners; carried messages to relatives or to friends in the other prisons in the city; and exchanged Yankee greenbacks for Confederate money so that the men could buy extras from the "sutlers" in the camp.⁹⁶ After the war grateful Union veterans described the activities of the Sisters to a Congressional Investigating Committee. Former Union Sergeant Samuel M. Corthell, Company K, Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry stated:

They would let them come right in among the prisoners and go around and do all they could for us. But there were so many prisoners they could not attend to all. I have seen a Sister stand there with a loaf of bread in her hand and break it up almost into mouthfuls and divide it around so that all the hungry mouths she could get at could have some.⁹⁷

Another said:

The vermin, visible upon all prisoners could not have been pleasant to refined persons unaccustomed to such misery. Our dirt-begrimed, half-naked persons must have been revolting, yet no word or look from these kindly Sisters showed shrinking or disgust. . . . Their kindly address of "My poor child" fell pleasantly on the ear. No importunities could vex them, and I do not remember of having heard an utterance of impatience from their lips. I may have been prejudiced, at first, against these Sisters of Charity, but certainly their acts were truly Christian, worthy of imitation by all on like occasions.⁹⁸

A young sergeant, captured after the battle of James Island, June 16, 1862, later testified:

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 196 ff.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 790

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 196.

There were eight wounded men confined in our cell, only one of whom, Captain Lawler, was a Roman Catholic. All received the same attentions at the hands of Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) and companion.⁹⁹

The Sisters bestowed the same kindness upon the colored prisoners. Most of these men, members of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts, a Negro regiment, had participated in the assault upon Battery Wagner, Morris Island, during the summer of 1863.¹⁰⁰

The relative lull enjoyed by the Sisters at the Montgomery White Sulphur Springs General Hospital during the summer of 1863, ended abruptly in the fall. As early as September 14, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) informed Bishop Lynch:

All Lee's men were ordered to be sent to the Lynchburg Hospitals. We are pretty full now with patients from the West--some very badly wounded; others had cases of typhoid fever. We have a great deal of the fever just now in the Hospital.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ASCLM, Testimonial written by F. R. Jackson, formerly Sergeant, Company T, 7th Conn. Vols., dated February 6, 1869.

¹⁰⁰AUND, "Priests and Nuns on the Battlefield," unpublished manuscript by a Father Cooney, pp. 425-29. See also, BCA 35J8, Father John Moore to Archbishop Spalding, July 12, 1865. In this letter, Father Moore informed the Archbishop of the possibility of obtaining financial assistance for the Sisters from the U.S. Congress "especially out of consideration for the care the Sisters bestowed upon the wounded Negro soldiers that were brought to this city after the assault on Fort Wagner."

¹⁰¹CDA 29N5, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, September 14, 1863.

The patients admitted during these months were the worst cases the Sisters had seen. On October 26, 1863, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) wrote, "We have one poor unfortunate man who has lost both his arm and leg. . . . We have another whose entire hip is shot away. . . . The Sisters though pretty well worked up keep up remarkably."¹⁰² A few weeks later, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) described her experiences and feelings to Bishop Lynch:

You have I am sure, heard . . . of the large number of sick and wounded which we received on the 17th of last month. . . . You may well imagine how trying it was for us to have so large a crowd of badly wounded men ushered in upon us without a moment's warning. The wounded were brought on litters and left before my ward until my heart grew sick and I was compelled to whisper to myself again and again your salutary advice, "Take it easy." Those poor men with broken arms and legs and other dreadful wounds had not tasted a morsel of food for fifty-two hours and were in consequence nearly exhausted.¹⁰³

The aggregate number of men treated in the hospital during September was 653; during October, 675; during November, 630; and during December, 873--a total of

¹⁰²CDA 29T2, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, October 26, 1863. Sister M. Bernard (Frank), her health impaired, had returned to Charleston during the summer of 1863. She died there on November 27, 1863.

¹⁰³CDA 29W6, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Bishop Lynch, November 10, 1863.

2,831.¹⁰⁴

On February 21, 1864, Bishop Lynch left Charleston for Montgomery White Sulphur Springs.¹⁰⁵ While stopping in Richmond, the Bishop met the Honorable Judah Benjamin, Secretary of State for the Confederacy. The Secretary informed the Bishop that the Confederate Government wished him to accept the position of Confederate Commissioner to the Vatican. Approximately ten days later, while visiting the hospital at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, the Bishop notified the Secretary of State that he would undertake the mission with the understanding that his stay in Europe would not exceed six months.¹⁰⁶ On April 8, 1864, the Bishop sailed from Wilmington, North Carolina, bound for Rome, via Bermuda.¹⁰⁷ Almost two years elapsed before he returned to the United States.

¹⁰⁴U.S., National Archives, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Medical Dept. Statistical Reports of Hospitals in the Dept. of Va., Medical Director's Office, Richmond, Va., Vol. CLI, chap. vi, p. 124.

¹⁰⁵Madden, "History of the Diocese of Charleston," n.p.

¹⁰⁶CDA 30K1, Bishop Lynch to Honorable Judah Benjamin, March 3, 1864.

¹⁰⁷Sister Esther Marie Goodrow, "Catholic Participation in the Diplomacy of the American Civil War" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, St. Louis University, 1954), p. 77.

While the Bishop was on the high seas, the parties so long opposed to Doctor Woodville's management of the hospital at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, banded together, prepared and preferred charges resulting in a court martial trial of the Doctor. At 10:00 A.M. on April 16, 1864, the Military Court for the Department of Western Virginia convened at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, Montgomery County, Virginia. Colonel P. T. Moore, the presiding judge, was assisted by Colonel W. H. Morris, Colonel A. T. M. Rust, Captain H. C. Graham, Judge Advocate, and Captain J. Adair, Provost Marshal. Doctor Woodville was present and pleaded not guilty. When asked if he objected to any of the judges, he replied in the negative. Neither did he desire any postponement of his trial. Hence, the proceedings commenced. The principal charges were:

1. Embezzlement and misapplication of the military stores belonging to the Confederate States.
2. Keeping three of his own Negro slaves on the hospital payroll when, in the opinion of those preferring the charges, they were of no use to the hospital.
3. Failure to enforce quarantine regulations regarding the smallpox hospital.
4. Placing two junior assistant surgeons over an assistant surgeon.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸U.S., National Archives, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Service Record of J.

The trial lasted two weeks. The Defense called seven witnesses; the Prosecution, fifteen, including Sister M. De Sales (Brennan). Suffice it to say that none of those who had preferred charges could produce any evidence to substantiate their accusations. The testimony relative to Doctor Woodville's alleged failure to enforce quarantine regulations revealed much information that Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) had previously written to Bishop Lynch. The production of the directives issued by Confederate Major General Sam Jones satisfied the court that neither the Doctor nor the Sisters had violated the restrictions. On April 25, 1864, therefore, the court acquitted Surgeon J. Lewis Woodville and adjudged him:

A most valuable, honorable and efficient public officer who has been most vexatiously harassed and grossly calumniated by charges for which there is not the slightest warrant, and the groundlessness of which the prosecutors had every opportunity of ascertaining, and the justice of which they took no pains whatever to ascertain.¹⁰⁹

In his own defense Doctor Woodville stated:

Lewis Woodville, Surgeon-in-charge of the Confederate Montgomery White Sulphur Springs General Hospital, Hand-written copy of the Proceedings of the Military Court for the Dept. of Western Virginia, convened at the Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, in the County of Montgomery, Va., to hear the case against Surgeon J. Lewis Woodville, pp. 1-7.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 102.

I have only to add that about the time of this attempt by the Medical Director and his friend, Confederate Captain Graham to impose regulations so vexatious and enforce them in such a vexatious manner, there seemed to be a settled purpose in certain quarters to drive from this Hospital these humane and most useful Sisters of Mercy who have been of such essential importance to its proper management, and whose kind attentions have contributed so much to the comfort of the patients. This purpose, originating I presume in some narrow-minded sectarian prejudices, was manifested in various efforts to make the situation of these Sisters as uncomfortable as possible; and before any degree of harmony could be re-established, two Ministers of the Gospel, four contract physicians, one assistant surgeon and one Quarter Master (all of religious sects other than the Sisters) had to be relieved from duty here --two of the prosecutors, . . . being two of the parties so relieved. It is gratifying to me to be able to add that, since then entire harmony has existed among the officials here, though representing different religious sects.¹¹⁰

The trial was soon forgotten as the Federal forces moved dangerously close to the hospital at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs. On June 11, 1864, Confederate General Jubal Early's Corps, pulled out of the line at Cold Harbor, near Richmond, Virginia, was sent to support Confederate General Breckinridge then opposing Union General David Hunter's attempt to move out of the Shenandoah and capture Lynchburg, Virginia.¹¹¹ Had it not been for General Early's support, it is possible that General Hunter's forces would have reached

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 103-04.

¹¹¹J. B. Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary (New York: Macmillan Co., 1935), II, 229, n. 1.

Montgomery White Sulphur Springs. On August 21, 1864,
Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) informed Bishop Lynch:

We have had very stirring and exciting times in Virginia for the past four months. Hunter, Averrill, and Cook made two raids in by the Sweet Springs and on to two miles of Lynchburg. They burnt every bridge between Sales and Lynchburg save two--tore up some eighteen or twenty miles of the road, burnt Bonsack's factory and every Depot on the road. All communication was cut off for four weeks. For several weeks we had only two mails a week; then a tri-weekly mail. Last week the repairs on the road were completed and now all goes on as usual. It seems Hunter intended visiting the Montgomery White but was too hotly pursued by our men. On his retreat he devastated all before him.¹¹²

The happenings at Montgomery Springs General Hospital during the autumn of 1864 and the early spring of 1865 remain something of a mystery. Only one of Sister M. De Sales' (Brennan) reports to Bishop Lynch during this period has been preserved. On November 2, 1864, she notified him that Sister Helena (Marlowe) was critically ill; that the coffee and sugar rations had been discontinued at the post; and that the authorities were furloughing every man whose wounds would permit it. Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) asked the Bishop if the Sisters might have a retreat before Christmas--"We have now been almost two years from home, and our duties have

¹¹²CDA 31H4, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, August 21, 1864.

been most distracting and dissipating."¹¹³ After this communication there is silence--a far cry from the actual conditions in the Shenandoah Valley during the fall of 1864.

Because the Valley provided food for General Lee's army, Union authorities decided it had to be destroyed. In August, 1864, General Philip Sheridan was ordered to do the job. Although the Confederates put up a good fight, they were unable to stop him. Toward the end of October, General Sheridan reported:

I have destroyed over 2000 barns filled with wheat, hay and farming implements; over 70 mills, filled with flour and wheat; have driven in front of the army over 4000 head of stock, and have killed and issued to the troops not less than 3000 sheep.
 . . . The people here are getting sick of the war.¹¹⁴

These depredations must have made the last months of the war at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs very difficult, to say the least. However, no record remains to indicate what privations the Sisters might have had to endure. On April 28, 1865, Father John Moore, pastor of Saint Patrick's parish, Charleston, wrote Bishop Lynch: "Nothing from Montgomery Springs since March 2, 1865. Mr. Croghan and the Sisters were

¹¹³CDA 31R4, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, November 2, 1864.

¹¹⁴Catton, p. 392.

then well. There is no way of communicating with them now."¹¹⁵

While General Sheridan's forces were devastating the Shenandoah Valley, General William T. Sherman's army was nearing the Carolinas. In September, 1864, as it became obvious that the Union General would capture Atlanta, the Federal officers imprisoned in Savannah and Andersonville, Georgia, were moved to Charleston despite the protests of Confederate Major General Samuel Jones, then commanding at Charleston. On September 12, 1864, General Jones notified the Confederate Secretary of War that there were about 7000 prisoners in Charleston. The General begged the Secretary to remove them.¹¹⁶

Conditions in the Charleston prisons during these months were worse than they had ever been. The revolting sights and smells, however, did not deter the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy from their daily visits. When speaking of the men sent to Charleston from Andersonville, the most notorious of all the Confederate prisons, William B. Hesseltine, author of Civil War

¹¹⁵CDA 32K2, Father John Moore to Bishop Lynch, April 28, 1865.

¹¹⁶U.S., National Archives, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Letters and Telegrams sent, Adjutant and Inspector General's Office, Major General Sam Jones, Charleston, S.C., September 12, 1864, to James A. Seddon, W.D.-141-J-1864, Vol. XLIII, chap. 1, p. 13.

Prisons, states:

They were crowded into the yard of the City Jail where the ground soon became filthy with the overflowing sinks and vermin which had shared the exodus from Andersonville. The rations, however, were superior to any they had received for months . . . and after their release the prisoners looked back on Charleston as the "oasis" of their prison experiences. Aiding this sentiment were the visits of the Sisters of Charity of Charleston who came among them distributing gifts to the well and bestowing care and medicines upon the sick.¹¹⁷

With the outbreak of yellow fever in August, 1864, General Jones determined to move all the prisoners from Charleston as fast as he could. The last of them left the city on October 8.¹¹⁸ Writing to Sister Xavier (Dunn) in December, 1869, John O'Rourke, former Captain of Battery L, First Illinois Light Artillery stated:

I cannot forget the morning we were ordered away from Charleston because . . . --the guards in charge of us being seized with the plague--when you and Sister Teresa came into the prison. I met you at the gate and showed you to a room where a few of my comrades were lying sick of the yellow fever. You . . . promised me you would take care of them yourself. You did so as none but the Sisters of Mercy could do--even the Doctors fled from the plague. . . . I received letters from them after they recovered. They thanked you and blessed you because they said they owed you their lives.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷William B. Hesseltine, Civil War Prisons (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 1930), p. 155.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹ASCIM, John O'Rourke, former Captain of Battery L, 1st Illinois Light Artillery, to Sister M. Xavier (Dunn), December 22, 1869.

Even after the prisoners had left Charleston some wrote back to the Sisters asking them to use their influence with the authorities to effect a prisoner exchange.¹²⁰

On November 15, 1864, about a month after most of the Union prisoners had been moved from Charleston, General William T. Sherman marched his army out of Atlanta, Georgia, eastward toward Savannah. The Confederacy was simply not strong enough to stop them. Savannah was reached, captured, and presented to President Lincoln as a Christmas gift. In February the Yankees entered South Carolina.

The Confederate authorities were convinced that General Sherman would attack Charleston, but the wily General marched his men to Columbia, the state capital. To escape being caught in a pocket, Confederate General Pierre G. T. Beauregard, commanding the forces in South Carolina, ordered General Hardee, in command in Charleston, to evacuate the city. On the night of February 17-18, 1865, as Sister M. Peter (Sullivan) lay dying, the Confederate forces left Charleston. "The city that for four years . . . had been proof against bombarding

¹²⁰ASCLM, John Dunn, 1st Lieut., Co. I, 164 Rgt., N.Y. Vols., to Sister M. Xavier Dunn, December 6, 1864.

fleets, storming parties and the long blockade, . . . went down forever when Sherman's army tramped across its supply lines fifty miles inland."¹²¹ Sister M. Peter (Sullivan), only forty-five years old, died the next morning, February 19, 1865.

Because of the services the Sisters had rendered the Union prisoners, they had less to fear from their conquerors than other Charlestonians. In fact, on February 19, the United States Provost Marshall, Lieutenant Colonel A. G. Bennett, issued an order stating:

Guards and Patrols will respect the property of the Sisters of Mercy. Their horses, carriage and ambulance will not be liable to seizure.¹²²

Although Charleston had fallen, the war was not over. Sherman's army entered Columbia, South Carolina, on February 17. That night they burned most of the capital city including the Ursuline convent. The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Sumter, South Carolina, hearing of the destruction of the Ursuline convent, sent a wagon-load of provisions to the displaced nuns.¹²³ In

¹²¹Catton, p. 433.

¹²²ASCLM, Copy of the order given by the Provost Marshall, Charleston, February 19, 1865, located in Box No. 4, Community History.

¹²³CDA 15R5, Madame Baptiste Lynch to Bishop Lynch, May 16, 1866. Speaking of the Sisters in Sumter, S.C., Madame Baptiste said: "We can never forget their sending a wagon laden with provisions and clothing to us at that time, and sharing even their own with us."

return, Mother M. Baptiste (Lynch), Superioress of the Ursulines, and Bishop Lynch's sister, warned the Sisters in Sumter to ask for a guard as soon as the Yankees arrived.

The expected conquerors did not arrive in Sumter, South Carolina, until Palm Sunday, April 9, 1865, the very day General Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to General U. S. Grant at Appomatox Court House, Virginia. It was not Sherman's men, however, but those under the command of General Edward E. Potter who entered Sumter.¹²⁴ According to Sister M. Charles (Curtin), Sister M. Joseph (Kent), Superioress of the Sisters in Sumter, approached the General after Mass and asked for a guard. Although the General granted her request, Sister M. Joseph (Kent) had no confidence in the guard until she saw him make the sign of the Cross.¹²⁵

General Potter and his staff asked and received Sister M. Joseph's (Kent) permission to visit the convent. When the girls heard of this, they shut themselves in the attic and declared that they would not

¹²⁴David D. Wallace, South Carolina: A Short History 1520-1948 (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1961), p. 554.

¹²⁵ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin), unpaginated.

meet their conquerors. Amused by the situation, General Potter avowed that he would not leave until he had met all fifty. After Sister M. Joseph (Kent) ordered them out of the attic, they appeared with their heads held high in disdain. When the General asked for a song, they obliged with a spirited rendition of "Dixie." Contrary to expectations, the Yankees loved it and called for more. Before the visitors left, the girls volunteered to shake hands all around.¹²⁶

On April 21, 1865, as General Potter and his man were on their way back to Georgetown, South Carolina, they received word that Confederate General Joe J. Johnston had surrendered to United States General William T. Sherman. The war was over. The nation had to be reunited and reconstructed. So, too, did the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

¹²⁶ASCLM, Sister M. Joseph's (Kent) story as told to Uranie Lege.

CHAPTER IV

REUNION AND RECONSTRUCTION

When Bishop Lynch sailed for Rome in the spring of 1864 he notified his clergy that in his absence the Diocese of Charleston would be divided into two parts:

The first will embrace the city of Charleston and the missions immediately dependent on the clergy of the city. . . . The second will embrace the interior of the Diocese. I have appointed as Vicar General of the first the Rev. L. Fillion. . . . I have appointed as Vicar General of the second, the Very Rev. James A. Corcoran, D.D., now Pastor of Wilmington.¹

Five priests were then serving in the city of Charleston --Father Fillion, Father John Moore, Father Patrick Ryan, Father Baker, and Father Patrick O'Neill. The departing Bishop presumed that they would remain with their congregations should Charleston fall into Federal hands.² But even the best laid plans of a wise Bishop can be thwarted.

The war ended much more quickly than Bishop Lynch had anticipated. He found himself stranded in

¹BCA 34U1, Copy of a letter from Bishop Lynch to his clergy, n.d.

²BCA 34U2, Bishop Lynch's instructions to Father L. Fillion, n.d.

Rome fearful that the Federal authorities might not permit him to re-enter the United States in view of the mission he had undertaken for the Confederacy. Both sections of the Diocese of Charleston were under Federal control. Father Patrick O'Neill, the beloved pastor of Saint Patrick's Church, Charleston, had died of pneumonia on January 10, 1865. Father Fillion, Vicar General, had died of typhoid fever on February 21, 1865. Two years before, in August, 1863, Father Patrick Ryan, Father Baker's assistant at Saint Mary's, had requested permission to serve the Catholics scattered along the railroad from Charleston to Augusta, Georgia.³ When writing to Bishop Lynch in August, 1865, Father John Moore, who became pastor of Saint Patrick's parish after Father O'Neill's death, stated that he could not discover the whereabouts of Father Ryan. Moreover, Father Moore informed the Bishop that Father R. S. Baker, the oldest priest in the Diocese, had whooping cough.⁴ For all practical purposes then, Father Moore was the only active priest in the city of Charleston when the war ended.

³Madden, "History of the Diocese of Charleston," n.p.

⁴CDA 32S7, Father John Moore to Bishop Lynch, August 18, 1865.

When Archbishop Martin J. Spalding of Baltimore, Metropolitan for the Diocese of Charleston, learned of the situation, he named Father James Corcoran first Vicar General of the Diocese, and Father Moore as second, until Bishop Lynch could be consulted.⁵ This arrangement perplexed Father Corcoran who wrote to the Archbishop for clarification. The Archbishop declared that he had not intended to alter Bishop Lynch's orders constituting Father Corcoran Vicar General outside of Charleston. He merely granted Father Moore the vicarial powers formerly exercised by Father L. Fillion until Bishop Lynch's wishes were made known.⁶ This arrangement persisted until the Bishop returned to the diocese.

To Bishop Lynch's credit, it must be said that he made every effort to hasten his return to South Carolina. The United States Minister Resident in Rome, Rufus King, advised the Bishop that President Andrew Johnson's expected Amnesty Proclamation would undoubtedly specify what persons in the Bishop's position would have to do to be re-admitted into the United States.⁷ When the Proclamation came, however, it excepted from

⁵CDA 32K2, Father John Moore to Bishop Lynch, April 28, 1865.

⁶Lowman, p. 234.

⁷Goodrow, p. 141.

the benefits of the pardon:

1. All those who are or shall have been pretended civil or diplomatic officers or otherwise domestic or foreign agents of the pretended Confederate Government.
2. All persons who have been or are absentees from the United States for the purpose of aiding the rebellion.⁸

The only clause offering a ray of hope to the Bishop of Charleston stated that persons in the excepted classes might make special application to the President who would judge each case separately.⁹ Consequently, on June 24, 1865, Bishop Lynch wrote the United States Secretary of State, William Seward, asking to make "Special Application" in accordance with the President's Amnesty Act.¹⁰ On July 1, 1865, the Bishop wrote Archbishop Spalding of Baltimore asking him to support his petition as strongly as possible. Displaying anxiety and impatience, Bishop Lynch said: "I want to go home as soon as possible. . . . If I hear that yellow fever breaks out I do not know but I would be strongly tempted

⁸Jonathan T. Dorris, Pardon and Amnesty under Lincoln and Johnson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), p. 112.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰BCA 34U4, Copy of letter from Bishop Lynch to the Secretary of State, William Seward, June 24, 1865.

to go to Charleston anyhow."¹¹ Early in September the Archbishop informed the Bishop of Charleston that his pardon had been granted. Bishop Lynch left Rome almost immediately. He took the required oath of allegiance to the United States Government on October 14, 1865, in the American legation in Paris.¹² Shortly thereafter, he sailed for home.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy eagerly awaited the Bishop's return. At the war's end, the Community, like Caesar's Gaul, had been divided into three parts: the Sisters in Charleston; the Sisters in the hospital at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, Virginia; and the Sisters in Sumter, South Carolina. The records mention neither the names nor number of Sisters at any one of these locations. The Community Register, however, indicates that the total membership embodied twenty-seven professed Sisters and three novices, the future Sister M. Baptist (Sheahan), Sister Magdalene (Mixon), and Sister M. Rose (Gonzalez).¹³

¹¹BCA 34V6, Bishop Lynch to Archbishop Spalding, Rome, July 1, 1865.

¹²Goodrow, p. 145. See also, CDA 33D1, Copy of the Oath of Allegiance taken by Bishop Lynch on October 14, 1865.

¹³ASCLM, Community Register, pp. 1-9. The Community experienced only three deaths during the war-- Sister M. Bernard (Frank), Sister M. Baptist (O'Connell), and Sister M. Peter (Sullivan). Sister M. Bernard and

Charleston, site of the motherhouse, was a city of ruins. "Wharves were rotting; the waterfront resembled a tangled marsh, grass grew in the leading streets and blackened walls and chimneys stood as monuments of the terrible fires of 1861 and 1865 over water-filled cellars yawning like graves."¹⁴ Said one Northern visitor, "Here was enough woe and want, ruin and ravage to satisfy the most insatiate heart,--enough of sore humiliation and bitter overthrow to appease the desire of the most vengeful spirit."¹⁵

The motherhouse and orphanage on Queen Street had been so badly damaged by Yankee shells that they were uninhabitable. Although there are few references to this period in the Community Archives, one notation states:

1865--Occupied the houses of our kind benefactor Mr. W. M. Tunno until our House in Queen Street was repaired. Mr. Tunno not only gave the Sisters of Mercy his houses rent free, but he also donated

Sister M. Peter died of diseases contracted at the hospital at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs. The records do not indicate the cause of Sister M. Baptist's death.

¹⁴Wallace, p. 556.

¹⁵Sidney Andrews, The South since the War: As Shown by Fourteen Weeks of Travel and Observation in Georgia and the Carolinas (Boston: 1866), p. 1, as quoted in E. M. Coulter, History of the South, Vol. VIII: The South during Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), p. 3.

them his valuable furniture besides a quantity of provisions.¹⁶

The Charleston City Directory for 1866 lists the address of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy as: 32 and 34 Rutledge Avenue.¹⁷ Very likely, these were Mr. Tunno's houses.

The Sisters who had served at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs arrived in Charleston on July 9, 1865. Father Charles Croghan accompanied them. His presence increased the active clergy in Charleston from one to two priests and provided a pastor for Saint Joseph's Church. An article in the New York Tablet of July 1, 1865, presented a summary account of what had happened to these "Virginia veterans" since the armistice:

At the time of Lee's surrender there were over three hundred sick and wounded at the Hospital; over sixty of these were Federal soldiers and not more than two days rations to meet their wants. The Sisters . . . devised means to procure provisions enough to suffice for more than six weeks for the patients, and remained with them till all had either convalesced or died.

About the 22nd of May they proceeded to Lynchburg. The Federal General Gregg at this post received them and their Chaplain most courteously, and offered them every means in his power to prosecute their journey to Washington where they again applied to General Hardie for transportation to Charleston.

¹⁶ASCIM, Old Record Book, "Various Items," Box 4.

¹⁷Burke and Boineist (compilers), The Charleston City Directory for 1866 (New York: M. B. Brown and Co., 1866), p. 1.

In this they were not successful, General Hardie refusing them on the ground that being noncombatants no provision had been made by the authorities . . . for such persons. Finally through the kindness of some private gentlemen in Washington Father Croghan was enabled to secure transportation to New York, where they found themselves strangers and penniless. . . . On hearing of their embarrassing circumstances the Rev. William Quinn of St. Peter's, Barclay Street, . . . called a few of his parishioners together . . . to raise the necessary funds to enable these good Sisters to return to their homes. . . . The sum of \$1,148.00 was collected in a few days. On Saturday last this amount was presented to Sister M. De Sales at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in 17th Street. . . . On receiving the amount, Sister De Sales, . . . expressed her earnest thanks to the donors, promising that their kindness should never be forgotten by their Community.¹⁸

Scarcely two weeks after the Sisters from Virginia arrived in Charleston on July 28, 1865, Father Timothy Sullivan, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community since 1845, died in Sumter, South Carolina. When notifying Archbishop Spalding of Father Sullivan's death, Father Moore said:

He was perhaps the best priest that was ever in this diocese. He was suffering very severely from asthma for the past fourteen years or so, and for three or four years back more especially. Nobody who was acquainted with his condition would have been surprised to hear of his death.¹⁹

Father Sullivan was waked in the convent chapel in Sumter. The Catholics among the Yankee officers there

¹⁸The New York Tablet, July 1, 1865, p. 5.

¹⁹BCA 35J9, Father John Moore to Archbishop Spalding, July 28, 1865.

constituted themselves a guard of honor and sang his funeral Mass. According to Sister M. Charles (Curtin), then stationed in Sumter, "A conquering hero could not have been buried with more respect. He would have been pleased with the funeral; it showed forth so much the beauty of our religion."²⁰

The Sisters in Sumter were without a regular chaplain for many months after their beloved Superior's death.²¹ Although priests came every once and awhile to administer the sacraments, on Christmas Day, 1865, the people of Sumter had neither priest, Mass, nor Holy Communion. "This," wrote Sister M. Joseph (Kent), "constituted a privation that the greater number . . . never before endured."²² In matters spiritual, therefore, the Sisters in Charleston were in better straits than those in Sumter during the six months between the end of the war and Bishop Lynch's return to the diocese.

Bishop Lynch arrived in Charleston sometime in November, 1865. Writing to him from Sumter, on December 3, 1865, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) said:

²⁰ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin), unpaginated.

²¹Ibid.

²²CDA 3385, Sister M. Joseph (Kent) to Bishop Lynch, Sumter, December 28, 1865.

We sincerely sympathize with the Sisters in Charleston in the joy they experienced in meeting you and obtaining your blessing once more, and trust that 'ere long it may be in your power to afford us the same happiness and consolation. We are struggling along here with a small school, but we enjoy peace and quiet, which is truly a blessing whilst it pleases Our Lord to leave us in this place of exile.²³

Sister M. Agatha's greeting must have afforded some consolation to the Bishop, distraught as he was by the pitiable condition of his flock. To Archbishop Spalding, Bishop Lynch wrote:

What misery! What suffering! How much to do!
How little to do it with!²⁴

In the city of Charleston alone, the Bishop had to rent or buy a house for himself, erect a procathedral, repair the damaged churches, the Sisters' convent and the girls' orphanage, provide churches and schools for the newly freed men, and establish a boys' orphanage. To complicate matters the cotton he had placed in storage as insurance against the postwar needs of the diocese, had gone up in smoke when Sherman's troops marched through South Carolina.²⁵

²³CDA 33N1, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Bishop Lynch, December 3, 1865.

²⁴BCA 34U8, Bishop Lynch to Archbishop Spalding, January 12, 1866.

²⁵Ibid. See also, CDA 32Wa, Bishop Lynch to the President and Members of the Central Council of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith.

Realizing that there was little hope of raising money within the diocese, Bishop Lynch turned to outside sources. In fact, he spent the greater part of the next twenty years begging for the Diocese of Charleston in the large Catholic centers in the North.

The Bishop set out upon the first of these necessary but unpleasant tours in February, 1866.²⁶ Before leaving, he appointed Father A. J. McNeal pastor of Saint Lawrence Church, Sumter, and chaplain to the Sisters there.²⁷ If the Bishop made any other arrangements for the Community between November, 1865, and February, 1866, that fact was not recorded. Apparently, he did not meet formally with Mother Teresa (Barry) and the members of the Community Council. Nor did he appoint anyone to replace Father Sullivan as Ecclesiastical Superior. Mother Teresa (Barry) and the councilors elected in 1862 continued to govern the Community even

²⁶Madden, "History of the Diocese of Charleston," n.p. According to Father Madden, Bishop Lynch was in New York during February, 1866; returned to Charleston for Easter and was back in New York in April. On April 15, the Bishop preached at St. Xavier's; on April 22, at St. Bridget's, and on April 29, at St. Paul's.

²⁷Ibid. Regarding Father McNeal's appointment, Father Madden quotes from CDA, Lynch to McCloskey, Charleston, January 12, 1866. Father McNeal remained in Sumter until his death in 1909. In her Annals, Sr. M. Charles (Curtin) described him as "a humble, retiring, man; almost a hermit in his habits and most faithful in serving the convent."

though their terms had expired. In fact, they remained in office another four years. Due to the Bishop's frequent absences, and to the postwar financial difficulties of the Community, the Sisters did not elect new officers until August, 1869.²⁸

Aware that Bishop Lynch could offer them no appreciable financial assistance, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy turned to the United States Government. On March 13, 1866, Father Henry P. Northrop, then an assistant at Saint Joseph's Church,²⁹ informed the absent Bishop Lynch that the Government was going to repair the convent on Queen Street.³⁰ The Community records do not indicate when the Sisters applied to the Government, nor which agency furnished the funds. They state simply that:

1866--The Sisters' dwelling house was repaired by order of President Andrew Johnson and of the Secretary of War. The repairs amounted to \$4,000.00³¹

In September, 1866, the Sisters moved back to their old

²⁸ ASCIM, Council Minutes, July 16 and August 5, 1869.

²⁹ ASCIM, Booklet published for Bishop Northrop's Jubilee, April 14, 1907, p. 41.

³⁰ ODA 35A3, Father H. P. Northrop to Bishop Lynch, March 13, 1866.

³¹ ASCIM, Old Record Book, "Various Items," notations for 1866.

home and reopened the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy.³² They did not, however, have sufficient funds to repair the orphanage. It remained an uninhabitable eye-sore for the next five years. During that interval the Sisters rented a house elsewhere in Charleston for the orphan girls under their care.

The location of this temporary orphanage is questionable. An article in the Gazette of January 11, 1868 mentions that the orphans were living in a rented house on Spring Street, near Gadsden's Green.³³ Sadlier's Catholic Directory for 1870, however, lists a female orphan asylum under the care of the Sisters on Ashton Street.³⁴ Some years later Bishop Lynch referred to a house and lot on Chestnut Street "where the orphan girls were."³⁵ It is, of course, possible and probable that the orphan girls occupied more than one house between 1866 and 1871.

³²CDA 37E5, Mother Teresa (Barry) to Bishop Lynch, September 10, 1866. See also ASCLM, Council Minutes, August 7, 1866.

³³Gazette (Charleston), January 11, 1868, p. 5.

³⁴Sadlier's Catholic Almanac and Ordo for the Year 1870 (New York: D & J Sadlier & Co., n.d.), p. 146.

³⁵Madden, "History of the Diocese of Charleston," n.p. Father Madden located this information in a financial statement written by Bishop Lynch, July 1, 1874.

The Sisters received assistance in caring for the orphans from three rather prominent persons--General Daniel Sickles, military commander of the Carolinas until August 1867; General George Meade, victor of the battle of Gettysburg; and his sister, Miss Margaret Meade of Washington, D.C. As a result of their intercession, Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, supplied the orphanage with bread, meat, and groceries amounting to approximately \$1,800.00 annually from 1866 until January, 1869.³⁶

General Sickles also provided the timber used in erecting the back porches of the convent, and furnished horses for the Sisters' ambulance.³⁷ On at least one occasion General Sickles' office supplied the Sisters with a steamboat to visit the men imprisoned in Castle Pinckney--an old island fort in Charleston Harbor.³⁸ On May 3, 1866, Father Charles Croghan, then pastor of Saint Joseph's Church, notified Bishop Lynch that Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) had been after him "with a sharp stick" regarding the fate of the prisoners in

³⁶ ASCIM, Old Record Book, "Various Items," Notations for the year 1866.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ ASCIM, Box No. 4, Copy of an order from the Quartermaster's Office, Dept. of South Carolina, Charleston, April 25, 1866.

Castle Pinckney.³⁹

Bishop Lynch encouraged the Sisters in all their efforts to obtain financial assistance from the Government. In fact, in the spring of 1866, he instructed Sister M. Xavier (Dunn), Community treasurer, and Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to go to Washington and "there consult Sister Chantal (Cummings) as to the steps to be taken to obtain any aid from the Government for the purpose of refilling [sic] the Sisters' House or the Girls' Orphan Asylum."⁴⁰ Apparently, the Sisters made some effort to carry out the Bishop's directions, but then gave up the attempt. In a letter to the Bishop dated June 28, 1866, Father Timothy Birmingham, sixty-six-year-old veteran missionary then in New Orleans begging for the Diocese of Charleston, said:

You say the Sisters stopped the work--Let them have their way and it will be better for you. They are not suffering, and should their Washington friends fail them, the Catholic and even the Protestant public will always help them. This will be always a dernier resort for the Sisters and the fact of being fooled by their Yankee friends will serve to redouble Southern sympathy and Southern aid to build them up.⁴¹

³⁹CDA 35N1, Father Charles Croghan to Bishop Lynch, May 3, 1866.

⁴⁰ASCLM, Box No. 4, Instructions in Bishop Lynch's handwriting, dated simply, 1866.

⁴¹CDA 36D6, Father Timothy Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, New Orleans, June 28, 1866.

Evidently, there existed in Father Birmingham's mind a dichotomy between the Sisters' interests and those of the Bishop. The old missionary was not slow, however, to use the Sisters' name and reputation to raise funds for the diocese. He informed the Bishop that:

While collecting, I urged my appeal more in favor of the Sisters who are lauded by friends and foe, than of the Ursulines. For I could not arouse just sympathy without incriminating Sherman and his vandals; and to do so here, under military surveillance, . . . might . . . secure my speedy exit. . . . I have therefore maintained my self-respect and secured the general sympathy of all and their green-backs besides.⁴²

The spring of 1867 found Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) and Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) in Washington, carrying out the Bishop's instructions of the previous year. Sister De Chantal (Cummings), a Daughter of Charity, and evidently a friend of Bishop Lynch, introduced them to Miss Margaret Meade, sister of General George Meade, whose earlier exertions had been instrumental in securing government rations for the orphans. Through Miss Meade's influence the sisters met "several other influential persons."⁴³ These friends advised Sister M.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ CDA 39N2, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, St. Vincent's Female Orphan Asylum, Washington, D.C., March 9, 1866.

Xavier (Dunn) and Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to ask Congress for an appropriation of \$20,000.00 to rebuild the girls' orphanage in Charleston.

On March 9, 1867, the Sisters obtained an interview with none other than Thad Stevens, the Republican Representative from Pennsylvania who admittedly hated the South and was determined to crush the ex-Confederates. Nonetheless, he promised the Sisters to use his influence to get their bill through the House, if they succeeded in getting it through the Senate.⁴⁴ That same day, March 9, 1867, the Sisters went to see General O. O. Howard, head of the Freedmen's Bureau. Although the General was not in his office, they spoke to his aid. According to Sister M. De Sales (Brennan), the aid "had not the least doubt but General Howard would assist us in putting up a school for the freedwomen, and also one for the indigent children of the loyal subjects."⁴⁵ Two days later, Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) informed Bishop Lynch that they had met the Honorable Benjamin Butler, Representative from Massachusetts, who volunteered to introduce their petition in the House of Representatives.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶CDA 39N7, Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) to Bishop Lynch, March 11, 1867.

Mr. Butler, known in some sections of the South as "Beast Butler," was as good as his word. On March 25, 1867, he presented their bill in the House:

A Bill for the Relief of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy of Charleston, S.C. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled That in consideration of the services rendered by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy of Charleston, S.C., to the sick and wounded Union Officers and soldiers while said City was under the bombardment during the war; there be paid to them out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated the sum of \$20,000 dollars to be expended under the direction of Sister M. Xavier in rebuilding their Orphan Asylum in said City.⁴⁷

After two readings, it was recorded as House of Representatives Bill 83 (H.R. 83), and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.⁴⁸

On March 13, 1867, Senator John Sherman of Ohio, brother of the famous General William T. Sherman, had introduced the Sisters' petition and accompanying testimonial letters in the Senate. There, it was referred to the Committee on Claims.⁴⁹

⁴⁷U.S., National Archives, Legislative Department, Papers relating to the Petition of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Charleston, S.C., March 22, 1867, referred to the Committee of Claims.

⁴⁸U.S., Congressional Globe and Appendix, 40th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: P. & J. Rives and George A. Bailey, 1867), p. 331.

⁴⁹U.S., Journal of the Senate, 40th Cong., 1st Sess., 1867, p. 32.

Although the Sisters expected speedy action, they soon learned that it takes time for a bill to become a law. As the first session of the Fortieth Congress drew to a close, their bill was still in committee. On July 10, 1867, Congressman Butler informed Sister M. Xavier:

Congress has voted to do no general business at this session, so that your orphan asylum cannot be heard 'til next session, when I will see that it is brought up.⁵⁰

The Sisters' efforts to interest the Freedmen's Bureau in contributing to the establishment of schools for the freedwomen and the poor white children, also met with failure. Nonetheless, the Sisters had strong hopes that Congress would pass their bill at its next session.

The second session of the Fortieth Congress opened on December 2, 1867. On December 17 the Judiciary Committee was relieved from further consideration of the Sisters' bill. The House then referred it to the Committee on Claims.⁵¹ Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) again in the Capital prodding Mr. Butler to hurry the bill along, received a rather sharp note from the representative

⁵⁰ASCLM, Box marked "Important Letters," Note from Congressman Benjamin Butler, July 10, 1867.

⁵¹U.S., Congressional Globe and Appendix, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1867, p. 230.

whose attention was on a matter of far greater import to the nation.

My Dear Madam:

You do not seem to appreciate the fact that in the business of Congress there is a certain routine which cannot well be interfered with. The matter of your Sisters is with the Committee of Claims. I am not on that Committee and until that Committee reports I cannot get at it to bring it up if I would. I hope your case will receive early attention of the Committee at this session, but I doubt if it does as it will be a short one.⁵²

On February 26, 1868, Mr. Butler informed Mother Teresa (Barry):

I am not unmindful of your memorial but in the present temper of Congress it is impossible it should pass and should only prejudice your case which I believe to be a just and righteous one by bringing it up now. I doubt not it will ultimately succeed.⁵³

The Congress was indeed in a temper. On February 24, the House of Representatives had voted to impeach the President of the United States. The trial got under way in March and consumed the attention of both Houses until young Senator Edmund G. Ross from Kansas uttered his deciding "not guilty" on May 16, 1868. The Sisters waited patiently, only to have their

⁵² ASCIM, Box marked "Important Letters," Letter from Congressman Benjamin Butler to Sister Xavier (Dunn), n.d.

⁵³ ASCIM, Box marked "Important Letters," Benjamin Butler to Mother Teresa (Barry), February 26, 1868.

hopes disappointed a second time. In June, 1868, Senator Justin Morrill of Vermont, a member of the Committee of Claims, submitted an adverse report on their bill.⁵⁴

In the fall of 1868 the Government discontinued the rations it had been supplying to the girls' orphanage. This was a far more serious setback for the Sisters than the defeat of their bill in Congress. Although Mother Teresa (Barry) went to Atlanta to request General Meade to continue the rations, her efforts were in vain. Consequently, with the permission of Father Birmingham, recently appointed Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community, Mother Teresa (Barry) sent Sister Xavier (Dunn) to Washington "to use all proper means and exertion to obtain the rations."⁵⁵ Sister Xavier (Dunn) appealed to General John Schofield, Secretary of War, who granted an extension until January, 1869.⁵⁶ With sixty to seventy children to feed, clothe, and educate, such a short extension was not very helpful. When the Sisters' friends in Charleston learned of the situation, they secured an impressive number of signatures on a petition asking the

⁵⁴U.S., Journal of the Senate, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 513.

⁵⁵CDA 45K6, Father Timothy Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, October 25, 1868.

⁵⁶ASCLM, Old Record Book, "Various Items."

Mayor and City Council to grant the Sisters financial assistance.⁵⁷

The Municipal Government of Charleston in 1869 was in the hands of carpetbaggers, scalawags, and Negroes. The Charleston Yearbook for 1881 described the Mayor, George W. Clark, and Council as follows:

The Mayor, taken from Civil life, was one of many who drifted here after the war, as were some of the Aldermen--the body, as a whole, representing neither the sentiments nor the tax-payers of the Community.⁵⁸

Nonetheless, on July 27, 1869, this carpetbagger-Negro government by a vote of eleven to eight granted the Sisters an appropriation of \$6,000.00.⁵⁹ The amount was divided between the male and female asylums. At the time, there were sixty girls and twenty boys under the Sisters' care.⁶⁰ It is significant that a petition, signed by citizens disenfranchised because they had aided the Confederacy, should have succeeded in gaining

⁵⁷Gazette (Charleston, S.C.), February 20, 1869, p. 4.

⁵⁸Charleston City Yearbook, 1881, p. 363.

⁵⁹CDA 46S8, Father D. J. Quigley to Bishop Lynch, July 28, 1869. See also, ASCLM, Old Record Book, "Various Items."

⁶⁰ASCLM, Old Record Book, "Various Items." Bishop Lynch established the boys' orphanage on June 5, 1867. Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) was appointed Superior of this orphanage by the Bishop. The next chapter will discuss this institution in more detail.

an appropriation from a reconstruction government. If it was indicative of anything, it demonstrated that the Sisters' services and impartiality during the War had won them the loyalty of Northerner and Southerner, white man and Negro. Interestingly, the appropriation was re-enacted by the Democratic or Conservative Council in office in 1871, and again by the Republican Administration installed in November, 1873.⁶¹

Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) remained in Washington, D.C., during the winter of 1869. In compliance with the instructions of Father Birmingham, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community, she renewed her efforts to obtain a Congressional appropriation, to help the Sisters rebuild the girls' orphanage in Charleston.⁶² This time, however, she changed her tactics. Past experience had convinced Sister Xavier (Dunn) that the support of one or two Congressmen was not sufficient. Hence, she wrote to the men she had helped in the Charleston prisons during the war and asked each veteran to contact his

⁶¹ASCLM, Booklet, "Answer of the City Council of Charleston to a Bill for Injunction Presented by Bradley T. Johnston, and Hannah Enston against the City of Charleston and City Council of Charleston in the Circuit Court of the United States, Fourth Circuit, District of South Carolina" (Charleston, S.C.: The News and Courier Job Presses, 1874), p. 5.

⁶²CDA 4604, Father T. Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, February 22, 1869.

representative or senator in the Sisters' behalf. Included in the letters were newspaper clippings describing her exertions before Congress.

The replies varied. On January 27, 1869, John B. Dennis, former Brevet Brigadier General wrote:

I, for one, would be willing to bear my own expenses to Washington to testify before any Committee that may be appointed to consider the subject.

You can show this letter to the Honorable John Conness, Senator from California, who will, I am confident, do all in his power to promote your interest. My cousin, Honorable George C. Gorham, Secretary of the Senate, will introduce you.⁶³

Mr. John O'Rourke, former Captain in the Illinois Light Artillery, notified Sister Xavier (Dunn) that he had sent her letter and clippings to the editor of the Milwaukee Daily News. He also volunteered to contact the Wisconsin Congressmen most likely to oppose the Sisters'

⁶³ ASCIM, Booklet containing "The Petition of the Members of the Legislature of South Carolina to the Congress of the United States in Favor of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Charleston, S.C., for the Rebuilding of their Orphan Asylum Partially Destroyed during the Bombardment of the City, and also Various Important Letters from Officers and Soldiers of the U.S. Army, Testifying to the Heroic Charity of These Good Sisters in Their Attendance on the Prisoners, the Wounded, the Sick and the Dying, Without Distinction of North or South, of Creed or Color" (Charleston, S.C.: Edward Perry, 155 Meeting Street, 1870), p. 13. Hereafter cited as: "Petition of the Members of the Legislature of S.C. to the Congress of the U.S. in Favor of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Charleston, S.C., and also Various Important Letters."

bill.⁶⁴ Another former prisoner, John S. Hammell, Colonel of the Sixty-sixth New York Volunteers, informed Sister Xavier (Dunn) that he had written to Benjamin Butler, and would contact Roscoe Conkling, Senator from New York, and Ignatius Donnelly, the Representative from Minnesota.⁶⁵

Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) also contacted the members of the South Carolina State Legislature. Twenty state senators and fifty state representatives signed a petition supporting the Sisters' bill. At least three of the Senators, W. B. Nash, F. L. Cardozo, and R. H. Cain, and two of the Representatives, A. J. Ransier and Robert C. De Large, were Negroes. The Governor, Robert K. Scott, a carpetbagger from Ohio, appended a personal testimonial of the good the Sisters had done during the war. He also notified the two United States senators from South Carolina to push the Sisters' bill.⁶⁶

A number of influential people forwarded letters

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 16.

⁶⁵ASCLM, Letter from John S. Hammell to Sister M. Xavier (Dunn), August 10, 1868 or 1869 (date not clear).

⁶⁶ASCLM, Booklet, "Petition of the Members of the Legislature of S.C. to the Congress of the U.S. in Favor of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Charleston, S.C., and also Various Important Letters," pp. 7 and 24.

of endorsement to Sister M. Xavier (Dunn). Among those who did so were former Union Generals John P. Hatch, William W. Burns, Benjamin F. Butler, A. H. Edwards, G. A. Gillmore, C. C. Kilburn, D. E. Sickles, W. L. M. Burger, and William Gurner; and Rear Admiral J. A. Dahlgren.⁶⁷

Whether Sister Xavier (Dunn) determined upon this means of lobbying herself, or whether her friends in Washington advised her to do so, is not known. It proved, however, quite effective. On March 21, 1870, the House of Representatives reported, considered, and passed the Sisters' bill.⁶⁸

The bill (H.R. 1596) was then sent to the Senate where it was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.⁶⁹ On April 12, 1870, it was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs. About two weeks later that Committee returned the bill without amendment.⁷⁰ On May 3, 1870, however, when the Sisters' bill was reached in its order on the calendar, the presiding

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 8-27.

⁶⁸U.S., Journal of the House of Representatives, 41st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1870, p. 504.

⁶⁹U.S., Journal of the Senate, 41st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1870, p. 397.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 483 and 543.

officer ruled that its consideration would have to await the next session of Congress opening in December, 1870.⁷¹

Once again the Sisters were disappointed but hopeful. However, they had more reason than ever to be anxious about the fate of their bill. Early in March, 1870, with the approval and encouragement of Father Birmingham, their Ecclesiastical Superior, the Community had bought the Alston Mansion (now called the Russell House) on Meeting Street, Charleston, for \$19,000.00. To meet the first installment, they had borrowed money from friends, some charging no interest, others, 7 percent.⁷² From the Sisters' point of view the purchase killed two birds with one stone. They moved the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy from the motherhouse to the Alston Mansion. This enabled them to house the orphan girls in the motherhouse. Thus, they reasoned that they ought to be able to use a part of the congressional appropriation to pay for the Alston Mansion.

While waiting for the third session of the Forty-first Congress to convene, the Sisters began to organize a fair to raise some of the money needed to

⁷¹U.S., Congressional Globe and Appendix, 41st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1870, p. 2168.

⁷²CDA 4786, Father Timothy Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, May 23, 1870.

meet the payments on their new property. They soon encountered some rather stiff opposition from the clergy in Charleston. On August 6, 1870, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) informed Bishop Lynch that

Doctor Moore . . . thought it an injustice to call upon Catholics to aid in paying for the newly purchased building in Meeting Street and that he would do all in his power to prevent his Congregation sending any assistance to pay for the building.⁷³

Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) begged the Bishop to write the clergy in Charleston asking them to encourage their parishioners to support the fair. Father Timothy Birmingham, their Ecclesiastical Superior, who had encouraged the Alston House purchase, was too involved in building the church on Sullivan's Island near Charleston to be of much help to the Community.

On August 23, 1870, Mother Francis (Kyte) addressed another plea to the Bishop:

If you cannot return home soon . . . send a line to one of the clergymen and appoint him to act in your place. . . . I know not why we do not meet with more kindness from the clergy, as the only object of our life is to labor for the good of religion, and to promote God's honor and glory.⁷⁴

⁷³CDA 48G4, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Bishop Lynch, August 6, 1870.

⁷⁴CDA 48K3, Mother M. Francis (Kyte) to Bishop Lynch, August 23, 1870. Mother M. Francis (Kyte) was elected Superioress of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy on August 5, 1869. Her election and administration will be treated in the following chapter.

Mother Francis (Kyte) also told the Bishop that the Community was reopening Saint Mary's Free School on the second Monday in September (1870).

Bishop Lynch responded to these pleas by sending Father James A. Corcoran to Charleston. Having investigated the situation, Father Corcoran reported that:

All this excites in me as much wonder as disgust. That a priest of the diocese . . . should feel indifferent to the welfare of the Sisters and refuse to exert himself on their behalf is possible enough; but that he should go about from house to house misrepresenting them and stirring ill-will and dislike . . . and using his petty popularity to do them harm, is something new in the annals of the diocese. It is mean and unmanly in the last degree. . . .

The Fair will succeed, but on one condition. It must be postponed for a few months. . . . The Sisters feel assured that they can easily raise the installment before it is due on the strength of the Fair to be held soon after.⁷⁵

The fair was postponed until the spring.

The third session of the Forty-first Congress convened in December, 1870. The Sisters anxiously awaited word that the Senate had concurred with the House of Representatives and passed their bill (H.R. 1596). Unfortunately, however, their bill did not reach the Senate floor for discussion until the last day of that lame duck session, March 3, 1871. With the Senate functioning as a Committee of the Whole, Senator

⁷⁵CDA 48S1, Father James A. Corcoran to Bishop Lynch, October 7, 1870.

Frederick Sawyer of South Carolina introduced the bill. While he felt that there was a majority present who were in favor of it, Senator Sawyer feared that those who opposed it would talk it to death.⁷⁶ The opponents did just that. Senator J. M. Howard of Michigan was speaking against it when the Vice-President interrupted to say,

The hour of twelve has arrived and . . . I declare the third Session of the Senate of the United States of the 41st Congress adjourned without delay.⁷⁷

The Washington Daily Chronicle of Monday, March 6, 1871, stated:

Senator Howard spoke against time to defeat the appropriation proposed and eloquently urged by Senator Sawyer of \$20,000.00 to the Sisters of Mercy of Charleston. . . . It seemed to us a very ungracious close to a long and a useful and a distinguished Senatorial career.⁷⁸

It appears that Father Birmingham went to Washington before Congress adjourned to see what he could do to expedite the passage of the Sisters' bill. On April 3, 1871, Father J. A. Walter, pastor of Saint Patrick's Church, Washington, D.C., notified Bishop Lynch:

Father Birmingham has killed the Sisters' Bill. . . .

⁷⁶U.S., Congressional Globe and Appendix, 41st Cong., 3rd Sess., 1871, p. 2007.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 2010.

⁷⁸Daily Chronicle (Washington, D.C.), Monday, March 6, 1871, p. 10.

The Bill has been legislated out of Congress. Father Birmingham is a good man, but not the most agreeable companion.⁷⁹

A few weeks later, however, the Bishop received the following telegram from Father Birmingham:

God has just passed the Sisters' Bill through the House. Laus Deo!⁸⁰

The seeming contradiction was explainable. It was true that the Sisters' bill was talked to death on the last day of the third session of the 41st Congress. However, when the first session of the Forty-second Congress convened, the Sisters bill reappeared as part of House of Representatives Bill 19. This was a catch-all measure designed to make appropriations to supply deficiencies in the appropriations for the service of the years ending June 30, 1871, and June 30, 1872, and for other purposes. The appropriation the Sisters asked for had been cut from \$20,000.00 to \$12,000.00. According to Senator Conkling from New York, the managers of the bill in the House of Representatives affirmed that they would not agree to any of the expenditures provided for in the bill, if the Senate did not retain the

⁷⁹CDA 50D1, Father Walter to Bishop Lynch, April 3, 1871.

⁸⁰CDA 50D6, Telegram from Father Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, April 14, 1871.

appropriation for the Sisters.⁸¹ On April 19, therefore, the Senate passed the bill. The next day it was signed by the President.

Reactions to the appropriation for the Sisters were both favorable and unfavorable. The Washington Daily Morning Chronicle considered the amount very small and a poor payment for the services the Sisters rendered during the war.⁸² The New York Tribune, on the other hand, intimated that the money would revert to the Bishop of Charleston and not to the Sisters. The article stated:

On Saturday morning last the lady Superior and a companion came to this city for the purpose of obtaining the money. On Monday morning a Roman Catholic priest arrived from Charleston, and finding the Sisters at the house of a friend, peremptorily ordered them home, so that they left yesterday without obtaining their warrant. The priest then went to the Treasury Department and obtained the warrant payable to the Order of the Lady Superior alleging that he was the representative of the Sisters of Mercy. Prominent citizens of Washington, who are Roman Catholics, and who desire to see the money devoted to its legitimate purpose, fear that the priest who was able to order the Lady Superior home may also order her to sign the warrant and so obtain the money.⁸³

⁸¹U.S., Congressional Globe and Appendix, 42nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1871, p. 811.

⁸²The Daily Morning Chronicle (Washington), Wednesday, April 26, 1871, p. 8.

⁸³New York Tribune, April 27, 1871. This clipping was enclosed in a letter from Father Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, April 26, 1871. See CDA 50H1, Father Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, April 26, 1871.

The priest in question was Father Birmingham. Even Father J. A. Walter, pastor of Saint Patrick's, Washington, D.C., felt that Father Birmingham had acted imprudently. On April 28, 1871, Father Walter wrote to Bishop Lynch:

Father Birmingham hurried the Sisters home and I am inclined to believe he has the draft for the money. This was entirely wrong as he knew that it had been openly said by Senators that the priests wanted this money. I hope that neither the Sisters nor Birmingham will ever come here again. We are not accustomed to see religious lobbying in the halls of Congress.

P.S. Birmingham will leave New York per steamer. If the draft is payable to his order I would not be surprised if payment would be stopped.⁸⁴

Father Birmingham may have been imprudent, but he had no sinister motive in mind. The draft was made payable to Mother M. Francis (Kyte).⁸⁵ On June 12, 1871, Mother M. Francis (Kyte) informed the Bishop that in accord with his directions \$5,215.00 had been used to meet the installment on the Alston House; \$300.00 deposited in the savings bank to pay the interest on the last installment; and \$5,484.53 remained for building purposes. She also stated:

I sent for Mr. J. Devereaux and Mr. King and requested them to give an estimate of what it would

⁸⁴CDA 50H3, Father J. A. Walter to Bishop Lynch, April 28, 1871.

⁸⁵CDA 50H1, Father Timothy Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, April 26, 1871.

cost to repair the Orphan House. Have not heard from either since. As we have the money in hand, I would be glad dear Bishop that improvements could be made as soon as possible as we are so much crowded. Can you give us some idea when you may be home so that we may urge these men to have their estimates prepared?⁸⁶

The repair work must have been begun shortly thereafter. With the funds remaining from the appropriation, plus \$7,318.00 received at the fair, the Sisters rebuilt the girls' orphanage and erected a two-story building connecting it with the motherhouse. This building provided a chapel and dining room for the orphans.⁸⁷ Thus, despite the gossip and criticism it gave rise to, the Congressional appropriation did make it possible to reinstate the orphans in their prewar home.

Between 1866 and the spring of 1871 the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy had achieved their principal reconstruction goals. All their prewar property had been repaired. All of their prewar institutions--the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, the Girls' orphanage, and Saint Mary's Free School--had been reopened. Moreover, in 1871 the Community was also conducting Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter, South Carolina; had founded the Academy

⁸⁶CDA 50M5, Mother M. Francis (Kyte) to Bishop Lynch, June 12, 1871.

⁸⁷ASCIM, Old Record Book, "Various Items," notations for 1871.

of the Incarnation, Wilmington, North Carolina; and was providing Sisters for the boys' orphanage established by Bishop Lynch in Charleston. These last two institutions played a prominent part in the history of the Community during the first half of the 1870's.

CHAPTER V

A DIFFICULT DECADE

On August 5, 1869, while the struggle to obtain the Congressional appropriation was in progress, the long postponed election of Community officers took place. Mother M. Francis (Kyte) succeeded Mother Teresa (Barry) as Superioress of the Community. Sister M. Regis (Larkin) was elected Mother Assistant; Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara), Treasurer; and Sister M. De Chantal (Clary), Procuratrix.¹ Not quite two weeks later,

¹ASCLM, Council Minutes, August 5, 1869. Mother M. Francis, formerly Miss Catherine Kyte, was born in Tipperary, Ireland. She met the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy when they were in Columbia, S.C., conducting the Academy of the Immaculate Conception. She entered the Community on May 3, 1856, and was professed on November 20, 1858. She spent part of the Civil War years caring for the sick and wounded at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs, Virginia. The greater part of her life, however, was spent with the orphans and the children in St. Mary's Free School. Mother M. Francis died on March 4, 1899.

Sister M. Regis Larkin had entered the Community on November 21, 1850, and was professed in December, 1853. The records, unfortunately, contain very little information about her life. She died on June 30, 1906.

Sister M. De Chantal (Clary), born in Troy, New York, had entered the Community in May, 1856, and was professed on November 20, 1858. She, too, had served at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs General Hospital during the Civil War. In 1882, when the Community founded St. Francis Xavier Hospital, Charleston, Sister M. De Chantal was appointed Superioress of the Sisters there. She died on September 19, 1901.

Mother M. Francis (Kyte) and the new Councilors appointed Mother M. Teresa (Barry) Directress of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Meeting Street, and Sister M. Helena (Marlowe), Novice Mistress.²

Three weeks after her election, Mother M. Francis (Kyte) received a letter from young Bishop James Gibbons, Vicar Apostolic of North Carolina,³ asking for Sisters to establish a house and conduct a school in the city of Wilmington. Bishop Gibbons stated:

I may add that you are the very first Community in the United States to whom I have made application in behalf of Wilmington since I came to this city. I have a decided preference for you believing you know our people and our peculiar institutions better than others. You have also earned for yourselves a well-deserved reputation on account of your zealous labors during the prevalence of yellow fever in Wilmington. You will, therefore, receive a hearty welcome from our people and I hope you will be pleased with them.⁴

Mother M. Francis (Kyte) discussed the matter with Father Timothy Birmingham, Ecclesiastical Superior

²ASCLM, Council Minutes, August 16, 1869.

³On March 3, 1868, Rome had separated the State of North Carolina from the Diocese of Charleston and erected it as a separate Vicariate. On August 10, 1868, thirty-four-year-old Father James Gibbons of Baltimore was consecrated Bishop and installed in his procathedral in Wilmington, North Carolina, on November 1, 1868. See John T. Ellis, The Life of James Cardinal Gibbons (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1952), I, 72-74.

⁴ASCLM, Council Minutes, Copy of a letter from Bishop Gibbons to Mother M. Francis (Kyte), August 26, 1869.

of the Community, who encouraged her to accept Bishop Gibbons' offer. Before she could do so, however, she had to obtain Bishop Lynch's approval. Bishop Gibbons, in his letter, had mentioned that several young women in Wilmington and elsewhere had expressed a desire to join the Community. Seizing upon this point as the most persuasive reason for granting Bishop Gibbons' request, Father Birmingham advised Bishop Lynch "to consent on the ground that religion will be served his Diocese by the professed Sisters of Mercy and your Diocese will suffer no material loss, by his supplying it with Novices."⁵ Three days later, Mother M. Francis (Kyte) notified Bishop Lynch that the Community wished to send Sisters to Wilmington, if he would permit them to do so.⁶

Before Mother M. Francis' letter could have reached Bishop Lynch, then in Philadelphia, he had penned his approval to Bishop Gibbons.

Your letter of the 21st has just reached me. I know how much good to religion is done by our Sisters of Mercy. Perhaps it is one of the things against me in Heaven that you did not find them in Wilmington when you came.

⁵CDA 46T5, Father T. Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, August 27, 1869.

⁶ASCLM, Council Minutes, Copy of letter from Mother M. Francis (Kyte) to Bishop Lynch, August 30, 1869.

I shall put no obstacle to your getting them now, but shall rather be pleased. I leave the entire matter to you and Rev. Fr. Birmingham their Superior, and themselves. You would do well to go to Charleston and see them. Perhaps too, if you could not get the requisite number of subjects in Charleston, you might get one or two in Savannah.⁷

At a meeting held on September 4, 1869, Father Birmingham, Mother M. Francis (Kyte), and the Councilors chose Sister M. Augustine (Kent), Sister M. Charles (Curtin), and Sister M. Baptist (Shehan) for the new mission. Sister M. Augustine (Kent) was appointed Superioress. While she and Sister M. Charles (Curtin) had twenty years of experience in religious life, Sister M. Baptist (Shehan) had pronounced her first vows only three years before.

Mother M. Francis (Kyte) telegraphed the news of their selection to Sister M. Augustine (Kent) and Sister M. Charles (Curtin) who were then stationed at Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter, South Carolina. Sister M. Joseph (Kent), Superioress of the house, read the message first. Sister M. Charles (Curtin) said of her:

Notwithstanding her well assumed indifference, the shadow of some deep emotion passed over her tell tale face. There and then a chord was struck, a sacrifice asked, and given. She was the twin sister of Mother Augustine.⁸

⁷BCA 71W6, Bishop Lynch to Bishop Gibbons, August 30, 1869.

⁸ASMB, Annals of Sister M. Charles (Curtin), unpaginated.

The telegram informed the Sisters that Bishop Gibbons would visit Sumter shortly. Supposing that the new Bishop would not come there merely to see them, Sister M. Augustine (Kent) and Sister M. Charles (Curtin) packed all their belongings to be ready to leave with him immediately, if necessary. Although the date of Bishop Gibbons' visit to Sumter was not recorded, the Sisters discovered that he had not come to rush them away. Speaking of their first meeting with "the baby Bishop" Sister M. Charles (Curtin) said:

He said Mass in the Convent Chapel, partook of a Convent breakfast, and then sat down to talk. He poured out volumes from the abundance of his heart. . . . as though he must set the world aflame and make others do it likewise.

Being some years older than he, I listened to his plans and concluded . . . that the wheels could not go on so smoothly or so quickly as he imagined, though I did not see the full extent of the desert we had to traverse. However, he did not fail to communicate a little of his enthusiasm to us, so that we felt we should nerve ourselves for much work in the Old North State. It was arranged that we should first visit our Motherhouse in Charleston and be joined there by a young Sister Mary Baptist.⁹

The visit to the motherhouse was Sister M. Charles' (Curtin) first since the Civil War. "Every spot and room," she said, "recalled some of the various scenes through which I had passed during more than a score of years of youth and early womanhood."¹⁰ There

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

was, however, little time for musing about the past. On September 20, the three missionaries accompanied by Mother M. Francis (Kyte) left Charleston for Wilmington, North Carolina.

They journeyed by train until they reached the Cape Fear River. Sixteen-year-old William Price, whose family had taken refuge in Sumter, South Carolina during the war, met them there and conducted them across the river. Although it was night when they arrived in Wilmington, "the baby Bishop" was on hand to greet them and drive them to the home of a Mrs. Rose, "a good Catholic lady and former pupil of the Charleston Convent."¹¹ Sister M. Charles (Curtin) described their reception as follows:

The gentlemen were already at the house to greet us. The Bishop with his usual--I may say charming affability spoke words of kindly welcome--"This, Sisters, is your temporary home." . . . Coming out of the dark into a bright secular parlour, all dusty as we were, to be met with polite curiosity and introduced to a number of gentlemen among whom I could not distinguish the cleric from the lay, was no ordinary encounter. . . . But the Sisters were come and the good people thought it right to make a fuss.¹²

The Sisters remained with Mrs. Rose for about a week. While they were living there, Bishop Gibbons rented an old home for them on the corner of Second and Nun Street--popularly called "Piety Hill!" The Sisters

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

moved in at once, even though the occupants were not ready to vacate until October 1. On September 27, while lodged in their third floor quarters, Sister M. Augustine (Kent), Sister M. Charles (Curtin), and Sister M. Baptist (Shehan) bade goodbye to Bishop Gibbons and to Mother M. Francis (Kyte). The former was on his way to Vatican Council I; the latter, back to Charleston. Once the downstairs tenants moved out, the Sisters converted the house into both convent and school. On October 11, 1869, even though all their school furniture had not arrived, they opened the Academy of the Incarnation. Good advance publicity brought thirty-six students to their door, among whom there were about ten Protestants.¹³

During the next three years there does not seem to have been much communication between the motherhouse and the Wilmington foundation. With regard to branch houses, the constitution governing the Community at that time specified that "The Superioress shall write to the Motherhouse every month relative to the Community under her care; its success or the contrary."¹⁴ Such letters may have been written but, unfortunately, none have been

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ ASCLM, Constitutions and Rules of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in the Diocese of Charleston, S.C., 1845-1949, pp. 31-32.

preserved in the archives of the motherhouse in Charleston. The constitution also stipulated that

Neither Postulants nor Novices shall be received in the Branch Establishments without the consent of the Council of the Mother House, approved by the Bishop.¹⁵

There is no indication in the records of the Charleston Community that the Wilmington Foundation requested, or was granted this permission. Yet as early as October 9, 1869, Bishop Gibbons wrote to Mother Augustine (Kent):

In reference to Miss R _____ and sister, if not too late you may divert them to attach themselves to my Vicariate, and enter their probationary period in Wilmington. I can do this with a freer conscience as I have donated one young lady already to Charleston.¹⁶

The young lady sent to Charleston, a Miss Quaid, returned to her home about a month later. While it appears that neither Miss R _____ nor her sister entered the Wilmington Foundation, that house did receive its first postulant on December 2, 1869. She was Miss Maggie Price, twenty-year-old daughter of the editor and proprietor of the Wilmington Journal, a former student of Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter, South Carolina.¹⁷ On

¹⁵Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁶ASMB, 1869 Folder, Letter No. 5, Bishop Gibbons to Mother M. Augustine (Kent), October 9, 1869.

¹⁷ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin), unpaginated.

July 16, 1870, Miss Price received the Habit and the name of Sister M. Agnes. Between 1870 and January, 1873, five more postulants entered the Wilmington Community.¹⁸ For all practical purposes, then, the Sisters in North Carolina were functioning as a separate institution.

Although Bishop Gibbons was unable to secure subjects for the Charleston house, he was mindful of his promise to do so. Writing to the Sisters in North Carolina from Rome on June 1, 1870, he said:

In reference to Miss H _____, I regret that she did not attach herself to Charleston much as we might need her at home. It would be the first instalment of my great and lasting indebtedness to the good Sisters at Charleston who so promptly responded to my appeal. If matters are not settled before my return, I hope that something may be done then in behalf of Mother Francis.¹⁹

The nature of the relationship between the Wilmington house and the motherhouse remained somewhat undefined until June, 1872. On the nineteenth of that month, Mother M. Francis (Kyte) and the Councilors met to nominate candidates for the offices of Mother Superior, Mother Assistant, Treasurer, and Procuratrix. Among those selected were Sister M. Augustine (Kent) and

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹ASMB, 1870 Folder, Letter No. 2, Bishop Gibbons to the Sisters in Wilmington, N.C., Rome, June 1, 1870.

Sister M. Charles (Curtin) of the Wilmington mission. Father Henry P. Northrop, whom the Bishop had appointed to preside over the election, questioned the eligibility of these Sisters. Apparently Father Northrop was under the impression that the Wilmington Community had become independent. Mother M. Francis (Kyte) informed him that the Sisters in Wilmington had not applied for permission to separate from Charleston. According to the constitution, therefore, they were still united to the mother-house. However, Mother M. Francis (Kyte) admitted that they had acted independently since their establishment. After some discussion, the Councilors decided to write to Mother M. Augustine (Kent) to clarify the matter before the election.²⁰

Contrary to the expectations of the Charleston Community Mother M. Augustine (Kent) replied that Bishop Gibbons "tells me we are independent, he having regulated the matter with the Rt. Rev. Bishop Lynch."²¹ That a misunderstanding existed is obvious. However, an attempt to assign the responsibility for it to any one person would be futile. To some extent, all the parties

²⁰ ASCIM, Council Minutes, June 19, 1872.

²¹ ASCIM, Council Minutes Book, following the Minutes for July 6, 1872, Copy of letter from Sister M. Augustine (Kent) to Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara), June 25, 1872.

involved must share the blame.

On July 8, 1872, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara), Secretary of the Charleston Community, dispatched Sister M. Augustine's (Kent) letter to Bishop Lynch, then in Buffalo, New York. Sister M. Agatha stated:

We are inclined to think that Sister Augustine misunderstood the Rt. Rev. Bishop Gibbons, as you are aware that our Constitutions expressly say that Branch Establishments are to be made independent by the Council of the Mother House with the consent of the members and approbation of the Rt. Rev. Bishop, and the consent of each of the subjects in the Branch Establishment.

In time it was expected that the Filiation would become independent, but we hoped it would have been done constitutionally, and that whilst laboring in different Dioceses for God's honor and glory, we would have continued united in heart and affection.²²

One week later Bishop Lynch assured Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) that he never intended ignoring or acting contrary to the Sisters' rules. He acknowledged that he had no objection to the Wilmington Community becoming an independent diocesan establishment, and may have indicated that to Bishop Gibbons. However, he affirmed that he "never said or did anything which I understood as at all severing the connection of the Houses and making the Wilmington one independent."²³ On

²²ASCLM, Council Minutes Book, following the Minutes for July 6, 1872, Copy of letter from Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Bishop Lynch, July 8, 1872.

²³ASCLM, Council Minutes Book, following the Minutes for July 6, 1872, Copy of letter from Bishop Lynch to Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara), July 16, 1872.

July 29, Bishop Lynch informed Bishop Gibbons:

The whole question of the Sisters is a respect for the Rule as to the mode of separation. The question for us is whether we shall ignore it or require them to observe it. I think the latter course the most profitable one for the Sisters.²⁴

In his reply, Bishop Gibbons assumed much of the responsibility for the misunderstanding and shed a good deal of light upon the whole situation. He explained his position as follows:

Many months ago . . . Mother Augustine remarked to me that as a separation was eventually to take place, I might arrange the matter with you, adding that a mutual understanding on the part of the two Bishops would render any previous action on the part of the Council unnecessary. Without referring to the Rules as I ought to have done, but relying upon Mother Augustine's statement, I promised to speak on the subject to your Lordship. Having soon after, met you in Baltimore, I proposed the question whether you would consent to a separation. You kindly and promptly acquiesced, not however in my sense but as I have since learned, and should have known then, your consent was to follow the action of the Council. I acknowledge that I am to blame in relying on Mother Augustine's interpretation. Within the last few days I have carefully read the Rules and can find no clause to justify her interpretation. . . . To this error must be attributed the undue authority the Sisters hereafterward exercised, which I regret very much; and for which I must assume the responsibility. . . . As soon as I discovered the mistake which was only a few days ago, by an extract of your letter sent to Wilmington, I at once informed the Sisters, that they should in all things act as a dependent Branch until a separation was effected in strict accordance with

²⁴BCA 7219, Bishop Lynch to Bishop Gibbons, July 29, 1872.

the letter and spirit of the Rules.²⁵

Mother M. Augustine (Kent) admitted her mistake in letters to Bishop Lynch and to the Sisters in Charleston.²⁶ The latter communication betrayed a slight annoyance with the motherhouse for having permitted the Wilmington mission to function independently for almost three years before questioning its relationship to the Charleston Community. "For instance," said Mother M. Augustine, ". . . had they said you are not to receive Novices, then we would have known our true position."²⁷ Justifiable as this complaint may have been, it cannot excuse Mother M. Augustine (Kent) for having misled Bishop Gibbons regarding the procedure to be followed in securing independence from the motherhouse.

Mother M. Augustine (Kent) also seemed disturbed by the fact that as long as Wilmington remained a dependent branch Bishop Gibbons would not give them titles to the property he had purchased for them.²⁸ This point seems to have caused additional misunderstanding between

²⁵CDA 53G4, Bishop Gibbons to Bishop Lynch, August 2, 1872.

²⁶CDA 53G3, Mother M. Augustine (Kent) to Bishop Lynch, July 30, 1872; also ASCLM, Council Minutes Book, following the Minutes for July 6, 1872, Copy of letter from Mother M. Augustine (Kent) to Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara), Secretary of the Charleston Community, July 27, 1872.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

Bishop Lynch and Bishop Gibbons. In his letter to Bishop Gibbons, the Bishop of Charleston had said:

The Mother Superior at Wilmington seems to think that as matters now stand you would not convey to them any property as you intended. Do not let Charleston interfere with your purposes. Anyway let the Sisters be separated formally, as they have been in fact. . . . There can then be no fear that the Charleston House could, even if it had a mind to try it, could in any way interfere or embarrass you.²⁹

In reply, Bishop Gibbons wrote:

I fear that my remark to Mother Augustine regarding the transfer of property was not understood in the sense in which I made it. I simply meant that I could give the Wilmington Sisters no power to hold or improve property in their present status, for fear such an act might conflict with the obedience they owed to the Mother House. I had no thought of any shadow of embarrassment from the Charleston Sisters.

I assure you, Monseigneur, that absent as I have been . . . the subject of separation seldom entered my mind. I had no desire of haste, deeming a reasonable time of dependence due to courtesy and wisdom.³⁰

On August 5, 1872, the election, responsible for raising the question of the relationship of the Wilmington Community to the motherhouse, was held. Mother Teresa (Barry) was once again elected Superioress; Sister M. Joseph (Kent), Mother Assistant; Sister M.

²⁹BCA 7219, Bishop Lynch to Bishop Gibbons, July 29, 1872.

³⁰CDA 53G4, Bishop Gibbons to Bishop Lynch, August 2, 1872.

De Chantal (Clary), Treasurer; and Sister M. Isidore (Barry), Procuratrix.³¹ A few days before the election, the Wilmington House had formally requested permission to become a separate and independent Community. Action had to be delayed, however, due to Bishop Lynch's absence and his failure to appoint a clergyman to preside at the Sisters' Council meetings. Their former Ecclesiastical Superior, Father Timothy Birmingham, had died on June 4, 1872.³² Father Henry P. Northrop, assigned to act in that capacity during the election, had been instructed to relinquish the office once the election had taken place.³³ About the middle of the month Bishop Lynch notified Father John Moore, Vicar General, to

³¹ ASCIM, Council Minutes, August 5, 1872.

³² CDA 53A5, Telegram from Father D. J. Quigley to Bishop Lynch, June 4, 1872. The telegram stated: "Father Birmingham died this morning--New York--advise what to do." See also CDA 53D4, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Bishop Lynch, July 9, 1872. Speaking of Father Birmingham's death, Sister M. Agatha said: "You cannot imagine how much we regretted the death of our Reverend Superior so far away from his home and the scene of his labors for so many years. . . . We were sorry and are still sorry that he left home without telling us he was going or giving us his blessing, but one of the Sisters with whom he died wrote that he spoke often of the Community. From the moment Father Birmingham left our shores we forgot his many eccentricities and apparent unkindnesses, which though painful to bear, we always felt were dealt by a Saint."

³³ CDA 53H3, Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Bishop Lynch, August 7, 1872.

assume the post until he could appoint a new Ecclesiastical Superior for the Community.³⁴

On August 26, 1872, Father Moore, Mother Teresa (Barry), and the Councilors considered and granted the petition of the Wilmington Sisters.³⁵ The next day, August 27, 1872, Mother Teresa (Barry) notified Mother M. Augustine (Kent) and her Sisters that they were henceforth a separate and independent Community.³⁶

Ties of friendship were not severed, however. Visits back and forth, especially during the vacation months, were a common thing for the remainder of the nineteenth century and even down to the present day. In the 1890's the Sisters in North Carolina adopted the Religious Habit and Rule of Mother McAuley's Sisters of Mercy. Today their motherhouse is located at Belmont, North Carolina. They operate fourteen schools including the only four year Catholic College for girls in the Carolinas and Georgia, two hospitals, one nursing school, an orphanage, and a home for brain-damaged babies.³⁷

³⁴ASCLM, Council Minutes, August 21, 1872.

³⁵Ibid., August 26, 1872.

³⁶Ibid., August 27, 1872. Copy of letter to Mother M. Augustine (Kent) and Community granting their petition.

³⁷Interview with Sister M. Jane Frances (Galligan), R.S.M., member of the Belmont Sisters of Mercy, April 27, 1967.

The first half of the 1870's witnessed the climax of another episode in Community history involving the relationship between the motherhouse and a mission. In this case the branch house was the boys' orphanage, located at 77 Cannon Street, Charleston. When Bishop Lynch established this institution on June 5, 1867,³⁸ he appointed Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) Superioress of the house without consulting Mother Teresa (Barry) or the Councilors then in office.³⁹ Nevertheless, the Bishop required the motherhouse to send Sisters to the orphanage to work under Sister M. De Sales' direction. In effect, this arrangement placed these Sisters under a Superioress over whom the elected officers of the Community had no control. While it is not evident why Bishop Lynch acted as he did, it soon became apparent that the motherhouse resented his action. The situation was the source of confusion and dissension within the Community during the late 1860's and early 1870's.

The available evidence suggests that Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) expected the motherhouse to provide

³⁸gazette (Charleston, S.C.), February 20, 1869, p. 4.

³⁹CDA 57S5, Document in Bishop Lynch's handwriting containing a summary of the situation existing at the boys' orphan asylum between 1867 and 1874. The statement is not dated.

for the Sisters at the boys' orphanage as they did for the Sisters stationed in any other mission house. The motherhouse, on the other hand, seems to have adopted a "hands-off" policy. In August, 1868, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) voiced a complaint to the Bishop indicative of the situation.

I have just learned that Father Birmingham has opened a retreat for the Sisters. Sister Francis at the Girls' Asylum got notice to attend with the Sisters under her charge. We at this House have not been noticed. Of course, whilst this continues and Mother Teresa is allowed to pursue the course which she has respecting this House, you will find no Sister contented or willing to be here if their wills are to be consulted.⁴⁰

Unfortunately, there is no record of the Bishop's directions in this particular instance.

On March 25, 1869, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) notified the Bishop that all the Sisters at the boys' orphanage were "out from under vows" because the motherhouse had made no provision for their annual renewal.⁴¹ In her letter, Sister M. De Sales enclosed the correspondence between Mother Teresa (Barry) and herself relative to the affair. The notes manifest how strained and confused relations between the two houses had become.

⁴⁰CDA 44W2, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, August 31, 1868.

⁴¹CDA 46E1, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, March 25, 1869.

Dear Sister,

Thursday being the 25th I suppose like ourselves you will with your good Sisters enter into a few days retreat as a preparation therefor, until we can have an annual one which we hope will be some time in August.

Trusting all are well.

Very sincerely in Christ,
Sister M. Teresa⁴²

Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) having interpreted Mother Teresa's note as an invitation to make the retreat with the Sisters at the motherhouse, replied:

Dear Mother Teresa,

We are in receipt of your note and gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity of making the retreat. Please inform me as to what arrangements have been made for the house during our absence.

Yours,
Sister M. De Sales⁴³

Mother Teresa's answer indicated that she had no intention of regulating for the boys' orphanage.

Dear Sister,

I suppose dear Sister you can follow the usual exercises of your Rules and arrange your household affairs to suit as I cannot consistently attend to that matter. I suppose that Rev. Fr. Moore will receive the vows as he has the previous year.

Very sincerely in Christ,
Sister M. Teresa⁴⁴

Bishop Lynch finally instructed Father Birmingham, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community, to settle the affair. His manner of settling it, however, produced greater confusion.

Father Birmingham requested Father John Moore,

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

then pastor of Saint Patrick's parish, to receive the vows of the Sisters at the boys' orphanage. Father Moore, apparently, interpreted the request as a command. On Sunday, April 11, 1869, he notified Father Birmingham:

I have been informed that you have said to the Sisters in Cannon Street that it was my duty to attend them and to receive their vows, and I write this note to say to you very respectfully that such is not my duty. If any such obligation had ever been imposed on me, I would not have neglected it.⁴⁵

Father Birmingham hastened to assure Bishop Lynch that he had never told Father Moore that it was his duty to receive the Sisters' vows. However, Father Birmingham also informed his absent Bishop that he himself, even though he was Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community, had never received any official instructions regarding the boys' orphanage or the Sisters assigned there. As the orphanage was located in Saint Patrick's parish, he had assumed that the Sisters there were under Father Moore's direction.⁴⁶

On April 13, 1869, Father Moore informed the Bishop that he had begun a three-day retreat for the Sisters at the boys' orphanage and would receive their

⁴⁵CDA 46G7, Enclosure in a letter from Father Timothy Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, April 12, 1869.

⁴⁶Ibid.

vows at its conclusion.⁴⁷ The immediate problem was thus resolved. The episode, however, clearly revealed how confused the situation was.

In the fall of 1869 another incident occurred demonstrating how estranged the two houses had become. Father Birmingham reported the particulars to Bishop Lynch:

I saw the Sisters about the arrangement you made for Cannon Street. Sister E _____ came to me fully determined not to go. I told her it was your arrangement but she said she would not go there unless the Council sent her. Well! I called the Council, but not one of the Council would give a vote to send Sister E _____ to Cannon Street. Mother Francis said she told you that she would send no Sister there. The unwillingness to send or to go seemed insuperable.

I then gave out a piece of my mind. . . . Then Mother Francis answered that, though she would not send, yet if I said go, she would say so. . . . Even then E _____ was unwilling. I told her go, and write to you if she thought fit. . . . You see how almost insuperable is the unwillingness to go; and how dangerous it is to drive to rebellion.⁴⁸

The Bishop would have done well to have heeded his Vicar General's warning, but he did not. For the next five years Bishop Lynch permitted Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to remain in charge of the boys' orphanage and assigned Sisters from the motherhouse to serve

⁴⁷CDA 46E2, Father John Moore to Bishop Lynch, April 13, 1869.

⁴⁸CDA 47E6, Father T. Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, November 12, 1869.

under her.

The evidence suggests that Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) was suffering a gradual mental derangement during her years at the boys' orphanage. This fact helps to explain why the Sisters were so strongly opposed to being assigned there. During the summers of 1870 and 1871, Sister M. De Sales' (Brennan) health became so impaired that, with the Bishop's permission, she returned to the mountains of Virginia, near the site of the Montgomery White Sulphur Springs General Hospital, and placed herself under the care of her old friend, Doctor J. Lewis Woodville. Sister M. Alphonsa (Moore), sister of Father John Moore, accompanied her on both occasions. On August 26, 1871, Father Moore wrote to Bishop Lynch from the Sweet Chalybeate Springs, Virginia, where the Sisters were staying:

Sister De Sales has had two very severe nervous spells. Dr. Woodville told me her condition was critical. . . . She is still unable to go out. It appears to me useless for them to think of going home for some weeks at least.⁴⁹

The Sisters were still in Virginia in October. On the fifteenth of that month, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan), in a very shaky handwriting, informed the Bishop that

⁴⁹CDA 51A4, Father John Moore to Bishop Lynch, August 26, 1871.

she had received the last sacraments.⁵⁰ The very next day Sister M. Alphonsa (Moore) telegraphed Charleston: Come or send someone at once to help me take Sister De Sales home. Her mind is impaired.⁵¹

What transpired during the following month remains something of a mystery. Odd as it seems, on December 9, 1871, Sister M. De Sales had resumed her duties at the boys' orphanage with Sister M. Alphonsa (Moore) and Sister M. Agnes (Gallagher) assisting her.⁵² Apparently, Bishop Lynch did not consider her illness serious enough to warrant her removal. If one can judge from extant correspondence, there was indeed a considerable improvement in her health and no serious disturbances at the boys' orphanage during 1872 or 1873. During the spring of 1874, however, the situation took a turn for the worse. Writing to Bishop Lynch on March 9, 1874, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) indicated that Sister M. Agnes (Gallagher) had determined to return to the motherhouse and was supported by Mother Teresa (Barry)

⁵⁰CDA 51G6, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, October 15, 1871.

⁵¹CDA 51H3, Telegraph from Sister M. Alphonsa (Moore), October 16, 1871.

⁵²CDA 51S7, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, December 9, 1871.

and the Sisters there.⁵³ A month later, Sister M. Agnes (Gallagher) wrote a short note to the Bishop begging him to come to the boys' orphanage as Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) had refused to allow her to go to see him.⁵⁴

Obviously, something was wrong, but the particulars have been buried with those who knew them. The whole unpleasant episode ended abruptly some time during the autumn of 1874. The two Sisters serving under Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) simply walked out of the boys' orphanage and returned to the motherhouse. An undated document in Bishop Lynch's handwriting affords the present generation an explanation and summation of this rather sad chapter in the Community's history. The document states:

1. Sister De Sales was appointed Superior of the Boys' Orphan Asylum by the Bishop's own authority, without consulting the Council of the Sisters. He wished her to have the management.
2. There was a feeling of opposition to her personally among the Sisters at that time, which he hoped would die out.
3. But on the contrary it has increased and become more intense, until lately both the Sisters who were under her at the Boys' Orphan Asylum

⁵³CDA 56M3, Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) to Bishop Lynch, March 9, 1874.

⁵⁴CDA 56P7, Sister M. Agnes (Gallagher) to Bishop Lynch, April 5, 1874.

withdrew and returned to the Mother House.

4. The Community are unwilling that Sisters should serve under Sister De Sales' authority. She demands an investigation to ascertain if she is to blame for this state of things, or whether such opposition is wrong and unwarranted.

The Bishop holds:

1. That the opposition exists and that any such investigation will but give scandal, and embitter still more the sad state now existing. Furthermore, he feels that he would not be upheld by any Archbishop or Bishop or by Rome if he forced into office a member repugnant to the whole Community, or in this case, if he sent to the House under Sister De Sales to be under her, members of the Community who are themselves unwilling to go, and while the Council and the Senior Sisters oppose his doing so. Were Sister De Sales willing to live in any other house of the Community the difficulty would not exist. But on account of the opposition before mentioned, she is not willing and the Bishop sees the force of the reason.⁵⁵

The Bishop, therefore, dispensed Sister M. De Sales (Brennan) from her vows and she left the Community. The archives of the Community contain absolutely no references to the situation existing at the boys' orphanage between 1867 and 1874. Next to Sister M. De Sales' name in the Register is the brief notation--"left the Community in 1874."⁵⁶

⁵⁵CDA 57S5, Document in Bishop Lynch's handwriting, undated.

⁵⁶ASCIM, Community Register, p. 5. Correspondence between Miss Brennan, the former Sister M. De Sales, and Bishop Lynch shows that she lived for a time in several other novitiates after her

Their terms having expired, Mother Teresa (Barry) and the Councilors elected in 1872 went out of office in August, 1875. On the fifth of that month, the Community elected Sister Isidore (Barry), Mother Superioress; Sister M. Gertrude (Murkhardt), Mother Assistant; Sister Xavier (Dunn), Treasurer; and Sister M. Regis (Larkin), Procuratrix. Six days later, August 11, 1875, Mother Isidore (Barry) and the newly elected Councilors appointed Sister M. De Chantal (Clary) to take charge of the boys' orphanage, Cannon Street.⁵⁷ The records do not indicate who held that position between Sister M. De Sales' (Brennan) departure and Sister M. De Chantal's (Clary) appointment. It is significant, however, that Bishop Lynch permitted the Community to name the Superior of that institution. Had he done so earlier, the Sisters might have been spared a rather embarrassing chapter in their history.

departure from the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Because of her poor health, however, none were willing to admit her to profession. At the time of Bishop Lynch's death, February 26, 1882, she was living in Montreal. Sometime after that, she returned to South Carolina in poor mental health. Senior members of the present Community relate that she died in Columbia, S.C., about the turn of the century. This correspondence is located in CDA.

⁵⁷ASCLM, Council Minutes, August 5 and 11, 1875.

The three years of Mother Isidore's (Barry)⁵⁸ administration were difficult ones for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. As always, there were financial embarrassments. At the time of Mother Isidore's election, there were twenty-eight professed Sisters and three novices in the Community.⁵⁹ With the exception of four Sisters stationed at Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter, South Carolina, the entire force was concentrated in Charleston.

The motherhouse, Queen Street, housed the Mother Superior, the Councilors, the novices, the retired Sisters, and those teaching at Saint Mary's Free School.⁶⁰ The other Sisters in Charleston lived either in the

⁵⁸Mother Isidore (Barry), born Elizabeth Barry, entered the Community on November 21, 1858, and was professed on March 25, 1861. Although Bishop Lynch had selected her to go with the Sisters to Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs in December, 1861, she was not sent because her musical talents were needed in the Academy. In 1872, Sister M. Isidore was elected Procuratrix. She served in that office until her election as Mother Superior in August, 1875. From 1878 until 1889 Sister M. Isidore was the Directress of St. Joseph's Academy, Sumter, S.C. She died on October 27, 1893.

⁵⁹ASCLM, Community Register, pp. 1-10.

⁶⁰St. Mary's Free School, destroyed by fire on December 11, 1861, was reopened on the second Monday of September, 1870, in the motherhouse on Queen Street. In the fall of 1873 the school was moved from the motherhouse to the former St. Paul's Church building, Society Street, between Meeting and Anson Streets, Charleston, S.C. See Yearbook for the City of Charleston, 1880, p. 122.

girls' orphanage adjoining the motherhouse, the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy on Meeting Street, or the boys' orphanage on Cannon Street. The last mentioned institution was owned by the diocese. The girls' orphanage, the motherhouse, and the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, however, belonged to the Sisters. To provide for the upkeep of this property and for the needs of the twenty-seven Sisters then in Charleston, the Community had only one reasonably sure source of income, namely, the tuition paid by the students attending the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy. At a Council meeting, July 10, 1876, Sister M. Xavier (Dunn), treasurer, reported that the boarding students owed over \$800.00, and that she was doubtful that the debt would ever be paid.⁶¹ With their principal source of support in such a state, it is not surprising that the Community was indebted to its creditors for over \$2,000.00 in 1876 and 1877.⁶² The situation might have been worse had not the City Council of Charleston in November, 1875, renewed its appropriation for the orphans under the Sisters' care. The Council granted the Sisters \$6,000.00 annually for ten years provided the Community maintained and educated not

⁶¹ASCLM, Council Minutes, Monday, July 10, 1876.

⁶²Ibid., July 10, 1876, and February 2, 1877.

less than seventy-five children.⁶³ As previously, the appropriation was divided between the boys' and girls' asylums. On February 2, 1877, Father John Moore, representing Bishop Lynch at a Council meeting, told the Sisters that they would have to turn out the orphans for want of support if the city withdrew its appropriation. During 1876 the Saint Vincent's Orphan Society had raised \$675.00. This amount, said Father Moore, "might enable the Sisters to support eight orphans while with economy they could keep the house open for half-orphans."⁶⁴ Fortunately for the Sisters and the orphans the appropriation was not withdrawn. In fact, it was renewed for another fifteen years in October, 1885.⁶⁵

In an attempt to improve their financial condition, Mother Isidore (Barry) and the Councilors closed the boarding school in August, 1876. For the next seven years the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy located in the

⁶³ ASCIM, Council Minutes, following minutes for August 17, 1885, copy of Contract between the City Council of Charleston and the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, November 1, 1875 to January 1, 1885.

⁶⁴ ASCIM, Council Minutes, February 2, 1877.

⁶⁵ ASCIM, Council Minutes, following minutes for August 17, 1885, copy of Contract between the City Council of Charleston and the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, signed October 31, 1885, William A. Courtney, Mayor of Charleston, Mother Teresa (Barry), Superioress of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

former Alston Mansion, Meeting Street, accepted day students only. Some of the Sisters who taught in the Academy during these years lived on the premises. Others resided at the motherhouse and walked the eight-block distance daily.

Whether engendered by the financial distress or by the closing of the boarding Academy, there appears to have arisen a rather general dissatisfaction among the Sisters between 1876 and 1878. Mother Isidore (Barry), perplexed as to its origin, represented the situation as follows:

March 26, 1877

Most Beloved Father,

I appeal to you as the Spiritual Adviser and Director of our Community, to use your influence with our beloved Bishop by representing to him the spirit of disunion and alienation that has sprung up in our midst--which breach seems widening each day. . . . Yesterday's reunion was more like a funeral celebration than a day of rejoicing. Each member deplors the condition, no one seems to be able to remedy the evil. There is dissatisfaction. I know not of what nature. I may be with myself, and most likely is. I am open for correction, and most anxious to be relieved of responsibility if necessary for the peace of the Community. Oh! that we had a man of God with authority to guide, to counsel and to keep us in check--not only in spiritual, but also in temporal concerns. I appeal to you dear Father, because you have a knowledge of our difficulties. . . . I am of the opinion now that the Community is not satisfied with me in the position I hold. Most gladly will I yield my place and thank God too for relieving me. I trust our dear Bishop will adjust matters for us very soon through

your kind aid in our regard.

I am truly yours,
In the loving Heart of Jesus,
Sister M. Isidore⁶⁶

It is not clear to whom this letter was written. It may have been to Father John Moore who had been presiding at the Council meetings, or to Monsignor D. J. Quigley, then Vicar General of the Diocese.⁶⁷ Bishop Lynch had not appointed an Ecclesiastical Superior for the Sisters since the death of Father Birmingham in 1872. In June, 1877, the Bishop responded to Mother Isidore's (Barry) plea by assigning Father Henry P. Northrop to be the Sisters' Superior. Father Northrop, the future Bishop of Charleston, was then pastor of Saint Patrick's Church.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ CDA 62P2, Mother M. Isidore (Barry) to Most Beloved Father, March 26, 1877.

⁶⁷ Monsignor Daniel J. Quigley was born in Scotland and brought to South Carolina as a young boy. Although he began his studies for the priesthood at Mt. St. Mary's, Emmitsburg, he completed them at the American College in Rome in 1866. He was pastor of the pro-cathedral for many years and Vicar General of the diocese under Bishop Lynch and Bishop Henry P. Northrop. Monsignor Quigley was appointed Ecclesiastical Superior of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in 1883 and retained the position until his death on November 28, 1903. See O'Connell, p. 299.

Father John Moore was consecrated second Bishop of St. Augustine, Florida on May 13, 1877.

⁶⁸ Father Henry P. Northrop, the future fourth Bishop of Charleston, was born in the city of Charleston on May 5, 1842. He, too, began his studies for the priesthood at Mt. St. Mary's, Emmitsburg, but completed

A second letter from Mother Isidore (Barry) to Bishop Lynch, dated August 19, 1877, affords some insight into the factors contributing to the general dissatisfaction described in her March communication. Of existing conditions she said:

Our prospect is gloomy enough as many of the Sisters are in wretched health. We have been obliged to bring home one from the Boys' Asylum, the physician pronouncing her incurably diseased. Another is to be withdrawn from Sumter. . . . These vacancies have to be filled from our midst. Our force being small and duties so scattered, we cannot fill all the posts satisfactorily.⁶⁹

In an attempt to improve the situation, Mother Isidore (Barry) requested and received permission to go North in search of new members for the Community. Having been assured by a priest friend stationed at Saint Michael's Church, New York City, that he knew five young women willing to enter the Community, Mother Isidore (Barry)

them at the American College, Rome. After his ordination, June 25, 1865, he returned to South Carolina. For a time he served at St. Joseph's Church, Charleston, but in 1867, he was placed in charge of Newberne, North Carolina. After the death of Father Birmingham in 1872, Father Northrop became pastor of Stella Maris Church, Sullivan's Island, near Charleston. In 1877 when Father Moore became Bishop of St. Augustine, Father Northrop succeeded him as pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Charleston. He remained there until appointed Vicar Apostolic of North Carolina in 1882. On January 27, 1883, he was transferred to Charleston as successor of the recently deceased Bishop Lynch. ASCLM, Booklet published for Bishop Northrop's Jubilee, April 14, 1907, p. 41.

⁶⁹CDA 63R1, Mother Isidore (Barry) to Bishop Lynch, August 19, 1877.

and Sister Regis (Larkin) visited that city in September, 1877.⁷⁰ In the last analysis the trip was a failure. While two of the promised five young women returned to Charleston, neither persevered.⁷¹

Mother Isidore's (Barry) term of office expired in July, 1878. Although there had been two deaths among the Sisters during her administration, there had also been two professions.⁷² Hence, the Community continued to maintain the status quo even though, as Mother Isidore (Barry) had indicated, this meant stretching themselves thin.

⁷⁰CDA 63W5, Mother Isidore (Barry) to Bishop Lynch, September 14, 1877.

⁷¹ASCLM, Council Minutes, October 20, 1877. See also Community Register, pp. 10-11.

⁷²Sister M. Ignatius (Clarke) died on October 24, 1875. Sister M. Veronica (Cagney) died on July 19, 1876. Both had been members of the Community for over forty years.

On March 26, 1876, Sister M. Austin (Schnell) and Sister M. Monica (Allemon) were professed. The latter was a sixty-year-old widow, a long time benefactor of the Community, who, upon her entrance, gave the Community some property in the city of Charleston to be disposed of for the benefit of the orphans. Sister M. Monica spent most of her ten years in the Community working with the orphans. She died on August 14, 1887. The records contain very little information about Sister M. Austin (Schnell). She too appears to have spent the greater part of her religious life working with the orphans. Sister M. Austin died of cancer on December 14, 1920. Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley), then in office, described her as "our wonderful Saint."

On July 16, 1878, the Councilors nominated and presented to the professed Sisters the names of Sister M. Joseph (Kent) and Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) as candidates for the office of Mother Superior. Apparently, a good number of the Sisters had expected Mother Teresa (Barry) to be one of the two nominees. Her exclusion aroused resentment. On July 22, 1878, Sister M. Helena (Marlowe), speaking for the dissatisfied, appealed to Bishop Lynch to "give us . . . the right to choose our own Superior by a free election, i.e., the privilege of giving our vote to whom we think will govern us best."⁷³ Sister M. Helena (Marlowe) claimed to represent seventeen of the twenty-four Sisters then in Charleston, as well as the five Sisters stationed at Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter, South Carolina.⁷⁴

Three days later, Bishop Lynch, then in New York, notified Father Henry P. Northrop, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community, that, if the election procedures described in the Rule had been observed exactly, the Sisters would have to accept the results and yield their private likes and dislikes. "If the statement be true that seventeen out of twenty-four be dissatisfied,

⁷³CDA 6608, Sister M. Helena (Marlowe) to Bishop Lynch, July 22, 1878.

⁷⁴Ibid.

I am sorry for it," said the Bishop.⁷⁵ However, he considered that statement to be "paroxysmal" and expected the number to have changed within a week. Bishop Lynch assured Father Northrop that both Sister M. Joseph (Kent) and Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) were excellent candidates "as no doubt the experienced Sister Teresa would have been."⁷⁶

The Sisters readily accepted the Bishop's decision. However, when notifying him of her submission, Sister M. Helena (Marlowe) stated:

One little point, however, you misunderstood--that regarding the first election held under Bishop Reynolds. It was a free election, not such a one as that directed by the complicated formula he embodied in the Rule, and by which we are bound to our discontent. However, dear Bishop, we again thank-you for setting our minds at rest, at least for the present. . . .⁷⁷

Two days later, Monsignor D. J. Quigley, Vicar General of the Diocese, combining wit and wisdom, notified Bishop Lynch:

I think that your letter has poured oil upon the troubles of the Sisters. They will submit. I think the severest punishment that could be inflicted just now on a rebellious spirit, would be to make her

⁷⁵CDA 66C9, Bishop Lynch to Rev. H. P. Northrop, July 25, 1878.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷CDA 66D3, Sister M. Helena (Marlowe) to Bishop Lynch, July 28, 1878.

Treasurer for three months.⁷⁸

The election precipitating this protest in Community history took place on August 5, 1878. The Sisters chose Sister M. Agatha (MacNamara) as their Mother Superioress; Sister M. Helena (Marlowe), Mother Assistant; Sister M. De Chantal (Clary), Treasurer; and Sister M. Vincent (Jones), Procuratrix. Two days later Sister M. Isidore (Barry) was appointed Directress of Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter, South Carolina. Mother Teresa (Barry) was reassigned Directress of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Meeting Street, Charleston. Sister M. Regis (Larkin) replaced Sister M. De Chantal (Clary) at the boys' orphanage, Cannon Street.⁷⁹

One month after Mother M. Agatha's (MacNamara) election, Father Henry P. Northrop, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community, informed the Bishop that:

The newly elected officers were received with an apparently sincere greeting by all the Sisters, in spite of the protest and preceding excitement. Everything is moving harmoniously and pleasantly as far as I can see, and the Mother seems to have taken the duties of her office in a spirit of prudence and firmness. . . . The health of the Community is good and the spirit of the Sisters seems to be much better than one could have suspected.⁸⁰

⁷⁸CDA 66D6, Msgr. D. J. Quigley to Bishop Lynch, July 30, 1878.

⁷⁹ASCLM, Council Minutes, August 5 and 7, 1878.

⁸⁰CDA 66M4, Father H. P. Northrop to Bishop Lynch, September 12, 1878.

Mother M. Agatha (MacNamara) governed the Community from 1878 until July 5, 1881. No new missions were opened; nor were any old houses closed. Neither were there any deaths or departures in the Community. In 1880, the boys' orphanage moved from Cannon Street to larger quarters at 173 Calhoun Street. No other location change occurred during the period nor was any construction undertaken. The financial condition of the Community did improve and the novitiate began to fill up. More important, however, was the fact that the dissatisfaction that had prevailed during the mid-seventies seems to have died out during Mother Agatha's (MacNamara) administration. Its disappearance is as difficult to explain as was its appearance. In retrospect, these three years, 1878-1881, seem like a watershed separating the difficult, tension-ridden 1870's from the rather untroubled 1880's.

CHAPTER VI

A QUESTION OF RULE

During Mother Agatha's (MacNamara) second year in office, 1879, Sister M. Aloysius (Daly) received a letter from her cousin, Sister M. Cecilia, Superior of Saint Mary's Convent, Augusta, Georgia. Sister M. Cecilia, a member of the Savannah Community of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, informed Sister M. Aloysius (Daly) that a Father Clarke, a Jesuit from Baltimore, had recently conducted a retreat for the Sisters in Augusta. Upon discovering that the Sisters there followed the same rules as Bishop England's Sisters in Charleston, Father Clarke informed them that they were not Religious, but merely a society of pious women. The same priest, according to Sister M. Cecilia, "gave a retreat some years ago to your Sisters in Wilmington and by his remarks about the Rules not being confirmed in Rome, he left them in a very unhappy state of mind. They told me of it, as I happened to visit them at the time."¹

¹ASCLM, Letter from Sister M. Cecilia, St. Mary's Convent, Augusta, Georgia, to Sister M. Aloysius Daly, Charleston, S.C., undated, but probably written during the fall of 1879.

As might be expected, Father Clarke's remarks caused quite a bit of excitement throughout the Savannah Community. The Bishop of Savannah assured the Sisters that he would make every effort to have their rules confirmed in Rome. He promised to discuss the whole question with the older members of the Community at a meeting scheduled for July or August, 1880.² In preparation for this meeting, Sister M. Cecilia wished to "look over the old rules that we first received from Charleston (Bishop England's Rules)."³ Hence, she requested Sister M. Aloysius (Daly) to ask Mother M. Agatha (MacNamara) to send a copy of the old rules to Savannah.

Mother M. Agatha (MacNamara) seemingly welcomed the opportunity to bring this important question to the attention of Bishop Lynch. Apparently, the subject had arisen before. Perhaps it was a partial cause of the dissatisfaction prevailing in the Community during Mother Isidore's (Barry) administration. At any rate, on January 27, 1880, Mother M. Agatha (MacNamara) appealed to Bishop Lynch "to obtain for us what we require to place us on a footing with other Communities, namely, the recognition or confirmation of our Rule and Communities

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

by the Holy Father."⁴ Furthermore, she stated:

The fact that we are not in that respect on an equality with other Communities is now well known and stands in the way of our procuring subjects. Clergymen know it and have reproached us with it, and would naturally prevent those young persons in whom they are interested entering our House. The objection has been made by some when invited to join us, and Fathers in giving retreats have made us feel it to our hearts' core.⁵

Mother M. Agatha (MacNamara) also informed the Bishop that she had discussed the matter with Mother Teresa (Barry) and the other "principal members of the Community." She found them all willing to submit to any changes necessary to obtain papal approbation of their rule.⁶

To understand the Bishop's reply, it is necessary to review events which had occurred twenty years before. On February 2, 1861, Bishop Lynch had addressed a petition to His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, asking him to confer upon the Sisters a "special blessing and testimony of approbation."⁷ The document affirmed that the Sisters had been established by Bishop England in 1829

⁴CDA 69R7, Mother M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Bishop Lynch, January 27, 1880.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷ASCLM, Petition from Bishop Lynch to His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, February 2, 1861, found in the Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy of Charleston, S.C., 1845-1949, p. 102.

"to live under the rules of The Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul with only such few changes as the circumstances of the country and the needs of the mission seemed . . . to require."⁸ After summarizing the services the Sisters had rendered in the diocese, and praising them for their "zeal, piety, modesty, and remarkable humility,"⁹ Bishop Lynch requested His Holiness to grant a plenary indulgence:

1. To each of the Sisters when she first makes her vows, also each year when she renews them, and also at the hour of death.
2. To every girl or woman who shall be duly prepared by the Sisters and shall under their care make her first Communion.
3. To the dying, whom in their last agony the Sisters shall piously assist.¹⁰

Father Timothy Birmingham had carried the petition to Rome. On March 15, 1861, he had received an audience with Pope Pius IX. When describing that meeting to Bishop Lynch, Father Birmingham had written:

Next I presented your letter in favor of the Sisters. The Cardinal read it for the Holy Father, who counted the items specified on his fingers. He said he could grant all that ——— only for the last, i.e., an indulgence for those instructed and prepared for death by the Sisters, which was not customary as they could not be the instruments of imparting an indulgence by mere instruction. He told the Cardinal to regulate it in the customary way--which

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., pp. 102-03.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 103.

is--each Sister will have a Crucifix, blessed by the Bishop and through the agency of the Sister; so that the Cross, and not the Sister will be the instrument or medium through which the indulgence will be imparted.¹¹

Although Father Birmingham had requested and was assured of speedy action, a full year passed before His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, affixed his signature to the original petition underneath the terse endorsement: "We assent and grant all that is asked in this petition."¹²

Due to the Civil War, and more particularly the blockade, the Sisters did not receive this document until 1866. When they did, however, they appear to have interpreted the Pope's signature as a formal papal approbation of the Community. The following notation was found in an old record book in the convent archives:

In March 1862, the Order of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy of Charleston, S.C., was recognized by His Holiness, Pius IX.¹³

Bishop Lynch's reply to Mother M. Agatha's (MacNamara) letter of January 27, 1880, offered additional support to this point of view.

¹¹CDA 2607, Father T. Birmingham to Bishop Lynch, Rome, April, 1861.

¹²ASCLM, Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy of Charleston, S.C., 1845-1949, p. 104.

¹³ASCLM, Old Record Book, "Various Items," notation listed next to the year 1866.

Bishop Lynch first informed the Sisters that there was a distinction between the body of rules and the approval of the Sisterhood. "The Rules if new and for a new purpose as were those of the Good Shepherd, could be asked for, but Rome would not grant it, except after a long examination of the case."¹⁴ The Bishop's description of the process involved and the money necessary was enough to dissuade anyone from attempting such a step.

Next, Bishop Lynch referred the Sisters to the petition signed by Pope Pius IX:

The petition states that your Rules are substantially those of the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, Sisters of Charity. That Rule is known in the Church, and as a Rule has all the sanctions required. The petition did not needlessly ask for its approval.¹⁵

The Bishop also stated:

The Institute or Sisterhood is recognized as a body under those Rules, and is blessed and favored by His Holiness, first by the rescript under his own hand, and secondly by the special Indulgences which he grants. . . .

This brief Rescript of the Sovereign Pontiff, for the Pope in such matters is and must be brief-- is of full authority and should be more precious than a larger document written by a clerk and signed by Cardinal Barnabo or any other Cardinal.

¹⁴ASCLM, Bishop Lynch to Mother M. Agatha (Mac-Namara), undated. See also ASMB, copy of this letter was found in 1872 folder in an envelope marked "no dates."

¹⁵Ibid.

It gives you the special blessing and sanction to your work of Religion, and special favors from his Paternal heart. What more do you wish?¹⁶

In essence, then, Bishop Lynch's reply implied that the Rule and the Sisterhood had already received papal approbation. Apparently, his explanation satisfied the Charleston Sisters. Shortly thereafter, Mother Agatha notified the Bishop that she was writing to Mother Jane Francis of the Savannah Community hoping that "the approval of Rome which I am forwarding them will restore peace to the Sisters of Savannah. Please dear Bishop, give your blessing to my efforts that they may avail something."¹⁷

Neither the Savannah Sisters nor those in Wilmington, however, were reassured by Bishop Lynch's reply. When the Sisters in Savannah attempted to obtain papal approval of their Rule, they were advised instead to adopt the Rules and Constitutions of Mother McAuley's Sisters of Mercy. The advice was based upon the fact that Mother McAuley's Sisters and the Savannah Community had the same general purposes. Rome evidently preferred union of institutes with similar aims rather than proliferation. Hence, on September 24, 1892, the Savannah

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷ASCLM, Mother M. Agatha (MacNamara) to Bishop Lynch, n.d.

Sisters received from Bishop Thomas A. Becker of Georgia, Mother McAuley's Rule and Constitutions.¹⁸ Before the turn of the century the Sisters in North Carolina also adopted the Religious Habit and Rule of Mother McAuley's Sisters of Mercy.¹⁹

The archives of the Sisters of Mercy in Belmont, North Carolina, contain an interesting letter from a Father Konings (spelling uncertain), C.Ss.R., to Bishop Northrop relative to the canonical status of Bishop England's Sisters. Father Konings stated:

. . . I do not doubt a moment that F. C. [probably Father Clarke] is right in his statement concerning the position which Bishop England's Sisters hold in the Church. Their Congregation is not a religious Congregation Coram Ecclesia. The Document A does not prove at all that "the Institute or Sisterhood is recognized as a body (Religious) by His Holiness." In fact the "approbationis signum" asked for and given by His Holiness does not imply a canonical approbation either of the Rules or of the Institute. It implies nothing more than an encouragement, the Holy See never approving a Congregation in that form. The Institute not being approved, the approbation given to the Rules of the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul does not apply to the Rules and Institute (Body) of the Bishop England's Sisters of Mercy, since the Rules though approved by the Holy See cannot make a Congregation which observes them

¹⁸ASVA, Handwritten volume entitled "Notes of the Different Foundations of Sisters of Mercy in Georgia from June 13, 1845," p. 24.

¹⁹In 1929 the Sisters in Savannah joined the world-wide Union of Mother McAuley's Sisters of Mercy. The Sisters in Belmont, North Carolina, although following Mother McAuley's Rule, have remained an autonomous Community.

a religious body Coram Ecclesia. Otherwise, every Corporation which would follow such Rules would be such a body. From this may be easily inferred that even the changing of the one year's vows into perpetual vows is immaterial to the question.²⁰

Having voiced his opinion, Father Konings proceeded to ask Bishop Northrop, "Why have these good Sisters been told that they are not Religious? This was a great imprudence." He recommended that Bishop Northrop tell the Sisters that in God's eyes they were really religious, bound to strive for perfection, and in time might apply to the Holy See for a canonical approbation of their institute and rules.²¹

Father Konings' letter, although undated, was addressed to Bishop Northrop, Wilmington, North Carolina. It must, therefore, have been written sometime during 1882. Bishop Northrop was consecrated Vicar Apostolic of North Carolina in January, 1882, and remained in that post until transferred to the See of Charleston in January, 1883. It is probable that while he was in North Carolina, Mother M. Augustine (Kent) and her Community sought his advice concerning their canonical status. He, in turn, must have sought Father Konings' opinion.

²⁰ASMB, 1882 Folder, Letter No. 1, Father A. Konings (spelling uncertain), C.Ss.R., to Rt. Rev. H. P. Northrop, n.d.

²¹Ibid.

"Document A," mentioned in Father Konings' letter, was undoubtedly a copy of Bishop Lynch's reply to Mother M. Agatha (MacNamara).

It appears, then, despite Bishop Lynch's views, that Bishop England's Sisters had received neither papal approval of rule nor of institute. During the nineteenth century, therefore, they were not "religious" in the strict canonical sense of that term. The last point, however, demands some elaboration.

Prior to the nineteenth century the term "religious" was used to designate only those Communities whose members pronounced solemn perpetual vows.

Before the Nineteenth Century the attitude of the Holy See towards Congregations of women with simple vows founded by Bishops was merely passive permitting them existence, approving their Rule of life yet not approving the Institute.²²

However, as the number of Congregations of women with simple vows grew, and as their services became ever more useful to the Church, the attitude of the Holy See changed from one of passive acceptance to active encouragement. Hence, during the nineteenth century the restrictive clause (which had previously withheld approval of the institute) was dropped from the decrees approving

²²Clement R. Orth, The Approbation of Religious Institutes ("Catholic University Studies in Canon Law," No. 71; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1931), pp. 63-64.

the rules and constitutions of women with simple vows.²³ Thereafter, papal approval of the rule of a Congregation was considered to grant papal approbation to the institute also. At least, this was the popular interpretation accorded the development. It also became the generally accepted opinion and practice to classify members of institutes whose rules had been approved by Rome as "religious." Actually, however, canon law did not redefine the term "religious," during the nineteenth century. Thus, only institutes whose members professed solemn vows were entitled to be called "religious" in the strict canonical sense of the word. The situation was not changed until 1900.

It was not until Pope Leo XIII published his celebrated *Conditae a Christo* in 1900 that Institutes with simple vows received formal papal approbation, and those of purely diocesan nature were given a definite juridical status and character.

. . . Pope Leo XIII first of all, formally established two juridical categories of religious institutes with simple vows: one embracing all institutes having only episcopal approbation, and therefore called "diocesan"; the other one embracing those which have received recognition of the Holy See, either by having had their constitutions approved, or by having, in addition to this, received papal commendation or approval.²⁴

In other words, members of Congregations professing

²³George Gallik, The Rights and Duties of Bishops Regarding Diocesan Sisterhoods (St. Paul, Minn.: Wonderer Printing Co., 1939), p. 13.

²⁴Ibid., p. 14.

simple vows, whether or not their rules had been approved by Rome, were classified as "religious" after the publication of Conditae a Christo.

The Constitution is considered as having given the juridical character to these religious congregations and also as being their Magna Charta.²⁵

When the new code of canon law was promulgated on May 27, 1917, it reaffirmed the content of Conditae a Christo. In the code "religious" are defined as "all those who have made profession of vows in any institute."²⁶ The definition includes religious women with simple vows in both diocesan and pontifical institutes. In retrospect, it is easy to see that the meaning of the term "religious" was evolving during the nineteenth century. Actually, when Rome redefined the term in 1900, it adapted the word to the institutes then in existence, rather than the reverse.

These developments help to clarify the position of Bishop England's Sisters in the Church during the nineteenth century. True, as Father Clarke had asserted, they were not "religious" in the strict canonical sense of that term. Technically, speaking, however, even members of congregations whose rules had been approved

²⁵Orth, p. 69.

²⁶Joseph Creusen, Religious Men and Women in the Code (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1953), pp. 14-15.

in Rome were not entitled to that designation until 1900. Perhaps this was why Bishop Lynch made no efforts to have the Rules of Bishop England's Sisters approved. It cannot excuse him, however, from having led the Sisters to believe that the signature of His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, upon the petition asking for special blessings, was tantamount to formal papal approbation of the Sisterhood.

Useful as this knowledge may be to the present generation, Mother M. Agatha (MacNamara) and the Sisters living in the 1880's were convinced by Bishop Lynch's explanation that the Rule had been approved by Pope Pius IX. This erroneous conviction caused some confusion and promoted controversy during the twentieth century. Nonetheless, Bishop Lynch's explanation appears to have relieved the anxieties and salved the distress felt by the Community of the 1880's.

To date, 1967, the Rule has not been approved by Rome. However, ever since the promulgation of the new code of canon law in 1917, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy have been recognized as religious, members of a diocesan congregation professing simple vows.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND FIFTY YEARS

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the profession of the first members of the Community in January, 1881. Fittingly enough, when Mother M. Agatha's (MacNamara) term expired in July, Mother Teresa (Barry) was re-elected Superior-ess. Mother Teresa (Barry) had already governed the Community for twenty-three of her fifty years in religious life. Although she did not know it then, another sixteen years in office would be required of her.

A new, and in some respects a changing Community was growing up in the 1880's. Between 1881 and 1891 sixteen Sisters were professed. The remarkable feature of this group was that eight of the sixteen were native Charlestonians. Of the remaining eight, three came from other parts of the South; one from Belgium; while only four were Irish-born.¹ Prior to this time the

¹ASCLM, Community Register, pp. 1-13. The eight Charlestonians were: Sister M. Thomasine (Gough), Sister M. Laurentia (Early), Sister M. Dominic (Gough), Sister M. Euphemia (Conlon), Sister M. Marcellina (Frane), Sister M. Patricia (Hancock), Sister M. Raphael (Cummins), and Sister M. Martha (Croghan). The three Sisters from other parts of the South were: Sister M.

Irish-born members of the Community outnumbered the American-born Sisters three to one. Only two native Charlestonians had been professed in the Community before 1881. Bishop England had once predicted that native vocations would not materialize for fifty years, but he could not have realized how accurate his statement proved to be. Once begun, the trend continued. During the next fifty years the number of American-born Sisters slowly grew over those of Irish birth. Simultaneously, the number of Southerners rose over those from other parts of the United States. The latter development intensified the southern character the Community had always possessed. The former development might have caused serious nationality conflicts, not unknown in the history of religious communities in America, but for the fact that most of the American-born Sisters were of Irish ancestry. Had immigration into the South been as heavy as it was into the Northeastern states during the last quarter of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this aspect of Community history might have been altered.

Beatrice (Hennegan), Sister M. Alexius (McCreen), and Sister M. Martina (Fowler). Sister M. Baptist (Goffard) was born in Belgium; while Sister M. Christina (Gaynor), Sister M. Ignatius (Walsh), Sister M. Scholastica (Hogan), and Sister M. Euphrasia (Mullane) were Irish-born.

Nine Sisters dies during the 1880's, the largest number of deaths in any ten-year period since the Community's foundation.² Sister M. Charles (Curtin), after a visit to Charleston in August, 1890, wrote:

Death has made undue havoc in the Charleston Community within the past few years, cutting off not only those of venerable age, ripe for Heaven, but valuable, useful and accomplished members that we in our short-sightedness would deem necessary for sustaining the house. God's ways are not like ours.³

Among the deceased was the venerable Sister M. Xavier (Dunn), whose death occurred on June 4, 1887. The people of Charleston whom she had served for so long filled the church to overflowing at the solemn Pontifical Requiem Mass offered for her on June 6. Perhaps the most touching tribute of all was that of an old Confederate soldier who sent a garland of hay and wheat to the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy in remembrance of Sister M. Xavier's (Dunn) patient and arduous work in the

²ASCLM, Community Register, pp. 1-13. The Sisters who died during this decade were: Sister M. Agnes (Gallagher), January 15, 1884; Sister M. Patrick (Collins), June 14, 1884; Sister M. Gonzaga (Curtin), July 24, 1884; Sister M. Magdalen (O'Neill), September 25, 1884; Sister M. Xavier (Dunn), June 4, 1887; Sister M. Monica (Allemon), August 14, 1887; Sister M. Aloysius (Daly), January 14, 1889; Sister M. Cecilia (Butler), February 9, 1889; and Sister M. Baptist (Goffard), May 18, 1889.

³ASMB, Annals kept by Sister M. Charles (Curtin), unpaginated.

Confederate hospitals.⁴

After Sister M. Xavier's (Dunn) death, Mother Teresa (Barry) was the sole survivor of those Sisters who had known Bishop England. More than ever, she became the link with the past, the guiding spirit of the Community. Although not actually a Mother Foundress, Mother Teresa (Barry) was accorded that position in the hearts of the Sisters. As a testimony of their esteem, the members of the Community re-elected her Superioress in 1883 and 1887, and from 1893 until her death in 1900.

For many years Mother Teresa (Barry) had cherished the hope of establishing a Catholic hospital in Charleston. In fact, in 1867, she had suggested that Bishop Lynch purchase one of the houses temporarily sheltering the orphans so that it might be used as a hospital once the orphanage on Queen Street became habitable.⁵ The Bishop, however, was unable to grant her request, and that ended the matter for almost fifteen years.

In the spring of 1880, Miss Maria McHugh, a resident of Charleston, gave the Sisters of Our Lady of

⁴News and Courier (Charleston, S.C.), June 7, 1887, p. 8.

⁵CDA 40A5, Mother Teresa (Barry) to Bishop Lynch, April 18, 1867.

Mercy a large brick house in Magazine Street. Tradition maintains that the donor wanted the Sisters to use it as an industrial school for the orphans, but that Sister M. Xavier (Dunn) persuaded Miss McHugh that there was a greater need for a hospital.⁶ True or not, Miss McHugh's house became the means of establishing the first Catholic hospital in the Diocese of Charleston. At a meeting on March 14, 1881, the Community Council, having decided that the location of the house was unsuitable for a hospital, voted to sell it and invest the proceeds until they could find a more desirable site.⁷ Not much interest could have accumulated in the three months between that decision and June 21, 1881, when the Sisters purchased a \$6,000.00 piece of property on the northeast corner of Calhoun Street and Ashley Avenue.

Plans for the construction of the hospital were prepared by a Mr. A. de Caradeuc with the advice of Dr. Wheeler, Post Surgeon of the United States Marine Hospital Service. During the summer of 1881, Dr. Wheeler made a special trip to Washington, D.C., to secure the latest improvements in hospital buildings from the

⁶ ASCIM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), "History of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy" (unpublished manuscript written to celebrate the Community Centennial, 1929), p. 60.

⁷ ASCIM, Council Minutes, March 14, 1881.

government architects.⁸ In September, however, Monsignor D. J. Quigley, Vicar General of the Diocese, informed the absent Bishop Lynch that the "hospital is still on paper."⁹ One year later the two wooden frame, two-story buildings that constituted the first Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary became a reality. The institution, named in honor of Sister M. Xavier (Dunn), opened its doors to the public on October 1, 1882. The next day the News and Courier reported:

The new Infirmary built by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Calhoun Street, west of Rutledge Avenue, has been finished and equipped and is now open to the public. The buildings have been erected especially for infirmary purposes, and after the latest and most improved plans of the U.S. Marine Hospital service. Doctors R. A. Kinloch and A. P. Pelzer are the surgeons in charge, and the infirmary is under the direction of Sister M. De Chantal, who is assisted by a corps of able assistants. Private rooms are to be obtained and patients treated by their own physicians. Applications for admissions should be addressed to Sister M. De Chantal, Sister Superior in charge.¹⁰

⁸CDA 81H7, Clipping from the News and Courier, Wednesday, April 4, 1894. The article, "A Useful Institution," written on the occasion of the presentation of a diploma to a retiring house physician, includes an address by Monsignor D. J. Quigley which summarizes the history of St. Francis Xavier Infirmary.

⁹CDA 73K7, Monsignor D. J. Quigley to Bishop Lynch, September 4, 1881.

¹⁰News and Courier, October 2, 1882, p. 4.

Although the official Community records do not mention the names of Sister M. De Chantal's "corps of able assistants," Sister M. Carmel (Carter), senior member of the present Community, maintains that Sister M. Helena (Marlowe), Sister M. Ignatius (Walsh), and Sister M. Thomasine (Gough) were among the first Sisters assigned to Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary.¹¹ Sister M. Carmel (Carter) also relates that:

Besides caring for the patients, the Sisters divided their time among household tasks, laundry and kitchen chores. They wore a black Religious Habit covered by an enveloping white apron with a bib. In this fashion they were able to keep clean and protect their capes from hindering them in their duties. There was no elevator in the building and the equipment did not include wheelchairs. Acutely ill patients upon admission were carried in chairs up the stairs.¹²

The hospital ambulance in these early days was a horse-drawn covered wagon. Sister M. Philomena (Dempsey), who was a young Sister in the 1880's, used to amuse the Community in her old age by telling the following story:

One day the proprietor of a circus contacted Sister

¹¹ASCLM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), p. 60.

¹²Sister Joan Marie Reynolds, O.L.M., "The Inception and Early Development of St. Francis Xavier Infirmary, Charleston, South Carolina" (unpublished Master's dissertation, School of Nursing, Catholic University of America, 1966), p. 18. Sister Joan Marie obtained this information in an interview with Sister M. Carmel (Carter) on December 30, 1965.

M. De Chantal (Clary) and asked her if she could use two horses that were too old for dancing, but in good working condition. Sister M. De Chantal knew this was an answer to prayer for they really needed the horses. The next day as the newly acquired horses were pulling the ambulance with a patient on Calhoun Street across King Street. The circus was coming down King Street. Upon hearing the band, the horses began to dance! The poor driver didn't know what was happening, but he conquered and the patient came through safely.¹³

With the exception of an occasional anecdote of this nature, the Community possesses little information about the happenings at the hospital in its formative years.

Bishop Lynch did not live to see the opening of Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary. He had become seriously ill about Christmas time 1881. Although he resumed some of his duties in January, it was obvious that he was growing weaker. On the morning of February 26, 1882, the Sisters were summoned to his presence and received his blessing. A few hours later, he died.¹⁴

The Very Reverend D. J. Quigley administered the diocese until January 27, 1883, when Bishop Henry P. Northrop was transferred from Wilmington, North Carolina,

¹³ASCIM, Letter from Sister Margaret Mary (Cammann) to Reverend Mother M. Charles (Gibson), November 8, 1866. Sister Margaret Mary related the story as it was told to her by Sister M. Philomena (Dempsey). Sister M. Philomena (Dempsey) entered the Community on March 10, 1869, and was professed on November 21, 1871. She was ninety years old when she died on September 1, 1936.

¹⁴News and Courier, February 27, 1882, p. 1.

to Charleston as Bishop Lynch's successor. Shortly after his installation, Bishop Northrop appointed Monsignor Quigley, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. No appointee could have been more pleasing to the Community. Monsignor Quigley had taken a very personal interest in the building of the hospital. He was to manifest the same sincere concern for the Community and its affairs until his death in 1903.

For Charlestonians, the most memorable event of the 1880's was the disastrous earthquake which shook the city on the night of August 31, 1886. So widespread was it that people in Texas and Wisconsin felt its tremors. In Charleston, twenty-seven persons were killed, hundreds injured, and two thousand buildings damaged. Property loss was estimated at \$6,000,000.¹⁵ On September 4, 1886, the News and Courier reported that all the Catholic schools were injured and that:

The Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, Queen Street, was also damaged. The Sisters and the children have all been camping out. The St. Francis Infirmary, Calhoun Street, was badly damaged and there were several providential escapes. . . . The Male Orphan Asylum also suffered but in no instance did loss of life result.¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid., Sunday, August 27, 1961, p. 1-C.
(Issue commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charleston earthquake.)

¹⁶Ibid., September 4, 1886, p. 3.

The following day, September 5, 1886, Monsignor D. J. Quigley sent a more graphic description of the destruction to a Father O'Connor, pastor of Saint Michael's Church, Philadelphia.

Our condition is terrible. . . . Every building in the city is in an unsafe and tottering condition. . . . The people are living in rudely constructed tents made of bed sheets or in vacant lots. No inducement could force them back to their shattered dwellings. Strong men who met every peril of the four years war are now pale with fear. Women are frightened nearly to death; at every shock they scream and run frantically around. Add to this exposure, want of food, of sleep and repose. Shock succeeds shock--two or three a day, each adding to the destruction of life and property. . . . The Sisters and their orphan children of the female and male asylums are living in the open air, under a tent, protected only by a sheet. . . . Water is scarce and gaslight almost given out so that but for the kindly light of the moon our streets by night would be impassable. All I could say would give you only a faint idea of our sad condition.¹⁷

Unfortunately, the members of the Community who lived through this nightmare never recorded their experiences. The News and Courier of September 7, 1886, however, carried one touching human interest story involving the Sisters:

Immediately after the great shock on Tuesday night the Sisters of the Meeting Street Academy, who had providentially escaped from the building, were proceeding to the Convent in Queen Street when they

¹⁷CDA 78G7, an undated clipping from the News and Courier containing letter from Monsignor D. J. Quigley to Father O'Connor, pastor of St. Michael's Church, Philadelphia, September 5, 1886. Emphasis added by the writer.

were met by a young gentleman, who asked if he could render any assistance. The Sisters thanked him for his kind offer and said that they could not think of anything. The young gentleman observed that one of the children had fled without shoes, and he immediately gave her those which he himself was wearing at the time. This young gentleman was Mr. Joseph Yates, Jr.¹⁸

On September 10, 1836, Bishop Northrop notified Archbishop James Gibbons of Baltimore that "our orphans got under roof today. Thank God!"¹⁹ It is not known when the hospital Sisters and their patients were able to move indoors.

Because of the high price of labor and building materials, Mother Teresa (Barry) and the Councilors decided to make only those repairs necessary to render their buildings habitable. Some of the money for this work came from the Diocesan Earthquake Fund, made possible by the contributions of Catholics in other dioceses. On July 1, 1837, Monsignor D. J. Quigley, treasurer of the fund, reported that of the \$103,207.35 he had received, \$5,811.36 had been expended for the immediate but temporary repairs to the convent, academy, and the infirmary of the Sisters. He estimated the cost of completing the job would involve spending an

¹⁸News and Courier, September 7, 1836, p. 8.

¹⁹BCA 81U9, Bishop Henry P. Northrop to Archbishop James Gibbons of Baltimore, September 10, 1836.

additional \$3,500.00 for the orphanages; \$4,000.00 for the convent, academy, and infirmary; and \$500.00 for Saint Mary's Free School.²⁰

In August, 1887, Mother Teresa (Barry) and the Council resolved that it was useless to repair the old, wooden frame girls' orphanage. Rather, they decided to add a brick wing to the east end of the motherhouse. They estimated the cost at \$10,000.00; \$7,000.00 of which they had on hand. With the Bishop's approval, they added to this sum the entire amount appropriated by the Bishop's Relief Fund for the restoration of their other buildings.²¹

On the anniversary of the earthquake, August 31, 1887, Monsignor D. J. Quigley laid the cornerstone of the new building. Council Minutes state:

A remarkable feature in this event is that it is the same cornerstone that was laid by the lamented Bishop England for old St. Patrick's Church in the year 1838. This stone . . . is a good omen that the spirit of our beloved Bishop will still hover over and protect them.²²

During the ceremony, Mother Teresa (Barry), surrounded

²⁰CDA 79K5, Booklet, "Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the Earthquake Fund," prepared by Monsignor D. J. Quigley, Treasurer of the Fund, July 1, 1887, pp. 1-9.

²¹ASCIM, Council Minutes, August 5 and 31, 1887.

²²Ibid., August 31, 1887.

by the Sisters and the orphans, recited the Litany of the Saints. At this time there were seventy orphan girls and fifty-five boys under the Sisters' care.²³

The earthquake of 1886 was the immediate cause of the development of the Catholic parochial school system in Charleston. This event was to have far-reaching consequences for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

Shortly after the Civil War, Monsignor D. J. Quigley, had opened a parochial school for boys upon the cathedral grounds. Although he had hoped that other parishes would follow suit, he learned by experience that the system did not fulfill the wishes of the Catholic community at that time. In the summer of 1879, therefore, he founded the Central Catholic School for Boys in a building on the north side of George Street, between Saint Philip and King Streets. The school, conducted by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, remained in operation until 1886. The building was so seriously damaged by the earthquake, however, that the Brothers were withdrawn.²⁴ Two years earlier, 1884, the Third

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Joseph L. O'Brien, A Chronicle History of St. Patrick's Church, Charleston, S.C., 1837-1937 (Charleston, S.C.: John J. Furlong and Son, 1937), p. 58. See also Alice Frances Moran, "A History of Catholic Education in South Carolina" (unpublished Master's dissertation, School of Education, University of South Carolina, 1941), pp. 80, 84, and 85.

Plenary Council of Baltimore had decreed that "near each church where it does not exist, a parochial school is to be erected within two years from the promulgation of this Council, . . . unless the Bishop, . . . judge that a postponement be allowed."²⁵ Rather than attempt to reopen the Central School, therefore, Monsignor Quigley determined to establish schools as speedily as possible in each parish.

Within the next year schools were opened in Cathedral, Saint Patrick's, Saint Joseph's, and Saint Mary's parishes. Lay teachers staffed these schools until 1897. In September of that year, Monsignor Quigley brought the Sisters of Saint Francis of Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania, to Charleston to take charge of Saint Patrick's School.²⁶ Two years later, in October, 1899, Bishop Northrop requested, and Mother Teresa (Barry) assented to furnish teachers for the Cathedral and Saint Joseph's parishes. Sister M. Xavier (Ryan) and Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley) were the first Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy to teach in the Cathedral school; Sister M. Chrysostom (Monahan) and Sister M. Berchmans (Crowley), the first to instruct the children of Saint Joseph's

²⁵Maynard, p. 465.

²⁶Moran, pp. 85 and 87.

parish.²⁷ Within ten years the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy were teaching in all the parochial schools in Charleston.

Monsignor Quigley's interest in establishing the parochial school system did not cause him to forget Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary. Through his efforts, Saint Francis became the Marine Hospital for the port of Charleston in 1887. The United States Marine Hospital Service paid Saint Francis \$0.85 per day for furnishing quarters, subsistence, nursing and medicines to each seaman sent there for treatment. If the patient had a contagious disease, the Marine service paid the hospital \$2.00 a day, and \$10.00 if the hospital provided for the burial of a deceased seaman.²⁸ By modern standards, these rates are ridiculously low,; but over a twenty-year period the Infirmary received \$47,489.15 from the Government. In fact, the contract with the United States Marine Hospital Service provided the Infirmary with its second largest source of income.²⁹

²⁷ASCLM, Council Minutes, October 19, 1899.

²⁸U.S., National Archives, Library, Annual Report of the Supervising Surgeon-General of the Marine Hospital Service of the United States for the Fiscal Year Ending 1895 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1894), I, 23.

²⁹Reynolds, p. 35.

When Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary had opened its doors to the public in 1882, it had received but five patients.³⁰ Twelve years later, on April 3, 1894, Monsignor Quigley stated that 1,951 patients had been treated in the previous ten-year period--an average of nearly 200 persons a year.³¹ This increasing popularity necessitated more space. On October 29, 1895, Monsignor Quigley presented plans for an annex to Mother Teresa (Barry) and the Council members. The following autumn, 1896, a new two-story frame building was ready for occupancy. It contained two wards, an operating room with all the latest improvements, and twenty private rooms with baths. A special feature of this new structure was the screened piazza in the front of the building facing south for the use of convalescing patients.³² This annex became so crowded with sick and injured soldiers and marines during the Spanish-American War that it was dubbed the "Marine Ward."³³ The Infirmary treated 138

³⁰Ibid., p. 19.

³¹CDA 81H7, Clipping from the News and Courier, Wednesday, April 4, 1894. The article, "A Useful Institution," includes an address by Monsignor D. J. Quigley summarizing the history of St. Francis Xavier Infirmary.

³²Reynolds, pp. 23-24.

³³Ibid., p. 26.

soldiers and 123 marines during 1898; and 53 soldiers and 84 marines between January and October, 1899. The records tender thanks to Roper Hospital and to the Citadel for having provided Saint Francis with extra bedsteads and mattresses during the emergency.³⁴ The Sisters who cared for the soldiers during the Spanish-American War were: Sister M. De Chantal (Clary), Sister M. Euphemia (Conlon), Sister M. Laurentia (Early), Sister M. Rose (Gonzales), Sister M. Michael (Leary), Sister M. Bernadine (McGinley), Sister M. Aloysius (McGrory), Sister M. Veronica (O'Day), Sister M. Margaret (O'Neill), and Sister M. Magdalen (Prendergast).³⁵

These Sisters, although devoted and self-sacrificing, were not trained nurses. The knowledge and skills they possessed, they acquired through experience, especially from the doctors' instructions. Realizing the situation, and desiring to improve the standards of the only Catholic hospital in the diocese, Bishop Northrop recommended that the Community establish a training school for nurses. Through a priest friend in

³⁴ASCLM, Saint Francis Xavier Advisory Board Minutes, January, 1899, and October, 1899.

³⁵ASCLM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), O.L.M., unpaginated.

the North, the Bishop hoped to secure the services of a graduate nurse, a laywoman, to undertake the organizational work.³⁶

Mother Teresa (Barry) and the Council members favored the Bishop's proposal. Acting upon his suggestion, the Community, in December, 1899, purchased two houses immediately east of the existing hospital buildings on Calhoun Street as a site for the future Saint Francis Nurses' Training School.³⁷

The arrangements for establishing the nursing school were among Mother Teresa's last official acts. Early in May the eighty-six-year-old Superioress of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy developed influenza. Although she put up a struggle remarkable for one her age, at four o'clock Friday afternoon, May 18, 1900, Mother Teresa (Barry) died.³⁸ On Monday morning, May 21, her body was carried from the convent to the Pro-cathedral,

³⁶CDA, uncatalogued report from Miss Mary McKenna to Bishop William T. Russell, 1917. Miss McKenna was Superintendent of St. Francis Xavier Nurses' Training School, Charleston, S.C., from its foundation in 1900 until 1902. Later, in 1913, she became Superintendent of St. Francis Xavier Infirmary. Upon leaving that position in 1917, she submitted a report of her services and experiences in Charleston to the Bishop. This reference will be cited hereafter as McKenna Report.

³⁷ASCIM, Council Minutes, December 18, 1899.

³⁸News and Courier, May 19, 1900, p. 5.

Queen Street, for funeral services. The Sisters and orphans walked in procession behind the coffin. In keeping with Mother Teresa's wishes, there was no eulogy. Bishop Northrop, celebrant of the solemn pontifical requiem Mass, said simply:

. . . On this sad occasion it seems to me enough to say that she had for more than seventy years done a duty to God and kept aloof from the world. . . .³⁹

Mother Teresa is buried in Saint Lawrence Cemetery with no special stone or words to mark her grave.

In Mother Teresa's (Barry) death the Community lost the living link with Bishop England. She, in some indefinable way, had embodied the spirit of the Community. In fact, the Community of 1900 was as much Mother Teresa's as it was Bishop England's. What a Mother Foundress is to some Religious Communities, Mother Teresa had become for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Bishop England had guided the Community for twelve years. Mother Teresa was a member for seventy-one years, and Superioress for thirty-nine.

Community records, however, contain only a sketchy outline of her life. This fact might appear strange were it not so typical. Contrary to some Religious Communities, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy have

³⁹Ibid., May 22, 1900, p. 8.

only recently begun to keep house histories and anecdotal records. Information about the personal lives of the Sisters is largely nonexistent.

Physically, Mother Teresa was a tall, big-boned woman, rather masculine in appearance. She had a high forehead, light eyes, thin lips and a firm jaw. Hers was a strong, no-nonsense face, yet there was compassion in her eyes. "Dignified" and "reserved" are the adjectives most frequently used to describe her. A Civil War veteran once told Bishop Lynch that:

The visits of Mother Teresa to the Hospital in Charleston did me more good in the soothing influence her deportment and conversations exercised over my mind (although she never spoke on religious matters) than did the unvarying kindness of a mother and sister to my diseased body.⁴⁰

In his History of Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia, Father Jeremiah O'Connell spoke of her as "that incomparable Religious."⁴¹ Mother M. Baptiste (Lynch), sister of Bishop Lynch and also the Superior of the Ursuline Sisters in Columbia, South Carolina, until her death in 1837, had described Mother Teresa (Barry) as a

⁴⁰CDA 36W7, Letter from a Mr. M. A. Moore to Bishop Lynch, from Gourdin's Depot, N.E.R.R., S.C., August 14, 1866. In this letter Mr. Moore, a former Confederate soldier, is seeking information about the Catholic Church.

⁴¹O'Connell, p. 265.

"superior woman."⁴² Father Patrick L. Duffy, pastor of Saint Joseph's Church, Charleston, at the time of Mother Teresa's death, characterized her as "a valiant woman, and tender mother, courageous to suffer and quick to sympathize."⁴³ The senior Sisters of the present Community have always heard her spoken of as "dear, ever-kind Mother Teresa." If some had contrary sentiments, they were not recorded. On his deathbed Bishop England had counselled the Sisters to fulfill their obligations. Mother Teresa (Barry) fulfilled them in humility, simplicity, and charity. She bequeathed to the Community an example of hard work, perseverance, and obedient submission to the Bishop of Charleston.

At the time of Mother Teresa's (Barry) death, there were forty-eight professed Sisters, three novices,

⁴²AUND, XI-1-e, Mother Baptiste Lynch to James F. Edwards, May 30, 1887. Professor James F. Edwards of the University of Notre Dame had written to Mother Baptiste Lynch in search of relics of Bishop England. Mother Baptiste referred him to Mother Teresa (Barry), "one of his first band of Sisters of Mercy, . . . is a venerable and a superior woman."

⁴³Patrick L. Duffy, "Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy," The Religious Communities of Women, Vol. II: The Catholic Church in the United States of America Undertaken to Celebrate the Golden Jubilee of His Holiness, Pope Pius X (New York: The Catholic Editing Company, 1914), p. 415.

and one postulant in the Community.⁴⁴ Forty-two of the forty-eight professed members lived in Charleston. They had under their care seventy-six students in the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Meeting Street; one hundred fifty pupils in Saint Mary's Free School, George Street; one hundred orphan boys and girls; the children attending the Cathedral and Saint Joseph's parochial schools; and the patients in Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary.⁴⁵ The Community then conducted only one institution outside the city of Charleston--Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter, South Carolina. The six Sisters there had in their charge twenty-one boarders and thirty-eight day students.⁴⁶ The only other Religious Communities of women then serving in the diocese were the Ursulines of Columbia, South Carolina, and the Franciscans of Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania. The Ursulines operated two Academies for young ladies, one in Columbia, the other in Greenville, South Carolina. The Franciscan Sisters taught the children of Saint Patrick's parochial school, Charleston.⁴⁷ From a diocesan viewpoint, therefore, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy were conducting the only

⁴⁴The Catholic Directory for 1900 (Milwaukee: M. H. Wiltzius and Co., 1900), p. 222.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

Catholic hospital, the only Catholic orphanages, two of the four academies for girls, and three of the five parochial schools then in the diocese.

On June 30, 1900, the Community elected Mother Teresa's (Barry) successor. They chose Sister M. Loretto (Quinlan), described by all the Sisters who knew her as a warm, gentle, and motherly woman.⁴⁸ According to the Constitutions then governing the Community, the Superior-ess might serve two terms but could not be re-elected without a dispensation from the Bishop. So highly did the Sisters love and esteem Mother Loretto (Quinlan) that, having obtained the necessary dispensation, they re-elected her for a third term in 1907, and a fourth in 1910. During Mother Loretto's (Quinlan) ten years in office, the Community established Saint Francis Nurses' Training School; converted the orphanage into a city institution; accepted three more parochial schools; and built a new motherhouse.

In establishing Saint Francis Nurses' Training School, Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) was actually

⁴⁸ Mother M. Loretto Quinlan entered the Community on July 2, 1865, and was professed on September 24, 1868. Shortly thereafter, she was assigned to St. Joseph's Academy, Sumter, S.C., where she spent the greater part of her religious life. In 1891 she became the Directress of St. Joseph's and held that position until her election as Mother Superioress in 1900.

completing the arrangements begun by Mother Teresa (Barry). In accord with Bishop Northrop's desires, Mother Loretto, Sister M. De Chantal (Clary), Superintendent of the hospital, and Monsignor D. J. Quigley, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community, encouraged Miss Mary McKenna, a graduate of Union Hospital, Fall River, Massachusetts, to accept the position of Superintendent of the Training School. Miss McKenna arrived in Charleston sometime during September, 1900.⁴⁹ The Nursing School opened on October 22, 1900, with an enrollment of eight lay students.⁵⁰ The young Sisters placed in training attended all the classes with the lay students except the lectures in obstetrics. In that day and age it was not customary for Sisters to take care of obstetrical patients. However, Miss McKenna gave the Sisters private instructions in that subject to enable them to pass the state examinations.⁵¹

Most of the doctors on the Nursing School faculty were graduates of the South Carolina Medical College, Charleston, South Carolina. Sister M. De Chantal (Clary), the Superintendent of the hospital, deserves

⁴⁹CDA, McKenna Report, unpaginated.

⁵⁰Reynolds, p. 29.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 30.

the credit for having secured their services and planned the curriculum with them. Miss McKenna described Sister M. De Chantal (Clary) as "a magnificent woman, dignified and capable, and thoroughly in sympathy with all things which meant progress for her Community."⁵² However, Sister M. De Chantal (Clary) was then almost seventy years old. Because of failing health, she resigned as Superintendent in June, 1901. Three months later, September 19, 1901, she died. Her successor, Sister M. Laurentia (Early), died the following July (July 3, 1902). Sister M. Euphemia (Conlon), who became the third Superintendent of Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary, served in that capacity until 1913.⁵³

The year 1902 marked the hospital's twentieth birthday and the nursing school's first graduation. What Bishop Northrop had once termed "our one-horse infirmary" had grown to include five buildings, each a two-story frame house. According to the hospital records, 3,447 patients had received treatment during the twenty-year period.⁵⁴ The financial statement reveals that, at one point, the Sisters had literally sold a

⁵²CDA, McKenna Report, unpaginated.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Reynolds, p. 35.

cow and a calf to meet their expenses. Some of the Sisters, when not on duty, had given piano lessons or taught china painting to help supplement the hospital income.⁵⁵ At a later date, Miss McKenna related that, before 1913, the Sisters had neither a Community recreation room nor comfortable sleeping quarters. She described their accommodations as follows:

They took their recreation in a small room used as a sacristy, and the Sisters in charge of halls slept there in a room which received all the sounds of the patients and the nurses working during the night. The Sisters were supposed to get up if anything unusual happened during the night.⁵⁶

The eight young women who constituted the first class of the Saint Francis Xavier Nurses' Training School graduated on October 22, 1902. Shortly thereafter, Miss McKenna returned to her home in Fall River, Massachusetts. The following year Sister M. Bernardine (McGinley), a graduate nurse, became Superintendent of the training school.⁵⁷ She remained in that responsible position throughout Mother Loretto's administration.

A Community with multiple apostolates must learn the knack of keeping its varied works operating as harmoniously as possible, simultaneously. Mother M.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 35.

⁵⁶CDA, McKenna Report, unpaginated.

⁵⁷Reynolds, p. 31.

Loretto (Quinlan) encountered this problem at the end of her first six months in office. The fifteen-year-old contract between the Community and the City Council, that provided \$6,000.00 annually for the maintenance of seventy-five orphans, expired on December 31, 1900. It could not be renewed in view of a provision in the State Constitution of 1894 barring the appropriation of any public funds to sectarian institutions.⁵⁸ The dilemma was familiar enough. Without the city appropriation the Sisters could not provide for the orphans, yet they did not wish to abandon them.

Alderman Bernard O'Neil, a long-time friend of the Sisters, came to their assistance. Under the terms of a bill he introduced in the city legislature, the motherhouse and girls' orphanage, Queen Street, became a city institution governed by a board of seven commissioners chosen annually by the City Council. The commissioners appointed all the staff members and employees of the City Orphan Asylum, the new name for the orphanage.⁵⁹ The constitutionality of the bill was questioned, but on January 9, 1901, George S. Legare, Corporation

⁵⁸ASCLM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), p. 63.

⁵⁹Charleston Library Society, Manual of the City Council, 1899-1903 (Charleston, S.C.), pp. 196 and 387-393.

Counsel, reported to the Committee on Ways and Means that he found nothing in the legislation in conflict with the provisions of the state constitution. Therefore, at a regular meeting of the City Council on January 22, 1901, the bill was approved.⁶⁰

Under the new arrangement, the boys' and girls' asylums were merged. The boys, brought down from Calhoun Street, moved into what was formerly the mother-house. The girls continued to live in the wing that had been added to the east end of the main building in 1887. One relocation necessitated another. Hence, the mother-house moved to the Alston Mansion, 51 Meeting Street, site of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy since 1871. The Academy, in turn, changed its address to 205 Calhoun Street, formerly the Boys' orphanage.

In keeping with the nonsectarian nature of a city institution, the Sisters had to remove all visible signs of religion from the Queen Street property. Even the crosses on top of the buildings and on the gates were carved away. The absence of the Blessed Sacrament constituted the greatest deprivation for the Sisters. From 1901 until 1918, the Sisters living in the City Orphan Asylum made their daily visits to the Blessed

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 213.

Sacrament in the Cathedral or, after 1910, in the Legare Street convent.⁶¹

On July 5, 1901, T. Moultrie Mordecai, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the City Orphan Asylum, notified Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) under her baptismal name, Miss Joanna Quinlan, that the Board had unanimously elected her Principal Matron of the orphanage. He ordered her "to report for duty to the Chairman of this Board on and after Saturday the 6th at 12 noon."⁶² The Board also elected Sister M. Genevieve (Keenan) as Assistant Matron; Sister M. Austin (Schnell) as Sewing Mistress; Sister M. Dominic (Gough), Sister M. Thomasine (Gough), Sister M. Christina (Gaynor), and Miss Annie Cross, as teachers; and Sister M. Euphrasia (Mullane) and Sister M. Agnes (Dougherty) as nurses.⁶³ While employed at the City Orphan Asylum, the Sisters were not permitted to use their religious names. They were, however, allowed to wear their religious habits.

The Sisters soon learned that working for a city

⁶¹ASCLM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), O.L.M., unpaginated, entry dated February 14, 1918.

⁶²ASCLM, Box labeled "City Orphan Asylum," letter from T. Moultrie Mordecai to Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan), July 5, 1901.

⁶³Ibid.

institution involved red tape. They had to buy all food and clothing for the orphans from those merchants awarded contracts by the Board of Commissioners and at the prices specified in the contracts. Failure to comply brought reprimands such as included in the following letter from Chairman Mordecai:

Where your expenses exceed per month \$350.00 you must positively consult me before incurring one copper of additional expense, even if the children have to go with old shoes instead of new. . . .

In the bill of Margenhoff's Bakery I notice an item of \$6.00 for cakes and candy. Please inform me why this was incurred. I gave no special order for this disbursement and it will receive criticism.⁶⁴

The Sisters could not even plan an outing for the children without the consent of the Board of Commissioners.

It is evident that Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) found it difficult to adjust to the employer-employee relationship. Chairman Mordecai chided her several times for having admitted more children into the orphanage than the number fixed by the Board of Commissioners. He also frequently reminded her that his duty and hers was simply to carry out orders prescribed by a higher authority. His reports to the City Council, however, were consistently favorable to the institution.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Ibid., May 6, 1903.

⁶⁵The Yearbooks of the City of Charleston contain the annual reports from the Chairman of the Board

In 1912, the city raised its appropriation to the City Orphan Asylum from \$6,000.00 to \$6,450.00 annually.⁶⁶ In later years there were additional increases necessitated by the rising cost of living. This money, however, had to be expended for the upkeep of the children. It could not be used to repair or improve the property. The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy paid for any expenses of that nature. With time the Community became accustomed to the arrangement. In fact, the orphanage remained a city institution until January, 1965.

The movement into the parochial schools, begun during the last years of Mother Teresa's (Barry) administration, continued during Mother M. Loretto's (Quinlan) ten years in office. On September 16, 1901, Father J. T. McElroy became pastor of Saint Peter's Church, Charleston. The parish, established in 1867 to serve the Catholic colored population, had a school

of Commissioners of the City Orphan Asylum to the City Council. See Yearbook of the City of Charleston, 1909 (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell), p. 290. See also the Yearbooks for 1910 and 1911, pp. 318-320, and pp. 457-462, respectively. In general, these reports attest that the discipline in the institution was very good; the children were carefully taught; and that rigid economy was practiced.

⁶⁶Yearbook of the City of Charleston, 1912 (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell), p. 311.

conducted by three lay teachers. The new pastor, however, wished to place the school under the direction of the Sisters. He appealed to Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) who appointed Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley) and Sister M. Petronilla (Cannon) to Saint Peter's on February 2, 1902.⁶⁷

During the summer, with money he obtained from Mother Catherine Drexel, foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Negroes, Father McElroy converted the former school building, 51 Society Street, into a convent for the Sisters.⁶⁸ The school was transferred to old Saint Paul's Church, also on Society Street, between Meeting and Anson Streets.⁶⁹ The convent, named Saint Catherine's in honor of Mother Drexel, opened on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1902. The first occupants, Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), Superior, and her assistants, Sister M. Francis (Robb) and Sister M. Anna (Earl), taught Sunday School and took care of Saint Peter's Church (including the laundering of all the altar linens), in addition to

⁶⁷ ASCIM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), O.L.M., unpaginated.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Moran, p. 90.

their weekly school duties.⁷⁰ One hundred twenty-five pupils enrolled for the school year, 1902-1903.⁷¹

In June, 1903, the Franciscan Sisters from Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania, in charge of Saint Patrick's parochial school since 1887, withdrew from the diocese. In response to Bishop Northrop's request for replacements, Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) assigned Sister Alexius (McGreen), Sister M. Cecilia (Lynch), Sister M. Dominic (Gough), and Sister M. Leocadia (Burke) to Saint Patrick's for the school year 1903-1904.⁷² There was no convent in the parish at that time. Hence, the Sisters lived at the motherhouse, 51 Meeting Street, and walked to and from daily--a distance of about twenty city blocks. In bad weather, they took the streetcar.

On November 28, 1903, two months after the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy had begun teaching in Saint Patrick's School, Monsignor D. J. Quigley, pastor of the parish and Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community since 1883, died. In his death, the Sisters lost one of the best friends they had ever had among the diocesan clergy. The Council Minutes state:

⁷⁰ASCIM, Council Minutes, September 8, 1902.

⁷¹Moran, p. 90.

⁷²ASCIM, Council Minutes, July 28, 1903.

Our Ecclesiastical Superior did everything his judgment deemed wise to further the cause of religion in the different houses of the Order, and always evinced a tender, solicitude for the welfare of the Community. With gratitude we enshrine his memory in our hearts and we recommend his soul to the infinite mercy of God.⁷³

From 1903 until 1913, Bishop Northrop reserved to himself the Ecclesiastical Superiorship of the Sisters.

Mother Catherine Drexel visited Charleston in March, 1904. She was so pleased with the work being done at Saint Peter's School that she encouraged Father McElroy to establish the Immaculate Conception School for the colored children in the northern part of the city. The school, located on the southwest corner of Coming and Shepard Streets, opened in September, 1904, with an enrollment of fifty students. Sister M. Dominic (Gough) and Sister M. Anna (Earl) were the first Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy to teach the children in the Immaculate Conception school, lived with the Sisters who taught in Saint Peter's school in Saint Catherine's Convent, Society Street. On April 15, 1909, Bishop Northrop blessed a new wing to that convent. The addition had been built with money donated by Mother

⁷³Ibid., undated entry probably sometime during November, 1903.

Catherine Drexel.⁷⁴ The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy conducted Saint Peter's and the Immaculate Conception schools until 1917.

As the number of parochial schools in Charleston increased, the number of students attending Saint Mary's Free School for Girls decreased. In 1892, Saint Mary's had had an enrollment of 280 pupils; in 1900, 150; and in 1905, 90 pupils.⁷⁵ The school, founded during Bishop England's lifetime and conducted by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy throughout its sixty-eight-year history, graduated its last class in June, 1906.⁷⁶ The following September, the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, then celebrating its seventy-sixth anniversary, moved from Calhoun Street to 54 George Street, the building vacated by Saint Mary's Free School.⁷⁷ In May, 1907, the Cenacle Sisters of Saint Regis, a Community

⁷⁴ASCLM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), O.L.M., unpaginated. See also, Moran, p. 90.

⁷⁵Sadlier's Catholic Directory and Ordo for 1892 (New York: D. J. Sadlier & Co.), p. 215; The Catholic Directory for 1900 (Milwaukee: M. H. Wiltzius & Co.), p. 222; The Catholic Directory and Almanac for 1905 (Milwaukee: M. H. Wiltzius & Co.), pp. 251-252.

⁷⁶ASCLM, Register of St. Mary's Free School, 1875-1906.

⁷⁷ASCLM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), p. 63.

whose main work consists in conducting retreats for women, moved into the Calhoun Street house.⁷⁸

In June, 1906, the Ursuline Nuns who had been conducting Saint Angela's Academy, Aiken, South Carolina, since its establishment in 1900, returned to their motherhouse in Columbia, South Carolina. Shortly thereafter, Bishop Northrop asked the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy to staff Saint Angela's, a boarding and day school for young ladies. On August 27, 1906, Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) and the Councilors agreed to accept the school and to assume the debt on the property.⁷⁹ Early in September, Sister M. Cecilia (Lynch), Sister Gabriel (Wyndham), Sister M. Rosalia (Meyer), Sister M. Colette (Kelly), and Sister M. Annunciata (Hogan) moved into the former Ursuline convent in Aiken, a large white frame house on the corner of Richland and Pendleton Streets.⁸⁰ Sister M. Cecilia (Lynch) was the Superioress of the

⁷⁸ASCLM, Booklet published for Bishop Northrop's Jubilee, April 14, 1907, p. 45.

⁷⁹ASCLM, Council Minutes, August 27, 1906.

⁸⁰Ibid. These minutes mention the names of the first Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy assigned to St. Angela's Academy. See also History of Saint Mary Help of Christians Church and the Aiken Missions, Compiled for the 75th Anniversary of the first Catholic Church in Aiken, S.C., 1867-1942 (103 page paper back, privately printed, 1942), p. 76. This reference is located in St. Angela's Academy, Aiken, S.C.

house, Directress of the school, and music teacher. The school, also a large white frame building, faced Pendleton Street. Negotiations transferring the property from the Ursuline Community to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy were completed on November 21, 1906.⁸¹

In that early period of its history, Saint Angela's Academy educated students from the first grade through high school. According to Miss Alma Burckhalter, a graduate of the class of 1907, boys were accepted in the lower grades, but the high school department was exclusively for girls.⁸² Between 1907 and 1910 total school enrollment fluctuated between ninety-four and ninety-eight students.⁸³ Many of these pupils were non-Catholics.

Father John S. Seidl was pastor of Saint Mary Help of Christians, the Catholic Church in Aiken, when

⁸¹ ASCIM, Council Minutes, undated entry, 1906.

⁸² Tape recording of an interview between Sister M. William (Pinckney), O.L.M., present Principal of Saint Angela's Academy, and Mrs. Wyman Schroeder, oldest Catholic resident in Aiken, Aiken, S.C., April 4, 1967. See also, ASCIM, "Memories of St. Angela Academy, Its Early Days," an account written by Miss Alma Burckhalter, a graduate of the class of 1907, p. 4.

⁸³ The Official Catholic Directory for the Years 1907 through 1910 (Milwaukee: M. H. Wiltzius & Co.), for the year 1907, p. 266; 1908, p. 269; 1909, p. 271; 1910, p. 277.

the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy took charge of Saint Angela's. He was an elderly man in poor health. Upon the advice of his doctor, he resigned his pastorate at Christmas time, 1907. His successor, Father J. J. Hughes, remained less than a year. In 1908 Father Dennis P. Lanigan took his place and served as pastor of Saint Mary's Church and the Aiken Missions until 1915.⁸⁴ Father Lanigan has left a very interesting map indicating the state of Catholicity in Aiken and the surrounding missions during his pastorate. The map shows an outline of the whole state of South Carolina with the counties of Edgefield, Saluda, Aiken, Lexington, Barnwell, Bamberg, Orangeburg, and Calhoun shaded in various tints. During Father Lanigan's pastorate and for some years thereafter the resident priest in Aiken was responsible for ministering to the Catholics in these eight counties, commonly called the "Aiken Missions." In the entire territory, a distance measuring 6,497 square miles, there were only 123 Catholic adults and 128 Catholic children out of a total population of 228,703. There were eight churches and twenty-five mission stations (i.e., private homes where Mass could be

⁸⁴History of Saint Mary Help of Christians Church and the Aiken Missions, p. 50.

offered).⁸⁵ Father Lanigan could not possibly say Mass in each of these locations every Sunday. Hence, he alternated. The Sisters and people of Aiken, therefore, did not have Mass every Sunday. Nonetheless, they would all congregate in the church and one of the Sisters would read the Mass prayers as Bishop England had instructed the people to do in the early 1800's.⁸⁶ Occasionally, some of the Sisters would take the trolley to Augusta, Georgia, to assist at Mass there. When they did so, however, they had to leave Aiken at six o'clock in the morning and did not usually return until noon time. Since the church regulations then required persons receiving Holy Communion to fast from the previous midnight, the Sisters packed a breakfast and travelled on an empty stomach.⁸⁷

In the days before Florida became the fashionable cold weather resort on the East Coast, many wealthy Northerners wintered in Aiken. These rich families brought with them a retinue of hired help, sometimes as

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 50.

⁸⁶Tape recording of an interview between Sister M. William (Pinckney), O.L.M., and Mrs. Wyman Schroeder, April 4, 1967.

⁸⁷Interview with Sister M. Catherine (Smith), December 14, 1966. Sister M. Catherine lived at St. Angela's Academy during Father Lanigan's pastorate.

many as twenty-five servants to a household. The majority of the working people were Irish Catholics whose presence greatly increased the congregation at Saint Mary Help of Christians. The resident priest, therefore, spent more time in Aiken during the winter months than he did during the summer months. Hence, the Sisters had Sunday Mass more frequently from November to April than they did during the rest of the year.⁸⁸

The Sisters at Saint Angela's assisted Father Lanigan in every way they possibly could. Each year, at the end of the spring term, Father Lanigan would bring the Catholic children from his various missions to Saint Angela's. During the following two weeks the Sisters would board, instruct, and prepare these children to receive the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation.⁸⁹ On Sunday afternoons during the school year, two Sisters from Saint Angela's gave catechetical instructions to the few poor white Catholic families living in Langley, one of the cotton mill towns in Horse Creek Valley. This region, extending from Aiken southwestward to the Savannah River near Augusta, Georgia,

⁸⁸ Tape recording of an interview between Sister M. William (Pinckney), O.L.M., and Mrs. Wyman Schroeder, April 4, 1967.

⁸⁹ CDA 9466, Father D. J. Lanigan to Bishop Northrop, May 9, 1913.

was then one of the most depressed industrial areas in the United States. Some of the inhabitants lived in houses provided by the mill companies. Others lived in dilapidated two-room pine shacks. The Sisters taught these people, young and old, in their homes. In some instances, the teacher and her pupils used wooden crates for benches.⁹⁰

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy experienced a period of unprecedented growth during Mother M. Loretto's (Quinlan) ten years in office. Although eleven Sisters died, thirty-five young Sisters were professed.⁹¹ By comparison with other religious communities, a total membership increase of twenty-four Sisters over a ten year period may appear insignificant. For the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, however, it was phenomenal.

There was no apparent reason for the increase aside from the providence of God. Twelve of the thirty-five newly professed Sisters were Irish-Americans, natives of Philadelphia. Although none of the twelve is alive today, the Sisters who knew them relate that they learned about the Community and its work from a priest in Philadelphia. Five of the newcomers were

⁹⁰Interview with Sister M. Catherine (Smith), December 14, 1966.

⁹¹ASCLM, Community Register, pp. 16-21.

Charlestonians; two came from other sections of South Carolina; while another two were natives of other Southern states. Although six Sisters were of Irish birth, at least three of them had lived in Philadelphia before entering the Community. Of the remaining eight Sisters, five were natives of states in the northeastern part of the United States; one, a native of Germany; another, a Canadian; and the last, from England.⁹²

It soon became apparent to Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) and the Councilors that the old Alston Mansion on Meeting Street, site of the motherhouse of the Community since 1901, could not accommodate the growing numbers. Sisters who made their Novitiate there relate that there was hardly room to move between the beds in the Novitiate dormitory. On June 4, 1907, therefore, in return for \$7,500.00, Bishop Northrop conveyed to the Community a piece of property on the southeast corner of Queen and Legare Street, directly behind the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist.⁹³ Construction of the new motherhouse began on February 2, 1909. Three months later, the Community sold the former Alston

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³ASCLM, Copy of Deed of Conveyance, recorded June 8, 1907, Register Mesne Conveyance, Charleston County, S.C., Book T-24, Title to Real Estate.

Mansion, Meeting Street, to Mrs. Caroline Mullally for \$20,000.00.⁹⁴ The Sisters expected to move into their new convent on August 15, 1909, but the building was not ready for occupancy until December. During the interim the Sisters lived in other houses of the Community in the city and in Loretto Cottage⁹⁵ on Sullivan's Island. On December 8, 1909, Mother M. Loretto's (Quinlan) feast day, Bishop Northrop blessed the new building.⁹⁶ Thereupon, the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy as it is officially called, or 68 Legare Street, as it is familiarly called, entered upon its forty-nine-year history as the motherhouse of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) began her fourth

⁹⁴ ASCIM, Council Minutes, June 24, 1909. This house was purchased by the Historic Charleston Foundation in March, 1955. In March, 1956, it was opened to the public, furnished much as it must have been when its original owner, Nathaniel Russell built it in 1809. Hence, it is no longer called the Alston House, but the Russell House. Today, 1957, the Nathaniel Russell House, owned by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy from 1870 until 1909, is the headquarters of the Historic Charleston Foundation.

⁹⁵ Loretto Cottage was built in 1902 upon a piece of property purchased and given to the Community in 1899 by Monsignor D. J. Quigley, then Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community. Monsignor Quigley wanted the Sisters, especially the hospital Sisters, to have some place where they might relax during the summer. There have been few Sisters in the Community since then who have not pleasant memories of days spent "on the island."

⁹⁶ ASCIM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), p. 71.

consecutive term as Superioress of the Community in June, 1910. One of the problems uppermost in her mind was the need to modernize Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary. To build a completely new plant was her ideal. However, Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) realized that insufficient funds might make that goal an impossibility.

In 1910, hospitals were no longer primarily charitable institutions, but were becoming nonprofit big businesses. Each year hospital organization became more complex. Persons in administrative positions, therefore, needed special training. Aware of this development, in August, 1910, Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) and the Council members decided to send Sister M. Bernardine (McGinley) and Sister M. Dolores (Lawly) to Columbia University, New York City, for a course in hospital management.⁹⁷ Before the Sisters completed the first year of the two-year course, however, Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) became seriously ill. She lingered for three months, hopeful that if it were God's will, she might live to see a new infirmary built. Her wish was not granted. On May 22, 1911, while Bishop Northrop and the Sisters knelt around her bed, Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) died.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ASCIM, Council Minutes, August 23, 1910.

⁹⁸News and Courier, p. 10.

Mother M. Loretto (Quinlan) was the right woman in the right place at the right time. The years following Mother M. Teresa's (Barry) death could have been difficult ones. Rather, that decade ranks among the happiest and most harmonious in the Community's history. This was due in no small measure to Mother M. Loretto's (Quinlan) firm but gentle personality. The Sisters loved her and trusted her judgment. Under her direction they had willingly adjusted to new situations and had broadened the scope of each of their varied apostolic activities.

On June 17, 1911, the Sisters elected Mother M. Aloysius (McGrory) to govern the Community for the remainder of Mother M. Loretto's (Quinlan) term (i.e., until June, 1913).⁹⁹ The most pressing problem Mother M. Aloysius (McGrory) inherited from her predecessor was the necessity of updating Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary. With the Bishop's approval, Mother M. Aloysius (McGrory) and the Council members decided to build a new eighteen room wing on Ashley Avenue behind the 1896 annex and to

⁹⁹ASCLM, Council Minutes, June 17, 1911. Mother M. Aloysius (McGrory), born Kate McGrory, entered the Community on December 3, 1892, and was professed on August 15, 1895. The records, unfortunately, contain very little information about Mother M. Aloysius. In the latter years of her life she worked in the business office at St. Francis Xavier Infirmary. She died on December 1, 1928.

renovate the existing buildings.¹⁰⁰ However, Bishop Northrop, exercising his prerogative as first Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community, would not permit any work to begin until the Sisters agreed to the following stipulation:

In the management of your new Infirmary you will engage as Superintendent only a trained nurse graduate in the institutional work of Hospital, either from Johns Hopkins Hospital or Columbia University, New York. This Superintendent will have absolute and complete authority in the direction of your new hospital for one year or as long as I think her services may be needed for (securing) a modern up-to-date service for the Hospital, Sisters and nurses.¹⁰¹

Put simply, Bishop Northrop did not consider the Sisters professionally competent in the sphere of hospital administration at that time. This is not surprising, nor would it have been unusual in 1911. It was only in 1899 that leaders in nursing education had begun to study the problem of providing adequate training for those who wished to become hospital superintendents. As a result, a course in hospital administration had been introduced at Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York City, in 1899. Courses in hospital management at the graduate level were not offered until the

¹⁰⁰ASCIM, Council Minutes, March 29, 1912.

¹⁰¹CDA 92H5, Bishop Northrop to Mother M. Aloysius (McGrory), May 27, 1912.

1930's.¹⁰² Apparently Sister M. Bernardine (McGinley) and Sister M. Dolores (Lawly) never completed the course they had begun in September, 1910. As none of the other Sisters at Saint Francis had had any formal education in hospital management, Mother Aloysius and the Council agreed to comply with the Bishop's directive. The erection of the new wing, named in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes, began during the summer of 1912.

During that same summer the Sisters at Saint Angela's Academy, Aiken, South Carolina, moved from their original location on the corner of Richland and Pendleton Street to larger quarters, the former Magnolia Inn, on the corner of York Street and Richland Avenue. The initiative for this change appears to have come from Father Lanigan who considered the old school on Pendleton Street a fire trap.¹⁰³ To raise funds for the new Saint Angela's Father Lanigan had sent letters of appeal

¹⁰²Deborah M. Jensen, History and Trends of Professional Nursing (4th ed. rev.; St. Louis, Mo.: The C. V. Mosby Co., 1959), pp. 234-235.

¹⁰³CDA, uncatalogued letter from Father D. J. Lanigan to Mother M. Aloysius (McGrory), June 19, 1912. In this letter Father Lanigan asks Mother M. Aloysius to call a Council meeting to "talk over" the Magnolia Inn property. He termed the original school site a "death trap in case of fire." Furthermore, he stated, "to my mind, a gold brick was sold to the Sisters when they purchased the property."

to people in all sections of the country. The replies had brought in a part of the \$20,000.00 the Sisters needed to purchase the former Magnolia Inn.¹⁰⁴ The Sisters, in their turn, continued to educate as many of the mission children as they possibly could, free of charge.

Active Religious Communities in the United States were entering a new stage in what might be called their evolutionary development at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Changing times resulted in changing standards for teachers, nurses, and social workers. Each professional group demanded that its members receive more and better education. Sisters wishing to compete effectively with their secular counterparts had to become professional people. In short, they had to pursue a college degree or the equivalent in their field.

There were few Catholic colleges for women in the United States prior to 1920. Realizing this, and eager to speed up the process of preparing teachers for

¹⁰⁴There is no accurate record of the amount raised by these appeals. St. Francis Xavier Infirmary lent the Sisters at St. Angela's Academy \$5,000.00 toward the purchase price of the Magnolia Inn. The Sisters also used the money obtained from the sale of the old St. Angela's. Even at that, the Academy labored under a debt for a number of years.

the parochial school systems, the authorities at Catholic University established Sisters' College, a four-year institution for Religious only. The Sisters attending were required to spend only one year, usually their last, in residence on the campus. The College opened its doors to the teaching Sisters of the United States and Canada in the summer of 1911.¹⁰⁵

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy welcomed this development. There were no Catholic colleges for women in South Carolina, North Carolina, or Georgia. The College of Charleston, a secular institute and the only college within commuting distance, did not admit women until 1918.¹⁰⁶

Sister M. Carmel (Carter), senior member of the present Community, has stated that two Sisters were scheduled to attend Sisters' College during the 1911 summer session but were prevented from doing so by Mother M. Loretto's (Quinlan) death. Mother M. Aloysius (McGrory), however, carried out her predecessor's wishes. During the summer of 1912, eight Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy attended Sisters' College: Sister M.

¹⁰⁵Roy J. Deferrari, Memoirs of the Catholic University of America, 1918-60 (St. Paul, Minn.: Daughters of St. Paul, 1962), pp. 69-70.

¹⁰⁶J. H. Easterby, A History of the College of Charleston (New York: Scribner Press, 1935), p. 133.

Benedicta (Hummel), Sister M. Chrysostom (Monahan), Sister M. Celestine (Quale), Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), Sister M. Francis (Robb), Sister M. Isidore (Sowers), Sister M. Mechtilde (Rogers), and Sister M. Carmel (Carter).¹⁰⁷ Every summer thereafter Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, sometimes as many as twelve, attended Sisters' College. The efforts of the Community to obtain requisite professional preparation for its members has been a key factor and problem in its history ever since 1912.

During the summer of 1912 Bishop Northrop wrote Miss Mary McKenna, the first Superintendent of Saint Francis Nurses Training School, asking her to return to Charleston as Superintendent of the hospital. Miss McKenna was then a nursing supervisor at Bellevue Hospital, New York City. Since leaving Charleston in 1902 she had received a B.S. from Columbia University and had spent an additional year studying and observing the various departments of Bellevue Hospital. Miss McKenna's immediate reaction to Bishop Northrop's invitation was hesitation. However, when the authorities at Bellevue and Columbia University, even though non-Catholics, pointed out the good she might do for the Church and

¹⁰⁷ASCIM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), p. 73.

the nursing profession in South Carolina, Miss McKenna accepted. She arrived in Charleston in January, 1913 and went to work almost immediately.¹⁰⁸ The new Lourdes wing opened on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11, 1913. The two-story building provided eighteen rooms for patients, an operating room, dining facilities, and a chapel.¹⁰⁹ The News and Courier gave it a very favorable write-up, describing the modern equipment in detail.¹¹⁰

The following July (1913) Mother M. Benedicta (Hummel) succeeded Mother M. Aloysius (McGrory) as Superioress of the Community. During Mother M. Benedicta's (Hummel) first year in office the renovation of the two older hospital buildings was completed. The workers converted a section of the main building into a convent. For the first time in thirty years the Sisters at Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary had a Community room and comfortable sleeping quarters.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸CDA, McKenna Report, unpaginated.

¹⁰⁹Reynolds, p. 38.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 38-39, quoting News and Courier, February 11, 1913, p. 12.

¹¹¹CDA, McKenna Report, unpaginated. Mother M. Benedicta (Hummel) entered the Community on July 20, 1881, and was professed on March 25, 1882. Before her election as Mother Superioress she was the Directress of the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Charleston. After her

In the autumn of 1914 Bishop Northrop interested Miss McKenna in establishing a District Nursing and Social Service Agency in Charleston. The Bishop's suggestion sprang from his awareness of an existing need. Between 1907 and 1908, 2,500 immigrants, predominantly Germans, Austrians, and Italians, had arrived in Charleston.¹¹² They had come seeking jobs. However, there was no industry to speak of in Charleston except the American Tobacco Company's cigar factory located in the northeastern sector of the city close to the docks, the city dump, and the county jail. Although not all the immigrants who came remained in Charleston, those who did settled in the neighborhood of the American Tobacco Company. Poverty and slum conditions prevailed. Holy Rosary, the only Catholic church in the area, numbered seven hundred parishioners in 1912. Close-by was the Star Gospel Mission. Fearful that Catholics might patronize this and other non-Catholic centers, Bishop

three years in office, 1913-1916, she became the Directress of St. Angela's Academy, Aiken, S.C. Sister M. Benedicta died on August 30, 1933.

¹¹²Wallace, pp. 652-653. See also, Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of South Carolina (compilers), South Carolina (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 77. Speaking of the 2,500 immigrants, the writers state: "Except for the importation of slaves, this was the most concentrated inflowing of labor since the founding of the colony."

Northrop suggested establishing a Catholic center.¹¹³

Miss McKenna enlisted the cooperation of the doctors, nurses, and Sisters at Saint Francis in organizing the District Nursing and Social Service Agency. In April, 1915, it became a reality. Its aims were twofold: (a) to provide home nursing care for the sick poor, and (b) to establish a center where the needy might find assistance in solving their problems. The Agency was to be an entirely charitable organization. Participating nurses received no fees for their services, and were required to attend patients "irrespective of creed, sex, or nationality, (and in special cases) of color." The Superintendent of Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary, Miss Mary McKenna, supervised the entire program. The doctors reported patients needing home care to her and she, in turn, instructed and appointed the nurses.¹¹⁴

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy on duty at Saint Francis were an integral part of the program. However, in consideration of and respect for the Rules

¹¹³ Sister M. Anthony Monahan, Our Lady of Mercy Welfare Center (Charleston, S.C.: John J. Furlong & Sons, 1963), p. 19.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 16, quoting the District Nursing and Social Service of St. Francis Xavier's Infirmary, Statement of Policy. The original copy of this document is located in CDA 96R2.

governing the Community, certain restrictions were placed upon the Sisters. They were required to have a woman companion, not necessarily another Sister, but preferably so, if possible. They were not permitted to attend obstetrical cases, and not to be appointed to night duty. The last mentioned regulation was not much of a departure from the rules governing the lay nurses. District nurses ordinarily worked only between eight o'clock in the morning (8:00 A.M.) and six o'clock in the evening (6:00 P.M.). Secular nurses in the program worked after 6:00 P.M. only by special request of the doctor, and with the explicit permission of the Superintendent.¹¹⁵

The District nurses obtained whatever supplies they needed from a special dispensary established in the hospital. The Sister Superior of Saint Francis became the treasurer of this department. She was responsible for purchasing supplies and keeping a record of their distribution.¹¹⁶

Sister M. Michael (Leary) took charge of the more strictly social service aspects of the program. A six room rented house, 90 Columbus Street, became her headquarters.¹¹⁷ Although the sign over the door read,

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Monahan, pp. 19-20.

"St. Francis Neighborhood House," people soon referred to it familiarly as "the Neighborhood House." The records of the first years in the Neighborhood House are sketchy. Case No. 1, dated April, 1915, states simply: One family in great need. Lots of little children. Home rehabilitated after deserted by father." Notations for the years 1916, 1917, and 1918 indicate that at least eighty-one families received help during that three-year period. The assistance included food, clothing, medicines, medical attention, and in some cases the wherewithal to pay the rent. Although the records state that a number of families received spiritual assistance, its nature is not specified.¹¹⁸

One of the chief purposes of the Neighborhood House was to offer the largely immigrant population then living in the area opportunities to socialize and simultaneously familiarize themselves with the American way of life. Between 1915 and 1918, therefore, Sister M. Michael (Leary), aided by Sister M. Rosalia (Meyer) and a corps of dedicated lay women, inaugurated a vacation school for children and classes in sewing, millinery, home nursing, and cooking for the older girls and young mothers.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 21

¹¹⁹Ibid., pp. 21-22.

About the same time Bishop Northrop was interesting Miss McKenna in organizing the District Nursing and Social Service Agency, he was discussing the possibility of establishing a Catholic high school in Charleston with Father Joseph O'Brien, a brilliant young priest, a recent graduate of the Catholic University, Fribourg, Switzerland. Prophets of doom warned that the Catholics of Charleston did not feel the need of a Catholic high school. Nonetheless, Father O'Brien accepted the challenge. Father J. D. Budds, pastor of the Cathedral parish, gave him permission to use the Cathedral Grammar School, Queen Street, for the high school students until other quarters could be found.¹²⁰

Father O'Brien, who intended naming the high school in honor of Bishop England, turned to Bishop England's Sisters for teachers. In response to his request, Mother M. Benedicta (Hummel) assigned Sister M. Berchmans (Crowley), Sister M. Jane Frances (Martin), and Sister M. Ancilla (Luney) to the high school.¹²¹ The school opened on September 22, 1915, with an enrollment of sixty-two pupils--a greater number than was expected. From the beginning, it was a coeducational

¹²⁰CDA, uncatalogued brochure, "The Bishop England High School," p. 7.

¹²¹ASCLM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), p. 771

institution offering both college preparatory and commercial courses.¹²²

The first year was a success--so much so that Father O'Brien began to look around for larger quarters. During the summer of 1916 he secured the deed to the property on Calhoun Street, formerly the convent of the Cenacle Sisters. On September 18, 1916, the school, now officially Bishop England High School, began its second year in the Calhoun Street building.¹²³ In reply to Father O'Brien's plea for a fourth teacher, Mother M. Benedicta (Hummel) assigned Sister Mechtilde (Rogers) to the high school faculty.¹²⁴

The establishment of Bishop England High School was to have long-term significance for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. During the next two decades the high school enrollment increased steadily, thereby necessitating additional faculty members. It soon became apparent to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy that in providing qualified teachers for the high school, the faculties of the three academies they were conducting would have to suffer. This resulted in what might be

¹²²Moran, p. 93.

¹²³CDA, uncatalogued brochure, "The Bishop England High School," p. 8.

¹²⁴ASCLM, Council Minutes, April 28, 1916.

called a conflict of interests, not finally resolved until 1929.

On June 7, 1916, Bishop Henry P. Northrop, whose health had been failing for almost a year, died at Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary.¹²⁵ His successor was not appointed until the following December. In the interim, Monsignor P. L. Duffy, pastor of Saint Joseph's Church, was the Administrator of the diocese. In his presence, on July 1, 1916, the Sisters elected Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley) to succeed Mother M. Benedicta (Hummel) as the Superioress of the Community. Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley), then attending Sisters' College, Washington, D.C., received word of her election in a telegram from Father J. D. Budds, who had been appointed Ecclesiastical Superior of the Sisters in 1913. She reached Charleston on July 3, 1916.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ASCLM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), p. 75.

¹²⁶ASCLM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), unpaginated. Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), born Julia Hanley, entered the Community on April 27, 1898, and was professed on December 8, 1900. From 1902 until 1911, she was Superior of St. Catherine's Convent, Society Street, Charleston, S.C. In 1911, she was appointed Directress of St. Joseph's Academy, Sumter, S.C., and retained that position until her election as Mother Superioress in 1916. Mother M. Stanislaus served two terms, 1916-1922. She was Novice Mistress in 1932 and 1933 and was elected Treasurer in 1938. Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley) died on March 7, 1944. At the time she was Superior of St. William's mission, Mine Creek.

The fifth Bishop of Charleston, the Most Reverend William T. Russell, a Baltimorean, pastor of Saint Patrick's Church, Washington, D.C., at the time of his appointment to Charleston, was consecrated in Baltimore by Cardinal James Gibbons on March 16, 1917.¹²⁷ He arrived in Charleston on March 22 and was installed in his Cathedral the next day. That afternoon, he visited the convent. According to Sister M. Carmel (Carter), he "asked the Sisters to pray that he would be a worthy Shepherd of his flock, telling them that he did not expect to take Bishop Northrop's place, but he hoped to find a little corner in the hearts of his people for himself."¹²⁸ On the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, the Bishop received the Sisters' vows, his first official act in the diocese.¹²⁹

Bishop William T. Russell, as his predecessor Bishop Northrop, was keenly interested in Catholic education. There were in the diocese in 1917 eight parochial schools, five private academies for girls, and Bishop England High School.¹³⁰ The Sisters of Our Lady

¹²⁷ News and Courier, March 19, 1927, p. 1.

¹²⁸ ASCIM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), p. 76.

¹²⁹ ASCIM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), unpaginated.

¹³⁰ The Official Catholic Directory for 1916 (New York: P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 1916), p. 312.

of Mercy staffed five of the eight parochial schools; three of the private academies, and assisted Father O'Brien at Bishop England High School. While the enrollments in the academies remained rather constant, there was a steady increase in the number of students attending the parochial schools and Bishop England High School. More students necessitated more teachers. Bishop Russell realized that the sixty-seven professed Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy could not continue to respond to calls for additional teachers and simultaneously conduct Saint Francis Xavier Hospital, the City Orphan Asylum, and the Neighborhood House. One of his first acts as Bishop of Charleston, therefore, was to invite the Oblate Sisters of Providence of Baltimore to take over the two parochial schools for the colored Catholic children of Charleston, Saint Peter's and Immaculate Conception, conducted by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy since 1902. The Bishop's request received a favorable reply. On September 9, 1917, the Oblate Sisters moved into Saint Catherine's Convent, Society Street, and the nine Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy returned to the motherhouse, 68 Legare Street.¹³¹ Sister M. Regina (Bergin), formerly Superior of Saint

¹³¹ASCIM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), unpaginated.

Catherine's Convent, and her own sister, Sister M. Imelda (Bergin) were assigned to Bishop England High School, raising the number of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy on that faculty from four to six.¹³² There is no record of where the other seven Sisters were assigned. It is most likely, however, that they joined the faculties of Saint Joseph's, Saint Patrick's, or the Cathedral parochial schools.

According to the Official Catholic Directory for 1916, there were only 9,300 Catholics in the Diocese of Charleston when Bishop William T. Russell took possession of his See. Of these 9,300 Catholics, 5,500 were residents of the city of Charleston, while the remaining 3,800 were scattered throughout the state of South Carolina.¹³³ These figures help to explain why five of the eight parochial schools and the only Catholic high school were located in the city of Charleston. The small number of Catholic residents in most localities rendered the erection and maintenance of a parochial school impractical if not impossible. There was, however, one rather unique rural Catholic settlement, known as the Mine Creek Mission.

¹³²ASCLM, Council Minutes, September 11, 1917.

¹³³The Official Catholic Directory for 1916, p. 312.

Mine Creek is situated about eight miles from Ward, South Carolina, a little town on the Columbia-Augusta division of the Southern Railroad in Saluda County. In 1917 it was listed as a mission station attached to the Aiken Missions. Most of the people in the area were descendants of Mr. William Rodgers. Mr. Rodgers and his brother-in-law, a Mr. Donovan, both Catholics, with their immediate families had come from Georgia and settled Mine Creek in the later part of the nineteenth century. The original Mr. Donovan had had four sons; Mr. Rodgers, ten sons, all of whom had had large families of their own. Although the priest from Aiken could visit Mine Creek only once a month, the people assembled in the church twice every Sunday. In the morning they read the Mass prayers. In the afternoon, they studied and recited the catechism.¹³⁴

In 1919 Bishop Russell sent Father M. Leonidas Lariviere, a priest from Fall River, Massachusetts, in South Carolina on sick leave, to Mine Creek to recuperate. Father Lariviere, greatly impressed by the strong faith of the people of Mine Creek and interested in their spiritual welfare, suggested establishing a

¹³⁴ ASCIM, Box marked "Mine Creek Mission," three typewritten accounts of the foundation of Mine Creek Mission, anonymous and undated. See also, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley).

parochial school there. The Bishop, who favored the proposal, appealed to Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) for Sisters. On September 6, 1920, Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) and the Councilors accepted the new mission and appointed Sister M. Mechtilde (Rogers), Superior. Sister M. Bernadette (Benson) and Sister M. Raphael (Cummins) were selected to assist Sister M. Mechtilde.¹³⁵

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1920, Father Lariviere drove Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley), Sister M. Martina (Fowler), and Sister M. Mechtilde (Rogers) from Saint Angela's Academy, Aiken, to Mine Creek, about a thirty-mile distance. The scene that greeted the missionaries was calculated to depress all but the most optimistic spirits. In her diary, Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) wrote:

No preparation of any description had been made for the Sisters. . . . No furniture had been provided except the beds and a stove. . . . No water connections, the water being drawn in a barrell by a mule up to the front door . . . the yard a scene of desolation--brush weeds, decayed wood and debris--the whole outlook enough to make the stoutest heart shrink.¹³⁶

That afternoon, Sister M. Bernadette (Benson), Sister M. Raphael (Cummins), and Sister M. Jane Frances

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ ASCLM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), unpaginated.

(Martin) came over from Aiken bringing food and linens with them. For the next week the Sisters scrubbed, cleaned, and polished the two former Knights of Columbus huts that constituted their new convent and school. Father Lariviere even managed to get the water pipes working. "So," said Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley), "we had the luxury of a necessity."¹³⁷

On Monday, September 27, 1920, Sister M. Mechtilde (Rogers), Sister M. Bernadette (Benson), and Sister M. Raphael (Cummins) opened Saint William's School, the first rural parochial school in the diocese. The first year the Sisters taught thirty-two students ranging from kindergarten to the ninth grade. In addition, they cared for the priest and taught catechism on Sundays.¹³⁸

Father Lariviere, his health restored, returned to Fall River, Massachusetts, at the end of the third school year, 1922. His successor, Father George J. Dietz built a new church, convent, and school at Mine Creek.¹³⁹ All three buildings were named Saint William's, perhaps in honor of the original Mr. William Rodgers. Sister M. Carmel (Carter) described the new

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹History of St. Mary Help of Christians Church and the Aiken Missions, p. 62.

convent as:

a small two-story building having eleven rooms and a basement, steam heat and water connections. Next to the Convent is the little schoolhouse, primitive, but far superior to the first building.¹⁴⁰

In this setting the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy taught the children of Saint William's for the next twenty-two years. This rural parochial school was the only new teaching assignment Bishop William T. Russell asked the Community to undertake.

America had entered World War I on April 6, 1917, less than a month after Bishop Russell's installation. Shortly thereafter, Miss Mary McKenna resigned as Superintendent of Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary; joined the Army Nurse Corps; and was commissioned Chief Nurse at Camp Wadsworth in Spartanburg, South Carolina. During her four years at Saint Francis, Miss McKenna had done much for the hospital and for the nursing profession in South Carolina. She had completely revised the curriculum of the Saint Francis Nurses' Training School and had obtained an affiliation with Bellevue Hospital, New York City, for its students. She had served as President of the State Association of Nurses for three terms and had been Chairman of the Red Cross Nursing

¹⁴⁰ ASCIM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), p. 79.

Organization in the state for four years.¹⁴¹

Before leaving Saint Francis, Miss McKenna had strongly recommended to Bishop Russell scrapping the old buildings and constructing a completely new hospital. As if to add weight to her suggestion, she had stated:

I feel that with a building and a Nurses' Home there would be no reason why this institution should not stand first in the State. From things I have gathered . . . I feel that many patients who now go to other institutions because they are new and present a fine exterior, would come to St. Francis.¹⁴²

The Sisters seconded Miss McKenna's proposal. It was, in fact, what they had hoped to achieve four years earlier.

All the evidence suggests that Bishop Russell favored the idea, but he could not act upon it until he had fulfilled his promise to provide a new modern building for the growing Bishop England High School. The war years, with their high prices for labor and materials, and the government prohibition upon all unnecessary building, postponed both projects until the early

¹⁴¹CDA, McKenna Report, unpaginated. See also, Reynolds, pp. 40-41. Sister Joan Marie Reynolds states that Miss McKenna returned to St. Francis Xavier in failing health in 1939 and died with the Sisters to whom she had given so much of herself.

¹⁴²CDA, McKenna Report, unpaginated.

1920's.

Sister M. Teresa (Lynch) succeeded Miss McKenna as the fifth Superintendent of Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary.¹⁴³ Training, experience, and personality rendered her well-qualified for the responsibility. Before she had entered the Community in 1912, Sister M. Teresa (Lynch) had graduated from Metropolitan Hospital, New York City, and had had a number of years of valuable work experience. As soon as she had completed her Novitiate, Sister M. Teresa (Lynch) had been assigned to Saint Francis where for four years she had served under the able direction of Miss Mary McKenna. Those who knew Sister M. Teresa (Lynch) have characterized her as "a sympathetic, tender, and devoted nurse."¹⁴⁴ The administration of the hospital remained in her hands for the next ten years. During this period Sister M. Gertrude (Tarmey), a graduate of Saint Francis Nurses' Training School, became the Director of her Alma Mater.¹⁴⁵

The Neighborhood House entered upon a new phase of its development during the war and immediate postwar

¹⁴³Reynolds, p. 45.

¹⁴⁴ASCIM, Box marked "St. Francis Xavier Infirmary," copy of a resolution passed by the doctors and Executive Staff of St. Francis Xavier Infirmary upon the death of Sister M. Teresa (Lynch) on June 12, 1928.

¹⁴⁵Reynolds, p. 45.

years. In her History of the Neighborhood House, Sister M. Anthony (Monahan) states:

The Red Cross which had functioned in Charleston on a temporary basis was reactivated in 1917 and established headquarters at the Neighborhood House. Here Sister M. Michael cooperated with interested citizens in establishing the Red Cross Nursing Corps to aid the families of the men who were overseas.¹⁴⁶

Perhaps this development necessitated more space. At any rate, in March, 1918, Bishop Russell directed Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) to purchase new quarters for the Neighborhood House suitable also for a Day Nursery. The Bishop empowered the Sister-in-charge of the Social Service work to make whatever collections were necessary to pay for the new property.¹⁴⁷ Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) and the Councilors immediately took steps to carry out the Bishop's orders. In June, 1918, the Community purchased the old Cordes Mansion, 88 America Street, the northeast corner of America Street and Hampstead Mall.¹⁴⁸

At this time Bishop Russell was actively involved in the work of the National Catholic War Council,

¹⁴⁶ Monahan, p. 23.

¹⁴⁷ ASCIM, Council Minutes, March 25, 1918.

¹⁴⁸ ASCIM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley). An entry dated May 15, 1919, states: "The old Cordes Home was bought by the Sisters on June 1, 1918 for \$5,000.00."

an organization formed in August, 1917, to provide central control and direction for the numerous Catholic societies participating in the war effort. In fact, in January, 1918, Cardinal Gibbons appointed Bishop Russell and four other prelates to investigate the possibilities of forming a permanent organization to coordinate Catholic activities in the nation during peacetime. From this select committee the National Catholic Welfare Conference later emerged.¹⁴⁹ In connection with this assignment, and with a view to the postwar welfare of the Diocese of Charleston, Bishop Russell, in December, 1918, asked Mrs. Julia Furlong, Chairman of the Women's League of Charleston, to observe the welfare work then in progress, and to assess the postwar needs of each area. When speaking of Charleston in her report to Bishop Russell, Mrs. Furlong gave high praise to the Neighborhood House:

In the case of Welfare Work, we have a wonder woman here in Sister Michael. . . . Under the leadership of Sister M. Michael every phase of welfare has been zealously followed: Instructions, actual field work under observation; a Dispensary for the poor, the follow-up system, cases of alcoholism, kindergarten and vacation work for the children--all receive

¹⁴⁹John T. Ellis, "The Diocese of Charleston in American Catholic History," The Catholic Banner, Official Newspaper of the Diocese of Charleston, December 4, 1960, p. 9A. See also, John T. Ellis, American Catholicism (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1965), pp. 131-132.

unremitting attention and labor . . .¹⁵⁰

Yet, Mrs. Furlong classified the overall accomplishments of the Neighborhood House as "small-scale." She inferred that with additional and better paid workers the House could extend its services and operate more efficiently.

Whether as a result of Mrs. Furlong's report, or not, on April 22, 1919, Bishop Russell requested the Sisters to rent the Neighborhood House to the National Catholic War Council. In presenting the proposal to Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) and the Councilors, Father J. T. McElroy, Ecclesiastical Superior of the Community since Father Budds' death in 1917, informed them that the War Council would train a Charleston lady to operate the center; spend \$3,000.00 in equipping it, \$2,000.00 a year for maintenance; and pay the Sisters \$1,000.00 rent for the first year. The Bishop suggested that the Sisters might rent a home for their own work, or continue it at the Neighborhood House while residing at the Infirmary.¹⁵¹

Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) and the Councilors granted the Bishop's request. In May, 1919, the Community rented the Neighborhood House to the National

¹⁵⁰CDA, uncatalogued letter from Mrs. Julia M. Furlong to Bishop William T. Russell, February 8, 1919.

¹⁵¹ASCLM, Council Minutes, April 22, 1919.

War Council.¹⁵² The arrangement, however, lasted only one year. On May 31, 1920, Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) noted in her diary:

In the afternoon Mother Stanislaus and Sister Michael repaired to the Neighborhood House by order of the Rt. Rev. Bishop to formally take over the work . . . after it had been in control of the National Catholic War Council.¹⁵³

Sister Michael (Leary) directed the activities of the Neighborhood House from 1920 until her death in 1932. An editorial in the News and Courier shortly after her death summarized what she, and under her direction, the Neighborhood House had contributed to Charleston during the previous decade.

. . . The Neighborhood House of which she was the heart has become a gathering place not only for the residents of the section of the City in which it is situated, but, . . . of all classes of the unemployed in all parts of Charleston. Groceries and meats, often donated by generous merchants in response to her pleas, truckloads of green vegetables and potatoes, . . . willingly given by leading truck growers were always at the command, and her willing hands piled high small wagons of the youngsters who had come to her in the pitiful need of their fathers and mothers. At a modest approximation Sister Michael fed thirty families a week in the recent past, and the Mothers' Club which she organized made and supplied many layettes for impoverished young mothers, yet no outsider ever knew of these gifts of love. Through it all, Sister Michael moved with quiet dignity, keeping faith with herself and those she helped, working many hours a day, trudging

¹⁵² ASCIM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), entry dated May 15, 1919.

¹⁵³ Ibid., May 31, 1920.

through hot streets on errands of mercy, often lacking carfare for herself, but always cheerful and confident.¹⁵⁴

On June 6, 1920, Sister M. Carmel (Carter) graduated from the Sisters' College, Catholic University, Washington, D.C. It was, as Mother M. Stanislaus noted in her diary, "a memorable day in the annals of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy."¹⁵⁵ Sister M. Carmel (Carter) was the first member of the Community to complete all the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree, including a year's residence at the Sisters' College. For each of the next eight years, the Community managed to maintain at least one and sometimes two Sisters in residence at Sisters' College.

Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) prized education highly. During her six years in office (1916-1922) it had become Community policy for each of the three academies and each mission house to save or raise enough money to send two Sisters to summer school every year.¹⁵⁶ For the Sisters not privileged to attend these sessions, Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) inaugurated year-round and

¹⁵⁴ Monahan, p. 40, quoting News and Courier, July 22, 1932.

¹⁵⁵ ASCLM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), entry dated June 16, 1920.

¹⁵⁶ ASCLM, Council Minutes, February 10, 1920.

six-week summer schools at the motherhouse, 68 Legare Street, Charleston. On May 3, 1921, Mother M. Stanislaus wrote in her diary:

The usual intellectual activities have been going on all winter. Miss Vielt has been conducting a class in Spanish for the older professed Sisters. . . . Miss Bailey has been coming twice a week all year . . . to give five young Sisters lessons on the violin. Miss Hanley has been coming to give French and voice lessons . . . Miss Langley, art lessons.¹⁵⁷

Mother M. Stanislaus (Hanley) also recorded that a Sul-
pician from Baltimore conducted the 1919 summer school at the motherhouse, and a Dr. Nelson Rice, who had received his doctorate in mathematics from Catholic University, the 1921 session. Father Joseph O'Brien, Principal of Bishop England High School, offered Latin courses during both summers.¹⁵⁸

These early motherhouse summer schools were not affiliated with any college or university program. However, they afforded the Sisters an opportunity to prepare themselves to take advanced standing examinations at Sisters' College. If the Sisters passed these examinations, and many did, they received college credit for

¹⁵⁷ASCLM, Diary kept by Sister M. Stanislaus (Hanley), entry dated May 3, 1921.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., entries dated July 23, 1919, and June 28, 1921.

that particular subject.¹⁵⁹

Bishop William T. Russell approved and appreciated Mother M. Stanislaus' (Hanley) efforts to provide the best possible professional preparation for the members of the diocesan sisterhood. When her term expired, he informed the Sisters that in selecting her successor they must keep in mind:

First, their own religious perfection; secondly their perfection as teachers and nurses. To devote all attention to one and neglect the other would be a great mistake.¹⁶⁰

Furthermore, the Bishop stated:

I am pleased to say that under the administration of Mother M. Stanislaus a high standard has been adopted for your Community. . . . This spirit of religious ambition for perfection in the two activities of your Community must be maintained. On no account can I permit any lowering of your present standard of excellence.¹⁶¹

Mother M. De Sales (De Antonio), Mother M. Stanislaus' (Hanley) successor,¹⁶² carried out the Bishop's

¹⁵⁹Interview with Sister M. Bernard (Campbell), O.L.M., August 13, 1966.

¹⁶⁰CDA, Letter from Bishop William T. Russell to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, May 9, 1922. The papers of Bishop William T. Russell in the Archives of the Diocese of Charleston have not yet been indexed.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²ASCIM, Council Minutes, July 1, 1922. Mother M. De Sales (De Antonio) entered the Community on August 5, 1902, and was professed on February 4, 1905. She spent the greater part of her life teaching in the parochial schools of Charleston. After her six years as

wishes. During her six years in office (1922-1928), Sister M. Grace (Dunn), Sister M. Ancilla (Luney), Sister M. Genevieve (Cross), Sister M. Catherine (Smith), and Sister M. De Lourdes (Boyle) received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Sisters' College.¹⁶³ In 1926, through the influence of Father Joseph O'Brien, founder of Bishop England High School, Marywood College, Scranton, Pennsylvania, offered two scholarships to the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. From that date through the 1930's Marywood College was not only an institution of higher learning but a home away from home for Bishop England Sisters. The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy owe a heavy debt of gratitude to the Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary who opened their college doors to them in a manner truly noble.¹⁶⁴ Sister M. Loretto (Reynolds), the first Sister of Our Lady of Mercy to graduate from Marywood, received her Bachelor of Arts

Mother Superioress, Sister De Sales was appointed Superior of St. Joseph's Mission Center in Sumter, S.C. In 1931 she was elected Mother Assistant of the Community. After a long illness, Sister M. De Sales died at St. Francis Hospital, Charleston, on August 21, 1957.

¹⁶³The Bulletin, the official organ of the Catholic Laymen's Association of Georgia, Augusta, Ga., August 20, 1927, p. 12.

¹⁶⁴Interview with Sister M. Bernard (Campbell), O.L.M., August 13, 1966.

degree in music in June, 1927. During that summer the Community had representation at the School of Applied Music, New York City; Fordham University, New York City; Marywood College, Scranton, Pennsylvania; and Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.¹⁶⁵

Bishop Russell manifested a real interest in the problems of Saint Francis Xavier Infirmary. Realizing the difficulty of maintaining high standards in buildings lacking up-to-date accommodations and conveniences, the Bishop, on October 4, 1923, authorized a fund raising campaign to build a completely new hospital. Estimating the total cost at \$150,000.00, and having \$40,000.00 on hand in bequests, the Bishop asked the Catholics of Charleston to contribute \$50,000.00.¹⁶⁶ Their response surpassed his most hopeful expectations. The sum of \$60,000.00 was assured before the construction of the new building began. Father Charles Dubois Wood, pastor of Saint Mary's Church, donated \$25,000.00 in cash. The Bishop himself contributed \$15,000.00. The total cost of the new building came to \$161,515.00.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵The Bulletin, August 20, 1927, p. 12.

¹⁶⁶CDA, Letter from Bishop William T. Russell to the pastors and parishioners of the various parishes in Charleston, S.C., October 4, 1923, un-indexed.

¹⁶⁷Reynolds, p. 49.

In her Inception and Early Development of St. Francis Xavier Infirmary, Sister Joan Marie Reynolds states:

The Reverend James J. May, Rector of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Charleston, merited everlasting credit for his tireless efforts and management of personal enterprises and projects to make the campaign a success. His was the driving force and spirit behind the drive.¹⁶⁸

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy were also indebted to Mr. Andrew J. Riley, Captain H. K. Lea, Mrs. John J. Furlong, and the numerous members of the laity who, under their direction, worked indefatigably in collecting funds.¹⁶⁹

On January 25, 1926, Bishop Russell laid the cornerstone of the new hospital. The dedication was scheduled for the following October 17, feast of Saint Luke the physician. Three days before, however, Bishop Russell suffered a heart attack. In January he became a patient in the building he had done so much to erect.¹⁷⁰ On March 18, 1927, Bishop Russell died.

The sixth Bishop of Charleston, the Most Reverend Emmet M. Walsh, a priest of the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia, was consecrated in that city on September 8, 1927. He took possession of his Episcopal See on September 22. Five months later he assumed the office

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 52.

of Ecclesiastical Superior of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. Monsignor J. T. McElroy, who had held that position since 1917, had had to resign due to failing health.¹⁷¹ Bishop Walsh retained the office until it was abolished twenty years later.

On August 15, 1928, Mother M. De Sales' (De Antonio) term in office having expired, the Community elected Sister M. Baptist (Eccleston) Mother Superioress.¹⁷² Four months after her election, Mother M. Baptist and the Council members decided to close the high school department of Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter, South Carolina, in view of the small number of Catholic students in attendance. Sister M. De Sales (De Antonio), Sister M. Gerald (O'Brien), Sister M. Laurentis (Bennett), and Sister M. Columba (O'Sullivan) remained in Sumter to teach the primary and grammar grades. The Sisters who had taught the high school students returned to Charleston to fill in vacancies in the

¹⁷¹ASCIM, Council Minutes, February 18, 1927, and May 16, 1927.

¹⁷²*Ibid.*, August 15, 1928. Mother M. Baptist (Eccleston) entered the Community on August 21, 1893, and was professed on March 25, 1896. Before she was elected Mother Superioress, Mother M. Baptist had spent most of her life at St. Francis Xavier Hospital and the Neighborhood House. Sister M. Baptist (Eccleston) died at St. Francis Xavier Hospital on May 12, 1955 after a long illness.

parochial schools there.¹⁷³

Bishop Walsh took a deep interest in the Catholic children living in sections of the diocese where the church was not easily accessible and parochial schools, nonexistent. In order to afford these children some formal religious instruction, the Bishop decided to experiment with the then relatively new idea of a religious vacation school. In response to the Bishop's request, in July, 1929, Mother M. Baptist (Eccleston) sent Sister M. Catherine (Smith) and Sister M. Charles (Gibson) to Spartanburg, South Carolina, to conduct a religious vacation school for the children of Saint Paul's parish. The resident priest, a Father McEvoy, turned the rectory over to the Sisters and moved in with one of the families of the parish. Approximately forty children between the ages of six and sixteen enrolled for these instructions. From 8:30 A.M. until 1:00 P.M. five days a week for the next month, Sister M. Catherine (Smith) and Sister M. Charles (Gibson) assembled these children in the parish hall and conducted classes in Bible and Church history, Christian doctrine, liturgy, and singing.¹⁷⁴ The school was so successful that the

¹⁷³ASCIM, Council Minutes, December 31, 1928, and January 1, 1929.

¹⁷⁴ASCIM, Letter from Sister M. Charles (Gibson) to Mother M. Bernard (Campbell), April 28, 1940. This

following summer the Bishop established religious vacation schools at Pinckney Colony (near Bluffton, South Carolina), Beaufort, South Carolina, and Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter, South Carolina.¹⁷⁵ In later years religious vacation schools, conducted by priests, seminarians, and the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, were established throughout South Carolina--in Georgetown, Beaufort, Parris Island, Rocky Botton, Aiken Missions, Anderson Missions, and North Charleston.

Encouraged by the success of the Sisters in Spartanburg, Bishop Walsh asked Mother M. Baptist and the Councilors to convert Saint Joseph's Academy, Sumter, South Carolina, into a year-round mission center. The Sisters living there would give religious instructions to the children of the Sumter, Florence, and Camden missions. In view of the few Catholic children attending the grade school, the Sisters decided to close Saint Joseph's and comply with the Bishop's suggestion.¹⁷⁶ In September, 1929, Sister M. De Sales (De Antonio), Sister M. John (Connell), Sister Mary (Monahan), and Sister M.

letter contains information about Sister M. Charles' experiences in the religious vacation camps in the diocese from 1929 until 1940.

¹⁷⁵The Bulletin, August 9, 1930, p. 8.

¹⁷⁶ASCLM, Council Minutes, August 29, 1929.

Louise (Tharin) began this special missionary work.¹⁷⁷ Old Saint Joseph's became a mission on wheels. In the mornings the Sisters said their prayers, prepared their lessons, and completed their household chores. Each afternoon they drove to one of their missions. Parents and pastors assumed the responsibility of getting the children to the mission center in time for the four o'clock instructions. Classes usually lasted an hour. Afterwards, the Sisters visited the sick and infirm in the area.¹⁷⁸ For the next twenty years Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy stationed at Sumter, South Carolina, travelled an average of five hundred miles weekly, bringing the truths of the Catholic faith to the children of the Sumter, Florence, and Camden missions.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy did not undertake any other new works during the first two years of Bishop Walsh's Episcopate.

Bishop England's Sisterhood was one hundred years old in December, 1929. Where once there had been four young women, there were then eighty-six professed

¹⁷⁷ASCIM, Sister M. de Lourdes (Boyle), "A Retrospect of the First Educational System in Sumter, S.C." (unpublished account of St. Joseph's Academy, Sumter, S.C.), p. 56.

¹⁷⁸Interview with Sister M. Assunta (Happoldt), November 21, 1965.

Sisters and four novices. The Community was conducting the only Catholic hospital, the only Catholic nurses' training school, the only orphanage for Catholic children, the only Catholic social service agency, a catechetical center, two of the four private academies, and six of the eleven parochial schools in the diocese.¹⁷⁹

As these statistics indicate, the history of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy was inextricably linked to the history of the diocese. In the last analysis, the story of the first hundred years of the Sisterhood is one of generous readiness to undertake any work for the good of souls in the Diocese of Charleston. No matter how difficult the task, and regardless of personal preferences, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy had never refused to obey the commands of the Bishop of Charleston. No better summary of the first one hundred years of the Sisterhood can be found than that written by Bishop Emmett M. Walsh in 1929:

The story of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy . . . is a simple narrative of heroism in danger, patient endurance in hardship, perseverance in the face of discouragement, fidelity in small things, and all the while poverty was a daily companion.

It is a story of generous Christ-like service to the sick and wounded, to the orphan and prisoner,

¹⁷⁹The Official Catholic Directory, 1929, pp. 271-272. See Also, ASCLM, Community Register, pp. 1-27.

to the poor and distressed, in peace and war, in calamity and pestilence.

It tells of Missionaries. . . . Under their Bishop they taught the negro and white . . . in grammar schools and high schools, free schools and academies, in city and country, in parish and mission. They have taught and served wherever their Bishops directed.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ ASCIM, Sister M. Carmel (Carter), the Foreword.

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