

To Maureen -

We are grateful for all
that you and Ronnie did
for the College and the Congregation.
You have been part of this history!

Sister Margaret Patricia

PROMISES TO KEEP

A History of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word
San Antonio, Texas



VOLUME ONE

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT FROM 1869 TO 1994

by
Sister Margaret Patrice Slattery, C.C.V.I.

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The title, *Promises to Keep*, is taken from Robert Frost's poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," *Complete Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958), 175. The quotation is used with the permission of the Henry Holt & Co., Inc.

DEDICATION

This history of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word is dedicated to the persons who created it, the living and deceased members of the Congregation. It is being published in conjunction with the 125th anniversary of their foundation in 1869 in San Antonio, Texas.

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PREFACE

Promises to Keep is a history of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio, Texas, beginning with their foundation in 1869 and continuing to the celebration of their 125th anniversary in 1994. A brief account is given also of the origins of the Congregation with the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Lyons, France, and of the foundation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in 1866 in Galveston, Texas, which led to the establishment in San Antonio.

The phrase adopted for the title of the book, “promises to keep,” will be familiar to many readers from its use in Robert Frost’s poem, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” where it is used to suggest a person’s acceptance of responsibility over personal satisfaction and enjoyment. Like the speaker in the poem, the sisters also have promises to keep through their religious vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience and through their choice of a life of dedicated service to others. Their history illustrates many ways in which those promises have been fulfilled.

Volume One presents a chronological study of major events and happenings in the Congregation as a whole. It describes the sisters’ many accomplishments that were causes for celebration as well as the tragic occurrences that led to sorrow. It deals with the founders and the leaders who guided the development of the organization and fostered the growth of its spirit. It traces the establishment of various forms of ministry, the expansion to different geographical locations, the development of governmental structures, and the changes in response to the changing Church.

Volume Two offers detailed historical accounts of some of the congregationally sponsored institutions. The plan for this volume evolved as I began to research the archives of the hospitals and realized that each one of these institutions has its own story to tell, a story that runs parallel with that of the Congregation. Each one illustrates the struggles, the sorrows, and the pains, as well as the joys, the glory, and the celebrations of the whole organization, and yet the history of each institution is unique.

I realized that it would not be possible within the narrative of Volume One to trace the complete history of these institutions and that if their stories were to be told they would have to be presented separately. Volume Two, therefore, includes detailed essays on nine hospitals, seven that are owned and operated by the Congregation and two that were still under the sisters’ sponsorship when the writing of this book began but which have since been sold to other entities. Included also is a historical account of Incarnate Word College, which like the

hospitals, has its own story that complements and completes the history of the Congregation. Another section of Volume Two contains a record of ten schools in Mexico, which are owned and operated by the Congregation and which illustrate, through their struggles during the revolution and persecution, the indomitable spirit of the sisters.

In recording the history, I have tried to present not merely a factual record but also some interpretation of events and some understanding of the broader context of what was happening at the same time in the Catholic Church and in society in general. I have tried also to reconstruct the personalities of some of the sisters who held leadership positions either in Congregational offices or in the sponsored institutions. At the same time, I have tried to remain true to the sources of information.

I wish to express appreciation to the general superiors of the Congregation who asked me to take on this work and offered their help and direction along the way. The research has been a source of great inspiration and has given me a truly deep and sincere appreciation for the sisters who founded the Congregation and for all of those who have sustained it in the past and continue to do so in the present.

I wish to pay tribute to three persons who offered me great encouragement and inspiration in the beginning of the work and who have all died during the course of its development: Rev. Msgr. Robert P. Slattery, my brother, who urged me to complete the task in spite of many interruptions due to his illness; Dr. Sterling F. Wheeler, past president of Incarnate Word College, who was most helpful in the early planning of the book; and Sister Gertrude Meiburger, former professor of history at Incarnate Word College, who assisted me with the beginning research and who offered a sense of direction in approaching the study. I trust that God has given all of them new life in His eternal kingdom, and I am confident that in spirit they have continued to offer me their support and guidance.

Materials for this study have been drawn from many sources, and I wish to thank all of those persons who assisted me with the research. Sister María Luisa Vélez was responsible for locating and examining all of the documents in Spanish contained in the sisters' archives in Mexico. Her help has been invaluable in providing me with pertinent material and in interpreting its significance. For translating the documents, I am grateful to Sister Rosa María Icaza and also to Sister María Guadalupe Ponce, who in addition to her translations aided in the work of research and editing.

For faithful assistance in searching through archival materials, I am grateful to Sister Finbar Joyce. For her dedication and persistence in compiling the index and in doggedly pursuing pertinent facts, I wish to

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express appreciation to Sister Matilda Fagan. For their help in entering data into the computer and in organizing material, I wish to acknowledge Leticia Vargas, Monica Rangel, and Val Zepeda, all students of Incarnate Word College.

Archivists at Incarnate Word Convent have been of great service in providing documents and in researching minute details—Sister Josephine Kennelly, Sister Francesca Eiken, Beverly Cantrell, and Anita Zavala. Also the librarians of Incarnate Word College, Mendell Morgan, Vasilios Aivaliotis, and Tamorah Hernandez, as well as Brother Edward Loch of the San Antonio archdiocesan archives have been most helpful in locating documents and points of information.

To the many persons who read portions or all of the manuscript and offered suggestions and encouragement, I am most grateful: Dr. Dennis Slattery, professor of English at Incarnate Word College, who read the work chapter by chapter and added his recommendations and words of encouragement; Sister Mary Daniel Healy, who patiently listened to each chapter and section read aloud, sometimes more than once, and gave her candid opinions and support; Sister Clarencia Kavanagh, who offered her wealth of knowledge from years spent in the archives and from her personal experience of much of the history; Sisters Bernadette Azuela and Luz María Arriaga, who reviewed sections of the manuscript pertaining to Mexico and offered suggestions; Sister Theresa McGrath, who was most helpful in offering information and in editing parts of the manuscript; Sister Nora Marie Walsh, who reviewed all of the sections on the hospitals in the United States and provided current information; Louis J. Agnese, Jr., Dick McCracken, Sister Margaret Rose Palmer, and Sister Theophane Power, who read the essay on Incarnate Word College and offered insights and suggestions; Sister Juanita Albracht, who reviewed the section on changes in ministry and helped with additions and comments; Art Gonzalez, John Koobs, Charles Van Voorst, Mike White, Alex White, Sister Mary Brian Sherry, Sister Mary Eustace Farrell, Sister Mary Digna Lynch, Sister Bridget Maher, Sister Mary Vincent O'Donnell, Sister Kathleen Coughlin, Sister Brigid Mollaghan, James Kaskie, Philip Robinson, Sister Theresa Daly, Sister Mary James Whelan, and Steve Dufilho, who read essays on the hospitals and contributed comments and information.

I am grateful also to the many persons who provided me with an oral history of the Congregation through personal interviews; to the sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament of Lyons, France, who offered me gracious hospitality in their monastery and shared information and documents from their archives; to the sisters in Mexico, in Peru, and in the hospitals of the United States who welcomed me into

their convents and their places of ministry and provided me with information. I wish to recognize also the studies on different periods or aspects of the Congregation that were written earlier by Sister Gabriel Wheelahan, Sister Bonaventure Burns, Sister Mary Helena Finck, Sister Hilda Shortall, Sister Columbanus Robinson, Sister Clement Eagan, Sister Mary Climacus Shelly, Sister Charles Marie Frank, and Sister María Antonia Fernández.

To Paul R. Fayfich, Assistant Professor of Business Administration at Incarnate Word College, and to Ita Borger-Boglin and Jack Roger of the Computer Laboratory I am indebted for generous assistance with preparation of the manuscript.

Writing the history has been an outgrowth of renewed interest in the background of religious congregations, much of it stemming from the Vatican II document *Perfectae Caritatis*, which in 1965 urged sisters throughout the world to explore their founders' experiences and charism as part of their efforts at renewal. The sisters of the Mexican province began to study the history and charism of the founders in the 1960s, and the Congregational Heritage Committee continued to promote interest in the research.

I trust that the material contained in these pages will be for the sisters themselves a source of information on their history, a cause for celebration of their accomplishments, and a source of encouragement as they forge their vision for the future. I am hopeful that the book will have an appeal also to persons outside the Congregation and will contribute to a greater understanding of this moment in time in the history of women religious and their role in the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER I

SERVING THE VICTIMS OF CHOLERA IN SAN ANTONIO

The year was 1869, and the people of the Southwest were slowly recovering from the ravages of the Civil War and the Reconstruction Era that followed. Texas suffered its share in the loss of confederate soldiers. According to Ernest Wallace, "The number killed and wounded will probably never be known, but the roll of the names that can be counted is truly astounding."¹ A woman from Prairieville recorded in her letters, "To be sure, we have been left with many widows, orphans, and cripples."²

The loss of life did not end with the last shot fired on the battlefield. The spread of disease that followed the burial of the dead and the return of the wounded soldiers prolonged the suffering and multiplied the number of fatalities. Epidemics of yellow fever broke out in Galveston, Houston, Indianola, Harrisburg, and Brownsville. San Antonio somehow escaped. The explanation offered at the time was that the city's altitude and inland location placed it "above the yellow fever line."³ Later studies suggested that the city was spared because of the absence of a particular mosquito that carried the disease.⁴

When an epidemic of cholera spread throughout Texas and other areas of the Southwest in 1866, however, San Antonio was not so fortunate. This was the second outbreak of the disease in a short period of time. Just eighteen years earlier, in 1849, the people had struggled with an epidemic that lasted six weeks and took the lives of 600 out of a population of 5,000. Many persons died because they had no access to medication and no recourse to a physician, and because San Antonio had no hospital to care for the sick and to help prevent the spread of the disease.

Abbé Emmanuel Henri Domenech, a French missionary, recorded a vivid eyewitness account of the effects of the epidemic:

San Antonio, which a few days before was so gay, so crowded with people, and so full of life, was now silent as the grave. The streets were deserted, and the church bells no longer tolled the ordinary; had they done so, the tolling would have been continuous night and day. The parish priest could find no time even to say mass. One-third of the population had fled and were camped in the woods, along rivers and water-courses. Another portion shut themselves up in their cabins, whence arose cries and wailings, and supplications to God for mercy; while a third part were in the throes and agonies of death. We met no one in the streets, save those who were carrying off the dead. Coffins were scarce, and the dead were in many instances strapped to dried ox-hides, and thus dragged along, all livid and purple, to their graves.⁵

The second cholera epidemic that broke out in 1866 was not as severe as the first, yet it lasted two months, and the number of deaths reached 293. The population was approximately 12,000. *The Daily Herald* reported that “the number of burials in this city in the [past] twenty-four hours . . . was twenty-one; from the 13th to the 15th, both inclusive, the number supplied by the sanitary commissioners was seventy-four—a large portion of whom were negroes and Mexicans of the poorer class.”⁶ Those who were not afflicted fled to the nearby towns of Seguin, Kerrville, and Bandera in an effort to escape contamination. People died in the streets for want of medical care. San Antonio still had no hospital to care for the sick.

A terrible fear that other epidemics might follow spread among the people. According to Pat Ireland Nixon, M.D., “The cause of cholera was unknown and its epidemiology was a matter of mystery. . . . The doctors thought the disease was due to a miasma, something that arose from water in damp places.”⁷ San Antonio was a frontier town with muddy roads, a poor drainage system that left stagnant pools of water standing in the streets, a river that was polluted with refuse of all kinds, and little or no sanitation. The outbreak of cholera was always imminent because of the frequent flooding of the San Antonio River. A major flood had occurred in 1865, and another in 1869. They not only caused injuries, suffering, and death but also created swamp-like conditions in many areas that became breeding places for disease.

Following the second outbreak of cholera, the Board of Health recommended reforms, such as paving the sidewalks and grading the streets to provide gutters that would drain stagnant waters. It was proposed that “all weeds and filth, garbage of all kinds, suds from the laundry, etc., should be prevented from being thrown in the streets.”

Furthermore, the extremely crowded conditions of the jail required "immediate attention" as well as many of the tenement houses in which ten or twelve people occupied a single room ensuring "a widespread and malignant prevalence of the cholera or any other epidemic." The recommendations suggested also that "all military camps should be removed beyond the limits of the city [since] it is among troops that epidemics find their chosen food."⁸

The people of San Antonio were desperately in need of help. Mayor W. C. A. Thielpape and other civic leaders appealed to the Catholic bishop, Claude Marie Dubuis, for assistance. Like many other bishops throughout the United States who at this time were traveling to Europe in search of priests and sisters to minister to the large number of immigrants, Dubuis had recently returned to his native France and had successfully persuaded a small group of Catholic sisters from Lyons to open a hospital in Galveston to care for the people dying of yellow fever in that city. Perhaps he could do the same for San Antonio.

Bishop Dubuis, whose diocese covered the whole state of Texas, had been born in the village of Têche, not far from Lyons. In 1846, just two years after his ordination, he had come to the United States as a missionary at the request of Bishop Jean Marie Odin, C.M., the first bishop of Galveston. As a young man, Claude had been critically ill and had promised to spend ten years doing missionary work if his life was spared. When Bishop Odin visited France, seeking priests for his diocese, Dubuis determined to follow him in his missionary efforts in the new world.⁹

He was assigned first to the town of Castroville, a rural settlement of 1,300 people, mostly Alsatians and immigrants from Germany, Austria, Holland, and Belgium. Here he labored under conditions of extreme poverty but successfully established the Catholic Church in the area, built the first chapel and rectory, and started a Catholic school.

By 1851, Dubuis was named vicar general for the western portion of the diocese and was transferred to San Antonio. He was appointed pastor of San Fernando Church, which would in time be changed to San Fernando Cathedral.

When Bishop Odin was chosen to lead the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Dubuis was named his successor in Texas. His episcopal consecration was held in 1862 in the chapel of the seminary in Lyons. Returning to Texas a short time later, he brought with him seminarians, priests, and religious for his diocese that was larger than the whole of France. Of the 500,000 people within the state, Catholics numbered only 40,000 or 8% of the total population, but keeping in touch with them was extremely difficult for they were scattered throughout vast expanses of wilderness. In a letter written to his family some years later,

Dubuis described his journeys on horseback that sometimes lasted six months and took him through “the monotony of the plains as well as [the] terrible Rocky Mountains which hide their heads in the clouds and in whose valleys are the red-skinned Comanches, panthers and lions with deadly claws, to say nothing of carnivorous teeth.”¹⁰ He reported that on one trip he confirmed 6,000 people, on another 10,000.

When the newly consecrated bishop returned to Texas, he was eager and ready for his assignment in spite of the many difficulties that awaited his return from France. The cathedral in Galveston had suffered the ravages of the Civil War. It had been “riddled with bullets and bombs,” and could not be repaired “without a sum of \$6,000.”¹¹ Within the following year, yellow fever broke out in the city, gradually building up to the stage of an epidemic. Listed among the victims were three Ursuline nuns who had only recently established an academy in the city.

In addition to sickness and disease that claimed many lives, Dubuis faced “insurmountable poverty” everywhere he turned. In San Antonio, he found “deprivation, sufferings of all kinds.” He reported to Archbishop Odin, “In spite of everything we live, but we live without dollars.”¹²

Dubuis realized that he desperately needed more priests to cover the far-distant outreaches of his diocese. He needed also more money to build churches and schools. Finally, he needed hospitals and a congregation of sister-nurses who would care for the ever-increasing number of victims of disease. He returned to France determined to find answers to all of those needs for the Catholic Church in Texas.

He appealed first to the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. Several years earlier, Bishop Odin had been confident that this religious community, which had established an excellent hospital in Paris, would be willing to come to Texas. Dubuis had even assured the doctors of Galveston that the Daughters would staff the hospital that was now under construction. Much to his disappointment, however, he found that the religious community could not spare any sisters for Texas.

Another congregation gave him an initial promise of help, but at the last moment had to withdraw the commitment. In desperation, Dubuis turned to Rev. Mother Angélique Hiver, Superioress of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Lyons, who had already sent sisters to Texas in 1852 to establish a convent and school in Brownsville. He knew Rev. Mother Angélique well. Two of his own nieces had become members of the religious order, Sister M. du St. Esprit in Lyons and Sister St. Clare in Belmont.

The Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament had been established in Lyons as early as 1627. It was a cloistered order of women whose apostolic work was limited to teaching. Under the con-

ditions of their rule, the nuns could not respond to the bishop's appeal for sisters who would engage in the active ministry of health care. Rev. Mother Angélique was anxious to assist the young bishop from Texas so eagerly seeking help for his diocese, however, and agreed to prepare for such a mission any young women whom he might interest in founding a new congregation of sisters dedicated to the care of the sick.¹³

Dubuis was successful in securing volunteers from the Hospital of the Antiquaille. Three young women who were members of the Hospital Sisters of Lyons and had been trained as nurses agreed to make the journey to Texas. They entered the Monastery of the Incarnate Word on September 19, 1866. Two days later, Dubuis formalized his appeal to Rev. Mother Angélique asking her to prepare the volunteers for their mission in Texas:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, suffering in the persons of a multitude of sick and infirm of every kind, seeks relief at your hands. Already He has commissioned your community to exercise spiritual works of mercy in our vast diocese; today He begs you to accept the mission of corporal works of mercy by sending Hospital Sisters of the Incarnate Word to take charge of our hospitals, refuges, and asylums.

We beseech you then to form according to the rules of the Order of the Incarnate Word the subjects whom we send you.¹⁴

From several references of Bishop Dubuis to a "third order" and "tertiaries," as well as Rev. Mother Angélique's description of the members as "*hospitalières*," the original concept for the new congregation may have been that of an institute of pious lay persons rather than a congregation whose members professed religious vows.¹⁵ It is not surprising that such confusion existed in this identification. The Catholic Church had some difficulty in accepting the idea of sisterhoods actively engaged in works of charity outside their convents. *Circa Pastoralis*, issued at the Second Baltimore Council in 1866, recognized as religious only those persons who observed the enclosure and professed solemn vows. Not until 1900 did Leo XIII issue the document *Conditae a Christo*, which gave official recognition to religious institutes whose members professed simple vows.

It was clear from the beginning that the foundation in Galveston would be distinct from and independent of the order in Lyons. The members would be dedicated to an active apostolate of health care that would demand that they live outside the cloister and devote their lives to the service of others. To emphasize this distinctive character, the word "charity" was inserted in their name, Congregation of Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

Leaving their native France on September 25, 1866, just six days after they had been received into the monastery, Sisters Blandine Mathelin, Joseph Roussin, and St. Ange Escude came to Galveston and began their work of establishing the new congregation and of opening the much-needed hospital that in time would be called St. Mary's Infirmary.¹⁶ Over the next three years, the pioneers were joined by two other groups of sisters. All had been recruited by Bishop Dubuis and Rev. Mother Angélique and had been prepared by the sisters in Lyons for their missionary life in Texas.

In founding the hospital in Galveston, Bishop Dubuis had planned that as more members joined the order, another institution would be established in San Antonio. The sisters also felt an indebtedness to the people of San Antonio, particularly John Twohig, who had helped them with financial donations.¹⁷ Three years later, in response to the urgent appeals of the people following the outbreaks of cholera, the bishop decided to send three sisters from the Galveston community to open a hospital in San Antonio.

Sisters Madeleine Chollet, Pierre Cinquin, and Agnes Buisson were chosen for the task. Preparations were made for their departure on March 31, 1869, and their long journey by stagecoach to San Antonio. The trip would take three weeks and could be a dangerous one as they drove through the wide open spaces of Texas, yet the sisters were eager to begin a new foundation in the Alamo City and to serve the people so desperately in need of health care.

Even before they left Galveston, the sisters had some warning of the hardships and troubles that lay ahead. The people of San Antonio had started building an addition to the former rectory of San Fernando Church; the structure was to serve as a convent as well as the beginnings of the new hospital. As the sisters made their final preparations for the trip, word came that a fire had broken out and the still unfinished building was completely destroyed. The following report on the incident was carried in the *San Antonio Express*:

At about half-past 12 o'clock, p.m., the fire alarm was given, and with the ringing of bells we heard the rattling of the fire engine pressing along Commerce Street. Arriving at the place of the conflagration, we found the dwelling house of the Catholic priests in full blaze; the flames piercing through every part of the roof and the windows of the second story. . . . The roof soon fell in and with the help of hooks and ladders, most of the combustible parts of the house were removed, leaving nothing but the bare walls.

This building was intended for a hospital and was to be enlarged. . . . There was great danger of the Courthouse and Jail taking fire and had a

strong wind blown in that direction, that building would have been numbered amongst the by-gones.¹⁸

The disheartening news did not delay the sisters' leaving Galveston for their new mission, but surely it must have added to their concerns about the journey and the unknown fate ahead of them. Yet they had come from France to serve the needs of the people of Texas, and San Antonio cried out for their help. As Sister Pierre said, "The glory would be for God, the utility for others, and the trouble for [themselves.]"¹⁹

The three sisters arrived quietly and unobtrusively sometime in April of 1869. The Alamo City in the latter part of the nineteenth century was still a small town with a population of a little over 12,000 set in a vast open prairie where life was rugged and even dangerous at times.²⁰ Gun-toting cowboys roamed the city streets and were ready to shoot on any provocation. Abbé Domenech reported that the city was "notorious for assassinations; the knives of the Mexicans and the American revolvers were in constant use; and deeds of bloodshed were of hourly occurrence."²¹

Tribes of Comanches often traveled through the surrounding areas, sometimes bringing violence and destruction along with them. Samuel Maverick reported in 1855 that "some twenty-five or thirty" were making raids in the area and had "killed two persons, stole some horses, and killed others."²² The *San Antonio Express* carried reports of similar happenings: "For two months past, San Antonio and the surrounding county in a radius of 25 to 40 miles, has been entirely at the mercy of the Indian thieves and savages, who have with impunity driven off horses and mules, slaughtered beeves, and built their campfires right under the noses of our suffering people."²³

The culture shock of the three young French women, all in their early twenties, can only be imagined as they caught their first sight of the dusty, unpaved and filth-infested streets lined with adobe houses, swinging-door saloons, and rough and ready Texans, and as they heard the unfamiliar sounds of both English and Spanish. The misgivings caused by the strange sights and sounds could not have matched, however, their disappointment and despair at seeing the burnt ruins of their hospital and convent.

To add to their distress, they found that no provision had been made for their arrival. In the wake of the disaster, no one had thought of the necessity of accommodations for the now homeless travelers. At last they were given a place to stay with the Ursuline nuns who had come from France in 1851 to establish a Catholic school in the city. The sisters' stay, intended to be of short duration, lasted six months.

Meanwhile, under the direction of the Rev. James Anstaett, vicar general, work began on re-building the hospital and convent located on Commerce and Cameron Streets. The project, however, seemed beset with difficulties. Just as the workmen prepared to attach the roof to the building, one of the walls of soft stone collapsed. Completion of the structure was delayed once again, and more money had to be raised to cover the costs of additional materials and labor. Generous donations came from the people of San Antonio, particularly Francisco Guilbeau, who was now mayor of the city, and the same John Twohig, the local businessman who had helped the sisters in Galveston.

As construction neared completion, the sisters themselves took on the work of cleaning and scrubbing the interior of the building. By October 15, they were ready to move in and begin their work of caring for the sick. They placed an ad in *The Weekly Express* announcing the grand opening on December 1 of what was to be called the Santa Rosa Infirmary. The Mass of Foundation was celebrated by the Rev. J. Anstaett on December 3 in a small makeshift chapel.

From the very beginning, it was determined that the facility would be open "to all persons without distinction of nationality or creed." It had been founded "with small means," the sisters confessed, and they were, therefore, limited in the number of patients that could be accommodated. They hoped, however, "eventually to get out of debt" and to be in a position to accept any number of patients applying for admission.²⁴

The simple stone structure had two floors with a few small wards and private rooms for patients. Living quarters for the sisters were described as "extremely poor."²⁵ Two frame buildings were located at the rear of the infirmary. One was used as a laundry; the other was referred to as the Dead House and used as a place to keep the bodies of patients who died in the infirmary until they could be claimed by relatives.

Eight patients were admitted on the opening day, four women and four men, one of whom was black. It was not a promising beginning in spite of the urgent need for a hospital in the city. In the pre-Listerian days of the late nineteenth century, hospitals were places to be avoided because of the high percentage of patient deaths. Wealthy people who could afford the private services of a physician usually preferred not to enter a hospital at all and were customarily cared for in their homes. Only persons who had no other recourse for health care or those in the advanced stages of their illness sought admission to the hospital.

Charges were minimal. Rooms cost \$1.00 per day. If a patient wanted heat in the room, not from a central heating system, but from an open wood fire, fifty cents was added to the bill.

SERVING THE VICTIMS OF CHOLERA IN SAN ANTONIO



Bishop Claude Marie Dubuis



Rev. Mother Angélique Hiver



Rev. Mother Madeleine Chollet



Rev. Mother Pierre Cinquin

From the very beginning, the sisters made it clear that an important part of their work was a ministry to the poor and that persons who were unable to pay for the services of the infirmary would be admitted. They wisely qualified their position, however, by saying that "the number of charity patients must be proportioned to the number of paying patients, or else we should be in a state of bankruptcy at the very beginning, since we have no revenue, no resources, no other income, but that which is the result of our industry."²⁶

As worthy as the sisters' intentions were, the balance of paying and non-paying patients was not always maintained, and finances were an on-going problem. Santa Rosa was actually functioning as the city hospital but with no financial support from public funds. A plea for help was carried in an editorial of the local newspaper. The deficit, it was stated, "has been produced by the admission of the destitute, for whom the town is really responsible. . . . Somebody is responsible for this and the community should see that the wrong is righted."²⁷

The infirmary was commonly called the "Charity Hospital," and the people of San Antonio took great pride in the opening of the institution, frequently referring to it as "our hospital" or the "city hospital." Fortunately, several outstanding physicians had established their practice in the community—Drs. Ferdinand Ludwig von Herff; George Cupples; Amos Graves, Sr.; and Julius Braunnagel. All of them became associated with Santa Rosa, and their successful medical practice won the respect of the citizens for the care offered at the infirmary.

Although the sisters had very little preparation for their work, they were eager to learn not only the essentials of nursing but also the language and culture of the people. They were ready to work hard and did all of the work themselves. They cared for the patients, washed their linens, scrubbed the floors, prepared and served their meals. They operated their own horse-drawn ambulance, and at times they were called upon even to bury the dead. It was not unusual for patients from out of town who died in the infirmary to be waked in the Santa Rosa parlor while the sisters made all arrangements for the funeral, purchased the cemetery lot, converted their ambulance to a hearse, and gave the deceased an appropriate Christian burial.

Nothing was too much trouble for them. They were following in a long tradition of dedicated service to their fellow men and women as an expression of their love of the Incarnate Word, a tradition that had begun almost 250 years earlier with a young woman named Jeanne Chézard de Matel, who had sacrificed herself in the service of others and whose spirit still dominated the French monastery of the Incarnate Word in the City of Lyons.

CHAPTER II

ORIGINS IN FRANCE: A SECOND INCARNATION OF THE WORD

Lyons in the 1990s is a bustling city with narrow streets and heavy traffic. Peugeots, Renaults, Citroens, and motorcycles of all shapes, sizes, and sounds crowd the *Centre Ville*, where silk weaving is still an important industry, where banking is a source of financial power, and where prize-winning restaurants have established the city's reputation as a gastronomic paradise.

It is a city rich in history, tracing its foundation to 43 B.C., when it became a center of affairs of the Roman Empire. Ideally situated at the confluence of the Rhone and Saône Rivers, the city is still a center of commerce and culture and often referred to as France's "second city."

Separated by its height and towering over the commercial area is the Hill of Fourvière, so named from the words *forum* and *vetus*, or old forum. Original site of the Roman city, Fourvière symbolizes a joining of forces similar to the blending of the two rivers, as they pass below its towering structure. Roman ruins of the ancient civilization are preserved side by side with monuments of Christianity.

History has recorded that Fourvière was the site of the martyrdom of Bishop Pothin and his followers in the early days of Christianity. Miraculous recoveries from plagues and other illnesses have been attributed to pilgrimages and prayers addressed from the holy hill to Mary, the Mother of God. In 1638, children were saved from the rapid spread of scorbut which had been the source of many deaths; in 1643, through the prayers of its citizens, the city was delivered from the disease known as "la peste," and in 1832, it was spared from the spread of cholera that was ravaging other parts of France.

In the nineteenth century, the holy hill attracted many founders of religious orders of men and women: Colin, who founded the Marist Fathers; Champagnat, who organized the Little Fathers of Mary; P. Coindre, who established the Congregation of Jesus and Mary; Eymard, who began the Fathers of the Holy Sacrament; M. Gabriel, who founded the Soeurs de Bon-Secours; and Rev. Mother Angélique Hiver, who together with Canon Galtier, restored the monastery of the order of the Incarnate Word.

Rising from the top of the hill of granite is the monumental basilica commemorating the many blessings received through prayer at Fourvière. Built in 1872 by the archbishop of Lyons, Monseigneur Ginoulhiac, in gratitude for deliverance of the city from attack by the Prussians, Notre Dame de Fourvière symbolizes the faith of the people of Lyons and their gratitude to the Mother of God. The basilica and its adjacent golden statue of the Virgin Mary, according to those familiar with the history, represent the coming of Mary to Lyons. They suggest also the reach of men and women for eternal truths that exceed their grasp, the rising upward and beyond the here and now to attain and understand that which lies beyond.

In 1627, the City of Lyons became the site for the first foundation of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament and the work of Jeanne Chézard de Matel. Jeanne had been born in Roanne on Nov. 6, 1596.¹ Her father was a French nobleman; her mother, who belonged to a wealthy family, was noted for her charity to the poor. Jeanne grew up in France during a period of religious renewal and was greatly influenced by the Jesuits, who had established a college in Roanne.

As a young woman just nineteen years of age, she had prayed for a knowledge of Latin so that she could read and understand the scriptures as St. Catherine of Siena had done before her. From that day onward she was able not only to read but also to interpret the Latin texts. She became a devout and holy woman of prayer, longed for a cloistered life of communion with God, and initially considered entering the Carmelites.

In a mystical experience of prayer, however, she was given a call to found a new religious order devoted to the humanity of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word. "My daughter," Jesus addressed her, "thou thinkest that thou art to enjoy the quiet and repose of contemplation in the house of thy father, but my Divine Wisdom ordains otherwise, having destined thee to found an order in my Name, to honor my Person Incarnate for the love of men."²

In her autobiography, she records the words of Jesus: "There have been in the Church orders dedicated to My Mother and to different

saints; but amongst so many there are none that . . . are consecrated to My Person as that one shall be which thou art to institute, and on which I shall confer great blessings.”³

On another occasion, Jeanne wrote that she had been called to be a “Gospel of Love” and was told by Christ that “the Gospel of power had been given to the apostles in the miracles they wrought; that the Gospel of wisdom belonged to the doctors [of the Church] . . . ; that to [her] the Gospel of Love was reserved.”⁴

In accordance with her divine insights, Jeanne began her work of establishing a religious order of women who would profess the solemn vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as well as the vow of perpetual enclosure and the vow of fidelity to the ministry of Christian education. The order was to be an “extension of the Incarnation,” a phrase which John Lozano interprets as meaning that through the institute “the Word was to be given to the whole Church, so to speak, through a second Incarnation, making Him appear before the world in a special manner. Jesus would thus be in some way born anew.”⁵

The members were to be consecrated to the adoration of the Incarnate Word, to the active ministry of teaching, and to zeal for the conversion of sinners.⁶ They were to have special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Virgin Mary.

Jeanne insisted always that she was not the foundress of the order herself. “I have been but the instrument,” she declared. The true founder, or “sole institutor,” was the Incarnate Word himself.⁷

In a series of visions, she was shown the religious habit to be worn by the members of the order. They were to be dressed in white and wear a red scapular and red cloak. The scapular would have a crown of thorns embroidered in blue surrounding the monogram of Jesus, IHS, and a heart with the Latin motto *Amor Meus*. Every part of the habit had a symbolic meaning for Jeanne. The color blue signified God the Father in heaven; the white represented God the Son, the splendor of the Father; and the red suggested the Holy Spirit, the fire of love. The red cincture added to the habit was to remind the sisters of the cords that were used to bind and torture Christ during his passion.

Jeanne planned to establish five separate monasteries in honor of the five wounds of Christ. She began her work in 1625 in Roanne, where she was not able to set up a permanent religious foundation but gathered her first community of seven members and established a school. From Roanne she moved to Lyons in 1627, where she was received graciously by Archbishop Charles de Miròn and successfully established both a convent and boarding school. Once again, she was able to attract followers to join her in living a way of life that was common to religious institutes of

women, although the foundation had not yet been approved by Rome. At this time, Jeanne made her first application to the Holy See for canonical approbation of the order.

Before approval was received from the Vatican, Archbishop de Miròn, who had strongly supported the newly established religious institute, suffered a stroke and died. A short time later, a plague broke out in the city, and Jeanne was advised to leave Lyons for Paris, where she determined to start a second foundation, which was approved by Pope Urban VIII. At the same time, the name of the new institute was confirmed as the Order of the Incarnate Word.

Before the foundation in Paris could become fully operational, however, Jeanne was called back to Lyons, where she faced much opposition from the recently appointed archbishop, Alphonse-Louis du Plessis de Richelieu, who questioned the authenticity of her spiritual writings and refused to enact a papal bull that had been received from the Vatican and that would grant recognition to the order.⁸

In the face of such opposition, Jeanne redirected her efforts to Avignon. In 1639, she obtained the necessary civil and episcopal authorization for a new foundation in that city. The approbation given by the local bishop was confirmed in 1644 by Pope Innocent X. In the confirmation document, the order was identified as "Congregation of the Daughters Called of the Incarnate Word and the Blessed Sacrament."⁹

Her third monastery was established in 1643 in Grenoble, where once again she was questioned about her writings and given much opposition in her effort to set up a religious community. She next returned to Paris to complete the work she had begun there some years earlier.

In 1653, after the death of Alphonse Cardinal Richelieu, Jeanne returned to Lyons and was finally successful in obtaining canonical approbation for the foundation she had started in that area. She was planning to return to Roanne to make her fifth foundation, but illness made it impossible for her to achieve this final goal.

At one time she was prepared also to found an order for men that would be called Priests of the Incarnate Word and had even drawn up constitutions for the organization. After her death, Monseigneur Camille de Neuville founded a Confraternity of the Incarnate Word for both priests and members of the laity, men and women, who followed the spirit of the order in their devotion to the Incarnate Word and the Blessed Sacrament. The confraternity was approved in 1670 by Pope Clement X.¹⁰

During all of her work in founding the various houses and in encouraging young women to enter the religious order dedicated to the Incarnate Word, Jeanne herself had never become a fully professed

member. She had never received the religious habit, entered the cloister, or professed solemn religious vows, although as early as 1635 she had made public vows of chastity and of perseverance. In her early years she had been advised by her spiritual directors that should she make her profession, embrace the cloister, and become fully associated with any one of the houses that she had founded, she would be unable to provide financial support, from either her own resources or that of others. Nor would she be able to accomplish the necessary travel for establishing other foundations. In her autobiography, she described her role as similar to that of a fisherman. Her responsibility was "to bring to the safe haven of the religious life the young souls whom [God] dost take with the net of [His] grace in the sea of the world."¹¹

As she prepared for death in the monastery in Paris, Jeanne asked for the blessings she had long denied herself. On September 10, 1670, she received the habit of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, was given the name of Sister Mary of Jesus, and professed her religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The following day she died.

When the revolution erupted in France during the latter part of the next century, monasteries were destroyed; church property was confiscated; and the religious members dispersed. Together with other religious establishments throughout the country, the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament was suppressed in 1790 by a decree of the revolutionary government. Many of the sisters returned to their own families; others lived in exile, trying to preserve the spirit and traditions of their religious community. Not until 1817 was the order reestablished at Azerables through the efforts of Abbé Denis, a holy priest of the diocese of Limoges. Members of the restored monastery took up the work of the care of the sick as well as education.

A short time later, Abbé Antoine Galtier, chaplain of the Hospital of the Antiquaille, determined to reestablish the order in Lyons. Canon Galtier was spiritual director to a young woman named Rosalie Hiver, who had entered the Hospital Sisters of Lyons. Although she had not professed her religious vows in the congregation, she had served as a nurse in the Hospital of the Antiquaille for seven years. Following the direction of Canon Galtier, she sought admission to the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Azerables, where she received the habit and the name of Sister Marie Angélique.

Returning to Lyons in 1832 with one other sister and a postulant, she began the work of restoring the monastery that had been suppressed in that city. Two members of the order came to join her, bringing with them the writings of Jeanne de Matel as well as her heart that had been

removed from her body at the time of death and encased in a metal container. It had been kept hidden during the time of the revolution. Through the generous support of Canon Galtier, Sister Marie Angélique was able to secure property and reestablish the first convent on the Hill of Fourvière.

It was to Fourvière that Bishop Claude Dubuis came in 1866 seeking help for his diocese of Texas and where he successfully recruited the first members of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. Dubuis' appeal for the Church in Texas, however, was not the first that had been made in the Archdiocese of Lyons, nor was it to be the last. Even before he had been consecrated the first bishop of Galveston, Jean Mary Odin had traveled to Europe in 1845 seeking financial support from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons as well as volunteers to assist him in ministering to the 10,000 Catholics scattered over every part of Texas. Catholic settlements had been made in San Antonio, in Victoria, and in Houston, but only six priests were available to serve the needs of the whole state.

Bishop Odin returned to Lyons in 1851. The Catholic Church and religious orders of men and women were flourishing throughout the whole of France. Over 400 new religious orders and congregations were established during the course of the nineteenth century to respond to the need for priests and teachers not only in France, but also in the missionary fields of the New World. Through his appeals to many of these organizations, Bishop Odin was successful in recruiting priests from the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who would carry on missionary work along the Texas border; the Brothers of Mary, who would establish a school for boys later called St. Mary's University in San Antonio; the Ursuline nuns, who would set up academies for the education of young women in Galveston and San Antonio; Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, who would open a convent and school in Brownsville; and diocesan priests and seminarians.¹²

In a detailed study of the influence of France and of the archdiocese of Lyons on the establishment of the Church in Texas, Bishop Laurence J. FitzSimon compares the work of the many French priests and sisters to that of the Spanish Franciscan friars who had come to Texas as early as 1528. The missionary zeal, the hardships encountered, and the heroism of the one group can be measured against the other. Both had a profound effect on the development of Catholicism.

Our first Texas Bishops, Odin and Dubuis, were from France as also were Bishops Neraz and Forest. The rapid growth of Texas after its attainment of independence had created an urgent need of priests. At the invitation of the first two bishops of Galveston there came volunteers from Europe,

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and owing to the nationality of the bishops and their personal influence, the majority of them came from France. The history of almost every one of the older parishes in Texas begins with a missionary priest with a French name. . . . Lyons was the home of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the world center of that great missionary movement of the 19th century which brought Christianity to almost every remote part of the globe. . . . This society saved and built up the Catholic Church in Texas during the most difficult period of the past century.¹³

The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word who came to San Antonio in 1869 became part of this significant impact of the City of Lyons on the Catholic Church of Texas.

CHAPTER III

FOUNDER AND CO-FOUNDRESSES

Before the three sisters left Galveston to make the new foundation in San Antonio, Bishop Dubuis had determined that Sister Madeleine Chollet should be named superior of the small community and made the following official pronouncement of the appointment:

On the date mentioned below [March 19, 1869], Monseigneur Claude Marie Dubuis, Bishop of Galveston, nominated our Sister Marie Madeleine of Jesus, a professed religious of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word of Galveston, Superioress of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio, to which city His Lordship has sent her to administer her charge in the Hospital known as the Santa Rosa; which nomination has been made and confirmed by Monseigneur himself, and the aforesaid Reverend Mother has been received and recognized by the Community of Galveston and has entered upon her duties in San Antonio.¹

Sister Madeleine was only twenty-three years of age when she took charge of the new foundation. She had been born Louise Chollet on February 7, 1846, in Roanne, the same city in which Jeanne Chézard de Matel, foundress of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament had spent her childhood. It was in the Jesuit chapel in Roanne that Jeanne had decided in 1625 to found her religious order. Two hundred years later, Louise Chollet, through her experience in prayer in the same chapel, was moved to follow in the religious tradition of Mother de Matel, responding to a call to care for the sick and suffering people of Texas.

She entered the novitiate in Lyons and on July 14, 1867, received the habit of a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word and the name

Sister Marie St. Madeleine of Jesus.² The following November, after four months of intense training, she left with the second band of six sisters for Galveston. Their departure was rushed and set for an earlier date than planned when word was received that yellow fever was raging once again in Galveston, taking the lives of many, including that of Sister Blandine Mathelin, superior of the first group of sisters who had left Lyons just a year earlier.

Sister Blandine and her two companions, Sister Joseph and Sister St. Ange, had been given only six days of preparation in the French monastery before coming to Galveston in 1866. According to an account written by Sister Mary of Jesus Noirry, "No written or printed rules were given to [them] as their speedy departure did not allow time to formulate any suited to their practical needs, and, besides, it was considered prudent to wait and see if the tiny seed about to be sown in Texas soil would take root."³

The annals of the monastery in Lyons note that the sisters were given a religious habit, "the costume worn by all true members of the third order of the Incarnate Word."⁴ The habit and veil were similar to those worn by the French sisters, but the scapular was white and embroidered in red with the letters JMJ (Jesus, Mary, and Joseph).

When the second group of young women was recruited for the Texas mission, Rev. Mother Angélique was determined that they would spend a longer time with the French sisters and receive a thorough training in the spirit of the order that had come down from the foundress Jeanne de Matel and that had been fostered in the restored Lyons community by Rev. Mother Angélique herself and by her spiritual adviser, Canon Galtier.

The group included four volunteers—Louise Chollet, who became Sister M. St. Madeleine of Jesus; Julie Magnin, who was named Sister M. Martha of Jesus; Gabrielle Jugnet, who became Sister St. Raphael of Jesus; and Agatha Noirry, called Sister Mary of Jesus. They were given an intense period of training in the Lyons novitiate, where, according to Sister Mary of Jesus' account, they were "confided to the care of an elderly religious, who, because of her exact observance was styled the 'living rule.'"⁵ Rev. Mother Angélique was fond of calling them "the four pillars on which the true spirit of the Incarnate Word must rest" and of advising them that the "reign and flourish" of the new congregation would depend upon them.⁶

Before the group left for Texas, two more volunteers joined the band—Sister M. Agnes Buisson, who had been a novice in the Monastery of the Incarnate Word in Belmont and who initially intended to enter the congregation in Victoria, and Mrs. Jugnet, a widow of 58

years and the mother of Sister St. Raphael. Mrs. Jugnet, who was given the name of Sister Mary of the Incarnation, was initially selected by Bishop Dubuis, because of her age and experience, to be appointed superior of the new foundation in San Antonio. Unfortunately, on the journey from France to Galveston, she contracted yellow fever and was forced to remain in New Orleans, where she died a few weeks later. Sister St. Raphael remained with her mother to care for her during her illness.⁷

By the time the novices were ready for their journey to Galveston, a short rule had been drawn up by Rev. Mother Angélique and approved by Bishop Dubuis. Together with the rule, the young sisters were given a habit designed especially for the new congregation, differing essentially in color from that worn by the French sisters. The color was changed from white to black which was considered more adaptable to the active work of caring for the sick in hospitals. The scapular extended to the waist and was made of black also. Around the waist the sisters wore a red worsted cord that had replaced the belt of red leather worn by the cloistered nuns. Embroidered in red on the scapular was a crown of thorns encircling the monogram of Jesus, I.H.S., and a heart with the Latin motto *Amor Meus*.

As Rev. Mother Angélique sent the novices off to Texas, she entrusted to them the responsibility of seeing that the habit would be worn by the sisters in the Texas congregation exactly as it had been designed. Word had come back to her that some of the sisters in Galveston had exchanged the prescribed veil for a cornette similar to that worn by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul and the Hospital Sisters of Lyons, who served at the Antiquaille. Since all three had been members of the Hospital Sisters, it is not surprising that they had returned to wearing the cornette with which they were familiar. Their actions were sanctioned also by Bishop Dubuis, who perhaps did not see great significance in the change and who had originally hoped to have the Daughters of Charity, who wore the cornette, staff the Galveston hospital. Rev. Mother Angélique, on the other hand, felt a sacred trust had been broken since the habit had been handed down from the time of Mother Jeanne de Matel. Steps must be taken to restore the original dress.

The responsibility, which she imposed on the young sisters now ready for the journey to Texas, was not an easy one. As newcomers to the community in Galveston, they would not be in a position to call for change, yet this was the duty they had been given and which would create a division within the community. It was Sister Madeleine Chollet, in particular, who obediently carried out this responsibility and faced the

opposition of other members of the community as well as that of Bishop Dubuis. Sister Mary of Jesus reports that upon their arrival in Galveston, there were four different forms of the habit being worn at the same time within the small group of sisters.⁸ Sister Madeleine became the spokesperson for the newly arrived novices, and through her unwavering insistence that the directives of Rev. Mother Angélique be followed, she finally convinced the others that they must return to wearing the veil and adopt the habit given them by the sisters in France.

Sister Madeleine's actions clearly demonstrated to Bishop Dubuis her steadfast determination to uphold whatever she believed in as well as her strict obedience to the religious superiors in Lyons. It was this exactness that prompted him to name her the first superior of the foundation in San Antonio.

Years later, such concern over religious dress would suggest a misdirection of values. In the late nineteenth century, however, the costume worn by members of all religious orders and congregations signified who they were. It also had a great impact on what they were able to do. To members of the order in Lyons the habit had a sacred origin and a rich symbolism that made it an object of great reverence and respect. Parts of it had been revealed to Jeanne de Matel in a vision through her prayerful communion with God.

In addition to the differing points of view over what form the habit should take, the newly arrived sisters in Galveston found a spirit that was quite different from that in the Monastery of Lyons. Both Sister Joseph and Sister St. Ange had spent far more time with the Hospital Sisters of Lyons than with the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament. Their training in Lyons had been limited to only a few days. On the other hand, Sisters Madeleine, Mary of Jesus, and Martha had been given four months of preparation in the spirituality of Jeanne de Matel and in the customs and traditions of the Incarnate Word nuns. According to Sister Mary of Jesus' early account, this "difference between the spirit of the Antiquaille and that of the Incarnate Word was one of the hardest trials the nascent congregation had to bear."⁹

It was in the Galveston convent that Sister Madeleine made her first vows on December, 1868, just three months before the journey to San Antonio and her appointment as the first superior of the new foundation. She had spent just a little over a year in the hospital in Galveston and had no previous experience in France with the care of the sick. Her training in nursing, therefore, was limited, as was her facility with the English language.

It seems clear, also, that Sister Madeleine could neither read nor write. Her parents have been described as "pious and devoted," but like

many other persons of the same background living in France at the same time, they were probably uneducated. Their daughter also must have had no formal schooling. Many years later, Sister Rosalie Ring, another pioneer in the Congregation, could recall teaching Sister Madeleine how to write a check and to sign her name appropriately. "I had her fill a whole jotter [notebook]," Sister Rosalie recalled, "in practicing the writing of her name."¹⁰

The fact that Rev. Mother Madeleine did not read or write could account for the fact that there are almost no written records, no personal memoirs, and no community diaries of her three-year term as the first superior of the community in San Antonio.¹¹ The community was small, of course, and the sisters lived and worked together, so that there was little need for correspondence. It might be expected, however, that some letters would have been exchanged between the sisters in Galveston and those who had journeyed to San Antonio, but the congregational archives have no record of such communication. Even letters to and from Lyons or to and from Bishop Dubuis are not to be found for that period of time. In spite of the lack of correspondence, some information on the founding years can be pieced together.

As the sisters began their work in Santa Rosa, other young women became interested in joining the Congregation. The first postulant, Silvie Simpasteur, applied for admission on September 16, 1870. Four months later, María Esparza and Anastasia Krawiec entered the community. The reception ceremony, at which the three young women received the religious habit, was held in May, 1871, in San Fernando Church. They were given the names of Sister Mary Francis Regis, Sister M. Claude, and Sister M. Joseph. Although they had come from different parts of Texas, the fact that each one of the new members represented a different nationality, French, Mexican, and Polish, was a prophetic reflection of the international character that the Congregation would assume in the future.¹²

The question now arose as to where and under whose direction the novices should be prepared for their profession of vows and for their role as members of the Congregation. Should the novitiate be established at the first house in Galveston or should it be located in San Antonio? It was Bishop Dubuis who determined that a separate novitiate should be set up in San Antonio and that Sister St. Pierre Cinquin should be appointed mistress of novices.

It was an appropriate time also, he decided, to separate the communities into two independent congregations. In a time before the development of the railroad in Texas, the distance between Galveston and San Antonio made travel and communication difficult. Furthermore, the

establishment of independent congregations had been in the tradition of the founding order of Lyons. Jeanne de Matel had initially set out to establish five independent orders in the seventeenth century. Since the restoration of the order following the French revolution, still other independent houses had been founded, including those in Texas, in Victoria and in Brownsville.

With the separation of the San Antonio foundation, Bishop Dubuis offered the fully professed sisters the opportunity to remain in the Alamo City or return to Galveston. Sister Agnes Buisson, who had come to San Antonio with Sisters Madeleine and Pierre, chose to return to the first foundation.

One year later, a modification of the tentative rule was drawn up in Lyons and approved by Bishop Dubuis. It contained regulations pertaining to the sisters' apostolic works as well as prescribed prayers and pious practices. To give his official approval of the revised rule and of the San Antonio foundation as a separate congregation, Dubuis issued the following statement:

We, Claude Marie Dubuis, by the Grace of God and the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of Galveston and San Antonio, have examined and approved the Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, which Sisters are under the Rule of St. Augustine.¹³ We ordain that the present Constitutions for the above named Sisters, whom, by our Episcopal authority, we have established in the city of San Antonio, Texas, be observed in their house in San Antonio, by all the Sisters there, and all the Sisters depending thereon. We do not pretend, by virtue of the regulations prescribed in these Constitutions, to impose any obligation under pain of sin, except that which naturally accompanies the infraction of the vows, or of the virtues in matters of importance. . . . For the present We give with our approbation, Our Apostolic blessing to all those who are or ever will be true members of this little Congregation. We pray that God may give you the grace, Our very dear Sisters and well beloved Daughters in Christ, and the will to observe these Constitutions, to which We affix our Episcopal seal.¹⁴

The influence of Bishop Dubuis on the establishment of the Congregation is evident in all of these details regarding the foundation. It was he who recruited the early members, appointed the first superiors, decided on the separation of the two houses as independent congregations, and approved the original constitution and directory. He determined also that the community should be placed under his episcopal sanction "to save it from the possibility of future disaster."¹⁵

Bishop Dubuis' diocese, however, was far too extensive and demanding of his time and energy to permit him to give much attention

to the newly established congregation. The archives contain no letters that he wrote to either Rev. Mother Madeleine or Rev. Mother Pierre, and he evidently assumed no financial responsibility for their work or for the institutions they began to build in the name of the Church. In one of her letters, Mother Pierre says, "Bishop Dubuis . . . left *us* only with debts . . . without revenue, without resources, having confidence only in the providence of the Incarnate Word."¹⁶

At the sisters' general chapter held in 1942, it was decided that Bishop Dubuis should be recognized officially as the founder of the Congregation. Some years later, Rev. Mother Calixta Garvey presented documentation from the archives to support this decision. She quoted from a letter that Rev. Mother Angélique had written to the sisters, saying, "Your real founder is Monseigneur Dubuis."¹⁷ She pointed out also that Dubuis referred to himself as "Founder and Father" of the Congregation in the Constitutions of 1872 and in the revision of the document in 1885. Also, at the general chapter held by the sisters in 1897, Dubuis was described as the founder.¹⁸

Bishop Dubuis, no doubt, influenced the spirit of the Congregation through his dedication to spreading the word of God, his determination to build up the Catholic Church in his diocese, and his willingness to work untiringly and to sacrifice himself for others. In a letter written for Rev. Mother Madeleine, Sister Gabriel referred to him as "the priest of the poor and the orphans."¹⁹ All of these characteristics of "The Apostle of Texas," as he has been called, provided an example for imitation and inspiration. His work of founding the Congregation would never have succeeded, however, had it not been for the dedication of the sisters themselves.

Rev. Mother Calixta wisely concluded her study for the 1942 chapter by recognizing Rev. Mother Madeleine Chollet as co-foundress. "Bishop Dubuis was God's instrument in bringing us to San Antonio," she said. It was Mother Madeleine, however, "our spiritual mother and leader [who] carefully nurtured in herself and in her sisters the 'spirit' of the charity of the Incarnate Word."²⁰

If Bishop Dubuis is to be recognized as founder and Sister Madeleine as co-foundress of the Congregation, surely another person is deserving of the same recognition—Sister St. Pierre Cinquin, who accompanied Sister Madeleine on the stagecoach journey from Galveston and who was equally responsible for establishing the foundation. Upon the completion of her three-year term as the first superior of the Congregation, Rev. Mother Madeleine proposed to Bishop Dubuis that Sister Pierre be appointed as her replacement. Mother Madeleine

was then placed in charge of St. Joseph's Orphanage, a position that brought her into close contact with the children whom she dearly loved.

The burden of superiorship had been a heavy one for Rev. Mother Madeleine. "She loved to do great things unnoticed and in silence," according to the annals of the Congregation.²¹ She preferred the simple tasks of helping in the kitchen or working in the laundry to the responsibilities of being the superior, and she was wise enough to recognize that Sister Pierre was better suited, at least at that point in time, to offer the kind of leadership that was necessary to establish the Congregation.

Some years later, however, Mother Madeleine would be re-elected to the office of superior and would prove herself an able administrator and a practical-minded business woman. She would always maintain her strict adherence to rule.

Under the guidance and direction of the new superior, a new spirit or charism was introduced in the Congregation. Rev. Mother Pierre's personality counterbalanced perfectly with that of her predecessor. Mother Madeleine recognized this fact herself when Bishop Dubuis at one time considered appointing Sister Pierre to be superioress in Galveston. "No, no, Monseigneur," Madeleine had exclaimed, "if you take her, I also will go. It is true we are different in character, but we cannot live apart. We must work together."²² The spirit of both foundresses, one of serious and strict observance of the rule, and the other of lighthearted simplicity would endure in the future ages of the Congregation.

CHAPTER IV

BIG MAMA

Whereas Rev. Mother Madeleine was retiring and reserved in all of her actions, Rev. Mother Pierre was extremely warmhearted, outgoing, and expressive of her emotions. Perhaps it was her experience as the mistress of novices that prompted her to develop a loving, maternal relationship with her sisters, although she was not much older in age than many of those under her charge.

She was born on May 22, 1845, in Beaujeu, France, to Pierre and Claudine Cinquin, wealthy, cultured, well educated, and deeply religious parents. One of three children, she was given the name of Jeanne Pierrette. Her early education was received from the Ursuline nuns in Beaujeu, who fostered her intellectual as well as her spiritual development. By the time she was eighteen she had considered entering a religious congregation, and five years later, in April, 1868, she asked for admission to the novitiate in Lyons to begin her preparation for missionary work as a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

When Jeanne received the religious habit on August 6, 1868, she was appropriately given the name of Sister St. Pierre of the Passion.¹ Just as the first pontiff had been called Peter and would become the rock of the Catholic Church, so also Sister St. Pierre would become a foundation stone for the new congregation. She completed three months of her novitiate training in Lyons under the direction of Rev. Mother Angélique Hiver, who evidently saw in the young woman outstanding traits of personality and intelligence that would prepare her for a leadership position in the new religious order in Texas. In the annals of the

Congregation, she is described as “being endowed with natural grace and attractiveness to which a refined education added a special charm.”²

When Sister Pierre left Lyons in October, 1868, together with five other novices bound for the new mission in Galveston, she was only 23 years of age. Just a few months later, in March, 1869, the decision was made to open the hospital in San Antonio and the novice, Sister Pierre, was sent with the two professed sisters, Madeleine and Agnes, to establish the new foundation. Sister Pierre made her religious vows on August 15, 1869, in the chapel of the Ursuline sisters.³

In so many of their personal characteristics, the two foundresses of the San Antonio community, Sisters Madeleine and Pierre, seemed to be exact opposites yet complementary one to the other. Madeleine was small of stature; Pierre was robust. Madeleine was quiet, timid, retiring, and initially, at least, unsure of her ability to lead others. Pierre, on the other hand, was gregarious, fond of singing and dancing, and courageous in undertaking new ventures.

Madeleine was scrupulously exact in following every detail of the rule and wanted her sisters to be as conscientious as she was herself. Pierre, on the other hand, sometimes chided the sisters for their faults and failings but more frequently won their hearts by encouraging them to be saintly and pleasing to God.

In contrast to Rev. Mother Madeleine, who left no written records of the first three years of her administration and very little insight into her personality through letters and memoirs, Rev. Mother Pierre revealed a great deal about her personality in her writings. Her letters to the sisters, to the superiors in Lyons, to bishops and priests, and to benefactors are interesting and chatty, full of information about the beginnings of the Congregation and offer intimate revelations of her own personality.

In her correspondence with the sisters, she often calls them by pet names that suggest her fondness for each one. Sister Gabriel becomes “Gabby”; Sister Mary of the Assumption is called “Sump”; Sister Xavier is “Goosy”; Sister Alphonse is “Phonse”; and Sister Leo is named “Pope Leo.” In a maternal way, she addresses them also as “My Dear Child,” “My Dear Daughter,” or “My Dear Little One.”

In the annals, she is described as being “a remarkably pleasing and amiable person” and also as “a mother in the truest sense of the word.”⁴ In writing to the sisters, she sometimes refers to herself as “your old mother,” “your old Ma,” or “Big Mama,” an affectionate title given to her initially by Sister Mary Gabriel Wheelahan and used often by the children at St. Joseph’s Orphanage, referring in a gentle way to her physical stature but also to her warm-hearted motherly ways. Rev.

Mother Madeleine, on the other hand, was “Little Mama,” which described her smaller size and her gentle, quiet manner.

Mother Pierre’s letters reveal many aspects of her spirituality. Prayer was at the center of her life and a source of grace for herself and for others: “Prayer is our great force,” she told the sisters. “With it we can plead for our neighbor and benefit his soul, when unable to assist him otherwise.”⁵

She often counseled her sisters to turn to God in prayer in any difficulty. “What can we do of ourselves and who will sustain us when hell and earth seem to be united against us?” she asked. “Prayer alone will preserve hope in our hearts and strengthen us in our desire to serve God.”⁶

Pray always, she urged them, and if not “with knees bent down as you cannot leave your work,” nevertheless “with your souls full of love.”⁷ The sisters in the hospitals, she suggested, could even “say the rosary while making the beds.”⁸

Characteristic of many spiritual writers of her time, she expressed a great concern for the weakness of human nature. “We will always have in us and meet in others defects and imperfections,” she said.⁹ She often reproached herself for her own tendency to lethargy which, she felt, kept her from accomplishing all that she should do for the glory of God. “The more God seems to impel me to activity,” she wrote, “the more I feel timid, apprehensive, lazy, desirous of doing nothing, of seeing everything in a gloomy way, . . . and on the other hand I continually fear to oppose the will of God and would want to sacrifice all, to suffer all, rather than omit in the slightest way the designs of the Incarnate Word for His work.”¹⁰

Just as Jeanne de Matel had advocated that the Incarnate Word sisters should become a second incarnation in the world around them, so also Rev. Mother Pierre urged them to imitate the Incarnate Word, to do as Jesus would have done. Suffering, in particular, was a gift from God, a way of following Christ, who had suffered and died on the cross. “Can a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word shrink from the glorious banner of suffering for Christ’s glory?” she asked. “Is it not the only wish of her soul to suffer and die for Him Whom she loves and asks to love forever?”¹¹

“Sufferings and difficulties are great teachers,” she told the sisters. “They make us more fit for practical life if we take them in the right sense.”¹² Most importantly, however, a sister should suffer and be silent, for to complain was to bring about a loss of the grace attached to the suffering.

Over and over again, she counseled them to strive for virtue—charity, patience, faith, trust, simplicity, obedience to superiors, and

obedience to their religious rule. They were to be humble and never to look for praise or even success in their work. "Be generous and firm in your task," she said. "Do not look for appearances; seek the glory of God in hidden life. God is glorified, souls are saved, not by exterior success, but by interior sacrifices."¹³

In another letter, she suggests, "Let us take the last place everywhere, in conversation, at table, everywhere." Not in suffering and in pain, however. Neither in work. Here, she says, "Let us be the first to begin, the last to retire, but of our own accord."¹⁴

To be a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word was a great gift from God, according to Rev. Mother Pierre, and she frequently reminded the sisters of how grateful they should be for the wonderful grace of being called to give their lives in service to others. In one of her letters, she exclaims, "Oh! How grand and noble is our vocation! To be called to leave the world and its vanities, to follow and imitate the Incarnate Word in His hidden life, by love of prayer, labor, penance, and mortification! After having determined and embraced wilfully such a divine vocation during our novitiate, to continue then during a lifetime to practice these virtues and redeem with Christ, and by Christ's merits and graces, our own precious soul and the souls of our brethren. Think of it, sisters!"¹⁵

In another letter she asks, "Is there anything better in heaven or on earth than to be consecrated to the Incarnate Word? To lead, for Him and in imitation of Him, a hidden, laborious life; to sanctify ourselves, and help souls to know, love, and possess Him eternally! But remember, my sisters, that the selfish soul, the superficial, indolent, and unmortified soul shall not attain this end. You have freely and willingly chosen to follow in the path of the Crucified; keep to it. Courage, then, and be brave to the end. Only a few years, a few days, perhaps, of struggle, and all will be over. The eternal reward is worth a passing moment of pain."¹⁶

For a sister to be untrue to her calling or to give up her religious vocation was a sign of weakness, of ingratitude, of turning one's back on God, who had given such a cherished gift. Mother Pierre's words to the sisters are rarely harsh. On occasion, however, when she felt that a sister was unfaithful to her vows, she could be most severe, as in the following passage in which she tells a sister she should leave the Congregation:

[We are] convinced by the continual difficulties you have found in the observance of your vows, rule, etc., that the task is above your strength and that the yoke and suffering of Our Lord are to you a source of pain rather than of joy and satisfaction. Besides your conduct having been far from satisfactory, your obedience many times so reluctant, we consider it

our duty to refuse you to become an annual professed member of our community. You cannot engage yourself any more; we wish not [*sic*] of you, considering your past. Would you be willing to leave the community, we would consider it an honest step, as your experience and ours are that you are not satisfied [in] adhering to our rules and spirit.¹⁷

Many of her letters are addressed to the superiors of the monastery in Lyons and reveal her continued reliance on them for direction, not only in spiritual matters but even in decisions regarding the opening of new schools or the establishment of hospitals. Inexperienced in the work that she was called upon to do and unfamiliar with the ways of the American people and the operations of American business, she often longed for someone who could advise and direct her. "How we should like to have you with us in these sufferings and struggles," she wrote to Mother Marie Salome on one occasion, "to judge the situation and tell us what we must do but, since that is not possible, we pray a lot and then do our best."¹⁸

During the administration of Rev. Mother Pierre, the Congregation developed a new form of ministry that the sisters were not fully prepared to assume but which simply evolved from their care of the sick in Santa Rosa. In this early period of the development of medicine, before the days of sterilization of instruments and the use of antibiotics, it was not at all unusual for a young mother to die giving birth to a child. Unable to care for or even to support the newborn infant, the father sometimes turned for help to the sisters, asking them to care for his child for a few months, a year, or even longer. In some instances the sisters were asked to give shelter and care not only to the newborn child but also to brothers and sisters as well.

According to an account in Sister Hilda Shortall's history of Santa Rosa, the sisters' care of children began when four small girls were left one day "homeless and alone" at the infirmary. Sister Francis Simpasteur brought them to Rev. Mother Pierre, who accepted them "as a gift from God although at that moment she had not enough food for the [patients'] next meal." Telling Sister Francis to make room for the children, she assured her that "God would provide." Sister Hilda adds a comment to this story by saying, "And He did."¹⁹ Before nightfall, friends of the infirmary and local merchants sent so much food and clothing to the sisters that the future establishment of the orphanage was ensured.

During this period also, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd operated a home for unwed mothers in the East End of San Antonio. The women who were brought from the home to Santa Rosa for the delivery of their babies frequently left them at the hospital in the sisters' care.

The work with orphaned and homeless children thus began as a service to the patients of the hospital. Very soon, policemen and other city officials, hearing of the work that the sisters at Santa Rosa were doing, brought in abused and abandoned children they found in the city streets.

The first orphans were accepted in the hospital in 1872. Their number increased rapidly, and by 1874, the following report was carried in the *San Antonio Express*:

There are thirty orphan girls, many of them quite small, who are taken care of and educated by the sisters. They are of various nationalities, American, German, Mexican, Polish and perhaps others. We happened in at the time when a large class of them were engaged in needlework, in which they are fully instructed. Others of them were engaged in their devotions in the chapel upstairs.

Sister St. Pierre is a large, fine looking French lady, young in years, but with a matronly and commanding appearance and seems devoted to her good work.²⁰

The sisters' establishment of the orphanage was not unusual in the Catholic Church in the late 1800s. According to Henry J. Browne, it was happening in every diocese throughout the country. "The orphanage represented the most pressing need of the time," he says, because of "the calamities of immigration [which] were innumerable and killed off the unfortunate by the thousands."²¹

The motherhouse diary describes the admission of "a band of nine little Italian orphans" brought to St. Joseph's by Sister St. Theresa Thompson. "Rev. Mother [Pierre] hearing of the misery . . . opened her heart and the orphanage for the poor little homeless ones."²²

Children of all religious faiths were taken in and given shelter. Many had not been baptized in any church and were given instructions to become Catholics. Others who belonged to the Presbyterian, Lutheran, or other religious groups were accepted on the same basis as the Catholic children. Participation in religious services was a part of the regular daily routine and included attendance at mass, often in the nearby San Fernando Church, recitation of daily prayers, and even participation in the sisters' chanting of vespers each evening.

As the number of children began to grow, it became increasingly difficult to accommodate them in Santa Rosa, and Rev. Mother Pierre determined that a separate home should be established. She purchased a piece of property on what later was known as Houston Street and began construction on a two-story stone building to be called St. Joseph's Orphanage. According to the early records, "The work progressed slowly, owing to lack of funds and was completed only in the latter part of

the month of September, 1874.”²³ Contractor for the building was Theodore Engelhardt, who from that time until his death, supervised all of the early construction of the Congregation’s hospitals and schools. The work was closely supervised by the Very Rev. E. M. Buffard, vicar general, and on October 9, the new home was blessed by Bishop Dubuis.

The following year, it was decided that the location of the orphanage should be exchanged with that of the hospital. Santa Rosa’s position on Military Plaza opposite the courthouse and the jail had become a busy center of the city. The noise coming from the marketplace, the dust rising from the unpaved streets, and the screams of the prisoners were all disturbing the peace and quiet of the patients. In the summer of 1875, therefore, the sisters moved all of the sick from Santa Rosa to the stone building that had been erected as the orphanage, and the Houston Street location became the permanent site of the hospital.

The children were housed in the building originally erected as Santa Rosa, and although not located in an ideal site, it continued to serve the needs of the orphanage for many years. To give the children an outing on Sundays, the sisters often took them to the infirmary, where removed from the bustle of the city, they could enjoy the benefits of fresh air.

Sister Madeleine was named the first superior of the home, with Sister Francis Simpasteur, Sister Mary of Jesus Noirry, and Sister Bernard Delles making up the small community. The children ranged in age from newborn infants to ten or fourteen years of age. Most of them were true orphans, and daily entries in the remark book offer brief descriptions that hint at the sadness which already filled their young lives: “October 5, 1900: Received two little girls from Galveston. Their names are Katie and Nellie Connolly. Their father was killed by the street car in June, 1900, and their mother was drowned in the flood.”²⁴

Operation of the orphanage was almost totally dependent upon charity, although at times the records show that for those children who had one or more parents, small payments were received. Many entries such as the following appear in the remark book, “Mrs. Sallie Beal sent two dollars as a help to her daughter’s support.”²⁵

The sisters and the older children did sewing to earn money. Wealthy ladies of San Antonio often came to the home to arrange for chemises to be made or for linen handkerchiefs to be embroidered. Such items were also sold at public fairs held in the city. Other sources of income included the making of altar breads for local churches and the laundry of altar linens for the parishes as well as for St. Mary’s College and St. Louis College, schools for boys established by the Marianists.

The principal means of support, however, was charitable donations from benefactors who came to know of the sisters' work at the home and of their need for support. John Twohig, who had helped the sisters in establishing the infirmary in Galveston as well as the one in San Antonio, became the principal donor of the orphanage. In one of her many letters expressing her gratitude for his generosity, Rev. Mother Pierre wrote, "What is the matter with you that you have been so good? I was and we were all in amazement with such an unexpected rain of dollars, when actually we had been for weeks after heaven for some help as the dryness of funds in the asylum was worse than we had for a *long time*."²⁶

Twohig also solicited funds from other donors and formed what he called the Burial Club, persuading a large number of benefactors to give him \$2.00 each, the amount that would have to be paid for "hack hire" to attend Twohig's funeral. In return, Mr. Twohig agreed "to go to the funeral of each of them *even had he to walk*." Only one condition was included in the agreement: members of the Burial Club could not "die *outside the city limits*."²⁷ On his list of sixty-eight members sent to Rev. Mother Pierre were many prominent local citizens, such as J. E. Billups, W. C. Sullivan, Thomas J. Devine, and A. W. Gifford.

Other prominent persons and businesses in San Antonio donated frequently to the orphanage. Gifts are carefully noted in the records from O'Connor and Sullivan, bankers; Joske and Brothers; Wolff and Marks; F. W. Wolfson; Lytle and Co.; A. B. Frank & Co.; the Menger Hotel; Wm. S. Richter, baker; Lignite Coal and Wood Co.; and George Dullnig. Donations came also from Mayor Bryan Callaghan, from General David Sloan Stanley of the military post [Fort Sam Houston], and from Bishop John Neraz.

The sisters not only relied on the efforts of John Twohig to secure support for the orphans but regularly went out themselves into various parts of the city and begged for donations. They went in two's to government offices, to various places of business, and to the military post.²⁸ One of their favorite stops was the construction site where the tracks were being laid for the railroads coming into San Antonio in the late 1800s. The workers, most of whom were unskilled and poorly paid laborers, were particularly generous to the sisters who arrived regularly each payday.

On occasion, they went also to areas of the city where people might be gathered for a special observance, such as All Souls Day, when crowds visited all four cemeteries of the city. The donations were carefully recorded: "At the American [cemetery], they received only 10 cents; at the Polish, \$5.05; at the Mexican, \$15.00; and at the German, \$20.00."²⁹

It was Sister Mary of Jesus, who first began to go on begging expeditions to the outlying towns and ranches. Her independent personality gave her just the kind of courage and daring she needed to travel fearlessly through the wide open spaces of Texas asking for donations for the orphans. Through her daring exploits in the wilderness and her colorful character, she became a legend in the Congregation.

She had come from Lyons to Galveston with the second band of volunteers that included Rev. Mother Madeleine. When she received her religious name in Lyons, she was called Sister Anne Marie, but somehow that was changed to Sister Mary of Jesus. In the early records of the Congregation, her family name appears in various forms also, sometimes as Noirry or Noiry, and other times as Noiret. Very little else is known about her background. She wrote a brief account of the foundation of the Congregation but included almost no reference to herself. Even her complete birth date is not recorded in the register of members.

The date given for her entrance in Lyons is April, 1873, but this could not possibly be correct if, as other records show, she came from France in 1867 with Sister Madeleine. She did not accompany Sister Madeleine, Sister Pierre, and Sister Agnes when they came to San Antonio in March, 1869, but followed them three months later, arriving some time in June, according to Sister Mary Loyola Hegarty's record.³⁰ There is no information on how she traveled from Galveston or whether she made the stagecoach journey alone or in the company of others.

In a letter from Mother Marie Angélique of Lyons, a reference is made to Sister Mary of Jesus' having some difficulty in the Galveston congregation, of not having worked hard enough to deepen her spiritual life, and of her habit of fabricating stories or at least exaggerating the details. Mother Angélique was pleased to learn that she had been accepted in the Congregation in San Antonio. "Now that she has the good fortune of being on the right road, she will continue to go forward in it," she said.³¹

Although she received the religious habit in Lyons in 1867, the register states that she did not make her perpetual vows until 1882. The dates indicate that she would have been in the Congregation for a period of fifteen years before her final profession, but it would be highly improbable that she would remain a novice for that length of time.

All of this confusion of names and dates suggests that exactitude in recording details was not of great importance to Sister Mary of Jesus. What was of much more significance was the welfare of the orphans, and she was intent on seeing that they had sufficient food and good warm clothing. She persuaded Rev. Mother Pierre to allow her to purchase a wagon and team of horses for her begging expeditions. Then,

wearing a soldier's overcoat that reached to her ankles, a pair of heavy boots, and a broad-brimmed straw hat to disguise the fact that she was a sister in a religious habit, she set out to travel the often dangerous roads of Texas, carrying with her a brace of pistols for protection. She drove the wagon herself, usually accompanied by one of the orphans or by another sister. The children and the young sisters loved to go with her because the trips were always full of some kind of excitement. A first-hand description of the experience is told in the annals by one of her traveling companions:

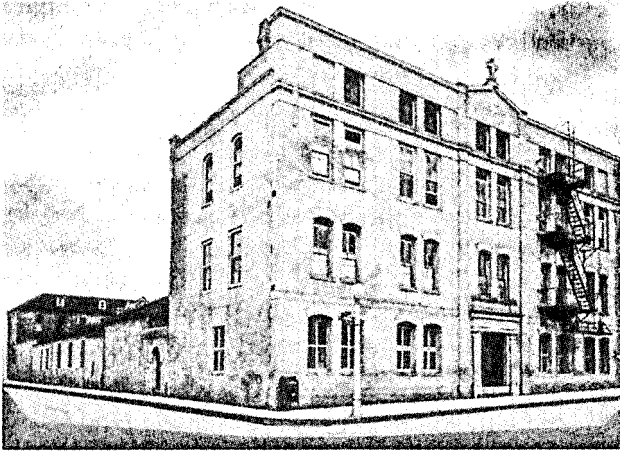
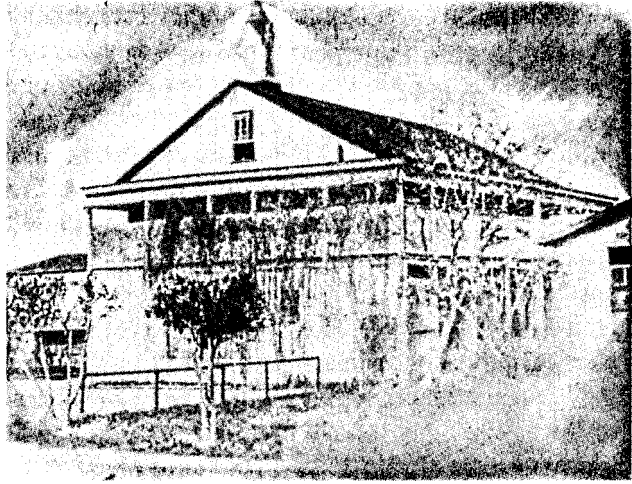
We sat upright in the wagon, with rosary beads in hand; frightened at the howling of the coyotes, wolves and panthers, and by noises of various kinds, either real or imaginary, that tended to excite fear. Sister Mary of Jesus, alone, was fearless, and would even laugh at our apprehensions. After tying the horses to the wagon, she would spread her blankets on the ground, then say her night prayers, take out her pistols, and placing one of them at each side of her, at a convenient distance, she would lie down and sleep as peacefully as if she were in her bed.³²

Her begging tours lasted five or six weeks, and she usually returned with a few hundred dollars plus eggs, butter, bacon, and potatoes for the orphans as well as hay for her horses. She became well known throughout various parts of the state, particularly at government posts and military installations where she was always treated kindly. Her travels were sometimes dangerous, however, as she recorded herself:

I left the wagon in order to look for water and shelter, telling [the orphan boy] to drive slowly, I keeping the wagon in sight. Going out among the rocky ravines, and looking into the caves, of which there were many in the place, I was confronted by a large mountain wolf. He stopped and stared at me; I folded my arms and looked at him. What was I to do? I left my pistols in the wagon; I dared not run, this would show my fear of the animal. Recommending myself to the Heart of Jesus, I walked leisurely away and was followed by my shaggy friend—or enemy—I knew not. Looking towards the wagon, I noticed that the boy had come to a standstill, at the brink of a precipice. Having called to him, I turned to look back and found to my great relief that the wolf had disappeared. "Now," I reasoned, "he has gone, and will return, perhaps, with a pack of his kind." Going up to the wagon, I unharnessed the horses and led them to another spot. I then made a fire and cooked supper. Having partaken of our frugal repast, I tied the horses to the wheels of the wagon. But, for me, there was no sleep that night as, with pistol in hand, I sat in the front seat ready for any emergency. But the Heart that is ever watching took care of us, and we had no further trouble with the wolf or with any of his acquaintances.³³

BIG MAMA

The first Santa Rosa Infirmary constructed in 1869 was located on Commerce and Cameron Streets.



St. Joseph's Orphanage for Girls was constructed in 1875 on Houston Street. The location was later exchanged with that of Santa Rosa in order to provide a quiet atmosphere for the patients of the Infirmary. The photograph shows the home for girls as it appeared in the 1920s.



Sister Mary of Jesus Noiry became known as the Heroine of the Prairies for her travels across the Texas plains gathering donations for the children at St. Joseph's Orphanage.

Sister Stephen Dombey, another Frenchwoman, also made many wagon trips into the wilderness as well as visits to local merchants seeking funds for the orphanage. Like Sister Mary of Jesus, she sometimes encountered demonstrations of prejudice toward the Catholic Church and toward the sisters themselves. One story involving Sister Stephen that has been handed down through the years tells of a particularly harsh rebuke which she received when she called upon a businessman in the city and asked for a donation. He responded to her plea in the rudest possible manner by spitting at her. Undaunted, Sister looked him directly in the eye and said, "Thank you, sir. That was for me. Now would you please give me something for the orphans?"

In spite of the sisters' noble efforts to raise money, the early days of the Congregation were a time of serious financial difficulties. Rev. Mother Pierre always turned for help to St. Joseph, the protector of the Holy Family, who would also, she was sure, protect the family of the Incarnate Word. She composed her own prayer to express her urgent needs:

St. Joseph, we need 60 piastres to pay for that horse which Sister Mary of Jesus bought; 155 piastres to pay Mr. Grenett; 110 piastres to pay Mr. Woolfson; 60 piastres to pay Mr. Thalteyer. We need this money at once, my good Father. These debts are contracted by you who are the owner, father, and protector of your orphanage, St. Joseph's, San Antonio, Texas. The servants of your house, those who have charge of it, are the spouses of the Incarnate Word, your Son on earth and your God in time and eternity. We are not asking you for this money in our name; we, especially I, do not deserve to be heard; but we are asking it of you in the name of your adoptive Son, the Incarnate Word, and for your own honor because you are the master of the house.

I am going to have a candle burned for you today and, having given you this missive, I hope you will reply immediately. For you there is no difficulty; what you want you can do. If you answer this appeal, I shall have a mass in your honor offered in thanksgiving. If you do not reply, I will punish you in some way, my good Father. You have always spared me this latter pain. Please do not deceive our confidence in you. I am displeased for I have reminded you during the month about these debts and asked you to send us the money to pay them. You have not done so yet and the day of payment is approaching. Hurry! Hurry! Your honor is at stake.

P. S. In heaven there cannot be any bankruptcy; its funds and treasures are inexhaustible. Pay your debts, St. Joseph. We are asking for nothing superfluous but only for what is just and necessary.³⁴

Before 1875, the superior general of the Congregation as well as the members of the general council had been appointed by Bishop Dubuis. The first general chapter at which the sisters elected their own religious superiors was held on January 2, 1875, at St. Joseph's Orphanage. Rev. Mother Pierre was elected for a second term as superior general, with Sister Francis as her assistant, Sister Madeleine as secretary, and Sister Claude as councilor. In addition to her duties as the superior, Rev. Mother Pierre was also in charge of the novices.

In the same year, 1875, the sisters became involved in a new form of ministry that developed naturally from their care of the orphan children. Aware of the sisters' teaching at St. Joseph's, the Very Rev. Anthony Pellicer, who had been consecrated the first bishop of San Antonio, urged Rev. Mother Pierre to accept the children of the parish in the orphanage classes.³⁵ With the transfer of all of the Mexican children from the free school operated in conjunction with Ursuline Academy, San Fernando School was established. It was one of the first parochial schools in the city and the first to be conducted by the sisters. The children were divided into classes according to their nationality and language. Sister Francis Simpasteur was appointed to teach the Mexican children; Sister Bernard Delles taught those who spoke English. Classes in art were given by Professor Julian Onderdonk, a regional landscape artist who later achieved considerable recognition for his paintings, and instruction in music was offered by Professor Barbour. The lay teachers were each paid \$6.00 per week.

Once the school was established at the orphanage, the sisters' involvement in elementary teaching grew rapidly. Like Bishop Pellicer, other ordinaries throughout the country were intent on cooperating with the directives of the Catholic Church with regard to education. As early as 1852, the bishops of the United States meeting in Baltimore for their first plenary council had recognized the importance of establishing Catholic schools for the children of hundreds of thousands of Catholic immigrants entering the country at this time. Requests for sisters to open schools soon began to multiply.

Shortly after the opening of the school at the orphanage, Our Lady of Guadalupe School was established at Greytown, a Mexican settlement located near Floresville. This institution, although sponsored by the parish, was financed with state funds and was the first of many public schools operated by the sisters in the early days of the Congregation. Louise Reibe, a postulant who later became Sister St. John, earned her state teacher's certificate and was appointed principal of the school. Two other sisters, Sister Joseph Krawiec and Sister St. Ange Hernández comprised the faculty. In accordance with the

law, the certified teacher was not permitted to teach religion classes, but the other sisters could do so.

At Greytown, the sisters had no proper convent and lived in the sacristy of the church, which measured 10 feet by 18 feet and served as dormitory, community room, and refectory. They cooked their meals over an open fire in the yard and carried water from the river located a mile away.³⁶

Many other country parishes that had no resources of their own secured state funds to set up schools similar to the one in Greytown. In 1876, the sisters opened a public school in Atascosa; in 1877 they went to Cuero; in 1878 they were in Seguin; and in 1879 they opened a school in Meyersville. Unfortunately, the money from the state was often withdrawn after just a few years, and many of the schools had to be closed. In some instances, however, the parish or the sisters themselves took over the financial responsibility for the institution. In addition to the public schools, the sisters in 1878 opened a private school in Indianola, but four years later the building was swept away by a tidal wave.³⁷

A primary concern for Rev. Mother Pierre was the recruitment of more sisters to fill all of the teaching positions. Very few young women from San Antonio and the surrounding areas had entered the Congregation, possibly because the sisters conducted no high schools or academies and had limited opportunities to come into contact with young women of an appropriate age and educational background who might be potential candidates.

In her earnest effort to find more sisters, Rev. Mother Pierre made a decision in 1878 that would have a profound effect on the development of the Congregation and on the character of its membership. She determined that she would return to her native France and also make a trip to Germany to recruit vocations. She returned from the journey with ten young women who had expressed an interest in the missionary endeavors in Texas. Included in the group were Gertrude Saar and Marie Brolier, both of whom would later become superiors of the Congregation and known as Rev. Mother Ignatius and Rev. Mother Alphonse.

In 1881, she made a second journey for the same purpose. This time she included a trip to Ireland and returned to Texas with four young women from Europe as well as fifteen Irish postulants eager to do missionary work for the people of Texas.

The sisters in Lyons assisted in the recruitment efforts by contacting young women who showed an interest in entering a religious congregation. Rev. Mother Pierre asked them to look for those "who have a soul for God and a heart for their neighbor."³⁸

Help came also from Bishop Neraz, who recruited young women in his native France as well as in Ireland, where he visited the Sisters of Mercy in Knock and in Cahir. The international character of the Congregation was soon well established, and through the many decades to come it became greatly dependent for its growth on sisters coming from European countries, particularly from Germany and Ireland.

Three more elementary schools were opened in 1881. All three were established to serve Polish communities, and given Mother Pierre's deep devotion to St. Joseph, it is not surprising that all three were dedicated to him: St. Joseph's School, Panna Maria; St. Joseph's School, St. Hedwig; and St. Joseph's School, Cestohowa. In the same year, the sisters wisely secured a charter from the state authorizing them to operate schools as well as hospitals in Texas.

The continued expansion of their work called for more and more educational preparation for the sisters. The state was demanding that all teachers in schools supported with public funds be certified through teacher examinations, and Rev. Mother Pierre was determined that the sisters would be well qualified. In her letters she repeatedly encouraged those involved in the schools to study hard and urged the other sisters to pray that the teachers would pass the qualifying tests.

She was fond of making special promises in connection with her own prayers for the sisters' success—promises to say more prayers, to have masses offered, or to perform certain good deeds if her petitions were answered. Included in her collected correspondence is the following memorandum written to ensure that the promises she made would be fulfilled:

In case I should die without having fulfilled the following obligations, I wish the sisters of our community to know they are obliged to fulfill them since I contracted them in the name of the congregation.

1. If the sisters sent to Panna Maria and to St. Joseph's Parish are successful in their examinations to teach in the public schools, \$25.00 will be given to the Rector of San Fernando Church to aid in the purchase of a statue of Our Lady of Sorrows.

2. For the same reason, we will buy the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* on our missions. . . .

3. Each member of the community, whether she be a novice or professed, will say the Stabat Mater for one year . . . to give thanks for the protection which Our Lady of Sorrows grants to our sisters.³⁹

A few years later, she inaugurated the practice of a holy hour of adoration to be made each Thursday night "to thank God who granted

our sisters to succeed in passing the examination for the free school in Bandera."⁴⁰

Sister Gabriel Wheelahan, who had been recruited by Bishop Pellicer and who entered the Congregation from New Orleans with a good educational background in the American schools, was primarily responsible for assisting many of the sisters to earn the necessary teachers' certificates. She was eventually appointed an examiner by the state. When both Sister Ambrose Clutterbuck and Sister Philip O'Neill received their certification as second grade teachers and earned particularly high praise from the state examiners, Rev. Mother Pierre wrote to tell all of the sisters: "Is not this good news for you all, darling sisters, and is not my poor Gabbie's [Sister Gabriel's] heart going to jump with joy? . . . Courage, courage, all of you dear ones. Study, study hard and seriously. . . . Hurrah for you, my Ambrose and Philip! Become saints now and you will also get a certificate from Our Savior and this one will have an eternal stamp of security."⁴¹

In spite of the increase in the number of sisters coming from France, Germany, and Ireland, Rev. Mother Pierre could not respond to the many requests from all directions for more schools, more hospitals, and more orphanages. Some appeals, however, she simply could not turn down, particularly those coming from areas of great poverty, such as Eagle Pass. The sisters began their work of teaching in that city in 1882 in an old adobe building by the river. Just one year later, however, Rev. Mother Pierre wrote to tell the sisters: "On consideration of the necessity of having a school house for Eagle Pass parish where hundreds of poor children are left in the utmost ignorance or exposed to be brought up by sectarians, we . . . have determined to build a house there under the patronage of St. Joseph. . . . We have begun the work like the former ones of our community under the full and entire confidence in the Divine Help, and the unfailing faith that possesses our hearts in the protection of our Father St. Joseph."

Land for the school in Eagle Pass was donated by the sisters' great friend and benefactor, John Twohig. Money had to be borrowed for construction, since as Rev. Mother Pierre recorded, "No means of the community, which has nothing but debts, can contribute to its erection."

She carefully noted the donations received:

1. The loan of three thousand dollars without interest for two years from a gentleman.
2. The loan of two thousand more at 6% for one year.

3. The donation of one hundred dollars [from] Col. Pierce, president of the railroad, at present in the city of Eagle Pass.
4. The collections made by the sisters of Eagle Pass to the amount of four hundred dollars.⁴²

Financial difficulties were a continuing concern for her as they had been for Rev. Mother Madeleine. In one of her letters she wrote, "We are up to our eyes in work and always with no resources to pay our debts. This last situation worries me because I do not see how we are going to come out, since prayers, efforts, etc.—nothing—improves our situation." She concluded by saying, "I feel very tired. I try to maintain my will toward God, but the voice of fear speaks louder than the voice of grace."⁴³

The amount of income from the operation of the hospital as well as the schools was very low. Patients at Santa Rosa continued to pay very little for their care; many were charity cases and could not pay at all. In one of the diary entries for the hospital, it is recorded that the sisters even went without their own supper in order to feed the patients.

Even before she had paid off the debts on the convent and school in Eagle Pass, however, Rev. Mother Pierre was facing a need for more money. Patients had been turned away for lack of space at Santa Rosa, and the infirmary had to be enlarged. The building still served as a motherhouse for the sisters, and with the increase in the number of postulants coming from Europe, there was a great need also of enlarging the sisters' living quarters.

At last, it was decided in 1884 to construct a three-story addition, and Rev. Mother Pierre prepared the following statement for placement in the cornerstone: "The means to begin are none. Our bishop has authorized us to borrow money for the present needs. . . . The future expenses will be met by the assistance of Heaven, who has never forsaken us."⁴⁴

In addition to the on-going concerns about finances, three major problems were to confront Rev. Mother Pierre during the early 1880s. The first was a request from Bishop N. A. Gallagher to take over the operation of St. Mary's Orphanage, which was in the care of the Incarnate Word sisters in Galveston. The bishop gave as his reason for substituting one congregation for the other the fact that the sisters in Galveston did not have sufficient members to continue staffing the home for children.

The decision was certain to cause dissension between the two communities and to widen the gap that had already developed in the relationship, essentially because of a difference in spirit which was noted by Sister Mary of Jesus in her early account of the Congregation

and referred to also in the letters of Rev. Mother Pierre.⁴⁵ Sister Madeleine, Sister Pierre, and Sister Mary of Jesus, who left Galveston to establish the San Antonio community, had received their early preparation directly from Rev. Mother Angélique and the sisters at the monastery in Lyons. In contrast to the Galveston sisters, their spirit was strongly influenced by the contemplative way of life followed by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament.

Bishop Gallagher's arrangements to bring community members from San Antonio to take charge of the Galveston orphanage were made without much thought or planning and not communicated until the last minute to the sisters of the Galveston community, who were being replaced. The bishop, in fact, seemed to be deciding the matter even as he wrote to Rev. Mother Pierre proposing the idea: "After considering the matter I have come to the conclusion that the best plan to adopt as regards the care of our orphan asylum is to withdraw the sisters who have charge at present and to give the charge . . . to sisters whom I hope to get from your community in San Antonio. I therefore hereby give over to your community the charge. You can send the sisters immediately."⁴⁶

The bishop had determined also that the orphanage, even though it was to be staffed by a new community, should be continued under the financial support of the hospital operated by the Galveston sisters. Bishop Dubuis had contracted this arrangement with the hospital during his episcopal administration.

Rev. Mother Pierre had strong misgivings about the situation. "As far as I am concerned," she wrote to the sisters in Lyons, "I would prefer not to have to receive anything from them [the Galveston sisters] because I fear the consequences, but the good God who permits this trial will arrange it. On the other hand, if three or four hundred piastres are taken away each month from the support of the orphanage it will be impossible to receive so many children, and that will excite other remarks. . . . I believe there will be difficulty in this matter."⁴⁷

In spite of her concerns, Rev. Mother Pierre would not go against the wishes of the bishop. In 1883, Sister Gonzaga Stamcampiono and nine other sisters arrived in Galveston and took over the care of the 125 children. The size of the community made it possible for the heavy work of the orphanage to be divided and the children to be well cared for in every detail. The sisters were not responsible for the administration of the institution. Bishop Gallagher retained this charge himself, making all important decisions with regard to the acceptance of children, which was limited to those who were truly orphans.

In addition to caring for the children, the sisters went on begging trips, just as they did for their own orphanage. Frequently, they went to

Catholic parishes, writing to the pastor in advance to tell him that they would accept "anything the people [might] wish to give them, such as country produce of any kind, eggs, butter, lard, chicken, bacon, . . . dry goods and groceries also hardware."⁴⁸

Rev. Mother Pierre's fear of future difficulties were well founded. The sisters in Galveston were justly disturbed over Bishop Gallagher's actions, and the separation of the two congregations continued to widen, misunderstandings arose, and ill feelings developed. The work of the sisters from San Antonio was criticized severely by members of the Galveston clergy and the general public. They were accused of taking over a house that did not belong to them and in which they had no right to be working. The superior, Sister Gonzaga, according to Rev. Mother Pierre's letters, "wanted to swallow so much and be strong in order not to pain Bishop Gallagher and [the superiors in San Antonio]." The situation ultimately became so difficult for her that "she fell ill and almost lost her mind."⁴⁹

Word of the situation reached Bishop Dubuis, who was by this time living in retirement in France, as well as the superior of the monastery in Lyons, who wrote to Rev. Mother Pierre urging her to work toward a betterment of relations with the sisters in Galveston and even to effect a re-uniting of the two communities into one congregation. Too much time had passed, however, and too many differences had arisen to bring that about at this time. Rev. Mother Pierre immediately responded that "everything would soon be destroyed if this reunion took place now." She was convinced also that the Galveston sisters held a strong resentment to her personally. "I am the whole opposition," she said. "If necessity or some circumstance were to bring about a union (of the two communities), the good would only be temporary. More than ordinary virtue would be needed to continue to struggle, or it would be necessary to break the bonds of a unity not based on faith and confidence in God."

She assured the superior in Lyons, however, that she would obey her directive if she insisted that it be done: "If before God you answer for the consequences and tell me in the name of the Incarnate Word to try the impossible, I am ready not only to accept but to begin negotiations."⁵⁰ In the meantime she urged the sisters at the orphanage, "Suffer and be silent; you are the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word."⁵¹ The superiors in Lyons did not pursue their initial directions.

The difficult conditions at the orphanage continued for several years, until Bishop Gallagher decided that the community in Galveston had a sufficient number of sisters to resume their operation of the institution, and the community in San Antonio should withdraw their services.

Unfortunately he handled the resolution of the problem as poorly as he had handled the creation of it.

While the sisters were working in the Galveston institution, Rev. Mother Pierre had repeatedly asked him if their work was satisfactory and if he wished them to continue. He had always given them to understand that he was "appreciating their services." However, in 1888 word reached the sisters in San Antonio through Father F. Granger, who was associated with them at the hospital in Marshall, that Bishop Gallagher wanted them to withdraw but was reluctant to inform them of his decision. He "consider[ed] the disunion of the two houses a disadvantage for religion and hope[d] to remedy it by these proceedings."⁵²

Rev. Mother Pierre wrote immediately to Bishop Gallagher: "You need have no delicacy to keep in this matter. If it is your desire in any way, speak and we will retire most willingly. . . . Do not hesitate, dear Bishop. We have done the best we could; we are and ever shall be grateful for the confidence and occasion of practicing charity [that] you gave us, but will be *happy* and *very happy* to see the work in better hands, and attended more advantageously by any one else."⁵³

Although her response to the bishop was restrained, Mother Pierre expressed her true feelings to the sisters at the orphanage. "*This stings the heart, yours as well as mine,*" she wrote. "I do not think I am able to stand the work of Bishop Gallagher putting us out in his own time though I see everything coming from God. He [the bishop] is only an instrument for the Divine Will. . . . I beg you then be religious; *suffer and be silent.*"⁵⁴ Without complaint she reported to the other members of the Congregation that the sisters were leaving the orphanage, because "it was time to claim [their] services for the interests of our community," and that Bishop Gallagher had agreed to the change.⁵⁵

The second big trial of the 1880s for Rev. Mother Pierre and the community occurred when an epidemic of small pox broke out in San Antonio. The city had not yet established its own hospital, and with no other place to turn for help, public leaders called upon the sisters in the spring of 1883 to care for the victims of the disease. Rev. Mother Pierre agreed to send Sisters Alphonse Brollier and Clare Zienc to a makeshift facility called "a pest house" set up outside the city limits where the patients were placed in isolation.

The difficult conditions under which they lived and cared for the patients are described in one of Rev. Mother Pierre's letters: "Three times a day we brought them their food and that of the patients. We had to stay outside the barricade that encircled the terrain. We exchanged some witticisms as well as the pots and saucepans. I went there daily, sometimes twice a day. . . . They had no house for themselves but, by dint of insist-

ing, I obtained a tent from the city for them. They slept there and also prepared with an oil lamp the drinks for the patients. It was heart-rending to see them in such a tent during the cold weather. But they were so happy and had such high courage that it consoled us.”⁵⁶

Her greatest concern was not for the sisters’ physical well-being and the danger of contagion. She knew they would willingly sacrifice their lives, just as she would herself, for the people whom they came to serve. What worried her most was rather that they were enclosed in the quarantined facility and unable to attend daily Mass and receive the Eucharist. Each morning before daylight, therefore, the sisters drove the hospital ambulance wagon to the Pest House and brought one of the sisters back to Santa Rosa for mass while the other one stayed to take care of the patients.

For five weeks the epidemic spread throughout the city, and the sisters kept their post, enduring many hardships and exposing their own lives to the contagious disease. Their dedication, however, was rewarded by the fact that they were able to bring not only physical comfort but also spiritual consolation to their patients and were able to baptize three out of the six patients who died.⁵⁷

Finally, the third great trial of the decade arose in Chicago. In 1882, Mother Pierre had received a request from the Resurrectionist Fathers to open St. Josaphat School in the northern section of that city and in time to expand the foundation from teaching into other forms of service as well. Initial plans even included the establishment of a novitiate for young women entering the Congregation from the Midwest. Rev. Mother Pierre called all of the perpetually professed sisters together to determine whether the community should branch out into this new location. The sisters all agreed that they should open the school and begin to receive new members of the Congregation in a Chicago novitiate. For the time being the community there would be under the jurisdiction of San Antonio but would become independent when it was able to furnish fifteen perpetually professed sisters from among its own subjects and when the San Antonio superior saw that it was “capable of functioning by itself temporally and spiritually.”⁵⁸

The whole effort seemed to offer such promise. The Congregation would be able to expand into new geographical territories with a great increase in the number of sisters. Rev. Vincent Bazuiski, the superior of the Resurrectionist Fathers, assured Mother Pierre that there were “twenty-four or twenty-five young girls in Chicago waiting to enter.”⁵⁹

From the start, however, problems developed when the priest in charge of the school wanted to choose which sisters would be assigned to the mission. He knew some of the members of the community who

were from Polish backgrounds, and he had decided that those sisters would be best suited to serve the needs of his Polish parish.

Rev. Mother Pierre returned from a trip to Galveston just in time to find that the priest had arrived in San Antonio with carriages prepared to take four sisters to Chicago. When he was given the names of those who would accompany him, however, he had decided that one was not acceptable and that he would be satisfied with only three teachers for the time being. Rev. Mother Pierre was incensed with the priest's actions, called all of the sisters in the community together to witness her decision and announced: "Father, I am angry. . . . We had understood and believed that you wanted Sisters of the Incarnate Word, but instead it is such and such a person you want. We cannot continue with what we had promised you. Our sisters will not go." Only when the priest apologized for his actions, did she relent and agree that the sisters could leave, "but *the ones* and *all the ones* who are appointed to go or none," she insisted.⁶⁰

When Mother Angela Pierret and the three other sisters arrived in Chicago, they found more work than they could accomplish. Over 100 children were enrolled in the school, and many more were anxious to attend but unable to do so because they were employed in local factories. Father Vincent urged the sisters to begin teaching at night as well as in the daytime. He also wanted to open another school in South Chicago and to send two of the sisters to begin teaching there. He repeatedly urged Rev. Mother Pierre to send more sisters, preferably Polish ones, to Chicago.

In addition to their teaching, the sisters were expected to handle all arrangements in the sacristy of the church, preparation of the altar and the priest's vestments for all liturgical celebrations, laundering the altar linens, and cleaning the sanctuary. With regard to the promise of twenty-five young women waiting to enter the Congregation the sisters found this was not quite true. Only after several months did they secure any applicants at all, and then only five young women who seemed sincerely interested in becoming sisters.

Returning from one of her visits to Chicago, Rev. Mother Pierre brought with her the five postulants who had been accepted for entrance into the novitiate in San Antonio. Only later did she discover some of them had come to Texas not with the intention of becoming members of the Congregation but rather under the false assurance that they would receive an education from the sisters.

Three of the young women had to be sent back, and Rev. Mother Pierre wrote to the sisters in Chicago giving them advice on what kind of persons to accept in the future for admission to the novitiate:

Remember well that the age of admittance is from 16 to 20 and not above. . . . Do be careful about whom you receive. I would rather not see any postulants. Priests are not just towards this very often. They like to push in every character and every old maid they meet with. For the future we must be more careful and have direction with filling our convent with proper persons. . . . *Few, but good*, do not fear, pray for real vocations and be just; charity well understood is not to be unjust to God's work to be indulging to some persons.⁶¹

In a letter that she wrote later to Lyons, she said, "Chicago has . . . been an occasion of struggle for me and has caused me to shed many a tear." She also confided to the superior the changes that she had insisted upon with the priests at St. Josaphat:

I will not permit them to draw our sisters away from the humble paths of the unassuming virtue of a Sister of the Incarnate Word. They wanted to have men teachers with the sisters to teach the children who work in the factories, and teach during the day and in the evenings. I said "no," and it will be "no." I told them that the sisters would not be sacristans or take care of the priests. Being so few and having to work in a parish sacristy, it would be impossible for a sister not to be exposed to a thousand dangers (even with the priests). Let them occupy themselves with the children, visit the poor sick if they have time, but they must in no way be public persons. . . . I wrote to them a week ago and am waiting for a "yes" or "no" to our conditions or we will recall our sisters in August.⁶²

Responding to the pleading of the priests, however, she allowed the sisters to remain in Chicago for another year and even to open the second school in South Chicago. Mother Angela took over the direction of this school, while Mother Joseph Krawiec was appointed superior in North Chicago. By April, 1885, the sisters were still expected to do more work than they could accomplish, and the priests were still insistent on having more Polish teachers. Rev. Mother Pierre could not expose the sisters any longer to such excessive demands on their labors nor could she allow such a division on a nationalistic basis to arise within the Congregation. She notified Father Vincent that she would have to withdraw the sisters at the end of the school term. He responded angrily by dismissing them immediately.

Without recrimination, Rev. Mother Pierre sent him the following note:

I suppose it will be no need for our sisters to call on you for their return trip expenses, being discharged by you. It is of justice that they should be returned to their convent home, when they have been faithful to fulfill the duties for which they were called and sent away of your own determination. . . . Having to repress my emotions as to the ways of God on His

poor servants, I will close my correspondence with you, Reverend Father, asking you to forgive us all if unwillingly or by human weakness we have not been what we should be, and thanking you for what you have done for the souls of our sisters when under your care. I bid you goodbye until we meet at the feet of the Incarnate Word to be judged by His merciful heart.⁶³

Although the sisters had considerable difficulties with Bishop Gallagher of Galveston, their relations with Bishop Neraz, who had succeeded Bishop Pellicer in 1881 in San Antonio, were most cordial. He became a devoted and loyal friend of the Congregation. Before his appointment as the local bishop, he had served as their chaplain and knew the members of the community very well. Moreover, since the constitutions of the Congregation had not yet been canonically approved in Rome, the sisters were completely under his direction as the local bishop.

Like his predecessors, Bishop Neraz had been born in France in the Department of the Rhone, and his background endeared him to Rev. Mother Pierre, who turned to him for help in many of the difficulties she faced in her administration and who found that he had a good sense of humor that matched her own. On one occasion, while traveling in France, the bishop wrote to cheer her during an attack of illness: "Come on, don't die until my return because, despite the sorrow that I would experience, I want to be present at your burial in order to see that you are well dead and buried."⁶⁴

When the increase of the bishop's administrative duties made it necessary for him to spend more time away from San Antonio, he appointed the Rev. Francis Feith, S.M., to be the regular confessor and spiritual advisor of the sisters. Father Feith was particularly well prepared to serve the needs of the international congregation. He spoke English, French, German, and Spanish and could communicate with most of the sisters in their own language. His appointment marked the beginning of a long relationship with the Marianist priests who continued to serve the sisters as confessors and spiritual advisors for many years to come.⁶⁵

From 1885 to 1890, the work in teaching and in health care began to expand rapidly. One of the major developments was the opening of the first school in Mexico. Through their work at St. Joseph's School in Seguin, the sisters had become acquainted with the Rev. Thomas Mas, S.J., pastor of St. James parish in that city. When Father Mas was transferred from Seguin to Mexico, he was named superior of St. John's College in Saltillo. It was at his suggestion that Bishop Montes de Oca

asked the Congregation in 1885 to open a school for girls of wealthy Catholic families.

The bishop advised Rev. Mother Pierre that because of the Laws of Reform, which had created severe tensions between the Catholic Church and the government of Mexico, outlawing monastic orders and placing restrictions on priests and nuns, the sisters would have to “arrive incognito, begin quietly and with the appearance of being ordinary teachers.”⁶⁶ They would not be permitted to wear their religious habits in the classroom or in public places. In spite of the difficulties, the bishop assured them that they would be able to accomplish great good for Catholic education in Mexico.

Rev. Mother Pierre, always ready to respond to the needs of the Church and to the request of a bishop for help in his diocese, did not even hesitate to send the sisters, although most of them did not speak Spanish and were totally unfamiliar with the customs of the people of Mexico. Even the tension between church and state that threatened to break out in violence at any moment did not deter her. The sisters would be close to the motherhouse, she said, and if necessary they “could flee from the impositions and chicanery of an irreligious, persecuting government [and] be able to come back to their community in San Antonio without exposing themselves to revolutionary hazards.”⁶⁷

Sisters Mary of the Assumption Roguier, who was appointed principal and superior of the community, together with two other sisters—Ursula O’Sullivan and Mónica Montes de Oca—arrived in Saltillo to open Colegio La Purísima, which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1885. The school became a successful venture, enrolling many students and gaining recognition for the outstanding work of the sisters. A few years later, a free school was added to serve over 200 poor children of the area.

A second foundation was made in Mexico a short time later. At the request of Bishop Jacinto López of Linares, five sisters re-established in 1887 Colegio de San José, a boarding and day school in Monterrey. The school had originally been staffed by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, who had been exiled by the Laws of Reform. Sister Francis Simpasteur was appointed principal and superior. Other members of the community were Sisters Angélique Descombes, Gabriel Wheelahan, Agatha O’Driscoll, and Casimir Quinn.⁶⁸ Before they began their work in the school, Sisters Francis and Agatha were sent to Saltillo to learn Spanish.

In Monterrey as in Saltillo, the sisters were not permitted to wear their religious habits because of the opposition of the government, although a few years later this restriction was removed. From the time

of its foundation, the school enrolled a large number of students both in the regular classes and in the adjoining free school.

While the new foundations were being established in Mexico, other schools were being opened in different areas of Texas. In 1887, the sisters began teaching at St. Joseph's School, Roma, under the direction of Sister St. Ange Hernández as superior and principal. The school was operated with state funds, and officials insisted, just as they had done in Mexico, that the sisters could not wear their religious habits in the classroom.

The following year, 1888, St. Mary's School was opened in Weatherford but had to be closed just two years later because of insufficient attendance. In the same year, Immaculate Conception School opened in San Angelo with Sister Raphael Albinger as superioress and principal. The sisters arrived in the city on the third railway train to pull into the San Angelo depot. They began teaching in an unfinished frame building with only twenty students. The following year, however, the Congregation built a new school at a cost of \$5,000, and enrollment began to increase.

By 1890, the sisters were opening St. Joseph's School in West Pere, Wisconsin. A national shrine dedicated to St. Joseph had been erected in that small city, and as Rev. Mother Pierre explained to the sisters, "We were happy to give our services for the cause of our great protector."⁶⁹

In addition to starting so many schools, the sisters were occupied in establishing new hospitals. Several of these were railroad hospitals set up to care for the many victims of the hazardous venture of laying railroad tracks and operating the first trains in Texas and in parts of the Midwest. From the time that the railroads arrived in San Antonio in 1877, the sisters had cared for many of the workers at Santa Rosa.⁷⁰ Contracts were even arranged with different railways guaranteeing reduced prices.

As the operations moved on into other parts of Texas, the railroad companies opened their own hospitals, evidently finding it cost effective to care for the many injured workers in their own institutions. Many of the doctors associated with companies such as the Santa Fe, the Missouri Pacific, and the Texas Pacific were aware of the excellent care their patients had received at Santa Rosa and sent urgent pleas to San Antonio asking the sisters to take over the operations of the new railroad hospitals.

Sister Mary of the Assumption Roguier and ten other sisters went to Fort Worth in March, 1885, to staff the Missouri Pacific Railway Hospital in that city. Each sister was paid a salary of \$15.00 per month, with the exception of the superior who was paid \$20.00. In writing to

the other sisters to tell of the Congregation's first venture in health care beyond Santa Rosa, Mother Pierre described the excellent design of the building and the ideal location "in the suburbs of the handsome town of Fort Worth."⁷¹ Unfortunately, less than four weeks later the hospital was completely destroyed by fire. Through the courageous efforts of the sisters, however, no lives were lost in the disaster. Most of the patients, accompanied by seven of the sisters, were transferred to the Texas & Pacific Railroad Hospital in the nearby town of Marshall. A short time later, the Congregation took over the operation of that institution with Sister Alphonse Brollier as superior and administrator.

In the meantime, a new hospital was constructed in Fort Worth, and the sisters resumed their work at the Missouri Pacific. By 1889, however, operations of the company had moved beyond Fort Worth, and the authorities decided to sell the facility. The sisters purchased the property at a cost of \$25,000.00, paying \$15,000.00 in cash and guaranteeing that the remaining \$10,000.00 would be paid over ten months at \$1,000.00 per month. The hospital was renamed St. Joseph's Infirmary and was blessed by Bishop Neraz on May 12, 1889. Sister Xavier Wiss was named superior and administrator. Fort Worth had no other hospital, private or public, at the time.⁷²

The first city hospital in San Antonio was built in 1891, and upon its completion city officials appealed to the sisters at Santa Rosa to take over its operation. Sister Angela Pierret was named Directress with Sister Gregory Rihm, Sister Mary of the Annunciation O'Connor, and three postulants working with her in the care of the patients. Just five years later, however, the hospital was destroyed by a severe storm, and all of the patients had to be brought back to Santa Rosa. In spite of the fact that the sisters had responded to the city's critical need for nurses and had cared for the patients during the emergency, they were not compensated for their services. Each year they presented a bill to the mayor asking that the account be paid, but not until 1899, eight years later, was the debt of \$11,213.28 finally settled.

By 1890, six more railroad hospitals were under the sisters' direction in Palestine and Tyler, Texas; in Las Vegas, New Mexico; in Fort Madison, Iowa; and in St. Louis, Sedalia, and Kansas City, Missouri. Since many of the railroad hospitals were closed as soon as the tracks were laid and the trains were in operation, the sisters' work in many of these areas was frequently shortlived. Their entry into St. Louis was particularly fortuitous, however, in that it led not only to the establishment of their own hospital but also to the opening of elementary schools and a girls' academy, as well as the beginning of the St. Louis Province.⁷³

A third foundation was established in 1890 in Mexico with the opening of Hospicio Ortigosa in Monterrey, a home for poor elderly men and women of the city. The institution was named for the donor who had set up the endowment for its foundation. Sister Julia Doyle was named the superioress.

The final undertaking of Rev. Mother Pierre's administration was the building of St. John's Orphan Asylum for Boys. Because of limited space, the admission of homeless children at St. Joseph's had for some time been limited to girls. Infants and young boys whose parents had died and who were brought to the sisters for care were housed at Santa Rosa. The infirmary, however, was crowded with patients, and the sisters had anxiously awaited the time when their financial situation would permit them to build a home for the boys.

In 1890, in spite of the fact that they still owed money on St. Joseph's Infirmary in Fort Worth, Rev. Mother Pierre determined that she could wait no longer and that construction of the home should begin on a site adjacent to Santa Rosa "at the far end where the stables [were]." The proximity to the infirmary would make it possible to eliminate the building of a kitchen. All of the meals for the children could be prepared at the infirmary. "We could save much," she said, "that is wasted at the hospital."⁷⁴ The location, moreover, provided easy access to San Fernando School for Boys, which was conducted by the Brothers of Mary. The boys in the orphanage could easily cross the park in front of the infirmary and walk to school.

Mother Pierre wrote to the sisters asking them for help. The new building, she explained, was started with "nothing but the approval and blessing of our ecclesiastical superior, our confidence in Divine Providence, and trust in our ever ready helper St. Joseph." Their special prayers were needed as well as their cooperation in "living as sparingly as possible on community means in order to save for the poor of Christ."⁷⁵

It was decided that the institution should be named St. John's Orphan Asylum "as a tribute of undying gratitude" to Bishop John C. Neraz.⁷⁶ The bishop had shown a particular concern for the orphan children and had often secured donations to help with their care. One wing of the first floor of the new building was later given over to him for living quarters and for the chancery offices of the diocese.

As construction progressed on St. John's, Rev. Mother Pierre reported to the community on the financial situation:

The expenses have gone to \$29,000.00. Collections have contributed \$6,000.00; the balance has been placed at your credit before God, as it is the fruit of your labors and economies of the community. We sold two pieces of property, which brought \$14,000.00 towards the building, and

very soon we will see the construction to its end. . . . We have on the third floor the little boys who count over thirty already, and it is to be hoped that, when their number will require additional accommodation, the Lord will give us the means to provide a home for ourselves. We'd better always think of the poor and needy before [ourselves], and we can trust that our Divine Master will not cause us to suffer.⁷⁷

When the four-story St. John's was opened in December, 1890, the two top floors were used for the novitiate and for dormitories for the novices. The orphans occupied the lower floors, and their numbers increased rapidly. Just eight years later, a report to Dr. B. E. Hadra, Health Officer in San Antonio, shows that St. John's was accommodating 100 children, including newborn infants and youngsters up to fourteen years of age. "The food is plain and wholesome," the report states. "Physical training and common school education are provided them. A few cases of dengue fever and sore eyes have prevailed. Outside of this the general health of the children has been excellent."⁷⁸ Taking care of them were Sisters Benedict Mesle, Melanie Cheland, Edith Tudman, Wilhelmina Wax, and Placide McEvoy.

Although the work of the sisters in many of these early establishments met with considerable success, it was frequently beset with difficulties. One of the greatest causes for sorrow, however, was the loss of so many young sisters who fell victims to illness and disease. Sister Mary Gabriel Wheelahan wrote for Rev. Mother Pierre in 1885 telling all of the sisters of the death of a postulant, Mary Ryan, who just three months earlier had come from Ireland to enter the Congregation:

About the first of December she was taken ill with typhoid fever and continued to suffer until 6:00 p.m. January 2 when she expired.

The Incarnate Word asked not of her the merit of much work in His service; her sacrifice must have been very perfect to reap thus early its reward.

During her short time in the novitiate, she displayed great energy of soul and devoted attachment to the community and the labors it exacted from her. She was buried Saturday, January 8, in the postulant's habit.⁷⁹

Another record for the following year is given in a letter to the sisters in Lyons:

Before this letter reaches you, death will have taken one of ours. Sister St. Regis [Dwyer], only 21 years of age, has galloping consumption and is close to death. We have never before seen anybody so edifying in her last moments. She is gay and joyful. . . . She asks every sister who visits her to pray that the Incarnate Word may come for her. Resignedly, she complains to her mistress and me of the delay on the part of her Divine Spouse. We give her messages for heaven; she says she will ask what the

good God wants for us and that if our requests are according to His heart, we may be confident that He will grant them. . . . It is hard to resign oneself to lose workers when we have so few. . . . We have still another novice who is struggling between life and death.⁸⁰

The early diaries and correspondence have many references to such occurrences. The hard work of the sisters, the poverty of their living conditions, the fact that many came from foreign countries and endured difficult climatic adjustments—all of these factors contributed to the early deaths and caused much sorrow for the community.

Their greatest sorrow, however, was the death of their dearly beloved Rev. Mother Pierre. In the last year of her administration, she suffered intensely from diabetes, and her physician, Dr. Ferdinand Herff, recommended that she go to Carlsbad, Austria, to consult with a physician noted for his practice in this area of medicine and to take a series of treatments at the mineral springs of the sanitarium. She was undergoing severe physical distress by this time, and to be parted from the community she loved so dearly intensified the suffering. Before leaving the motherhouse, accompanied by Sister Raphael Albinger, she wrote a letter asking forgiveness of all the sisters: "You and I must prepare for death," she said, "and in view of such, I beg each and all to forgive me for the wrongs I may have caused you in the place I have held, and thanking you for your charity and love towards me, I call on you the blessings of the Incarnate Word."⁸¹

A short time later, in one of the very few letters she ever addressed to Sister Madeleine, she expressed an awareness of the fatality of her illness and offered her dear friend and gentle, timid co-foundress some last words of advice. "Goodbye, dear Sister Assistant," she said. "My heart is heavy and I must confess to you that I have little hope of being cured though I will do all that depends on me to be cured, if that is possible. Take courage, pray, and believe that you can do everything with and by the grace of God."⁸²

In spite of her intense suffering that would surely be aggravated by the long journey to Europe, she made arrangements to stop in France on her way to Austria to visit her mother who was very ill. She desperately hoped to arrive in the little town of Beaujeu to have one last opportunity to see the parent whom she dearly loved. Unfortunately, she reached her childhood home just in time for her mother's funeral. Grief was added to grief when six weeks later she received the news that her brother had died a short time later.

The number of her sufferings seemed to accumulate from day to day. The diabetes was causing her severe pain and made even the movement from her bed to a nearby chair an excruciating ordeal. Moreover,

she had contracted a severe cold and cough even before she left Texas that now grew much worse with continuing high temperatures. Added to her physical suffering was the pain of isolation from her sisters, the loss of dearly loved members of her family, and a separation of several weeks from the reception of the sacraments. Finally, the Austrian doctors decided to discontinue the treatment for diabetes until her infection could be controlled. It became necessary for her to leave the sanitarium and return to France, where it was diagnosed that she had developed tuberculosis.

Upon her arrival in Lyons, she addressed her last letter to Sister Madeleine:

It is a long time since I wrote to you myself; I wasn't able to hold a pen in my hand. Since coming here, I have regained a little strength and will be able to write a little. Do you remember that I used to say to you that I would like very much to die of tuberculosis because that would give me time to be prepared? And you see that the good God has kept this kind of death for me. I am ready and prepared; my sacrifice is made. Why should I wish to go against the will of God? I hope you will all be resigned to His Holy Will. Life is short; soon we will meet in the presence of the Incarnate Word. What a grace for me to be here in the house where I learned to know and love Him, and to breathe my last here! . . . I can die at any moment but that makes no difference—I am ready.”⁸³

Sister Madeleine and Sister Alphonse traveled to Lyons to be with her on the day of her death, December 11, 1891. A telegram announced the sad news to the sisters at the motherhouse who greatly lamented the loss of their foundress and the rock of the Congregation. To many sisters it seemed the foundation had been shaken. She had been their superior for nineteen years, from 1872 until she died in 1891. At the end of each three-year term of office she had been re-elected, at times holding other administrative posts in addition to that of superior. In 1875, during her second term as superior, she was selected also as mistress of novices; in 1877, she was elected superior, treasurer and mistress of novices. The sisters had lost not only a great leader, but also a wise and kind superior, Big Mama, whom they loved and admired.

In leaving her native France, her loving family, her familiar culture in order to serve the needs of the sick and the poor in Texas, she had “desired only to spend herself and be spent for others,” according to the annals of the Congregation.⁸⁴ Her desires had been fulfilled; her work had been accomplished.

It seemed appropriate that her death occurred at the French monastery.⁸⁵ At the very end of her life, she had returned to her spiritual as well as to her national roots. In the following letter written to San

PROMISES TO KEEP

Antonio by one of the nuns in Lyons, it is clear that her death was a cause of great mourning for the French order as it was for the Congregation in Texas:

We should like that this letter could reach you as quickly as the telegram to tell you how great and how sincere is the part that we take in your immense sorrow. It is one of those sorrows that no human words can console because to lose a mother like the one the good God had given you is an irreparable loss. It is not therefore consolation that we try to offer you; we mingle our tears with yours and we also need to be consoled for we loved your Mother very, very much. What is impossible for us to do we ask the Incarnate Word to do, to be Himself your consoler and to allay a little the grief in the great sacrifice. Now that your loved Mother is close to Him she is more powerful than ever and will obtain for you the grace to preserve and perpetuate among you the true spirit of your vocation as the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, a spirit she tried so hard to engrave in your hearts.⁸⁶

CHAPTER V

CELEBRATING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE IN JOY AND IN SORROW

Unfortunately, Rev. Mother Pierre did not live to experience the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Congregation in 1894, although even before her death, preparations had already begun for the celebration. For the other sisters, it was a time to look back on the past and realize that although they had endured many difficulties and sufferings, including the loss of their beloved Big Mama, they had also realized many blessings during the founding years.

By 1891, the number of sisters had increased from three to 197.¹ Their work in health care had expanded from the operation of a single hospital to the administration of nine additional institutions. They now owned St. Joseph's Infirmary in Fort Worth as well as Santa Rosa. They were also operating the City Hospital in San Antonio and seven railroad hospitals scattered throughout Texas, Missouri, Iowa, and New Mexico.

They had opened eighteen schools in the United States, and although seven had closed after short periods of operation, they were still teaching in Seguin, Eagle Pass, Roma, Rio Grande City, San Angelo, Panna Maria, St. Hedwig, Cestohowa, Meyersville, and Bandera, Texas. They were conducting schools also in West de Pere, Wisconsin, and in Saltillo and Monterrey, México. They owned and operated St. Joseph's Orphanage for Girls and St. John's Orphanage for Boys, both located in San Antonio, and for some years they had served in St. Mary's Orphanage in Galveston. They had also established a home for the aged in Monterrey, México.

The glory was for God and the service for others, but as Mother Pierre had predicted, all of the glory and the service had not been

accomplished without difficulties and sufferings for the sisters themselves. Nevertheless, it was a time to give thanks for many blessings.

Before the year of the silver jubilee arrived, the sisters gathered in 1892 to elect a replacement for Rev. Mother Pierre, who died shortly before the completion of her seventh three-year term of office. A special chapter of elections was held March 19, 1892, with all members of the Congregation who had made their final profession of vows participating in the election process. Rev. Mother Ignatius Saar was chosen as the new superior general with Sister Madeleine Chollet as her assistant; Sister Alphonse Brollier, treasurer; Sister Gabriel Wheelahan, secretary; and Sister St. Ange Hernández, Sister St. John Reibe, Sister Sacred Heart Bradley, and Sister Paul Boyle, consultants.

Born Gertrude Saar in 1858 in Labach, Prussia, Rev. Mother Ignatius had been educated as a teacher before determining that she would join the missionary Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio. She left her native land in 1878 and arrived in Texas in November of that year with Rev. Mother Pierre and three other young women, two from France and one from Germany, all coming to enter the Congregation. She received the habit in 1879 and made her first vows in the following year in the chapel at Santa Rosa.

Her early years in the Congregation were dedicated to teaching in elementary schools, first at Cuero and later at Meyersville. From the time of her novitiate, however, she had been recognized for her prayerfulness, particularly her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. On several occasions it was noted that while she was at prayer in the chapel, she became so completely absorbed in contemplation that she was actually lifted up from the *predieu* on which she knelt.²

Rev. Mother Pierre once observed “a heavenly smile” on the face of the young Sister Ignatius as she knelt before the Blessed Sacrament and called one of the novices to her side to share the beautiful sight. Not wishing to create any embarrassment on the part of the prayerful Ignatius, she cautioned the novice, “Never tell my Gertrude what you now see.”³

It was, no doubt, because of her deep spirituality that in 1883 she was appointed Mistress of Novices by the General Council, even though she had been in the Congregation only four years and had not yet made her final profession of vows. She remained in this position for nine years and was greatly respected by the novices under her direction as well as by other members of the community. Sister Helena Finck says she was “austere towards herself [but] possessed a sweetness and gentleness which won confidence and respect.”⁴

Rev. Mother Pierre was very fond of her, admiring in particular her deep spirituality. "My little Ignatius is my angel of peace," she once remarked. "So close to me in the position she holds, she sees and feels my tribulations very much and suffers with me. She is so true before God [and] forms the novices wonderfully well. Her example captivates all hearts, her gentleness and firmness subdue them, and if she lives, we will see beautiful souls in the house of the Incarnate Word because she leads them not by sentiment but by truth."⁵

Although Sister Ignatius had not received her initial preparation for the religious life in Lyons as both Sisters Madeleine and Pierre had done before her, she made three trips to Europe, spent considerable time in the French monastery, and according to Sister Madeleine, "imbibed from our saintly mothers of Lyons much of her knowledge of the spirit that should animate the daughters of the Incarnate Word."⁶

Before Rev. Mother Pierre died in 1894, leaving a vacancy in the office of the superior general, she had indicated to many of the sisters that the next superior general should be Sister Ignatius. It was no surprise, therefore, when she was elected Rev. Mother at the age of thirty-four and became the first person whose nationality was not French to hold that position.

Her Prussian background as well as her difficulty with the English language gave her a certain reserve in her relations with the sisters. She relied heavily on the assistance of Sister Gabriel Wheelahan, secretary general, in her correspondence. During her three-year term of office, only two letters addressed to the superiors of the various missions appear to have been written in her own hand.

In keeping with her own personal holiness, she expresses in both of these communications a concern for the spiritual development of the sisters. One letter, dated Jan. 3, 1893, is filled with exhortations to "cultivate . . . the virtues of silence, discretion, humility, and dependence," as well as obedience to superiors:

Yes, cherished sisters, let us do all we can to keep this spirit of family life, which is in particular, respect toward all superiors. They ought to know all our steps, movements and actions. Then let us practice charity, forbearance, and unity among ourselves. Let home, as well as each little mission house be a real Nazareth, where obedience to the head, fervor, piety, recollection, self-denial and charity reign.

Using expressions that suggest her unfamiliarity with the English language, she adds the following: "I would not give a kick [*sic*] for anyone who does not revere the one, whoever she be, holding for her the place of God and invested with this authority. I believe she kicks herself

out sooner or later, and the devil helps her; should she remain, she is only a sham in religion."

She also urges a strict observance of the rule, and with regard to the practice of poverty, cautions the superiors against spending money over and above the ordinary expenses of operating the mission houses without requesting special permission. Reflecting the continuing influence of the cloistered foundation, she directs the sisters also to "keep away from the presbytery, in fact, from all who do not belong to your little family circle, as much as you can."⁷

With her background in teaching, Rev. Mother Ignatius was particularly interested in the sisters' work in the schools, and to her must be attributed one of their most significant developments in education, the opening of Incarnate Word School, that was directly under the administration as well as the support of the Congregation. Although the beginnings of the institution in 1892 were extremely poor, offering little promise for future success, it was this foundation that led to the development of Incarnate Word High School and Incarnate Word College.⁸

For the location of the new school, the sisters first rented a house at 1224 Avenue D near the Sunset Depot, where there was "a sore need [for] Catholics to have a Catholic school in which to train their children." Classes started with fifty-four students and five "music scholars."⁹ Boys and girls were taught in separate classrooms.

Finding sisters for the faculty was not an easy task since enrollment was increasing in all of the other schools staffed by the Congregation, and the demand always seemed to exceed the supply. When Sister Denis Lynch was given charge of the girls, Sister Rosalie Ring the boys, and Sister Michael Vauthier appointed to teach German, it meant that some schools would be short one or more faculty members for the year.

Just five months after the school opened, the rented facility on Avenue D proved to be completely inadequate for the growing number of students. A tract of land was purchased on the corner of Crosby and Willow Streets, in an area called Government Hill, and construction began on a new Incarnate Word School. In the document placed in the cornerstone, the sisters stated that the building was being erected for "the greater glory of God" and that the school would be dedicated to "educating youth, rich and poor, of both sexes, the building being so arranged as to facilitate complete separation." The sisters' work was to be directed toward "the training [of] little ones who [would] seek virtue and science within its walls in such a way that they [would] become an honor to their family, their city, and their church."¹⁰

The costs of the land and construction of the two-story brick building created a heavy financial burden for the Congregation. Sister

Gabriel wrote to all of the sisters expressing the wishes of Rev. Mother Ignatius that they should try to “save every cent” they could, “even the copper cents of Mexico.” Characteristic of her dependence on the power of prayer, she asked them also to pray that the school would meet with success. “We will do little,” she said, “unless the Incarnate Word takes all under His protection and gives us all the ability to do His work in a befitting manner.”¹¹

Bishop Neraz blessed the new building on August 20, 1893, with great ceremony which is described in the annals:

To solemnize this event, and in response to the invitations of Bishop Neraz and Rev. Mother M. Ignatius, all the Catholic lay societies of the city escorted the Right Rev. Bishop and the clergy to the new academy. . . . [The procession] having arrived at the building, which had been tastefully decorated in garlands of evergreen intertwining roses of purest white, the procession halted at the entrance which was draped in the purple colors of St. Joseph and the green of the Hibernians. Passing through the ranks of the societies, the bishop and clergy entered the building. The large bell to be placed in the belfry was blessed first. For the time being, it remained in the front hall; it appeared in a bridal-effect covering of white satin and Valenciennes lace and surrounded by beautiful bouquets of white roses.¹²

Sister Gabriel expressed the pride of all of the sisters in the new structure: “The Incarnate Word has waited 25 years to have a school in San Antonio; at last He has one to do Him honor.”¹³ Just one year later the enrollment of the school had increased to 200.

Two additional Polish schools were opened during this period, St. Ann School in Kosciusko with Sister Ambrose Clutterbuck as principal and superior, and St. Anthony School in Pulaski with Sister Mary Louise Niemiec as principal and superior. A large colony of Polish immigrants had settled in Texas, many of them arriving as early as 1855 under the direction of the Rev. L. Moczygamba, a Polish Franciscan. Their first settlement was Panna Marya (Our Lady Mary), where the first Polish church in America was built and where the sisters began teaching in the parish school in 1881. Panna Maria, as it became known, was quickly followed by other Polish colonies in Texas.

By 1892 the sisters were operating six Polish schools in different parts of South Texas, Panna Maria, Cestohowa, Meyersville, St. Hedwig, Kosciusko, and Pulaski. Several young women from these small Catholic communities had joined the Congregation and were able to teach the Polish language in the schools. Sister Joseph Krawiec from St. Hedwig had been one of the first three postulants to enter in 1871. Over the next few years, she was followed by Sisters Clotilde Stanus,

Mary of the Incarnation Stanus, Dominic Winkler, Alacoque Krawiec, and Elizabeth Krawiec—all of St. Hedwig. From Panna Maria came Sisters Cecilia Krawiec, Ephrem Moczygamba, Veronica Urbanczyk, and Louise Niemiec.

Some of the institutions opened initially as public schools and were supported by state funds—Meyersville, Panna Maria, and Pulaski. When the funding was withdrawn in 1906, the school in Meyersville had to be closed. By 1914, the school in Pulaski met the same fate. The school in Panna Maria, however, was taken over by the Catholic parish and continued to serve the community for many years, as did St. Ann School, Kosciusko; St. Joseph School, Cestohowa; and St. Joseph School, St. Hedwig.¹⁴

In 1892, San Fernando Parochial School, which had been located in St. Joseph's Orphanage, was moved to a new location opposite Milam Park in front of Santa Rosa. Another parochial school, Immaculate Conception, was opened in 1894 in Tyler, Texas, under the direction of Sister M. Denis Lynch, principal, and Sisters Michael Vauthier, Evangelist Dillon, and Nicholas Stokes. The school was closed in 1902, however, because of lack of financial support.

In Monterrey, México, Sisters M. Stanislaus Nelson, Mónica Montes, and Celestine Lasnier took over the operation of Holy Trinity School in 1893, but the limited enrollment of students made it impractical to keep the school open. It was closed the following year.

Only one new development took place in health care during this period. In January, 1893, the sisters began to care for the sick at the New Braunfels Krankenhaus. The hospital was operated by an organization of women who invited the sisters to send nurses, including one who could speak German, to staff the institution. Just nine months after they arrived, however, the institution was closed for financial reasons.

By 1894, the sisters were preparing for the jubilee celebration marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of their coming to San Antonio and felt that no better memorial could be established than the building of a new chapel at Santa Rosa. The infirmary continued to serve as the motherhouse, and as the number of sisters increased so also did the need for more space for the community. Plans were drawn up for a two-story building adjoining the infirmary, with the first floor offering additional space for the sisters' living arrangements and the second floor set aside for the chapel.

In the cornerstone document blessed on July 12, 1894, by the Rev. J. B. Audet, chaplain of Santa Rosa, the sisters stated that the building was being erected "to commemorate in a special way the twenty-fifth anniversary of [their] establishment in this city of San Antonio." It was

being built also “in gratitude to the adorable person of the Incarnate Word” for the success He had given to the community “despite the many obstacles to the contrary at the beginning of [their] existence.”¹⁵

The costs of construction created a severe financial burden for the struggling Congregation. Sister Gabriel wrote to the mission houses saying, “The community will be forced to strain every nerve for the expense is immense and the income slight.” She also reminded the sisters, “It is your duty . . . to aid in the work spiritually and temporarily, which we are sure you will do.”¹⁶

The original chapel in Santa Rosa had been a hospital room converted into a simple place for prayer and for celebration of the Eucharist. The new building would be the first chapel built by the community, and every effort was made to make it an appropriate place of worship for the sisters and the patients of the infirmary. It was designed to accommodate a congregation of 250 persons. Friends and benefactors donated the altar, the statues, and the stained glass windows. Rev. Mother Ignatius herself was greatly involved in planning the decorative parts of the building, but on the day of dedication, because of illness, she was not able to be present for the ceremony. The sisters transferred her sickbed to a room in the infirmary close to the new addition so that she could witness the celebration.

Even before Rev. Mother Ignatius became superior she had experienced very poor health. “She is too good to live long,” Mother Pierre had said, and her frail condition became evident shortly after she was named superior general.¹⁷ She continued to serve as Mistress of Novices, not wishing to give up the position that she loved so much and in which she could spend much time in directing the young sisters in the spiritual life. She soon found that the demands of both positions were too great, however. In 1892, she proposed to the General Council that Sister Mary John O’Shaughnessy be appointed to replace her as Mistress of Novices.

Even then her health did not improve. In the monthly letter addressed to all of the sisters in May of that year, Sister Gabriel wrote: “Our Rev. Mother’s health is not as good as we would wish it. Her great energy keeps her busy, often when her sufferings should grant her rest. Needless to tell you, my dear sisters, to pray for her, especially in this regard, that strength may be given her to bear her heavy task.”¹⁸

Two months later, Sister Gabriel wrote again to tell the sisters that Mother Ignatius was still “quite sick” and suffering from a hemorrhage. At times she seemed to improve and was able to visit the houses of the Congregation, even making trips to Mexico. A short time later, however, messages were sent from the motherhouse saying that she had been

subject to "severe convulsions of the stomach,"¹⁹ and that she was "always on the cross of pain."²⁰

Frequently, the communication on Rev. Mother Ignatius' ill health was accompanied by the same news of Bishop Neraz, who had always been a great friend to all of the sisters and was particularly devoted to Mother Ignatius. The two pillars of the Congregation so closely associated with each other were critically ill at the same time in Santa Rosa.

In September, 1894, the sisters learned that their superior was suffering from inflammatory rheumatism and high fever and was in a critical condition. The doctors diagnosed her illness as neuralgia of the stomach, and Sister Gabriel explained that "the numo-gastric nerves that aid in digestion had completely lost their power of action" and that she was not able to take any nourishment. "In consequence of this," Sister Gabriel said, "her blood could not be renewed and turned to water and settled on her lungs and around her heart."²¹

The celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary and the jubilee year of the Congregation had not come to an end before Rev. Mother Ignatius died. In writing to tell the sisters of her death, Sister Madeleine, who had been her assistant in the general administration, suggested that the responsibilities of the office of superior general had been too heavy for her frail physical condition.

Four days before her death, Bishop Neraz relieved her of her position and appointed Sister Madeleine as a temporary replacement. Mother Ignatius died at the age of 36 on October 14, 1894, without having completed her three-year term of office. Her dying words to Sister Madeleine were: "Tell my sisters present and absent if I have any power with God I shall not forget them."²² She was buried in San Fernando Cemetery.²³

Just a short time later, the sisters mourned the loss of two other leaders of the Congregation. Bishop Neraz died on November 14, 1894, just one month after the death of Rev. Mother Ignatius. As a young priest, he had served the sisters as chaplain at Santa Rosa. Later, as bishop of the diocese he had been their episcopal superior, spiritual advisor, and counselor. In the last years of his life, he had made his residence at St. John's Orphanage to be near Santa Rosa, where he could receive immediate medical care in case of need. Here he endeared himself to the orphans as well as to the sisters who cared for him in his illness. When Sister Gabriel wrote to tell the sisters of his death, she said his dying wish was to recommend to the Congregation "the necessity of perfect union and charity."²⁴

Six months later, on May 21, 1895, the sisters received news of the death of Bishop Claude Dubuis. The last twenty years of his life had

been spent in retirement in France, and he was buried in his hometown of Coutouvre. Although his communication with the sisters, particularly in his later years, was minimal, he had been recognized and respected as the founder of the Congregation.

The sisters had anticipated the twenty-fifth anniversary to be a time of happiness, joy, and celebration, but the period had come to a close with sadness and grief. Within a period of just five years, they had lost four great leaders who had guided the Congregation in the early days of its existence: Rev. Mother Pierre (1891), Rev. Mother Ignatius (1894), Bishop John Neraz (1894), and Bishop Claude Dubuis (1895).

CHAPTER VI

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY: ESTABLISHING FIRM FOUNDATIONS

The turn of the century marked a turning point for the Congregation. Two important happenings at this time demonstrated how the organization had developed from very simple beginnings into a firmly established foundation with the promise of a secure and independent future.

The first of these occurrences was submission of the constitutions to Rome for canonical approbation by the Sacred Congregation of Religious. Seeking approval of the Vatican was a major step forward for the Congregation. If it were granted, such approbation would signify that the order had earned the highest recognition that could be given and that it had become an integral part of the Catholic Church.

Before this honor could be attained, however, the sisters would have to revise their constitutions in accordance with new regulations established by the Vatican. This was not the first time they had rewritten the constitutions. In fact the document that was ultimately sent to Rome became the third revision of their rule. The changes made in each version show how the organization gradually emerged from complete reliance on the French foundation to become a securely independent congregation.

When the first three sisters left Lyons for Galveston in 1866, their departure had been hurried, allowing no time for the preparation of constitutions suited to their active apostolate. Instead, they were given a copy of the rule used by the cloistered nuns in the French monastery. In the following year, as Sister Madeleine left France with the second band of volunteers, Rev. Mother Angelique of Lyons placed in her hands a new version of the rule prepared especially for the Sister Hospitallers,

as they were then called.¹ A foreword, titled “Exhortation,” was written by Bishop Dubuis urging the sisters to follow “religiously” the directives they were given which would put them “in union with the practices, prayers and good works . . . practiced in the various monasteries of the Incarnate Word.”²

In this original version of 1867, the object of the Congregation was very simply and briefly stated, “To glorify the Incarnate Word in all things.”³ The rest of the document was almost totally given over to identifying the spiritual exercises and the various prayers to be said throughout the day. The order of the day itself was spelled out in minute detail:

The sister hospitaliers will rise always at 4:30 a.m. Their first *thought* will be the presence of God, saying God is here and I wasn’t paying attention. Their first *desire*, that of David: I do not want to wake but for you, my God and my all. Their first word: Praised be the Incarnate Word in the Most Holy Sacrament. Their first *action*, the sign of the cross. . . .

At 5:00 they will go and make a half-hour of prayer in the chapel. . . .

At 5:30 they will recite Prime and the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus, followed by 3 Aves, 3 Glorias, and one Ave Sancte Joseph.

At 5:45 visit the sick in the dorms, make their beds, distribute what they need of drinks, potions, soup.

At 6:30 Holy Mass followed by Terce, Sexte and None [to be] recited as is convenient. . . .

At 7:30 breakfast during which ten minutes reading will be made. . . .

At 8:00 doctors’ visits. The head sister accompanies him and writes in the register his orders. The register is then given to the pharmacist for the preparation of the medicines.

At 9:00 breakfast of the patients.

At 10:00 pious readings in the wards for a few minutes.

At 11:00 particular examen followed by dinner. . . .

At 11:07 dinner. . . .

At 1:00 Vespers and Compline after which they will go to the community room to take care of the common tasks. There they can have a short reading and say the rosary while working. . . .

At 3:30 Matins and Lauds.

At 4:00 visit the wards.

At 5:00 patients’ supper.

At 6:00 supper for the sisters.

At 6:30 recreation until 7:45.

At 7:45 visit the patients.

At 8:25 evening prayer, reading of the point of meditation followed by the general examen, recitation of the prayer "O Good Jesus" and the *De Profundis*.⁴

The remainder of the document offers "rules of conduct" which are briefly stated and very few in number. Strange to say, the document does not treat of the practice of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Shortly after the San Antonio foundation was established as independent of the Galveston community, the constitutions were revised again. The second version was drawn up in 1872 at the request of Bishop Dubuis. Like the original document prepared five years earlier, it was written in French and composed by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament at the monastery in Lyons. The new congregation in San Antonio was still strongly dependent on the French founders.

The 1872 revision is far more extensive than the first document in its definition of the purposes of the Congregation:

To honor the Incarnate Word, Our Savior Jesus Christ, as master, source and model of all charity.

To embrace for his love and for the greater glory of God all the corporal works of mercy, serving the Incarnate Word corporally and spiritually in the person of the poor, the sick, children or others, etc.

To exercise the works of zeal and of charity to which they devote themselves in the institute at first in Texas since it is for this portion of the vineyard of the Lord that the master of hearts, the divine Incarnate Word, has called and chosen at this time servants, spouses that through them his name be in this part of the earth known and loved and his reign be established in the heart of those for whom the sisters will dedicate and sacrifice themselves until death.⁵

The document gives directives on the acceptance of members into the Congregation; on the observance of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; and on the particular virtues which the sisters were to practice—charity, gentleness, humility, and modesty.

The role of the Rev. Mother Superior, the Assistant, the Mistress of Novices, the Manager, and the four members of the general council are defined as well as the procedures for their election. The directives on governance suggest that the sisters did not envision at this time the

future growth of the Congregation, its development into provinces, and its need for a complex administrative structure. According to the 1872 constitutions, "The government of the entire personnel of the Congregation, . . . be they professed, novices, or postulants, will be under the jurisdiction of the Rev. Mother Superior."⁶

The Congregation was directly responsible to the local bishop, and the sisters were to "render honor and obedience to him in everything depending upon his charge. He [had] power to visit the houses, to approve of the ordinary confessors and depute extraordinary ones, to preside at elections, to examine the novices before they [made] profession, and to give the permits to voyages."⁷

One year later, in 1873, a directory was drawn up to accompany the constitutions. The individual sister's responsibility was spelled out in simple, direct language: "To honor the Incarnate Word, to serve Him in the person of my neighbor, and to do all that God asks of me."⁸ The number of regulations in this document, however, was greatly increased. Prayers to be recited, the manner of preparing for the sacraments, rules of conduct, and regulations for the novitiate were all delineated in minute detail. All of these documents—the 1867 version of the constitutions, the revision of 1872 and the directory of 1873—were written in French, and no translations were made into English, although the Congregation had accepted English-speaking members as early as 1870.

Ten years later, Rev. Mother Pierre realized the importance of having another revision of the constitutions that would be translated into other languages.⁹ Still dependent on the order in Lyons, however, the sisters had the document drawn up once again in France and only later, after the French copy was sent to San Antonio, was it translated into English by Father F. P. Garesché, S.J. The constitutions were approved by Bishop Neraz of San Antonio but also by Bishop Dubuis, who had by this time retired in France. A letter of approval was included also from Canon Galtier, spiritual advisor of the sisters of Lyons.

For the first time in 1885, the constitutions were issued in a printed form and a copy placed in the hands of each sister. For the first time also, they were presented to the members of the Congregation in a general assembly. The sisters were not asked to approve the changes, however. Rather, the assembly was called, as Rev. Mother Pierre said, "for the purpose of laying before our sisters the document prepared by our mothers of Lyons, setting forth our acceptance and submission to the constitutions which they [had] so kindly sent us."¹⁰

The purposes of the Congregation were expanded in this edition to include the personal sanctification of the members as well as service to "the suffering members of our Lord Jesus Christ by the exercise of

works of mercy." The apostolic works included care of "the sick, the insane, the poor, the aged," and the operation of "schools, asylums, and refuges, etc."¹¹

Growth in the membership of the Congregation led the sisters to describe a new form of governance: "The Congregation shall have neither Mother House nor Superior General, but its establishments shall be grouped together under the direction of some Principal Houses, each one governed by a superior, assisted by her council."¹² The various establishments of the cloistered order in France had been organized in this way, with each house, or group of houses, independent of the other, and with no centralized administration or motherhouse.

By 1895, the sisters began to plan for additional changes. By this time also, they began to anticipate submitting the constitutions to Rome for papal approval. If they were successful in this endeavor, the Congregation would be changed from a diocesan structure under the direction of the bishop to a canonically approved organization under the auspices of the Vatican Office of the Sacred Congregation for Religious. Approval by the Vatican would mean that a probationary development period had passed and that the Congregation had achieved full recognition within the Catholic Church.

The work of revision became one of the principal interests of Rev. Mother Madeleine Chollet, who had been elected superior general in November, 1894, after the short three-year term and death of Rev. Mother Ignatius. Members of the general administration assisting her were Sister Alphonse Brollier, assistant; Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan, secretary; Sister Mary John O'Shaughnessy, Mistress of Novices; Sister Alexis Harrison, treasurer; and Sister Ange Hernández, Sister St. John Reibe, Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart Bradley, and Sister Athanasius Vauthier, consultants.

At the end of her first three-year term as the superior of the Congregation, 1869-1872, Rev. Mother Madeleine had expressed an unwillingness to continue in her position of authority and had even asked Bishop Dubuis to replace her by appointing Sister Pierre as Reverend Mother. Twelve years later, however, she was ready to assume the position once again and to lead the Congregation through some of the most important steps of its development, including the approbation of the constitutions.

The change in leadership within the Congregation was followed by a change in the local diocese. Bishop John A. Forest, D.D., was consecrated as the third bishop of San Antonio on October 28, 1895. Born in France and educated at the seminary in Lyons, Bishop Forest had come to the missionary territory of the United States at the request of

Bishop Claude Dubuis and had been ordained in 1862 in New Orleans by Bishop John Odin. His French background matched that of Rev. Mother Madeleine, and the two became close associates. It was upon Bishop Forest's advice that the sisters first considered sending their constitutions to Rome.

Bishop Forest also encouraged them to change once again the organizational structure of the Congregation saying that "Rome would be more likely to approve [the] constitutions" if they had a motherhouse and a superior general. Moreover, the reorganization, he said, would help "to guard and preserve the true spirit of the Incarnate Word."¹³

Santa Rosa, which still served as the location for the general administration and which the sisters had always referred to as "the Principal House," was now designated as a motherhouse. At the same time, provision was made for the establishment of provinces. The term of office for the superior general and for the members of the general council was lengthened from three to six years, and a procedure was drawn up for the election of delegates to the general chapter who in turn would be responsible for the election of the general superiors.

Although the sisters had prepared the 1895 revision of the constitutions themselves, a step forward in their breaking away from the French foundation, they still felt that the changes should be submitted to Lyons for approval. Therefore, Sister Alphonse and Sister Mary John, who in 1895 were traveling to Europe in search of vocations, carried with them a copy of the revised constitutions and directory to be presented to the superiors of the Lyons community. A handwritten document in the archives, entitled "Observations Made on Our Constitutions and Brought to Lyons, France, to Be Submitted to Our Mothers," has a detailed list of changes needing their approval, such as the following:

Can we be permitted to use the title "Srs. of Charity" instead of "Srs. of the Charity"? (Response: yes)

It has been remarked that . . . works of charity towards our neighbor [are] a secondary motive and should not be inserted in the principal aim of a religious, which is her sanctification. Could this sentence form part of the next article? (Response: yes)¹⁴

After the documents were approved by the sisters in France, they were voted upon at the first general chapter of the Congregation held in San Antonio in August, 1897. In the election held according to the new procedure with forty-nine official delegates participating in the process, the entire general council with Rev. Mother Madeleine as superior, was re-elected for a second term of office.

In 1901, a code of 325 articles referred to as the "Normae" was issued by the Vatican giving information on what constitutions for a religious congregation should contain and offering information on seeking official recognition. Encouraged by Bishop Forest, the sisters reviewed their document one more time to make certain that it was in complete conformity with the new regulations and decided to apply for the canonical approval of Rome.

Meanwhile, Mother Alphonse Brollier and Sister Gabriel Wheelahan made a hurried trip to Lyons, where the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament were going through a severe crisis. In 1901, during a period of strong anti-clericalism, the French government had passed what was known as the Associations Act, which placed restrictions and limitations on orders of religious men and women, even demanding that some groups be banished from the country. Many Catholic schools were closed immediately, and the government ordered that within ten years all religious would be deprived of the right to teach in private as well as in public schools.

Although they were an order of contemplative religious, the sisters in Lyons were involved in the education of youth and were thus ordered to leave the country. When the notice was given that their monastery would be confiscated by the government on October 4, 1904, they made plans to seek exile in Fribourg, Switzerland. Mother Alphonse and Sister Gabriel had traveled to France to be with the sisters as they sorrowfully left their convent home on the Hill of Fourvière and to follow them to Fribourg to see that they were properly provided for in their new location.

While they were still in Europe, Rev. Mother Madeleine received an announcement from Rome that the draft of the constitutions would soon be considered for approval. They would have to be translated into French for final submission, however, since the Vatican accepted only documents written in Latin, Italian, or French. Fortunately, some of the sisters who had so recently left Lyons had returned to that city to make some final business arrangements and were able to provide the necessary translation.

Letters of commendation praising the work of the sisters in various dioceses in the United States as well as in Mexico were secured from Archbishop Glennon of St. Louis, Archbishop Zubiría of Durango, Bishop Forest of San Antonio, Bishop Dunne of Dallas, Bishop Hogan of Kansas City, Bishop Fitzgerald of Little Rock, Bishop Gavilán of Chihuahua, Bishop Valdespino of Sonora, Bishop Fierro of Tamaulipas, and Bishop Verdaguer of Brownsville. Through the efforts of Archbishop Zubiría of Durango, in particular, and the assistance of the

members of the Society of Mary stationed in Rome, the sisters were able to make the necessary contacts and submit the translated copy of the constitutions.

The process of approval took several months, but on April 26, 1905, they received the long-awaited Decree of Praise for the Congregation, the first step in the process leading to canonical approbation:

The Superioress General of the Institute of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, whose Mother House is in the diocese of San Antonio, in the United States of North America, having earnestly solicited that the Holy See should deign to approve the said Institute and its Constitutions, her petition was deferred to the Roman Commission established for the examination of the Constitution of new Institutes depending on this Sacred Congregation, and over which His Eminence Cardinal Francis Satolli presides. The most esteemed Roman Commission, having ascertained that the said Institute has been of great utility in the missions of the aforesaid country, which is attested by the letters of the Ordinaries of the dioceses wherein the Sisters have establishments, judges that, for the present, the said Institute is worthy of praise; hoping that it may make such progress that in due time it may be able to secure the Approbation of the Holy See; and has decreed that the Constitutions referring to the texts presented, introducing into them, however, the modifications indicated in the accompanying copy, should be approved by way of trial for five years.

This decision of the Roman Commission was presented to His Holiness, Pope Pius X, by the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, in an audience given on the 25th of April; and His Holiness has deigned to confirm and ratify it, and ordered in person that this Decree be granted.

Given at Rome from the College of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, the 26th of April, 1905.

Signed: Fr. H. M. Card. Gotti, Prefect
Louis Veccia, Secret.¹⁵

The changes in the constitutions required by the Roman commission were very few. The mistress of novices and the general treasurer were not to be included in the general council; sisters with temporary vows were no longer to be under the direction of the novice mistress; and the motherhouse community was to have its own local superioress.

The Decree of Praise indicated that full approval from Rome was almost a certainty. Rejoicing over the good news, Rev. Mother Madeleine sent the following message to all of the houses of the Congregation:

Let us strive, dear sisters, to increase more and more in the spirit of our holy vocation and now more than ever let us unite in strengthening the link which binds us to our holy mother the Church; let us strive that our dear congregation be one of her brightest ornaments by the virtues flourishing in its members and its active zeal as a body to promote the greater glory of God.¹⁶

Rev. Mother Madeleine did not live to see the decree of final approbation become a reality, but five years later her successor, Mother Alphonse, together with Mother Gabriel returned to Rome for a private audience with Pope Pius X. On April 5, 1910, the following decree was issued:

All things having been duly examined, and the commendatory letters of the R. R. Ordinaries taken into consideration, the Sacred Congregation of Religious in its sessions of the 17th day of March, 1910, deigned to grant to the Institute of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, whose Motherhouse is in the city of San Antonio, Texas, in the United States of North America, the final approbation of the Institute, and also of the Constitutions such as are contained in this authentic copy, written in French. . . . Our most Holy Father, Pius X, graciously deigned to ratify and confirm this favor, in an audience granted on the 5th day of April, to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the aforesaid Sacred Congregation.

Rome, from the Secretariat of the Sacred Congregation of Religious on the 20th day of April, 1910.

Fr. J. C. Vives, Prefect.

F. Cherubini, Sub-Secretary.¹⁷

The sisters had cause for celebration when the announcement reached them in San Antonio. Sister Gabriel wrote to all of the mission houses, "Every mandate in these pages is now the express will of God for us, my dear sisters, bearing as it does the approbation of His Vicar, our beloved pontiff, Pius X."¹⁸

The sisters had always held the Holy Rule, as it was usually called, in great esteem and had relied on it for direction of almost every aspect of their lives, possibly because of their separation from the French foundation and from the superiors of Lyons who represented for them the source of all wisdom on the religious life. "Keep the rule and the rule will keep you" was a favorite saying of many of the older superiors. Now that it had been given the approval of Rome, it was even more highly revered as representing the mind of the Church as well as the mind of Lyons.

Approval of the constitutions carried with it also some changes in spirit, however, changes that were bound to come about perhaps as a

result of growth in members. In the early correspondence, diaries, and other records, it is clear that the sisters looked upon the Congregation as a family with the superior general as the mother, the sisters as the daughters. Gradually these attitudes and sentiments began to change, and emphasis was placed on the Congregation as an organization rather than a family, on the rule rather than on the charism of the founders, and on the office rather than the person of superior.

Nevertheless, the sisters had reason to be proud of their accomplishments. From its simple beginnings with only three members arriving in San Antonio to find their first convent and hospital a burnt-out ruin, the Congregation had grown to 483 living members operating 31 schools, 15 hospitals, 3 orphanages, and 2 homes for the aged. The sisters were serving the sick, the uneducated, and the homeless in various parts of the United States as well as in Mexico. They had established an organization that was still closely associated with its French origins but now operating independently, securely established, and confidently self-reliant. Never again would they feel the need to seek approval of the order in Lyons for any changes in their constitutions. They continued to maintain a close relationship with the local bishop but had assumed a direct responsibility to the Vatican through the Sacred Congregation of Religious.¹⁹

The second significant happening for the Congregation at the turn of the century was the purchase of a large tract of land on the outskirts of San Antonio to be used as a motherhouse. With the continuing increase in the number of patients in Santa Rosa and the growth in members of the Congregation, the space set aside for the sisters' use at the hospital had become completely inadequate. For some time they had been interested in procuring a site removed from the heart of the city where they might establish the motherhouse, the novitiate, and perhaps even a school for young women. According to Sister Helena Finck's account, Rev. Mother Pierre had at one time approached Col. George Washington Brackenridge regarding the purchase of a portion of his estate, which was located at the headwaters of the San Antonio River in a completely undeveloped area on the north side of the city.

Col. Brackenridge was a native of Indiana, who had come to Texas in 1853 and made most of his fortune in the sale of cotton.²⁰ He later became the founder of the First National Bank of San Antonio and developer of the San Antonio waterworks. The sisters, particularly Rev. Mother Pierre, had been friendly with him and had from time to time brought the orphans out to enjoy picnics on his property. When the sisters approached the question of buying his estate, however,

Brackenridge was astonished. "Not for one moment would he consider selling a foot of Fernridge, the beauty spot of the Southwest."²¹

In 1869, he had purchased the property from James R. Sweet, former mayor of San Antonio.²² In a very early guide to the City of San Antonio the setting is described as "without doubt one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful, places in Texas, its woodland grace and parklike beauty so heightened by the perpetual mystery of its profound and noble springs. This is the Head of the River."²³ Here Sweet had built a one-story ranch house in 1852 that he called "Sweet Homestead," the first permanent dwelling in the area. The entire property was frequently referred to as "The Old Sweet Place."

Connected to the original one-story ranch house, Brackenridge built an elaborate three-story English-style addition in 1886. Here he lived with his mother and his sister, Mary Eleanor, who like the Colonel had never married. From their worldwide travels the Brackenridge family collected ornate furnishings and decorations for the house—costly chandeliers from Europe, magnificent tiled fireplaces, and even tooled elephant hide coverings for the ceiling of the dining room.²⁴

The location of the estate at the headwaters of the San Antonio River added not only to the beauty of the surroundings but also to the historical significance of the property. The Blue Hole, the major spring that feeds the river, was a favored campsite for prehistoric tribes of Native Americans. Archeological studies of the area have produced Paleo-Indian projectile points that date back 11,000 years.²⁵ The river, with its supply of fresh spring water, had actually given rise to the birth of the City of San Antonio. It runs 238 miles to the Guadalupe River, meeting the other waterway just above San Antonio Bay.

When Brackenridge's mother died in the latter part of 1886, he was grief-stricken and changed his mind about selling the property. He had purchased the estate and had built a beautiful addition to the home especially for her. Now he was determined to sell the land, the house, and everything in it that reminded him of his loss. Part of the property he would donate to the City of San Antonio to be used as a public park. The remainder, a tract of approximately 283 acres, he was prepared to sell to any prospective buyer.

The sisters were anxious to secure the property. Its location on the outskirts of the city provided just the kind of quiet atmosphere they were looking for. They did not need all of the land, however, and they were not at all interested in the furnishings of the house which were far too decorative and rich for use in a convent. Neither were they in a position to meet the total cost of the property—\$100,000. They tried to negotiate with Brackenridge, offering to buy a portion of the land, just

thirty-nine acres, and the house without the contents at a lower price. He absolutely refused their proposal. The buyer must take the total package or nothing!

After much prayer and deliberation, the sisters decided that the ideal location on the banks of the river and the gently rolling grasslands dotted with live oaks, laurels, and pecan trees were so beautiful and so well suited to their needs that they would make every sacrifice to arrive at the cost. As Rev. Mother Pierre had done so many times before, they turned the matter over to St. Joseph, trusting that he would help them meet the payments. They even buried medals in his honor on the land.

Just nine days later, on May 31, 1897, at the conclusion of a nine-day novena for God's blessing on their efforts, the sisters agreed to purchase the property. According to the deed of sale, they were to turn over to Brackenridge "twenty promissory notes, of even date herewith, . . . and each note being for the sum of five thousand dollars, payable to bearer in United States gold coin of the present standard weight and fineness, and payable in two [to] twenty-one years after date hereof, with five per cent interest per annum from date, and interest payable annually."²⁶

Sister Alphonse wrote to the superiors in Lyons to tell them what an important step they had taken:

We have just acquired a magnificent piece of property for the establishment of our motherhouse. It is about 40 minutes from town. It is truly an overindulgence by Divine Providence, although the property is very expensive. We would never have been able to buy it except for the fact that we have 25-30 years to pay for it. . . . We have about 283 acres of land, 90,000 gallons of water per day, and a magnificent river which passes through our land; so there is nothing to worry about. Now we have enough land for our dear mothers of Lyons if Madame Republic of France expels them.²⁷

Shortly after the transaction was confirmed, a disagreement arose between the sisters and Col. Brackenridge over the terms of the sale. The contract signed by both parties had specified that in addition to Brackenridge's personal belongings, only one item in the house should be excluded from the sale, the Aeolian Vocalin and Piano. "The same is excepted," the document stated "with all other personal property from this conveyance."²⁸

Brackenridge had evidently intended to exclude also his extensive library but forgot to insert a statement to this effect in the deed. At the same time, the sisters had understood that they had purchased the collection as part of the agreement and so informed the colonel when he came to retrieve his fine leather-bound books and multiple-volume sets

of classical writings. He was evidently frustrated by the sisters' strong stand on the matter as expressed in the following letter:

I must confess I am very much impressed with my utter inability to take care of myself in dealing with you ladies. There are among the books (which by the way is the only thing I sincerely regret selling), quite a number of volumes which were presents to me by the authors. Those I would like to have excepted out of the sale. It is now too late to do so without your consent. I desire permission to pay for them any price you may fix. As a matter of course they are not books of special value. I forgot yesterday to except them out of the sale.²⁹

After some deliberation the sisters determined they should not "divide the library," and to set a price of \$2,000.00 for the total collection.³⁰ At the same time, however, they asked Brackenridge to buy back his scientific and mathematical instruments (\$800.00), and his buggy (\$250.00), which they had paid for and for which they had no use. Strange to say, their letter indicates that they offered also to sell him the organ-piano at \$3,000.00, although this item had been specified as excluded from the sale.

We were not surprised to learn that you will be pleased to accept the books, but you must understand that we make an immense sacrifice in parting with them, for they are what we most appreciate. Our principal motive in doing so was to give you the pleasure of repossessing what you prize. However we cannot part with them unless you consent to take the organ-piano, music and instruments. We are willing to take \$2800.00 for the organ and to include the scientific instruments with mathematical for \$1000.00. We feel sure that you will be willing to accept the arrangement, for you know it would not be right to dispose of the books alone at so low a price.³¹

Brackenridge turned to his attorney for help but found that he had no grounds for redress. The sisters had legal title to the collection, and as long as they met their payments, the house and its contents were theirs.³² If the colonel did not want to accept the terms for repurchase he would have to withdraw his claim. The outcome of the disagreement was that Brackenridge withdrew his proposal, no doubt completely exasperated with the unwillingness of the sisters to back down on the agreement. As quoted in Sibley's biography of Colonel Brackenridge, he announced at his bank the next day, "Those old maids stole my library."³³ The library collection, as well as the other items, remained in the Brackenridge Villa. Some years later, the books were transferred to the Texana Collection of Incarnate Word College Library.³⁴

Although the sisters recorded that they found it “very difficult to meet all expenses,” they regularly forwarded checks of \$5,000.00 to Col. Brackenridge to cover the annual payments on the estate.³⁵ Through a bank in Holland they were able to secure a loan, and it is interesting to note in their letter of application for the money they assured the lending institution that they were “without a dollar of debt.”³⁶ Brackenridge offered them an extension of fifteen years on the limits of the note, but the sisters did not need that much time. The convent records show that on May 29, 1920, twenty-three years after the deed had been signed, the debt was “fully paid off, both principal and interest.”³⁷

In the meantime, the sisters began to transform the magnificent residence into their first motherhouse.³⁸ Using the Scottish word *bracken*, which translated means “fern,” the colonel had called his home Fernridge, but when the sisters moved in they changed the name to Brackenridge Villa.³⁹ The entire estate was frequently referred to as Alamo Heights, which subsequently became the name for the suburb that grew up surrounding it.

Using the parlor and music room for a chapel, the sisters had the first mass in their new home on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 25, 1897. The celebrant was the Rev. E. J. P. Schmitt, formerly of Vincennes, Indiana, who had become the sisters’ chaplain. Later that afternoon, Bishop Forest gave the first solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The announcement of these events was carried in an article appearing in the local Catholic newspaper, where the chapel was described as “a beautiful room . . . provided with an elegant organ, which the sisters obtained with the purchase of this place.”⁴⁰

The novitiate, which had been located for the past fifteen years at St. John’s Orphanage, was transferred to the villa at the end of the summer, and the sisters found that almost as soon as they moved into their new home they were running out of space. The house had been considered large as a private residence, but it could barely accommodate the members of the general administration as well as the growing number of novices. The sisters realized that a new motherhouse would have to be built on the property as soon as possible and engaged Alfred Giles as architect to draw up the necessary plans.

At the same time, Sister Gabriel wrote to the sisters asking for their help, “We have procured excellent plans for the motherhouse and long for the day when we can begin. At present, however, everything seems dark and nothing but confidence in our Incarnate Spouse can assist us to meet our obligations. Therefore, my dear sisters, redouble your petitions and do all in your power to save what you can. The depri-

vations we subject ourselves to, of things not necessary, will bring on us the blessing of God."⁴¹

By 1899, the sisters determined that they could delay the construction no longer. The number of patients at Santa Rosa had continued to increase, and it was becoming impossible to accommodate the need for more hospital space and at the same time provide for the growing number of sisters, all of whom could not be transferred to Brackenridge Villa. "Just imagine," Sister Gabriel wrote, "some [of the sisters] had to give up their beds to the patients at one o'clock at night."⁴² At least part of the motherhouse must be built, although the chapel would not be included in the initial plans and would be delayed until additional funds became available.

On October 15, 1899 the cornerstone for the motherhouse was blessed by the Very Rev. J. B. Audet, Vicar General of the Diocese of San Antonio, assisted by Father Joseph Weckesser, S.M.; Father M. O'Leary, chaplain of Santa Rosa; and Father Fridolin Schneider, C.P.P.S., who had replaced Father Schmitt as chaplain at the motherhouse. The sisters included the following statement in the cornerstone document:

In the erection of this building the Congregation has had principally in view the honor and glory of the Incarnate Word, and secondly to provide a home for our dear sisters who have been accommodated either at St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum or at Santa Rosa Infirmary. . . . As in all other undertakings the Congregation has to rely for its temporal resources on Divine Providence, but our confidence is unbounded, as we are convinced that what we have begun for the glory of the Incarnate Word may with His grace be completed.⁴³

By 1900 the building was finished, and the sisters moved into their new convent, which became the location of the offices and living quarters of the general administration and the novitiate. The building was called the Motherhouse and Academy of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, and from the very beginning there were plans to use part of the structure for a boarding and day school. It was also the location for the yearly homecoming for vacations and summer study for the sisters of the school missions. The temporary chapel located on the first floor became the site for the annual eight-day retreats, the ceremonies for reception of the habit and pronouncement of vows, and the sisters' jubilee celebrations.⁴⁴ Brackenridge Villa was used as a chaplain's residence.

An addition was made to the grounds of the motherhouse with the construction of Our Lady's Grotto in 1904 in celebration of the jubilee year of the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The Rev. J. G. Bednarek, who for reasons of personal health had come

to San Antonio from the Archdiocese of Chicago and who made his home at Brackenridge Villa, designed the structure as a replica of the famous shrine in Lourdes. He worked right along with the laborers in the construction effort, quarrying much of the stone and installing the electrical wiring to illuminate the structure for nighttime processions.

The grotto was dedicated on December 7, 1904, by Bishop Forest, assisted by Father Bednarek and Father Schneider. The first mass was celebrated on the outdoor altar the following morning. That evening, the sisters, novices, students, and orphan children, all joined in the first outdoor procession with hymns and prayers in honor of Our Lady, thus inaugurating a devotional custom that was observed henceforth on the principal feasts of Our Lady.

The addition of the chapel to the motherhouse was begun in 1906. The increase in the number of sisters made it imperative that a larger space be made available for the assembly of the whole community for prayers and for the celebration of the Eucharist. In writing to the monastery in Lyons, Mother Alphonse Brolier said the situation had become so bad that "there [were] more people outside than inside."⁴⁵

F. B. Gaenslen was selected as architect for the building, and Father Bednarek, who had designed the grotto, supervised every detail of the architectural plan. August Fuessel was named the contractor, and Theodore Engelhardt, who supervised the building of many of the congregational schools and hospitals, was named building superintendent. Rev. Mother Madeleine was so deeply interested in seeing the chapel come to fruition that she took on the responsibility of overseeing the project herself.

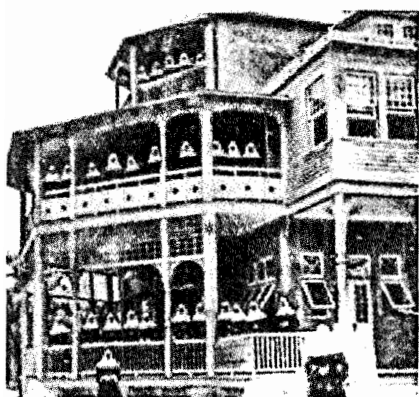
On January 6, 1906, ground was broken for the new building, with Bishop Forest, Father Bednarek and Father Schneider presiding at the ceremony. Just thirteen days later, Father Bednarek became critically ill and died before seeing his plans for the chapel become a reality.⁴⁶ His death was followed within a few months by that of Rev. Mother Madeleine. Both of them had shared the dream of seeing the Incarnate Word chapel built on the grounds of the motherhouse, and both had died before their dream could be fulfilled.

By June 22, a ceremony was held for placement of the granite cornerstone in the new building. Carved on the stone was the inscription, *Hic est Domus Dei*, and placed within a zinc box were the following items: holy water; blessed palm; medals; American coins; copies of the San Antonio newspapers; photographs of Bishop Forest, Father Schneider, Father Bednarek, and Rev. Mother Madeleine; a catalog of Incarnate Word Academy; and a copy of the constitutions approved in 1905. The cornerstone document included the following statement: "In

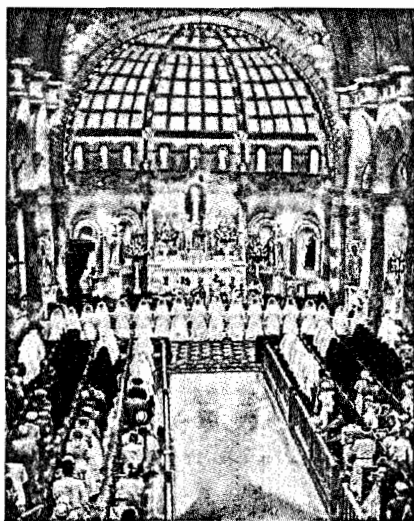
THE TURN OF THE CENTURY: ESTABLISHING FIRM FOUNDATIONS



Incarnate Word Convent was constructed in 1900. The chapel on the right was added in 1906.



Brackenridge Villa served as the sisters' motherhouse from 1897 to 1900. The sisters purchased 283 acres of land and the old home, part of which dates to 1852, from George Washington Brackenridge.



Interior of the convent chapel shows a reception ceremony on August 15, 1959, when eighteen young women received the religious habit and began their novitiate preparation.

the erection of this chapel, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word have principally in view the honor and glory of the Incarnate Word, in thanksgiving for the innumerable blessings He has bestowed on the Congregation since its humble establishment in San Antonio in 1869 by our present Superioress General—Rev. Mother St. Madeleine—and Rev. Mother St. Pierre of happy memory. Prodigious has been the development of the Congregation. Today it is composed of 452 members, distributed in 14 dioceses and in 50 establishments.”⁴⁷

Although the construction of the chapel had been delayed to allow time for the payment of the debt on the motherhouse, the sisters were still forced to borrow money for the project. A loan of \$12,000 was obtained from the diocese, and another loan for \$15,000 was secured from W. C. Sullivan. Sister Gabriel wrote to all of the sisters asking for help, “Let us contribute to the building fund, in the first place, by the faithful practice of holy poverty, so that our faults against this virtue may not keep from us the blessing of God; and in the second place, let each mission try to aid the work financially. . . . Each and all will then take an active share in the erection of the dwelling house of our Incarnate Spouse.”⁴⁸

Designed in the Romanesque style of architecture, the completed chapel was an imposing structure of cathedral-size dimensions. Built of red brick with white stone facings and slate roof, the building soon became an impressive landmark in San Antonio. The towering steeple topped with a gold cross and with figures of trumpeting angels could be seen from all directions in the city.

The interior of the chapel featured a vaulted ceiling of embossed metal, scagliola columns, a dome-shaped sanctuary, and an impressive altar of Carrara marble with onyx columns. The altar was donated by Dan Sullivan, Sr., in memory of his mother Annie Cotter Sullivan, long-time benefactor of the sisters. Placed in four niches around the main altar were the statues of four founders of religious orders: St. Benedict, St. Francis, St. Dominic, and St. Ignatius.

Because of a lack of funds, the side altars were originally made of wood but were replaced by marble in 1916 in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the sisters’ coming to Galveston. The altars were donated by all of the houses of the Congregation.

The choir stalls in the body of the structure were modelled on those found in the monasteries of medieval Europe. The stained glass windows were designed by the Emil Frei Art Glass Co. of St. Louis and depicted scenes from the life of Christ. A small harmonium in the choir loft was replaced in 1909 by a pipe organ.

The chapel was consecrated on May 30, 1907, by Bishop Forest. Also in attendance were Bishop Edward J. Dunne of Dallas and Bishop Peter Verdaguer of Brownsville as well as many priests from San Antonio and surrounding areas. The choir was made up of Brothers of Mary from St. Louis and St. Mary's Colleges.

The celebration was overcast, however, by the sadness felt by the sisters at the loss of Rev. Mother Madeleine, who had followed the progress of the construction step by step until her final illness. In December, 1905, word had been sent to the sisters that she was ill and suffering from rheumatism. By the following April, the doctors discovered that she had an inoperable tumor and that her illness was terminal. She died on July 20. Because construction on her beloved chapel was still unfinished, the solemn requiem mass was celebrated at Santa Rosa.

The sisters had lost the last of their three great founders and the person who had led the Congregation as superior general for a total of fifteen years. Her first term lasted from 1869 to 1872; her second term from 1894 to 1906. She had been assistant to Rev. Mother Pierre and to Rev. Mother Ignatius. She had served also as the superior at St. Joseph's Orphanage and at City Hospital during the sisters' work there. She died at the age of fifty-seven.

From her earliest days in the Congregation, when she insisted that the sisters in Galveston must change their habits to conform with the design presented to them from the monastery of Lyons, Sister Madeleine had demonstrated how conscientious she was in following exactly the directions of superiors and in fulfilling the obligations of the constitutions. Her exactitude made the responsibility of serving as superior a difficult task for her. She had very little tolerance for faults and failings either in herself or in others and felt it her responsibility to admonish the sisters for any weakness. Even from her deathbed she felt compelled to send the following message to the sisters:

I feel it my duty to call your attention to faults that have been committed and which certainly have offended the Heart of the Incarnate Word. From my bed of suffering I come to make a last appeal in the fulfillment of my duty towards you as your superior and your mother and beg of you, my dear sisters, for the love you bear the Incarnate Word, your congregation, and your own immortal souls to correct the faults which I shall here enumerate.⁴⁹

The faults which she went on to list in the letter were failings in charity, the criticism of superiors, the formation of particular friendships within the community, and the slapping of children in the classroom.

Although she was exact in following the rule herself and expected the same conformity from the sisters, Rev. Mother Madeleine was never harsh in her communications, but always direct and always humble as suggested by the following words at the close of her last letter:

I thank you most sincerely for all the marks of affection you have bestowed on me and for the help you have given me in my humble service in the house of the Incarnate Word. Here on my dying bed, I recall the Congregation, and I offer my sufferings in thanksgiving for the abundant graces God has sent us. I die content to know that so much has been accomplished for our dear congregation, despite the difficulties that we have had to encounter. . . .

Oh, be true to your Jesus, true to your congregation, and loving amongst yourselves. Remember the words of your mother who now asks you to forgive her any pain she may have caused you in the fulfillment of her duty during her happy days with you.⁵⁰

At the time of her death, expressions of sympathy came from many persons who had known and respected her for her administration of the Congregation and personal dedication to her religious profession. "She was truly devoted, entirely devoted to the good of the Community," Father Joseph Weckesser wrote. "The loss is a great one and in one way irreparable. She stands by herself. She was a very virtuous religious. I had often a chance to admire her zeal, her great piety and what struck me most was her deep humility."⁵¹

She had demonstrated also how courageous she could be in undertaking major developments of the Congregation. Under her leadership the constitutions had been finally approved by Rome; the Brackenridge estate had been purchased for the location of the novitiate, motherhouse, and academy; the convent had been built; and work on the construction of the chapel was in its final stages. The size of the Congregation had grown to over 450 members, and the work of the sisters had expanded in new areas of teaching, health care, and care of the elderly. The Congregation had been firmly established and was effectively fulfilling its ministry within the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER VII

MORE SCHOOLS, MORE HOSPITALS, MORE ORPHANAGES, MORE SOULS TO BE SAVED

While the purchase of Brackenridge Villa determined a permanent site for the motherhouse, and the canonical approbation of the constitutions established the Congregation's official status within the Catholic Church, the ministry of the sisters was expanding rapidly. The community was changing from a small group of sisters operating a few hospitals and schools in Texas, to a well established organization serving the growing needs of the Church in different regions of the United States and Mexico.

The great wave of immigration at the turn of the century was bringing scores of people to the United States from Catholic European countries, such as Ireland, Italy, Germany, France, Austria, Hungary, and Poland. The Official Catholic Directory for 1890 registered 7,855,000 Catholics. By 1920, the number had reached 17,735,553. Church leaders were calling for more schools, more hospitals, and more orphanages. Requests for teachers and nurses were coming from many directions, and the sisters were eager to respond, since each request offered an opportunity to save more souls.

The Church's need for parochial schools had been established in 1852 at the First Plenary Council of Baltimore. Most of the immigrant Catholics were poorly prepared to instruct their children in the faith, and the bishops believed that a whole generation could be lost to the Church if there were no parochial schools in which religion was part of the curriculum. The schools could also offset anti-Catholic bias in the textbooks being used in the public schools.

The directives of the council were reenforced by a document issued in Rome in 1875, "Instruction of the Congregation of *Propaganda de Fide*

Concerning Catholic Children Attending American Public Schools.” The exhortation, published with Vatican approval, maintained that children attending public schools were being exposed not only to a loss of faith but also to moral corruption. More parochial schools were an absolute necessity.

At the Third Plenary Council in 1884, Bishop Bernard McQuaid reported that 2,500 parochial schools had been established throughout the country where “Catholics [had] gathered their children . . . that therein they might breathe a Catholic atmosphere while acquiring secular knowledge.” However, the establishment of the schools would not cease, he proclaimed, “until all over the land the children of the Church [were] sheltered under her protecting care.”¹

The bishops took a strong stand on the issue, declaring that parochial schools were mandatory in all dioceses of the United States. “Near every church,” they decreed, “a parish school, where one does not yet exist, is to be built and maintained *in perpetuum* within two years of the promulgation of this council, unless the bishop should decide that because of serious difficulties a delay may be granted.” Furthermore, Catholic parents were “bound to send their children to the parish school, unless it [was] evident that a sufficient training in religion [was] given either in their own homes, or in other Catholic schools.”²

Ten years earlier, Rev. Mother Pierre had said, “We are called to help everywhere especially where the work is difficult, and if we had 100 more [sisters] to place this year there would be no trouble in giving them work to do.”³ The need was even greater in the 1890s as pastors tried to conform to the directives from the bishops and sent earnest appeals to the motherhouse asking for help. The sisters were prepared to teach the Catholic religion according to the Baltimore Catechism, which was also an outcome of the Third Plenary Council. Moreover, they were willing to work for very low salaries, an important consideration particularly in poor parishes.

Sisters’ congregations in the Eastern states and in the Midwest were experiencing an increase in the admission of young women from their own localities, but religious vocations in Texas were still scarce. To respond to the needs of the Church, Rev. Mother Madeleine knew it was imperative to continue making regular trips to Europe for the recruitment of sisters.

Although religious vocations began to decline in France at this time, principally because of political unrest and conflict between the civil government and church authorities, Ireland and Germany offered fertile fields for finding young women interested in entering a religious congregation that would bring them to the missionary territory of the

United States. In 1895, Sister Alphonse Brollier and Sister Mary John O'Shaughnessy journeyed to Europe and returned with 21 candidates from Ireland, 17 from Germany, and 3 from France. By 1900, the numbers had increased to 40 from Ireland, 20 from Germany, and 6 from France. In the same year, 18 young women came from Canada, 6 from the United States, and 5 from Mexico, making a total of 95 candidates from 6 different countries, all going through the same program of preparation for religious life and creating a real League of Nations in the novitiate in San Antonio.⁴

Sister Loyola Coindreau was appointed mistress of novices not only because of her spiritual qualifications for the position but also because of her facility in speaking different languages. Two assistants, one German and one Irish, were appointed to work with her, and Father Fridolin Schneider gave classes on the meaning of the religious vows, lecturing both in English and in German.

The Congregation was becoming completely international in character, with the diversity of backgrounds creating a multi-cultural richness and offsetting the possibility of the organization becoming dominated by any single national or ethnic influence which was true of many other groups of sisters that became almost totally Polish, Italian, German, etc. The situation was not without its problems, however. Young women entering from European nations, as well as from Mexico, had to endure difficult adjustment to the strange culture and very warm climate. Also, language was a barrier to communication, particularly for those coming from France and Germany, and a deterrent to educational advancement. Superiors, eager to respond to the urgent need for sisters who were prepared to teach or to care for the sick, sometimes failed to take these difficulties into consideration. Sisters having trouble in learning the language were sent to work in the laundry or in the kitchen rather than in the schools and hospitals. Unfortunately, such assignments were considered inferior and created feelings of discrimination among many sisters who felt they were denied educational and career opportunities because of their nationality.

National differences created also some situations of favoritism, with superiors giving special attention or preferential treatment to sisters of the same national origin. Very early, Rev. Mother Pierre had expressed concern about such dangers. An entry in the motherhouse diary for 1886 tells of her "recommending to [the sisters] the spirit of unity and true charity" and warning them "never to let the spirit of nationalism creep . . . into our dear community." "We are daughters of the Incarnate Word," she said, "all children of the same heavenly Father and Spouse of the same God-Man."⁵

Bishop Neraz had frequently addressed the sisters on the same matter. Even on his deathbed, according to Sister Mary Gabriel's report, "he instructed those who had the happiness of surrounding him . . . to guard against the spirit of uncharitableness and nationalism which would certainly destroy the work of Jesus."⁶

However, without the recruitment of so many young women in Europe, particularly in France, Ireland, and Germany, the sisters would never have been able to accomplish the great expansion of their works that marked this period. Within seven years, from 1897 to 1903, they opened twelve new schools in various parts of Texas: St. Mary's School, Yorktown (1897); St. Mary's School, Windthorst (1897); Hunter Academy, Thurber (1898); St. Mary's School, Clarendon (1899); Holy Angels Academy, Boerne (1899); St. Joseph's Institute for Boys, Marshall (1900); Sacred Heart Academy, Del Rio (1900); Incarnate Word Academy, San Antonio (1900); Holy Trinity School, Falls City (1901); St. Joseph School, Longview (1901); Our Lady of Guadalupe School, Del Rio (1902); and St. John School, Bartole (1903).

Each request to open another school was an urgent one. A parish had no provision for educating its children; a public school had funds for operations but no teachers; a new facility was needed for a particular ethnic group. Usually the appeal came from an area of extreme poverty where poor parents, most of them immigrants, were struggling to educate their children without the means to operate a school.

Such an appeal came from Bishop E. J. Dunne of Dallas, who asked for sisters to teach in the mining town of Thurber. Men operating the mines had been brought in as immigrants from various parts of Europe. "Every nation under the sun is found in Thurber," Sister Gabriel told the sisters in one of her monthly letters.⁷ Most of the laborers could not speak English, and neither could their children.

Rev. Mother Madeleine could not refuse the bishop's urgent request for sisters, even though there were only three to spare, Sister Veronica Urbanczyk, superior; Sister Cesarius O'Shea; and Sister Anthony Gleser. In 1898, they opened Hunter Academy to educate the 106 children in the small mining community. Since many of the children worked in the mines along with their parents, classes had to be taught at night as well as during the regular daytime hours.⁸

The sisters had taught in public schools in Texas since 1877, when they went to Cuero. Later establishments in Roma, Rio Grande City, Seguin, Atascosa, Panna Maria, Kosciusko, Yorktown, Windthorst, and Falls City were all public schools. Usually, the school building was parish property, but state funds supported the operation of the institution as a public agency, providing textbooks for the children and paying the

salaries of the teachers for four months, which was the state-prescribed period of school attendance. For the other five months, students paid tuition or the school was supported by the parish.

In some public schools, the sister's role as teacher was no different from what it would have been in the parochial school. Prayers were recited in the classroom, and religion was taught as a regular part of the curriculum. In other institutions, however, the laws of the State were more closely followed, and religion could be taught only after school hours with classes held in the church or in the convent rather than in the regular classroom.

The schools were often visited by superintendents or representatives of the local school board, and many stories were told of how the sisters and their pupils were always alert to the appearance of such visitors. By the passing of a red ink well from room to room, teachers were warned that the superintendent was on his way. One of the tales repeated by the sisters told of a choral class practicing the hymns for mass "and when the bottle of red ink came into the room, the students moved immediately from the 'Kyrie Eleison' to 'The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You' without so much as missing a note."⁹

Teaching in the public schools offered some significant advantages as well as some severe hardships. It was, of course, a means to reach both Catholic and non-Catholic children and to spread the word of God. On an economic level, it was also a way to earn higher salaries. Each sister certified by the State was paid \$250.00 per month for the four months required in the school year.¹⁰

Parishes generally paid a teacher only \$20.00 or \$25.00 per month for the eight or nine months of the parochial school term. The parish provided also a convent for the sisters' residence, and parishioners, particularly in the rural areas, were often generous in offering them fresh vegetables, meat, and butter. Without such donations, the sisters could not have existed on their meager salaries.

Although salary was never the prime consideration, the extra income was important to the young Congregation struggling to build a motherhouse; to open more hospitals, schools, and orphanages; and to care for the sick and retired members as well as novices still in training.

In some of the public schools, however, expressions of anti-Catholic sentiments and prejudice offered serious difficulties. Reporting on the conditions in Seguin, Sister Gabriel wrote, "The sisters have had much to battle with to go against the prejudice of this little town,"¹¹ while in Rio Grande City and Roma, she said, there was "considerable anxiety . . . on account of the malice of those opposed to the work of Jesus."¹²

A principal cause of resentment was the wearing of the religious habit, which was considered a means of teaching religion in the classroom. The attacks were often bitter and hateful, such as the letter in the San Antonio newspaper: "Whether these things [habits] are relics of barbarian superstition, taught as a means to control the people, [they] should be left in the Church and should not prevent a sister from preserving the individuality of womanhood when she enters secular work among the masses and receives remuneration in public funds."¹³ In Roma, the sisters were even advised that state funds would be withdrawn if they did not agree to wear secular clothing.

Although they had agreed to give up the wearing of the habit in the schools of Mexico, the conditions that called for such sacrifice were very different from the situation in the United States. The Catholic Church was being driven out of Mexico, and the only way in which the sisters could remain there and continue their teaching in the schools was to disguise themselves as lay persons and to teach religion without the knowledge of the government.

To yield to prejudice and anti-Catholic bias in the small towns of Texas, however, was to yield to a small minority of narrow-minded persons, and as Sister Gabriel remarked, even if such a concession were made, what would be gained? The sisters would "still not be at liberty to teach [the] holy faith," the principal reason for their work.¹⁴

The controversy continued over a period of ten years. The Texas Constitution provided that no part of the public school fund should be used for the support of any sectarian school, but what was meant by "sectarian school" was not defined. The legislature was asked repeatedly to clarify the question and failed to do so.

In 1894, the matter was brought to court, and the Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction issued a directive stating that a school in which "any sectarian instruction [was] given, directly or indirectly, by a teacher of the school or other person, during the hours of the daily school session" was to be designated a sectarian school and declared ineligible for public funds. Giving sectarian instruction included "the performance of any ceremony or the wearing of any garb or dress, or the assuming of any title or appellation, or the use of any device whatever, reasonably tending to impress upon the minds of the children any sectarian bias or prejudice."¹⁵

Once the matter was decided, the sisters determined that they would withdraw their services from the public schools.¹⁶ Although they expected that many of the institutions, particularly those in the rural areas, would have to close because of a lack of teachers or a loss of funds, much to their surprise, most of the parishes took over the opera-

tion of the schools themselves, scraping together enough money to keep them in operation and to pay the salaries of the sisters.

It was a time for rejoicing. The sisters were now free to wear their religious habits without opposition and more importantly they were free to teach religion to the children. "It is a temporal loss for the [local] community," Sister Gabriel said, "but what is this compared to the freedom . . . to teach others how to love our Spouse?"¹⁷

In addition to all of the schools opened in the United States during this period (1894-1906), twelve new schools were established in Mexico. The sisters had started teaching in Mexico ten years earlier, when Colegio La Purísima opened in Saltillo, and Colegio de San José in 1887 in Monterrey. Political unrest in the country became a deterrent to further expansion over the next several years.

Before Bishop Nera's death several years later, however, he urged Rev. Mother Madeleine in spite of the dangers involved, to respond to the bishops of Mexico who had repeatedly asked the sisters to open more schools in their dioceses. His successor, Bishop John A. Forest, encouraged her to do the same, and by 1894 she was ready to accept the invitation of Archbishop Santiago Zubiría to establish Colegio Guadalupano in Durango. The following year, 1895, Colegio del Sagrado Corazón was opened in Lampazos with Sister M. Angela Pierret as superioress and principal. In 1896, Sister Augustine Curran and three other sisters were teaching in another school in Linares, Colegio del Divino Salvador.¹⁸

Nine other schools in Mexico, most of them built with congregational funds, were established over the next ten years: Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Victoria, Tamaulipas (1899); Colegio del Verbo Encarnado, Tampico (1902); Colegio Guadalupano, Chihuahua (1902); Colegio del Verbo Encarnado, Oaxaca (1902); Colegio Corazón de María, Ciudad Porfirio Díaz (1903); Colegio Corazón de María, General Cepeda (1903); Colegio Guadalupano, Hermosillo (1905); Colegio Santa María, Mexico City (1905); and Colegio Jesús María, Torreón (1906). In addition the sisters founded two orphanages for girls, both in 1902, Asilo Colón in Mexico City and Asilo Maas in Saltillo.

One of the most important educational developments for the sisters during this period was the opening of a school at the motherhouse. In purchasing the Brackenridge estate, they had envisioned building a school on the property, and by 1900, they were ready to move ahead with their plans. It was determined that Incarnate Word School established earlier on Crosby and Willow Streets should be re-named St. Patrick's Academy and that a new Incarnate Word Academy be opened in

the recently constructed motherhouse. The west wing was converted to classrooms, an assembly hall, and a resident student dormitory.

The school was advertised as a "Select Boarding School for Young Ladies and Little Girls," and opened on September 13, 1900, with the registration of a young lady named Grace Griffin of Tyler, Texas, as the first student. Only seven students were enrolled during the first semester, three in the high school division and four in the elementary grades.

Sister Nicholas Stokes became the principal, and Sisters Celestine Lasnier and Julius Keegan made up the faculty. The high school curriculum included religion, English, Latin, German, history, mathematics, and commercial subjects. Instruction was offered also in vocal and instrumental music, sewing, and physical culture. The educational program was described as "practical, solid, and refined." It was designed "to form the heart as well as to cultivate the mind [and] to qualify the young ladies to fill happily and with justice to themselves and others the positions destined for them by God." The catalog clearly stated that "difference of religion [was] no obstacle to admission" and that no influence would be "brought to bear against the religious convictions of the pupils." However, "for the sake of uniformity" all students would be required to attend religious exercises.¹⁹

Nine years later enrollment had increased to 125 students, and the sisters began to envision the possibility of establishing a college where their own members as well as lay persons could be prepared for baccalaureate degrees. A new course of studies was introduced that would provide "a thorough training in various branches of a liberal education," and in 1910, the first Bachelor of Arts degree was awarded to Antonia Mendoza of Durango, México.²⁰

Sister Gabriel Wheelahan, secretary of the general council, was responsible for the sisters' work in teaching and sent out regular directives, such as the following, from the motherhouse: "No school should close without the pupils having been examined . . . in the presence of the Rev. Pastor, parents, and patrons. If this be not practicable, at least before the other sisters of the school. In no case should the examination be omitted entirely."

Moreover, examinations should not be a means of creating fear. "The pupils should be taught to look forward to [them] with true honor. . . . If the year's work has been conscientiously done, and we depend on God's help for our success, not aiming merely at human praise, there is no need to anticipate a failure."

Performances presented at commencement were to be "select and well-rendered."²¹ Strict control over such public demonstrations was

exercised by having the program submitted to the general council for approval.

"Testimonials," award certificates presented to honor students, were to be ordered from the motherhouse, as also were the textbooks, which included Swinton's readers, spellers, histories, and grammars; *Baltimore Catechism No. 2*; Copper's *Moral Philosophy and Logic*; *The Normal Union Arithmetic*; Monteith's *First Lessons in Geography*; Maury's *Physical Geography*; Jenkins' *Literature*; music primers; *Etiquette for Young Ladies*; and *Etiquette for Boys*. Readers in the Polish language were ordered for the schools in Yorktown and Panna Maria, and readers in German for the school in Boerne.

So many schools had been started in such a short period of time that by 1903 the general council determined there would be no further openings. In order to respond to the urgent needs of the parishes, many sisters had been sent out to teach without adequate preparation for their work. In some cases, even the novices were assigned to teaching positions, since as Sister Gabriel said, "It was impossible otherwise to meet the requirements of the schools."²²

Many of the novices were very young when they entered the Congregation; some had not completed high school. During the one or two years spent in the novitiate they took some high school or college classes, but most of that period was given over to preparation for the religious life and to working in the laundry or kitchen, which was considered an important part of the young sister's preparation in humility and generosity.

It now became important that more attention be given to educational preparation of the teachers and that classes be offered at the motherhouse during the summer. As early as 1875, the sisters in the public schools had been taking examinations for certification. Under the direction of Sister Gabriel, who often helped them prepare for the tests through correspondence work that she sent out from the motherhouse, most of them had been successful in earning their certificates. State requirements were becoming more and more stringent, however, and although parochial schools at this time did not require that teachers be certified, it would be only a matter of time until such requirements were enforced.

Summer classes were the only means for the sisters to complete their education. Catholic universities throughout the country did not accept women at this time, and it would have been unthinkable to send a sister to a state university. It was not until 1911 that The Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C., admitted sisters to a special summer program called the Teachers' Institute. Opening its doors to women, even though they were all members of religious congregations,

was permitted only as a concession to the pressing needs of the Church for the preparation of teachers in the parochial schools.

Congregational leaders were quick to respond to the educational opportunity and sent Sister Columkille Colbert, Sister Madeleine Lee, and Sister James Aloysius Stein to Washington to enroll in the opening session. When the summer program was completed and the University decided to continue the institute throughout the year, it was determined that the three sisters should stay on to continue their studies. Sister Columkille Colbert earned her baccalaureate degree the following year with the first class of sister graduates. The Congregation thus initiated a practice that continued over the next seventy years of sending sisters to the University each year to work on baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees.

The opportunity for studying at the Catholic University was so appealing to Rev. Mother Alphonse that in 1913 she even considered constructing a house of studies on the campus of Sisters College, where several sisters at a time could live close to the school and be able to pursue their degrees. Other congregations were erecting buildings for this purpose, and she began serious negotiations with the rector of the University for the purchase of a tract of land. Her plans were changed, however, because of a lack of financial resources although she continued to send the sisters, usually two and often as many as seven at a time, to earn their degrees.

Like the Sisters' Institute, the summer courses offered at the motherhouse were generally geared toward the preparation of the elementary teacher. At the completion of one of the early sessions Sister Mary Gabriel described the offerings: "Rev. Father Bednarek was professor of Latin, Physics, and Trigonometry. . . . We had also an excellent chemistry professor who was as devoted to his work as if he belonged to the community. Our sister painters had the pleasure of having with them again their old professor—Mr. Onderdonk. The violinists had Prof. Romberg, and the harmony class Prof. Hahn. Mrs. Hewitt tried her elocutionary powers with all the sisters that could be spared."²³

Once Incarnate Word College was established, summer courses carried college credit, but earning a baccalaureate degree was often a long process that stretched over twenty or more summer sessions. It is surprising that in spite of the limited opportunities and difficulties involved that so many sisters became outstanding teachers and forerunners in their profession.

In 1903, the same year that the summer sessions opened at the motherhouse, Santa Rosa established its training school for nurses. The program was open to both lay persons and sisters, although most of the

early graduates were members of the Congregation. Courses were taught by the doctors under the direction of Dr. Ferdinand Herff, who served as the first dean. Earning their diplomas in the first graduating class of 1905 were Sisters Colette Foran, Robert O'Dea, deSales Keegan, Philip Neri Neville, Malachy Sweeney, Eleanor Flynn, Victor O'Donnell, Stella O'Sullivan, Mary Ascension Ryan, Timothy Mullen, Austin Kyne, Anselm Zell, and Evaristus Moran.

Although Rev. Mother Madeleine had firmly insisted in 1903 that no more schools would be opened until the sisters had an opportunity to catch up with their education, the cessation lasted only three years. By 1906, a new general administration had been elected, and under the leadership of Rev. Mother Alphonse Brollier, the Congregation was once again expanding in ministry.

At the request of Bishop E. J. Dunne, three institutions were established in the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth. The first was All Saints Academy, primarily a boarding school for girls offering classes on both the elementary and secondary levels with boys admitted to the grade school. The Congregation built the new school at a cost of \$10,000 in an area of North Fort Worth called Rosen Heights. The institution opened in 1906 under the direction of Sister Christina O'Driscoll as principal.²⁴

A second school, Mt. Carmel, was opened in Fort Worth in 1910 when the sisters purchased a private residence owned by the Lydon family and located on North Clinton Avenue. The sisters lived at the convent connected to All Saints Academy and traveled by horse and buggy each day to teach in the new school. Enrollment increased each year, and in 1913 the Congregation built a new Mt. Carmel Academy on Houston St., and Mother Marie Bernadette Synan was named principal.²⁵

The opening of parochial schools continued in Texas with Sts. Peter and Paul School, Liberty Hill (1908); Sacred Heart School, Wilburton (1909); St. Mary's School, Hobson (1915); and Sacred Heart School, Shafter (1916).

Mother Crescentia Alt established Notre Dame School in Kerrville in 1911; Mother Benedict Joseph Cassidy opened St. Mary's School in Marfa in 1912; Mother Paul Sullivan started St. Philip's School in San Antonio in 1914; and Mother Eulalia Reyes opened Our Lady of Guadalupe School in San Antonio in 1918.

In some of the schools the sisters worked under difficult conditions, particularly in parishes where the people were poor and unable to support either the church or the school. When Mother Pauline Fierro, Sister Emmanuel Phelan, and Sister Simplicia Oeffelke opened San Francisco de la Espada School in 1915, fifty-three children in grades one to six were crowded into three small classrooms adjoining the

church of the historic mission, which had been established by Franciscan missionaries. By the end of the first year, enrollment had jumped to ninety-nine, but the classroom space had not been expanded.

The crowded conditions of the school became even worse on rainy days as children and teachers huddled together in corners of the classrooms to escape the water pouring in from the leaking roof and on cold winter days as they crowded around wood-burning stoves to keep warm and were forced to use candles to read their textbooks because there was no electricity. Neither the school itself nor the sisters' convent across the square had a telephone. "The place [is] so difficult to reach," Mother Bonaventure Burns wrote, "we consider it as one of the foreign missions. To speak to us through the phone, our sisters . . . have to go two miles to the nearest telephone station."²⁶

A greater hardship than the leaking roof, the cold, or the absence of electricity and telephone, however, was the lack of water. Several wells had been dug on the property but all failed. The Franciscan priests who had founded the mission in the 1700s had made the first effort, digging a shallow well, but by the time the sisters arrived the water was unfit for use. Later attempts at drilling were equally unsuccessful. Drinking water for the children was carried in each day from wells in the surrounding areas and stored in crocks on the teachers' desks.

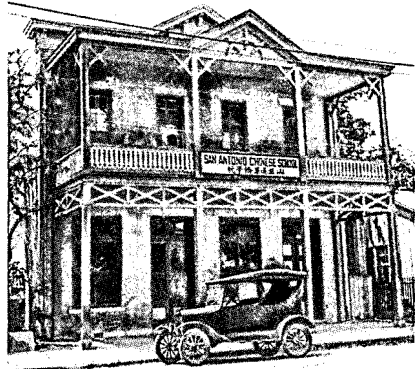
According to Sister Raphael Eccell, who was a student in the first grade when the school opened, one of the important duties of the children before they left school on Friday afternoons was to carry jugs of water from the nearby river to fill the sisters' bathtub. Although the sisters were living in primitive conditions, she said, "They were the only ones at the Fourth Mission who had a real bathtub bought for them by Father Hume."²⁷

The sisters were proud to be a part of Texas history, however, by teaching in the mission that had been established as early as 1690 in East Texas as San Francisco de las Tejas and moved to San Antonio in 1731. The monthly letter from the motherhouse described their opening of the school:

Through the efforts of our Right Rev. Bishop [Shaw] and Rev. Father [W. W.] Hume, Chancellor, the old mission house and presbytery, formerly the residence of the late Rev. Father [Francis] Bouchu, uncle of our deceased Mother Francis, have been repaired and furnished for a school and for a little convent for the sisters. The members of the little community are delighted with their new mission and quiet surroundings where everything reminds them of the early pioneers whose zeal and piety constructed the quaint and picturesque buildings, some of which,



Colegio La Purísima, opened in 1885 in Saltillo, was the first school established by the sisters in Mexico.



San Fernando School for Girls was opened originally in St. Joseph's Orphanage. As the number of students increased, classes were moved to this building on San Saba Street. Some years later, the school was sold for \$7,500 and converted into a school for Chinese immigrants. (Photo courtesy of The Institute of Texan Cultures.)



Mother Alma Neilan taught for many years in San Francisco de la Espada Mission School in San Antonio, where even in 1944, when this photograph was taken, classroom conditions were very primitive. (Photo courtesy of The Institute of Texan Cultures, The San Antonio Light Collection.)

though valuable for their traditions, are in a condition never to regain their primitive splendor.²⁸

Desperately in need of funds for the operation of the school, the mission applied to the state for assistance but was refused. Instead, a bus was sent each morning to transport the children from the mission to the public school. Not until Mother Alma Neilan became superior and went to visit every home in the parish urging the parents to send the children back to the mission did the students return.²⁹

In Oklahoma the sisters started Holy Rosary School, Hartshorne (1911) and St. Joseph's School, Norman (1914). In Missouri they began teaching at three schools that would continue to be under their direction for many years: Blessed Sacrament School, St. Louis, where Mother Kevin Murray became principal in 1914; Immaculate Conception School, Jefferson City, opened by Mother Edmund Kendellen, also in 1914; and St. Francis Xavier School, Taos, started by Mother Crescentia Alt in 1915.³⁰

During this period that preceded the changes brought about by the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, provision in Texas for educating children from Mexican families was totally inadequate. Although the number of Mexican children was growing "at a rate five times that of Anglos and nine times that of Blacks, . . . many school districts across the state made no provision whatsoever to accommodate Mexican children."³¹

Many Catholic parishes made provision for the educational needs of the children, but discrimination was a common practice. Separate buildings or classrooms were often designated as gratuitous or free schools and operated in conjunction with the school for Anglo children. Since Mexican families were often not able to pay the costs of tuition, the free school was supported by the income of the nearby or adjoining institution.³²

The Mexican school was usually in a less desirable location and operated under crowded conditions with as many as eighty children in different grades, all taught in one or two classrooms. The teachers, most of whom were Anglo, were not adequately prepared to teach the non-English speaking children. They usually insisted the pupils speak only English, put English readers in their hands, slowed down the process of their teaching, became as creative as they could in adapting their teaching methods, and somehow managed to get the students to learn.

Because many of the children belonged to families of migrant workers, they were often taken out of school to work in the fields. Some did not even start school until they were well beyond the age of the average first-grader. Sister Teresa Carmel Digan, who served as provincial

inspectress of schools in the San Antonio Province, once found a tall young man struggling to learn how to read in the first grade of the Mexican School in Seguin. When she returned a short time later to check on his progress, she found he had dropped out of first grade to join the army.

Although the arrangement of separating the Mexican children and providing them with makeshift classrooms was clearly discriminatory, the sisters did not see it in this light. Rather, it was looked upon as a charitable way of providing an education for those who could not afford to pay for it and who would not be accepted in the public schools, as well as a practical means of teaching Spanish-speaking children whose progress, at least in the primary grades, would be very slow in the regular classroom.

The separation of Mexicans from Anglos was a common practice also in other aspects of parish life. Records of the Archdiocese of San Antonio show that separate confirmation ceremonies were held in Del Rio, Seguin, Cuero, Yorktown, Cestohowa, and St. Hedwig. Even as late as 1925, the records indicate that in San Angelo on January 17 of that year 322 Mexicans were confirmed, and on the following day, 32 Anglos, designated as "Americans," received the sacrament. It was not until the 1950s that such discriminatory practices were stopped by Archbishop Robert E. Lucey, who also insisted that "no Catholic child may be refused admittance to any school maintained by the Archdiocese merely for reasons of color, race, or poverty."³³

One of the earliest gratuitous schools, later known as St. Peter's, was built in 1888 in San Angelo. In early records it is described as "an adobe building" constructed "about twenty feet in back of the Immaculate Conception Academy." Mother M. Pauline Marcoux "joyfully accepted the sacrificing task of teaching the ignorant Mexican children."³⁴

Our Lady of Guadalupe School in Del Rio had a similar beginning: "Situated at the rear of Sacred Heart Academy was a two-roomed frame building which in 1902 was converted into a school for the poorer children of this city. Sister Adela Ramos was sent in charge and commenced the enterprise with ninety pupils. As time progressed enrollment increased so Sister was given the needed assistance."³⁵

In Seguin, Our Lady of Guadalupe School opened in 1915 in conjunction with St. Joseph's. Two rooms in the sisters' convent were "set aside as classrooms for the Mexican children," where Sister Luitgardis Ziermann and Sister Engracia Garza taught eighty students.

Other gratuitous schools were Our Lady of Guadalupe School (1909) in conjunction with St. Joseph's School, Eagle Pass; Our Lady

of Guadalupe School (1912) associated with St. Mary's School, Marfa; Guadalupe School, later called San José School (1913), conducted in relation to Mt. Carmel Academy, Fort Worth; a school for Mexican children in connection with Hunter Academy, Thurber (1913); and Guadalupe School (1915) supported by Notre Dame School in Kerrville.

Most of the Congregation's educational efforts at this time were directed at establishing elementary schools, but as more sisters earned baccalaureate degrees, they were prepared to open secondary schools or to add high school classes to existing elementary schools, such as St. Joseph's, Seguin; Sacred Heart, Del Rio; Holy Angels, Boerne; St. Michael's, Cuero; All Saints, Fort Worth; Holy Rosary, Hartshorne; and Immaculate Conception, San Angelo.

In 1913, St. Mary's Academy was opened in Amarillo as the successor of St. Mary's School in Clarendon, which had been closed when the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad moved its shops causing a decline in population.³⁶ The new academy was established in response to the repeated urgings of Father David D. Dunn. Catholics agreed to pay two-thirds of the cost of purchasing a ten-acre tract of land for a new school building, and the Congregation assumed the cost of construction.

Eight sisters were sent to open the academy, which was dedicated on March 1, 1914: Mother Mary de Pazzi Ryan, principal and superior, Sister Cornelius Bryan, Sister Mary Baptist Courtney, Sister Hilda Shortall, Sister Seraphia Veigl, Sister Pierre Sweeney, Sister Isabella Holohan, and Sister Mary de Lellis Gough.

The boarding and day school included elementary grades, open to both boys and girls, and a high school for young women. It was the only private school in Amarillo, and enrollment grew rapidly during the early years in spite of the vicious attacks by prejudiced persons within the community. A local newspaper called *The Menace* published articles attacking the sisters and also sponsored public lectures warning the people of Amarillo that they would suffer dire consequences if they sent their children to the Catholic school. An open house sponsored by the sisters with tours of the new building helped to dispel some of the opposition, and in time the academy won the support of both Catholics and non-Catholics. In 1921, the school was accredited by the state.³⁷

Two more secondary schools followed the opening of St. Mary's. In 1913, Mother Emiliana Malone established Our Lady of the Ozarks Academy in West Plains, Missouri, and in 1914, Mother Mary de Pazzi became the first principal of Notre Dame Academy in Paris, Texas.

In addition to opening new schools, the sisters took up the operation of two orphanages in Dallas. At the invitation of Bishop Dunne,

Sisters Cesarius O'Shea and Patrick Molitor began their work in 1907 at St. Joseph's Orphanage, which had been under the direction of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. Although the institution was owned by the diocese, the sisters soon found that they had to go on begging expeditions for support just as they had done at St. Joseph's Orphanage for Girls and St. John's Orphanage for Boys in San Antonio as well as at St. Mary's Orphanage in Galveston. Sister Blaise Bracken and Sister Mary Brigid Fennell spent close to fifty years soliciting contributions in Dallas, standing outside the local churches, visiting the offices of businessmen, and traveling to surrounding areas, even as far as El Paso. The original orphanage located on West Page Street was a simple frame house enlarged with an annex which accommodated thirty-three boys and girls.³⁸

By 1917, the number of orphans had increased, and the home was so overcrowded that a separate institution, Dunne Memorial Industrial Home for Boys, was established by Bishop J. P. Lynch, who had succeeded Bishop Dunne. The former episcopal residence of Bishop Dunne located on Ninth Street and Rosemont Avenue in Oak Cliff was converted into space for the home, and a three-story brick building was added for classrooms and dormitories. It was described as an institution "where habits of thrift and industry [are] inculcated into fatherless and motherless boys and where they [are] taught useful arts and trades to make them self-supporting citizens." Mother Maurice Brennan was appointed superior and director of the home.

Several new hospitals were established during these years, some of which became major health care facilities. Although the Church had issued no directives on the need for Catholic health care comparable to those mandated for education, the same attitudes prevailed regarding the necessity of safeguarding Catholic patients against the dangers of public or sectarian institutions.

In 1896, the Congregation purchased a small sanitarium in Boerne, Texas, that had been built by two local physicians. The area located just thirty-five miles outside San Antonio was becoming well known throughout the country for its climate favorable to patients with tubercular disease. Because of the dangers of infection, it was impossible to accept such patients at Santa Rosa, and the location in Boerne offered an ideal rural setting with climatic conditions that were even more healthful than those of San Antonio. Sister Athanasius Vauthier and three other sisters opened St. Mary's Sanitarium, which according to Sister Helena Finck's account, had "a long record of never-ending charities, of frequent restorations to health, and of beautiful and edifying deaths."³⁹

A short time later, the sisters initiated the first of six major developments in health care with the opening in 1901 of St. Anthony's Sanitarium in Amarillo. The urgent pleas of the doctors, the townspeople, and the clergy persuaded Rev. Mother Madeleine to send four sisters to the Texas Panhandle to establish the first hospital in the area. Sister Cleophas Hurst, Sister Eugenius Ward, Sister Winifred Cullen, and Sister Conrad Urnau braved the snowstorms and the dust storms, as well as the anti-Catholic sentiment of many people in the area to start St. Anthony's, which many years later became an outstanding medical center in West Texas.⁴⁰

A second major development in health care was made in St. Louis, where in 1902, the Congregation took over the operation of St. Joseph's Sanitarium. The sisters had been working at the Missouri Pacific Hospital in this city since 1889, and they were eager to expand their ministry in the Midwest. Three sisters, with Sister Remigius Hackett as superior, began working at the small sanitarium but soon found that the location of the facility was not conducive to attracting patients, and the institution was facing financial failure.

Just a few months later, they were offered an opportunity to staff the Josephine Hospital and exchanged their position at St. Joseph's for this appointment. The recently constructed hospital had been erected through the generous donations of a wealthy Catholic laywoman of St. Louis, Josephine Heitkamp. In 1902, at the invitation of the Board of Trustees, the sisters took over the responsibilities of nursing, house-keeping, dietary care, and laundry, working under the direction of Miss Heitkamp's personal physician, Dr. Frank Lutz, who served as administrator. Sister Colette Foran was named the superior and superintendent, and the community included Sisters Remigius Hackett, Blaise Bracken, Cyprian Bersezai, Meinrad Kuhn, and Wendelinus Holzer.

Their work at the Josephine came to an abrupt halt in 1906, however, when serious differences developed between Dr. Lutz and the sisters regarding the direction of the institution, which was facing financial failure because of poor management. Dr. Lutz summarily dismissed them from the staff and replaced them with lay nurses.

Years later, however, the sisters were invited back to the Josephine and asked to assume not only the management but also the ownership of the institution, which was still having financial problems. Working under extremely difficult conditions, they developed the small, struggling facility into Incarnate Word Hospital, one of the Congregation's significant developments in health care.⁴¹

In Corpus Christi, the sisters assumed the ownership and administration of Spohn Sanitarium, the first hospital in the area. The building

was constructed in 1905 through a fund-raising campaign led by local philanthropist Alice Gertrudis King Kleberg, sister of the famous Captain Richard King, who had founded the King Ranch. Mrs. King, together with many leading citizens of Corpus Christi, was anxious to provide health care for the community and also to honor the highly respected local physician, Dr. Arthur Edward Spohn.

The two-story frame structure was built on North Beach fronting Corpus Christi Bay. Sister Cleophas Hurst was named the first administrator and superior, just as she had been at St. Anthony's Sanitarium. Working with her in establishing the new institution were Sisters Conrad Urnau, Regina O'Byrne, and Austin Kyne. From the very beginning the hospital was crowded with patients, attracted outstanding physicians to its staff, and offered great promise for future development. Unfortunately, the location of the sanitarium on the Corpus Christi bayfront, which added such beauty to the institution and which was so ideal for the health and comfort of the patients, became a source of tragedy in the years to follow.⁴²

Shortly after the opening of Spohn Sanitarium, the sisters were asked to start a hospital in San Angelo, where many persons suffering from tuberculosis came from other parts of the country seeking the mild climate of West Texas. San Angelo, like so many areas where the sisters established hospitals, had no medical facility. Persons who became seriously ill had to travel ten to twelve hours by train to St. Joseph's Infirmary in Fort Worth, which the sisters had opened in 1889.

Led by John Lee, the San Angelo Business Club invited the sisters to San Angelo. Mr. Lee knew the Congregation very well; his own sister, Sister Madeleine Lee, was a member of the community. The businessman's organization, although it included many staunch Protestants, successfully raised \$15,000 to purchase a tract of land and begin construction of the new Catholic sanitarium. The remaining costs of \$20,000 were paid by the sisters. The facility was opened in 1910 and named for Bishop John A. Forest. Mother de Sales Keegan was appointed the first administrator and superior. Other members of the staff were Sisters Robert O'Dea, Lydia Byrne, Emilie Boland, Herman Joseph Steffes, Cuthbert Ward, and Helen Sisson.⁴³

At the request of Bishop J. P. Lynch of the diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth, the sisters next went to Paris, Texas. The Sisters of Mercy had preceded them in this small town named for the French capital. They had tried to establish first a school and later a hospital, but both efforts were unsuccessful, primarily because of the small number of Catholics in the area and the lack of support for a Catholic institution. Responding to Bishop Lynch's appeal in 1911, the Incarnate Word sisters took over

the hospital that had failed and reestablished it as St. Joseph's Infirmary. Mother Helen Sisson was administrator and superior. Other members of the first community were Sisters Simon Molitor, Sixtus Doherty, Jerome Urnau, Eugenius Ward, Hildegard Tinnies, and Thais Desroche.

Although the beginnings were extremely difficult, and the number of patients sometimes dwindled to four or five, the sisters struggled to keep the institution going. By 1914, they had established a reputation within the area for offering outstanding health care, and more and more physicians joined the staff. The number of patients began to exceed the capacity, and a new St. Joseph's was constructed to serve the needs of the community of Paris.⁴⁴

In McAlester, Oklahoma, the sisters opened St. Mary's Infirmary in 1914 in response to an invitation from prominent citizens and physicians of the community, particularly Dr. E. H. Troy and Dr. George A. Kilpatrick. At a cost of \$14,000, the Congregation purchased the three-story stucco residence of Melvin Cornish and converted it into a small twenty-bed hospital. Mother de Sales Keegan was named the first administrator and superior. Serving with her were Sisters Eugenius Ward, Emerentiana O'Sullivan, Albertina Grehan, Cunegunda Naumann, and Rose of Lima Mendritzki.

The small hospital was often filled to capacity, and Mother de Sales sent frequent appeals to the motherhouse asking for funds for expansion, but she was always turned down. So many new institutions had been established that the superiors could not offer any support. The following statement is recorded in the minutes of the general council for Feb. 5, 1919: "As the motherhouse is not in a position to build, it was suggested to tell Mother de Sales to see what she could accomplish in the way of getting donations. If she succeeds, she will get permission to enlarge the infirmary building and procure the necessary equipment."⁴⁵

The donations were slow in coming, and a few years later, the sisters proposed to sell the infirmary because it was "too small . . . to meet the requirements for standardization."⁴⁶ Bishop Theophile Meerschaert of Oklahoma, however, pleaded with the superiors in San Antonio to leave the sisters in McAlester until another religious congregation could be found to take over the infirmary. Their stay lasted over fifty years.

Not until the 1930s, however, was St. Mary's able to undertake any significant expansion. At this time, James B. Cambron, a former railroad employee who had been cared for many years before by Sister Cleophas Hurst at St. Mary's Hospital in Sedalia, Missouri, and who had been impressed with the dedication and kindness of the sisters, made the first of many large donations to the McAlester hospital. Through his generosity and that of his brother, Peter, the infirmary was

expanded to 100 beds and was fully equipped and staffed to meet the requirements for accreditation.⁴⁷

The sisters' work in other hospitals during these years was sometimes shortlived. In 1898, they were asked to take over the operation of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Venice, Illinois. Sisters Mary of the Cross Rossiter, Mary of the Trinity Majeaux, and Mathias Treib were assigned to the new mission, but the little town of Venice could not support the venture, and just two years later, the institution was forced to close its doors.

In 1902, the Congregation sent sisters to serve as nurses in two institutions in Texarkana, Arkansas—St. John's Sanitarium and the Cotton Belt Railroad Hospital. At St. John's, they found that most of the patients were Methodists and Baptists, and although they could provide excellent nursing skills, they soon learned that they could offer very little spiritual help because of the resistance to Catholicism. In 1904, Rev. Mother Madeleine decided to reassign them to other institutions. Their work at the railroad hospital was also shortlived, continuing only until 1907.

As early as 1911, the sisters had operated a railroad hospital in Sedalia, Missouri, and had earned the respect of the local physicians for their work in nursing. When trustees of the Maywood Hospital in the same city decided to offer their institution for sale, the doctors and local citizens urged the sisters to purchase the facility and provided funds to assist them. Mother Cleophas Hurst and seven sisters opened what became known as St. Mary's Hospital in August, 1915.

In addition to all of the hospital openings during this time, a new development was made in the Congregation's relatively new ministry of care of the aged, which had begun in 1890 with the opening of Hospicio Ortigosa in Monterrey. The sisters now determined to build another institution for the elderly, particularly the destitute and the homeless, this time in San Antonio.

For many years, Santa Rosa had accepted elderly poor persons as charity patients, and many of them stayed on for long periods of time. St. Francis Ward had been set aside especially for this purpose. The demand for more space at the hospital, however, made it now imperative that a separate institution be erected.

In 1895, the sisters began to purchase tracts of land on South Flores Street and converted a small house on the property to be used as a temporary shelter until sufficient funds could be raised for construction of a new facility. Within just a few months, they were prepared to build a two-story frame structure which they named St. Francis Home for the Aged. According to a report in *The Southern Messenger*, the house was "located in a large and beautiful garden . . . where the old

people [had] plenty of fresh air and [could] sit in the shade of large mulberry and pecan trees.”⁴⁸

Operation of the home was so successful, and the sisters were so satisfied with their new ministry that they determined in the 1897 revision of the constitutions to include the following statement: “One of the grandest works of charity recommended by our constitutions is the care of the aged. The sisters devoted to this mission of mercy shall bestow on their charges a devoted and tender solicitude, ministering with indefatigable patience and sweetness to their every want, often made unreasonable by the eccentricities of age.”⁴⁹

Almost from the time it opened, St. Francis Home was filled with patients, accommodating from fifteen to twenty elderly men and women who were accepted without discrimination of race or religion. Sister Mary of Jesus Noirry, who for many years had spent her energy in raising funds for St. Joseph’s Orphanage in San Antonio, was named superior and soon found that directing an institution for the aged and destitute was just as difficult as managing an orphanage. Neither institution had the necessary means of financial support. Charges at the home were \$25 per month, but small as they were, most of the men and women could contribute little or nothing to their care.

To keep the home in operation, Sister Mary of Jesus took up her former task of fund raising. For many years she had begged for food, clothing, and money to help the orphans. Now she began to solicit contributions for the elderly. She organized benefit performances of the orphans at St. Joseph’s with all of the proceeds going to St. Francis Home, involved the women of neighboring Catholic parishes in sponsoring benefits and in securing gifts of clothing and furnishings from benefactors, and helped the residents themselves in planting vegetables on the property and in raising hogs and rabbits for their own subsistence.

The number of men and women seeking admission to the home continued to increase over the next few years, and every inch of space was occupied. Congregational leaders soon determined to construct a new and larger building that would accommodate not only the growing number of lay persons but also the elderly and retired sisters who up to this time had been cared for at Santa Rosa and at St. Mary’s Sanitarium in Boerne. In 1903, work began on the new home at 2017 South Flores Street but had to be stopped because of lack of funds. Strangely enough, the sisters seemed to know before they started the construction that they would not have enough money to finish, since the annals record that the “discontinuance of the work for over a year caused no surprise.”⁵⁰

At last in 1906, through the financial assistance of many persons in the San Antonio community who had become friends of St. Francis

Home, the new building was ready for its grand opening.⁵¹ It was described as “very spacious, fitted up in the best possible manner for the comfort of the dear aged people.”⁵²

Most importantly, it had such modern conveniences as electric lights and a system of hot water heating. Jokingly, the sisters often turned the name St. Francis Home into “The Fancy Home.”

Sister Maurice Brennan was named superior and was assisted by sixteen sisters who assumed all of the duties of caring for the fifty-eight residents. One of the early records mentions in particular the work of Sister Bernardine Devey, a kind and gentle person who was completely dedicated to the old people in her care. She was described as being always ready to “listen to the stories of their sorrows” and to offer them consolation in their declining years.

“Many of the inmates hardly knew God,” wrote the unidentified author of an early history of the home. “Sister Bernardine instructed and taught them resignation to God’s holy will. She had the pleasure of seeing many, after receiving the last consolation of our Holy Mother Church, die with a smile on their lips.”⁵³

If the number of new institutions—schools, hospitals, orphanages, and a home for the aged—seems large, the number of requests that were turned down for lack of available personnel was even larger. Urgent appeals, such as the following from a pastor in Stillwater, Oklahoma, were coming to the motherhouse regularly:

As the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, Wichita, Kansas, did not have a sufficient number of teachers, they gave up the school at Stillwater, Oklahoma. . . . We used to have two teachers and a sister for the kitchen; about 40 children (all Catholic) attended the school; usually a few boarders, preparing for First Holy Communion, were with the sisters. As most of the people are Germans, German was taught. . . . I would be willing to make almost any sacrifice in order to get sisters especially for this year; I am afraid that it will be difficult to get the children back if once they go to the public schools. . . . If it is possible at all, Rev. Mother, take charge of the school and send me at least two sisters. Save these children.⁵⁴

Other requests for teachers came from schools in Vernon, Fredericksburg, Yoakum, Brenham, Abilene, Electra, Slaton, Fort Stockton, and Ellinger, Texas; in Pachuca and Monclova, México; in Moberly, Pacific, Millwood, Wardsville, New Madrid, and St. Louis, Missouri; in Churchville, Iowa; in Dodge City, Kansas; in Rock Island and Quincy, Illinois; in Carlsbad and Deming, New Mexico; and in Fremont, Ohio. Requests came from as far away as Cuba and Central America, but it was impossible to respond to all of the appeals.

More hospitals needed nurses also, and the sisters had to decline appeals for help that came from Weatherford, Putnam, Stamford, Corsicana, Fredericksburg, Eastland, Denison, Cleburne, Canadia, and Victoria, Texas, as well as from St. Helena, California; Bonne Terre, Kansas City, and Hannibal, Missouri; Atchison, Kansas; Jacksonville, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; Globe, Arizona; Eureka Springs, White Sulphur, and Tontitown, Arkansas; Durant and Tulsa, Oklahoma; Silver City, New Mexico; Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; and Kent and Seattle, Washington.

Although the missionary status of the Catholic Church in the United States was officially changed in 1908, when the constitution *Sapienti Consilio* removed it from the jurisdiction of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, the sisters continued to recruit new members for the Congregation in Europe, particularly in Ireland and Germany. Many difficulties were involved in securing authorization from immigration authorities. Also, it was not unusual for a young candidate to be accepted by the Congregation and to make the long journey to the United States only to discover that for one reason or another she had made the wrong decision and that she wanted to return home.

Many years earlier, in 1882, Rev. Mother Pierre had considered establishing a convent in Ireland, where applicants, or candidates as they were called, might spend a probationary year or two before coming to the United States. The time could be spent in testing their commitment to the religious life and in adjusting to the necessary changes in life style. She had corresponded with Rev. Mother M. de Sales of the Presentation Convent in Sneem, County Kerry, on the matter and gave serious consideration to purchasing a school and convent which the Presentation Sisters were anxious to sell and which might serve very well as a candidacy. It is not certain why she abandoned the idea at this time, but once again in 1907 Rev. Mother Alphonse was considering a similar foundation. Some urgency was attached to the plan now because the Irish bishops had objected to young women being recruited "without having been able to make sure of their vocation."⁵⁵

She obtained the necessary permission from Rome to open a convent in Europe and wrote to the sisters saying, "We are wondering which would be the better place, Belgium or Ireland. We would prefer Belgium, which would be more centrally located."⁵⁶ She later changed her mind about both countries, however, and determined that the convent should be located in Germany, where Sister Athanasius Vauthier and Sister Frederica Backes had been very successful in recruiting candidates. The sisters were working with Rev. M. Welter, pastor at Kemplich in Kedange (German Lorraine), a zealous priest who had

become familiar, through German missionaries in Texas, with the work of the sisters and had encouraged many young women to enter the Congregation. As early as 1878, he had introduced the sisters to a very promising candidate, Gertrude Saar, who later became Rev. Mother Ignatius.

After several attempts to either rent or purchase property in Germany, however, the sisters found "the conditions, laws and other circumstances of the country were unfavorable to their project." Convinced that such difficulties were all within the providence of God, who would "make known His design in due time," they continued their search "until finally Holland opened its doors to them."⁵⁷

In 1911, they secured the authorization of Msgr. H. Van de Wetering, Archbishop of Utrecht, to open a house within his diocese provided that they would be self-supporting and would not begin work in local schools or hospitals. Many religious congregations already established in the area were operating all of the Catholic institutions that were needed. Moreover, because the archbishop was concerned about losing candidates for the religious orders in his own diocese, he insisted that no effort be made to recruit Dutch postulants.

The sisters purchased a small, two-story private residence at Oud Zevenaar, directly across the border from Germany, and opened their first convent in Europe, which they named Villa María. Sister Athanasius was named superior; Sister Mary Calvary LePage and Sister Ludmilla Heiger became responsible for direction of the postulants. Meanwhile, Sister Frederica, who had been recruiting in the area, returned to Texas with nineteen candidates, all from Germany.⁵⁸

During the course of this period of expansion in ministry, the sisters experienced the sorrowful death of the last of their co-founders, Rev. Mother Madeleine. She had served as superior general 1869-1872 and 1894-1906 and had led the Congregation through many important developments of its early years. In 1906, just a short time before her final illness, she had set a date for a business chapter to be held at the motherhouse. Although it was not yet time for the election of new superiors, there were matters that she needed to bring to a general assembly of the sisters. Two months before the chapter, however, she became critically ill and was hospitalized at Santa Rosa, where she died on July 20, 1906. Sadness filled the hearts of the sisters at the sudden death of their respected founder and leader.

Following her directives, they continued their plans for the meeting she had scheduled to begin on July 29 but which now had to be changed to a chapter of elections. Selected as the new superior was

Sister Alphonse Brollier, who had worked closely with Rev. Mother Madeleine, serving as her assistant for twelve years.

Like three of the Congregational leaders before her, Rev. Mother Alphonse was originally from France. Born in Lyons on Jan. 28, 1858, she had been educated by the Sisters of Providence at Saint Marcellin, Isère. It was during an investiture ceremony held in the chapel at the Incarnate Word Monastery in Lyons that she felt called to consecrate her life to the missions in Texas. In 1878, she responded to Rev. Mother Pierre's appeal for volunteers and came to San Antonio with the third group of young women to enter from France.

Before being elected to the general administration, Rev. Mother Alphonse had worked in the hospitals and as a very young sister had been assigned to Santa Rosa. In 1883, when the epidemic of small pox broke out in San Antonio, she had generously volunteered to care for victims of the disease in the Pest House, an isolation unit which the mayor had set up in a dilapidated shack on the outskirts of the city. She was only twenty-five years of age at the time. She later served in other hospitals in Fort Worth, Marshall, and St. Louis.

Like Rev. Mother Madeleine, she was a woman who accomplished a great deal without drawing much attention to herself and felt that she was unworthy to take on the leadership of the Congregation. She wrote to the sisters in Lyons expressing her concern that she might be called upon to take over Rev. Mother Madeleine's responsibilities during her illness. "I'm trying to maintain my patience," she said, "while asking the Incarnate Word to take care of Sister Alphonse because she is very unsure of herself."⁵⁹

Shortly after she was named superior general, she wrote to them again describing her reaction to the election: "The thought which gave me the most consolation [was] the weaker the instrument, the more glory goes to the Master in using it, because the Incarnate Word has always accomplished His work. . . . When the bishop had announced the election out loud, I said to Our Lord with a trembling but courageous heart, 'Lord, I want to be your little donkey and carry my burden with joy for your love and your glory.'"

The responsibility of being in charge weighed heavily upon her. "[It] is enough to beat to death a young superior just beginning her duties," she wrote. "Thank God I am a tough one, and I am still living, but alas, not without groaning. . . . Too many people to guide, to take care of, to encourage and improve, and I feel my own incapacity, my lack of virtue." Even the deference shown to her as the superior general was a source of concern. In humility she admitted, "The attentions of which I have been the object have caused me great confusion."⁶⁰

In spite of her feelings of insecurity, Rev. Mother Alphonse provided effective leadership for the Congregation. According to the early records, her “simple, direct manner seldom failed to gain the confidence of her sisters.”⁶¹ She herself confessed, “I do whatever I can to show [the sisters] affection. I scold very little but rather am patient and encouraging with poor human nature.”⁶² She was described as being “a true *mother* to [her] sisters in religion.”⁶³

In the years that followed, a series of tragic events would bring sorrow and sacrifice to the Congregation. Rev. Mother Alphonse’s quiet strength and gentle affection would become a source of great solace and support for her sisters.

CHAPTER VIII

TRAGEDY AND JUBILEE

The growth in ministry in the years leading up to 1919 was a cause of great satisfaction to the sisters. They had worked hard to accomplish their goal of giving glory to God and service to their fellow men and women, and most of their efforts had been successful. They began now to prepare for their fiftieth anniversary, the golden jubilee of the founding of the Congregation, a time of rejoicing and of thanksgiving for God's blessings.

Before the celebration began, however, it seemed as if God was demanding great sacrifices. From 1912 to 1919, four tragic events followed one after the other, taking the lives of several sisters and of persons who were in their care or working with them in ministry, as well as destroying institutions that had been built at great cost and with limited resources.

The first disaster occurred at St. John's Orphanage in San Antonio. The home for children had been constructed several years earlier to accommodate the growing number of homeless infants and young boys that were being cared for at Santa Rosa. In 1890, Rev. Mother Pierre wrote to tell the sisters of her plans to provide a proper home for the orphans, "We find ourselves in extreme need of an orphanage for boys and a place for babies . . . and to offer to the Incarnate Word a refuge in the person of his poor."¹

The Congregation had little money to pay for the cost of putting up a new building, but the sisters decided to defer the payment of debts on the construction of St. Joseph's Infirmary, Fort Worth, and on the addition to Santa Rosa. They also sold two pieces of property that had

been acquired for future development and postponed the building of a new convent for themselves that was designed to replace their cramped quarters on the top floor of the overcrowded Santa Rosa. "We must decide to put all of the resources of the community into [the orphanage]," Rev. Mother Pierre wrote to the sisters.² Later, she added, "The Lord will give us the means to provide a home for ourselves."³

St. John's was dedicated on April 22, 1890, and the sisters took great pride in the four-and-one-half-story Gothic-Victorian structure located on the southwest corner of the grounds of Santa Rosa. On the day it opened, thirty little boys and infants, together with six sisters, moved into the new home.

For twenty-two years the orphanage operated successfully, and the number of children at times reached over 100. Tragedy struck St. John's, however, on the morning of October 30, 1912, when a disastrous fire broke out. In less than two hours, the building was destroyed, and the lives of five sisters and three children had been lost.

Peter Herff offers the following eyewitness account of the tragic event in his book *The Doctors Herff: A Three Generation Memoir*:

In the early morning hours of October 30, 1912, I was awakened by a telephone call. It was then so close to daylight that I had no inclination to go back to sleep, so I sat out on the sleeping porch. Suddenly I noticed an ominous red glow in the southwest. Realizing with horror that it was the unmistakable reflection from a fire I immediately thought that the Santa Rosa Infirmary was burning. Frenziedly getting dressed, I drove like a maniac to the hospital. I was certain that the entire group of buildings was aflame, because the blaze appeared to be leaping at least one hundred feet into the sky.

The theory was that it was a case of spontaneous combustion caused by a carelessly mislaid oil-soaked rag. It was common practice at the time to saturate floors with crude oil in order to settle the dust. Just the afternoon before the lower floor and stairway in the orphanage had received that treatment.⁴

The gardener-chauffeur had spotted the fire and endeavored to enter the building and ascend to the upper floors. Finding the stairway blocked with flames, he took the fire escape and began to arouse the sleeping inmates. Almost simultaneously, at approximately 4:30, one of the sisters left her bed to get a glass of water for a thirsty youngster. Opening the door she made the same discovery that the other rescuer had made—the stairway was an inferno. Working with the man and some of the other nuns, Sister Edith managed to escort all but three of the children to safety via the outside escape route.

One of the orphans died in the arms of Mother Mary of the Cross. This grievous drama was unfolding as I arrived at the south side of the building. The chief and his assistant had lashed together two long ladders, attempting to reach a third-floor window where stood silhouetted the figure of the superior. Fire Chief Wright was on his way up the ladders when suddenly a second-story window blew out. In going it emitted a huge flame which passed up to where the sister, who had been joined by a companion, was standing. The fire immediately engulfed them, and they fell back to a grotesque death.

Two other nuns, Sister Mónica and Sister Mary Kostka, attempted to jump from fourth-floor windows, missing the nets outstretched to receive them. Ambulances rushed them to the hospital where Sister Mónica died on arrival. Miraculously, though her life hung in the balance for months, the other nun survived. But she sustained a spinal injury in the fall which permanently paralyzed the lower limbs of her body.

The final tally of destruction was at once tragic and encouraging. On the positive side was the response of eighty-nine orphan boys to the six o'clock roll call. Only three were missing, one whose body never was found, sustaining the hope that he had survived and fled in panic.⁵ The ranks of their keepers, however, had sadly dwindled; only three sisters had lived through the holocaust.

Sometimes it is extremely difficult to find reason for thankfulness in the face of such a tragedy. But in this instance there was more to rejoice over than the escape of the children. It would have been a staggering blow to have lost Santa Rosa Hospital. Amazingly the fire did not spread to outlying buildings in spite of the fact that highly inflammable porches ran the length of three stories of the infirmary. These and the heavy wooden scrollwork decorating them would have been tinder to the slightest spark. Had there been a strong wind on that morning, and had the firefighters been less diligent, we could have had a major disaster, both in human life and in valuable property.⁶

The five sisters who lost their lives in the fire were: Mother Mary of the Cross Rossiter, originally from County Wexford, Ireland, who was superior and administrator of the home; Mother Francis Regis Simpasteur, originally from France and later from the United States, who was one of the first postulants to enter the congregation; Sister Peter Claver Slevin from Dublin, Ireland, who was a teacher in the San Fernando School for Girls; Sister M. Leocadia Nolan, who was also from Dublin and taught with Sister Peter Claver at San Fernando School; and Sister Mónica Montes of Chihuahua, México, who was the first sister to enter the Congregation from that country and who had helped to establish the first school in Saltillo.

Sister Mary Kostka Farrell, originally from County Kildare, Ireland, never recovered from her spinal injury and was confined for the rest of her life to a wheelchair.⁷

The orphan children who died in the fire were Chris Gillis, aged twelve; J. Matloch, aged three; and Francis O'Brien, aged two and a half, who at first was presumed to be lost.⁸ Francis had a brother, Thomas, who lived in the orphanage also. After the fire he became the sole survivor of the family. The boys' mother, a widow, had died of typhoid fever just a few months earlier in Santa Rosa, and the children were left in the care of the sisters.

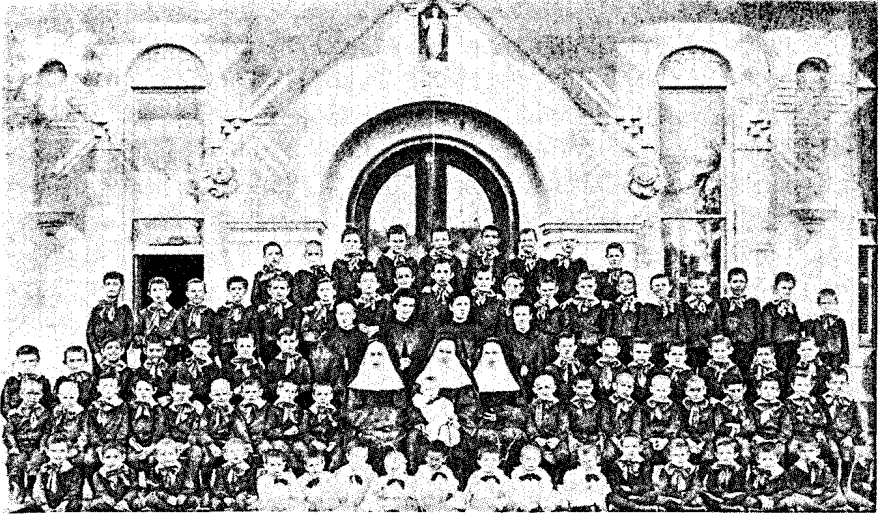
Two seamstresses, Katherine DeTemple and Lucy Stanush, who worked for the sisters and lived at the orphanage, were seriously injured but later recovered. Sisters Edith Tudman and Francis de Sales Brennan suffered slight burns and bruises but returned to work with the children almost immediately. Only Sister Broghan O'Connell escaped with no injury.

The sisters showed remarkable heroism in responding to the disaster. Sisters Edith, Broghan, and Mónica, who led the children down the fire escape on the outside of the building, rushed back to the dormitories and searched around the burning beds to be certain that no one had been left behind. Sister Mónica's escape was cut off by a burst of flames, and she was forced to leap for the firemen's net from a window on the fourth floor.

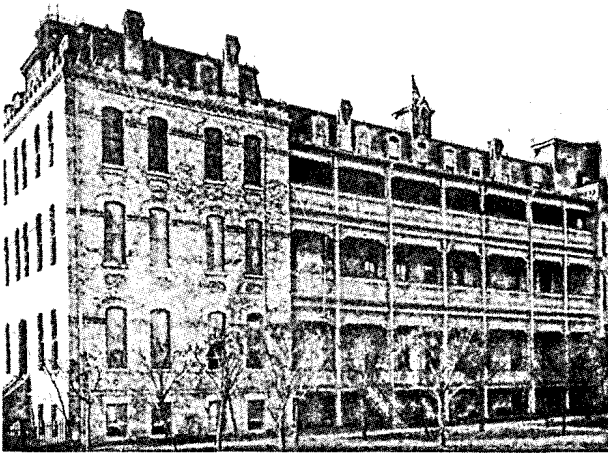
When the word spread that a child named Billy was missing, it was Mother Mary of the Cross who ran back to find him and was unable to escape the flames. It was not Billy who had been left in the fire, however, but a child named J. Matloch, whose body was found the next day. The other three sisters, Francis Regis, Peter Claver, and Leocadia, slept on the third floor of the building and must have been overcome with smoke shortly after the fire began.

The children who survived the tragic event were taken next door to Santa Rosa, where some were treated for burns and bruises. On the following day, twenty of them, still in their nightclothes with nothing else to wear, were taken to St. Louis College, where they were cared for by the Brothers of Mary.⁹ Others were taken to the San Fernando School for Girls, where classrooms were turned into dormitories. A short time later, they were all transferred to the annex of Mission Concepción, where arrangements were made for a temporary home. Mother Cesarius O'Shea took charge, and working with her were Sisters Evangelist Dillon and Bibiana Heinrich as well as Sisters Edith and Broghan, who had both survived the fire.

TRAGEDY AND JUBILEE



Boys at St. John's Orphanage in 1897. The three sisters seated in front and the four postulants standing directly behind them are not identified.



St. John's Orphanage, located on the grounds of Santa Rosa at the corner of San Saba and Houston Streets, was built in 1891. The building was completely destroyed by fire in 1912.



Mother Mary of the Cross Rossiter was one of the five sisters who lost their lives in the fire at St. John's Orphanage.



Sister Mary Kostka Farrell, as a result of injuries sustained in the fire, was paralyzed from the waist down and spent the rest of her life in a wheelchair.

Chancellor of the diocese, Rev. William Hume, organized relief committees, and help poured in from all over the city. The Knights of Columbus, led by R. J. Bovie, James R. Davis, H. B. Rice, T. L. Conroy, Nelson Lytle, and P. C. Woods, organized a city-wide collection of food and clothing. An appeal was made to all of the women of San Antonio to join the Ladies' Relief Committee. Mrs. William Cassin was named chairman of the group and working with her were Mrs. T. T. Jackson, Miss Carrie Jones, Mrs. J. R. Davis, and Mrs. J. J. Stevens.

Officers at Fort Sam Houston sent army cots and blankets for the children; soldiers came to search the ruins for the bodies of missing victims. Trucks from Joske's Department Store arrived at San Fernando School with quilts, blankets, and pillows as well as clothes for the boys.

The entire city mourned the loss of the sisters and the children as described in the *San Antonio Express*:

The truth of the poet's line 'One touch of nature makes the whole world kin' was never better exemplified than was shown in San Antonio yesterday when all of the great bustling city stood with bowed heads and aching hearts before the grief born of the disaster that befell St. John's Orphanage.

In the presence of a sorrow that came of the tragic death of five of the devoted sisters and two of their little charges they died to save, Jew and Gentile, Protestant and Catholic met together at a common shrine. All joined in the assignment of woe; all sought the alleviation of suffering.¹⁰

Funeral arrangements were made at the Santa Rosa Chapel, where Bishop John Shaw celebrated a requiem mass on the day following the tragic event. Six coffins were placed before the altar, five of them plain and black containing the remains of the five sisters and the sixth, a small white one, for the orphan boys, Francis O'Brien and Chris Gillis. The remains of the other child were not recovered until the following day.

Plans were drawn up immediately to erect a new orphanage at Mission Concepción on a tract of land owned by the diocese of San Antonio.¹¹ Fred Gaenslen, who had designed the motherhouse chapel, prepared the architectural plans for a complex of buildings that would include accommodations for both boys and girls. Bishop Shaw made an earnest appeal to the people of San Antonio, and the Chamber of Commerce organized committees to raise the necessary funds. Through the generous donations of people throughout the city, and in particular the support of Peter Kuntz of Dayton, Ohio, who had recently opened the Kuntz Lumber Co. in San Antonio, a new home for the boys was built and opened on December 28, 1913. Mother Cesarius was named superior and administrator, and the children were transferred from their

temporary shelter in the annex of Mission Concepción to the new St. Peter's Diocesan Orphanage, named in honor of Mr. Kuntz.

Just two months after the disaster at the orphanage, the sisters faced the second tragic event of this period of their history, another fire that claimed no lives but completely destroyed St. Joseph's College and Academy in San Angelo. Four months earlier, they had purchased the property from the Methodist Church. The Methodists had used the building for a college but were forced to sell it when the school failed financially.

The Congregation had completely restored the building and in September, 1912, admitted the first class of high school students. Initial plans called for operating both a boarding and a day school and for later extending the high school program to the college level. Mother Emiliana Malone was named superior and principal, and the sisters took great pride in the new establishment:

Built of red brick with white stone facings and an imposing pillared entrance, the handsome three-storied structure was situated on an elevation. . . . Its splendid, wide corridors on each floor assured healthy ventilation, and its classrooms, music rooms, auditorium, sleeping and administrative apartments had been scientifically equipped. . . . Rev. Mother Alphonse [was congratulated] on her success in securing so favorable an institution for Catholic educational purposes.¹²

The cause of the fire that broke out at 5:00 a.m. on Dec. 22, 1912, was never fully determined. There was some speculation that it may have been started deliberately by persons in the local community with strong anti-Catholic feelings. What was particularly regrettable about the disaster was the fact that although the San Angelo fire department was called for assistance, the firemen never arrived. The sisters tried in vain to extinguish the flames themselves, and neighbors responded with help, but the blazing building was beyond their control. After repeated calls to the local fire station, they were told that the department could not assist them because the property was located "a quarter of a mile beyond the city limits," and thus it was "not entitled to the city's protection."¹³ The sisters were forced to stand and watch their recent financial investment as well as their hopes for the new high school and college go up in smoke.

The following day, the mayor of the city sent a letter of apology to the sisters, and the City Council of San Angelo passed a resolution incorporating within the city limits both the burnt-out academy and St. John's Sanitarium, also owned and operated by the sisters. St. Joseph's was never rebuilt, however, and the sisters on the faculty were trans-

ferred to Immaculate Conception Academy, which had been established in San Angelo much earlier.

While the sisters in Texas were facing disastrous fires at the orphanage in San Antonio and at the academy in San Angelo, those in Mexico were struggling with the tragic happenings of the Mexican Revolution, which broke out in 1910. Abuses of political power under the leadership of Porfirio Díaz had created a clamoring for social reform throughout the country. Laborers, poorly paid and unfairly treated, were calling for justice. Strikes were organized among the miners and the workers in the textile mills. Opposition to the established government was accompanied by severe antagonism against the Catholic Church, which was viewed by many as blocking the course of change. Anti-clerical forces were determined to destroy the power of the Church by eliminating the clergy from the pulpits and closing the Catholic schools.¹⁴

In 1912, Rev. Mother Alphonse wrote, "Everywhere in Mexico the war is terrible, and God alone knows when it will end." The city of Torreón became a center of violence. Here the sisters "had to close their academy and flee," as Rev. Mother Alphonse reported.¹⁵ Just two weeks later, the school was "taken by the revolutionary parties as a hospital for their soldiers."¹⁶

Concerned for the safety of the sisters, the general administration recalled many of them to the motherhouse. Others took refuge in areas of Mexico where there was less danger from the revolutionary troops. Sister María Antonia Fernández has described their escape in 1913 from Lampazos, where they were forced to leave Colegio del Sagrado Corazón, that had operated "peacefully and effectively" since its establishment. When the school was threatened, the sisters fled from the city to Monterrey. Rail transportation was completely cut off, and their journey, usually a three or four-hour trip, took them three days. "Scarcely had they left Lampazos," Sister María Antonia reported, "when the rebels took possession of the college, plundered the clothing and the furniture, and having partially burned the building, departed."¹⁷

The Academia del Verbo Encarnado in Tampico suffered similar destruction:

Upon the entry of the Carrancistas to this town they took possession of the College and throwing the doors open invited the public to take what they wanted. They then used it for a cuartel for the soldiers and have stabled their horses there also. The little chapel is utterly ruined, as they have used it for a kitchen and they have nailed a coffee mill to the altar. . . . The chapel has been utterly desecrated, and before it could be used again, it [would] have to be cleaned, refitted, and reconsecrated.¹⁸

During this same period, 1910-1914, eight other schools were closed because of government intervention: Colegio Guadalupano, Durango; Colegio Divino Salvador, Linares; Colegio Guadalupano, Victoria; Colegio Guadalupano, Chihuahua; Colegio Guadalupano, Hermosillo, Sonora; Colegio San José, Oaxaca; Colegio Corazón de María, General Cepeda, Coahuila; and Colegio Jesús María, Torreón.¹⁹

In Mexico City, the situation was described as "a veritable reign of terror." Churches were "desecrated, private homes invaded, and between 600 and 700 of the old police force were executed as well as every officer of the old federal army."²⁰

When the wave of violence spread to Monterrey, Mother Alphonse wrote, "The war in Mexico is becoming terribly frightening." Churches were closed and priests put in prison. "Only our sisters are left," she said.²¹

If they were recognized as religious, the sisters were in danger of imprisonment or some form of persecution. Mother Casimir Quinn asked the general administration to permit them "to dress as secular ladies . . . as a safeguard."²²

Several bishops, priests, and nuns were jailed or exiled. Others fled to the United States for safety. Abandoning their churches and schools meant, of course, leaving the people they had worked hard to serve as well as sacrificing their property and possessions which would be confiscated by the government. Escape, however, offered an alternative to imprisonment or even death.

On their flight to safety, many of the priests and sisters stopped in San Antonio, seeking food and shelter at the motherhouse or at Santa Rosa. Sister Erastus Voestner, who worked in the hospital kitchen, remarked how "tired and worn out" they looked as they arrived. One priest in particular, she remembered, still had "the mark of the rope on his neck where they [the revolutionaries] tried to hang him."²³ After a good night's rest and a hearty breakfast, some of them moved on to other dioceses or congregations, while others stayed at the motherhouse or hospital for months.

Archbishop Shaw reported in 1915 to the Apostolic Delegate that 6 bishops, 50 religious priests, and 30 secular priests had arrived in San Antonio. Shaw himself, who lived at Brackenridge Villa on the Incarnate Word motherhouse property, moved back to Santa Rosa to make room for four members of the hierarchy to stay at the guest house: Rt. Rev. Ignacio Valdespino y Díaz of Aguascalientes; Rt. Rev. Jesús María Echevarría of Saltillo; Rt. Rev. Miguel M. de la Mora of Zacatecas; and Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fernández of the Basílica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Some of the bishops stayed as long as three years.²⁴

Rt. Rev. Francisco Uranga y Sainz, Bishop of Sinaloa, was given refuge at Santa Rosa, and twelve priests were taken in at St. Francis Home. In addition to the priests, there was one young man still studying for the priesthood who was ordained during his exile in San Antonio and celebrated his first mass in the motherhouse chapel.²⁵

In areas where the sisters were able to stay on in Mexico, they tried desperately to continue their work, but in constant fear of attack. In 1915, Rev. Mother Alphonse reported, "Things in Mexico are incredible, and would you believe that we still have four houses open? . . . We rely on the Incarnate Word to guard and protect them."²⁶

When Venustiano Carranza proclaimed himself president in 1915, attacks on the Church became even more vicious. In his study of the revolution, Rev. Francis C. Kelley gives a vivid description of the persecution of bishops, priests, and sisters. He tells also of the confiscation of churches and schools, of "tearing down altars, breaking statues, ripping up paintings," and "hunting for religious objects in private homes."²⁷

The Constitution of 1917, established during Carranza's time in power, denied the Church any legal status.²⁸ Monastic orders were outlawed.²⁹ All property held by religious institutions was declared to belong to the national government.³⁰ Elementary education was to be completely secular, and religious organizations and members of the clergy were forbidden to establish or direct the schools.³¹

"What an abomination!" Rev. Mother Alphonse wrote. "The constitutions are . . . all against God and religion." It seemed certain that the schools owned and operated by the Congregation would all be taken over. "If the laws are applied," she said, "it is finished. We [shall be] obliged to leave because religious people don't have the right to hold any school whatsoever."³² She advised the sisters to continue to "dress as seculars for the time being," but she refused to yield completely to the overwhelming fear created by the government and forbade the removal of the crucifixes from the walls of the convents.³³

Religion classes were held in private homes and conducted in great secrecy. Sister Marie Angélique Descombes wrote to tell the sisters, "We have been able to prepare a few children for their first communion, which has been a great consolation for us." Mass was celebrated in secret also, sometimes in the sisters' convents or in the homes of friends. The Blessed Sacrament was reserved in a portable tabernacle that could be easily removed in the event of a visit from a government agent. "We are obliged to be very careful," the sisters reported, "because the least indiscretion could be a reason for imprisonment."³⁴

While the revolution continued in Mexico, the United States became involved in its own war against Germany, and the whole nation rallied to the cause of national defense. The battles had hardly come to an end before another severe tragedy occurred that affected the sisters as well as the rest of the nation and other parts of the world—the outbreak of Spanish Influenza. The disease spread rapidly in the United States, and according to one report, “during a ten-week period [of 1918] there were 87,759 deaths . . . compared to 7,395 for a similar period the previous year.”³⁵ By the end of the year, the death toll in the nation attributed to influenza soared to 500,000.

Hospitals were crowded with patients, and doctors and nurses worked long hours trying to cope with the disease. At Santa Rosa and the other hospitals operated by the Congregation, the sisters were on duty night and day. What made the situation even more critical was a shortage of doctors and nurses. Many had not yet returned from their overseas assignments of World War I.

The sisters moved beds into hallways, parlors, and even the dining room to accommodate the increase in patients at Santa Rosa. Many calls for help came from outside the hospital, from the small towns surrounding San Antonio. The sisters could hardly afford to spare any of their nurses, yet Rev. Mother Alphonse could not turn down those who were in critical need.

From the town of Kerrville, fifty miles northwest of San Antonio, came an appeal from Father H. M. Kemper, who was trying desperately to cope with the spread of the disease in the poor and overpopulated Mexican section of the hill country community. Without access to a local hospital, the people had no way to cope with the illness. Rev. Mother Alphonse sent two sisters from Santa Rosa to help set up a temporary facility in Our Lady of Guadalupe School. When the schools in Kerrville, as in other cities, were closed in an effort to control the epidemic, the sister-teachers began working side by side with the nurses.

Another call for help came from Fort Sam Houston, where congested living conditions in the military barracks contributed to the spread of the influenza. Sisters William Cullen and Cleophas Hurst, both well trained nurses, and nine of the sister-teachers went to the Post to care for the soldiers. They agreed to take full charge, night and day, of one of the pneumonia wards and to give more help as soon as other sisters were available. By the end of the year, eighteen sisters were on duty at the base hospital.

Still another emergency plea came from the city hospital in San Antonio, the Robert B. Green. The Incarnate Word sisters themselves

had operated this facility as early as 1887, but now it was in the hands of city employees. So many nurses on the staff had become victims of the influenza, however, that the institution could not cope with the ever-increasing number of patients being admitted. Eleven sisters were sent to help with the overcrowded conditions.

Other calls for nursing care came from DeMazenod Seminary and the Carmelite Convent, where students and teachers were in need of help. The sisters responded as well as they could, stretching their resources to the limit. Meanwhile Rev. Mother Alphonse called for special prayers from those at home for protection of the many sisters exposed to the contagious disease. Soon she reported that "every day after Vespers, the whole community [at the motherhouse] makes the Way of the Cross with arms extended."³⁶

Congregational records show that every sister involved in nursing the sick both at Fort Sam and at the city hospital contracted the influenza, but all recovered.³⁷ Those working in the Congregation's own hospitals, however, were not so fortunate. The long, exhausting hours of nursing duty and the constant exposure to contagion took the lives of five nurses, "all of them young and capable of being of great service," according to Rev. Mother Alphonse. "But we are not complaining," she added. "It is the work of God."³⁸

The nurses who gave their lives in saving others were Sister Brendan O'Connor, Sister Georgina Heckl, and Sister Agnes Dominic Foran, all of Santa Rosa; Sister Sixtus Doherty on the staff of St. Anthony's Hospital, Amarillo; and Sister Scholastica Breheny, who died at the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad Hospital in Sedalia, Missouri. Two sisters from the schools became victims of the disease also, Sister Alacoque of the Sacred Heart Waters, who had gone to help care for the sick in Victoria, and Sister Catherine of Bologna Ryan, who had been teaching at Blessed Sacrament School in St. Louis.³⁹ The year 1918 would long be remembered in the Congregation as a year of suffering and sacrifice.

Tragedy struck again just a few months later, this time in the form of a hurricane in Corpus Christi. The disastrous event, like the fire at St. John's and the outbreak of influenza, demanded a sacrifice of life in service to others.

The sisters had begun their work in Corpus Christi in 1905, when they opened Spohn Sanitarium. The institution had been built through the generosity of the people in the community and turned over to the ownership and direction of the sisters when it was completed. It was the only health facility in South Texas, and it had a staff of outstanding physicians, including Dr. Arthur E. Spohn, for whom it was named. The

location of the sanitarium on Corpus Christi Bay in an area called North Beach was ideal for a health facility, offering pleasant breezes off the Gulf of Mexico and the warm sunshine of the Texas coast. Every aspect of the facility offered the promise of a long and successful record of service to the sick.⁴⁰

On September 14, 1919, however, a hurricane of major proportions struck the Corpus Christi area, aiming its most destructive force directly at North Beach. Winds reached eighty miles per hour, heavy rains drenched the area, and the frame structure of the sanitarium could not withstand the force of the storm.⁴¹

Fortunately, the number of patients in the sanitarium at the time was only twelve. The community of sisters numbered fourteen and working with them were eight lay employees and the sanitarium chaplain, Monsignor Claude Jaillet.

As the force of the storm increased, the sisters watched desperately as the bathhouse blew away, and parts of the main building were torn apart. They moved the patients to the south wing for protection, while the water began to rise around them, completely cutting off any possibility of escape.

Monsignor Jaillet led the sisters in reciting the rosary and the prayers for the dying. Then he heard confessions and consumed the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle of the chapel. The moment of death seemed imminent.

A short time later, a terrible crash was heard, the north wing was split open, and the roof fell in. The rising waters swept the wreckage away, taking with them the body of Sister Thais Desroches; Teresa Reece, a lay nurse; and two patients. Not until the next day were the rest of the patients, employees, and sisters rescued by boat and taken to a temporary shelter set up for the hurricane victims. Five days later, the body of Sister Thais was washed ashore near Portland, ten miles from North Beach, and was identified by her religious habit.

Sister Thais was originally from Canada and had come to Texas in 1887 to enter the Congregation. She had served as a nurse at other hospitals operated by the Congregation before her assignment in Corpus Christi. In the midst of the hurricane, her last words to the other sisters were, "We must save the patients." Like the sisters who died in the orphanage fire and in the epidemic of influenza, she had sacrificed her life that others might live. Sister Thais was the twelfth victim of the series of disasters occurring from 1912 to 1919.

The Congregation had already begun its celebration of the golden jubilee before the hurricane struck Corpus Christi. In 1916, a ceremony was held to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the first sisters' coming to

Galveston, which was three years before the foundation in San Antonio. Because the United States was still involved in World War I, it was determined that the celebration should not be "very ostensible" but "entirely of a spiritual character" and "rather private." Special masses and prayers were offered throughout the year in thanksgiving for the many graces received and for "the founders of the congregation, namely, Rt. Rev. C. M. Dubuis, Very Rev. A. Galtier, Rev. Mother Angélique, and the Sisters of the Incarnate Word of Lyons."⁴²

By 1919, the war had ended, and the sisters prepared for what Mother Bonaventure had promised would be "a becoming public festivity" and the official jubilee celebration. It was an occasion to give special thanks to God for the blessings of the past fifty years, 1869-1919. The Congregation had grown to a total of 663 members, and the sisters were operating 60 institutions: 1 college, 40 schools and academies, 12 hospitals, 4 orphanages, 2 homes for the elderly, and a postulate in Holland.

The celebration opened with a solemn high mass of thanksgiving held July 30 in the motherhouse chapel. The Rt. Rev. John Shaw, the former bishop of San Antonio who had been named Archbishop of New Orleans, was the principal celebrant. The sermon was delivered by Bishop Joseph P. Lynch of Dallas, who congratulated the sisters on their accomplishments. In particular he praised them for the motivation that had inspired their success. They have not asked, he said, "What is there in it for me?" Rather, they have been motivated by the opposite ideal, "What is there in me for it?"⁴³

The second day of the jubilee was dedicated to remembering the deceased members and benefactors of the Congregation. The Very Rev. A. Antoine, provincial superior of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, was the principal celebrant of the requiem mass offered in the motherhouse chapel. Bishop Arthur J. Drossaerts of San Antonio delivered the sermon and called on the sisters and others present to "review the past trials, the poverty, the struggles, the misgivings and sufferings connected with the foundation of [the] congregation."⁴⁴

Coming as they did after the recent series of tragic events experienced by the sisters, his words were an appropriate reminder of the need for sympathy as well as congratulations:

They [the sisters] came to San Antonio when San Antonio was but a miserable Mexican village. They came to Texas when from a mere human standpoint Texas held out no attractions, no inducements whatsoever to any civilized being. They came, when to come meant hunger and thirst and a thousand dangers and a thousand privations; yet they came *in*

nomine Domini and they remained and braved it all; [they] surmounted all obstacles; conquered all difficulties.⁴⁵

A third day of celebration, "College and Alumnae Day," was held on December 3, a day of importance to the Congregation as the anniversary of the first mass held in 1869 at Santa Rosa Infirmary. Once again, the observance began with a solemn high mass in the motherhouse chapel. It was offered by Bishop Drossaerts, and the sermon was delivered by the Very Rev. Louis A. Tragesser, S.M. Far in advance of the thinking of the Post-Vatican II era, Father Tragesser stressed the significant role played by women in the Church, saying, "They have borne a glorious part in the spreading of the Gospel and the winning of souls for Christ."⁴⁶

In addition to the days of celebration that marked the jubilee, the general administration established special memorials of the event, including the two side altars in the chapel. Temporary wooden structures had been installed at the time of the chapel dedication because of a lack of funds to purchase the appropriate marble designs. Now several years later, the Congregation still lacked the money to pay for the marble altars, but Rev. Mother Mary John O'Shaughnessy urged the sisters in commemoration of the jubilee to secure donations or "even [to hold] a raffle of a spread or other article [to] make up the price."⁴⁷

Also, a bas-relief group depicting the Annunciation was placed at the entrance to the chapel. The art work, designed in Mexico, was presented to the sisters by Mrs. Carmen Dávila de Rodríguez in memory of her daughter. Other jubilee memorials were added to the motherhouse grounds: a marble statue of St. Joseph erected by the Congregation in gratitude for his continuing protection and a statue of the Guardian Angel donated by the Children of Mary of the College and Academy of the Incarnate Word.

In celebration of their achievements in education, the sisters established the Golden Jubilee Scholarship at Incarnate Word College. In gratitude and recognition of the important role played by the many priests and bishops who had been associated with the Congregation, they dedicated a special room in Santa Rosa to be reserved for the use of any priest of the Archdiocese of San Antonio in need of medical care.

In appreciation for the donations received for the jubilee as well as the support offered to the Congregation throughout the fifty years of its existence, the sisters dedicated a bronze plaque "in loving and grateful memory" to their benefactors, which was placed at the entrance to the motherhouse chapel.

CHAPTER IX

CHANGING LEADERSHIP, CHANGING STRUCTURES

Rev. Mother Alphonse had guided the Congregation as the general superior from 1906 to 1918 and had been a person of compassion and understanding in time of trouble. She had also been a woman of vision and courage in expanding the ministry and never lost sight of the sisters' original mission of serving the poor. "The spirit of our Congregation . . .," she told the sisters, "is realized especially in the care of the sick and the education of poor children, especially in poor Mexican schools."¹

Under the strain of the last several years of her administration, during which the Congregation experienced one tragic event after another, the responsibility became a burden for her, and her physical strength began to weaken. "Her health is very delicate," Sister Marie Angélique Descombes wrote. "Her limbs become weaker each day and this causes her a lot of suffering, but her heart is still the same—good and devoted to her big religious family."²

As she neared the completion of two six-year terms as the general superior and a total of twenty-six years in the general administration, Rev. Mother Alphonse wrote frankly to the sisters of Lyons, "My two terms are over and, to tell the truth, I am so happy to think that I will be unburdened, because I no longer have the strength for such a heavy task."

She had not sought the position of superior and had often considered herself unworthy of the task, yet she had been an effective leader. She was wise enough to realize, however, that it was time to turn her authority over to someone else. "No doubt there will be some hearts which will bleed," she wrote, "but there will be others who will rejoice

to have another superior, and that is quite natural, isn't it?"³ At the General Chapter in June, 1918, the delegates chose Mother Mary John O'Shaughnessy as her successor. Mother Alphonse remained in the general administration as her assistant.⁴

The election of Mother Mary John brought no surprise to the sisters. She had been in the council for twelve years as assistant to Rev. Mother Alphonse, and before that she had served fourteen years as mistress of novices. In many ways, however, the election was a changing of the guard. Mother Mary John was from Caherciveen, Ireland, and became the first of five successive Irish sisters to serve as general superior. With the exception of Rev. Mother Ignatius Saar, who was from Prussia and had served as superior for a very short term, leaders during the first fifty years of the Congregation's existence had all been French. Their association with the sisters from Lyons and dependence on their direction had been very strong throughout these years. Rev. Mother Alphonse was the last direct link with the French foundation.⁵

After the election, Mother Alphonse wrote to assure the French sisters: "Rev. Mother Mary John is really a true daughter of the Incarnate Word from Lyons. She loves you very much. . . . I am sure that she will always remain submissive and affectionate towards you."⁶ Nevertheless, a movement away from France was inevitable. Rev. Mother Mary John had limited facility with the French language, and although she wrote occasionally to the Lyons sisters, she depended mostly on Mother Alphonse to maintain the communication. As the years passed, Mother Alphonse's eyesight began to fail, and the close contact with France gradually disappeared.

Also contributing to the decline of the French influence was the lack of young women entering the Congregation from that country. Since 1905, shortly after the sisters of Lyons had been forced by the government to leave France and to take refuge in Fribourg, Switzerland, there had been only two young women who had come from France.⁷

During World War I, it became impossible for candidates from any European country to join the Congregation. During this same period of time, particularly in 1917, the number of applications from the United States increased significantly, probably because of more recruitment in Texas and other areas of the country. At the end of the war, large groups of young women from Ireland and from Germany were once again applying for admission. Vocations from Mexico began to increase also, while there was only one applicant from France.

The following figures show the number of sisters entering from 1911 to 1922 and indicate how the national origins were changing:

CHANGING LEADERSHIP, CHANGING STRUCTURES

<u>Year</u>	<u>Germany</u>	<u>Mexico</u>	<u>United States</u>	<u>Ireland</u>	<u>France</u>
1911	19	4	4	52	0
1912	9	8	5	4	0
1913	7	5	3	24	0
1914	8	5	2	4	1
1915	3	2	7	0	0
1916	0	6	2	0	0
1917	0	5	20	0	0
1918	0	7	5	1	0
1919	0	4	7	20	0
1920	2	4	7	21	0
1921	17	13	7	2	0
1922	11	15	2	32	0

The general administration in 1918 included not only the first Irish-born superior but also five other Irish sisters among the seven-member council. The other two were Mother Alphonse, who was from France, and Mother Wendelinus Holzer, who had come from Germany.

The imbalance in the national backgrounds of the Congregational leaders gave rise to concern and unrest, and before the next election in 1924, the delegates were urged to choose persons of different nationalities. The matter was brought to the attention of Archbishop A. J. Drossaerts, who presided at the elections. The archbishop, who was from Holland, must have realized the problems that could arise from a nationalistic spirit and advised the chapter members to choose another sister from Germany and a sister from Mexico. Strangely enough, he did not urge the selection of a sister from the United States.⁸ Sister Avellina Meyer from Germany and Sister Jacinta González from Mexico were chosen to replace two sisters from Ireland on the general council.

The change in leadership was felt not only in the change of nationality but also in the contrast between the motherliness of Rev. Mother Alphonse and the formality and reserve of Rev. Mother Mary John. In many ways the two superiors were like the early founders of the congregation—Rev. Mother Madeleine and Rev. Mother Pierre. Although they were dissimilar in personality, they worked very well together, one's talents and personality complementing that of the other. "We never had a word of contradiction," Mother Alphonse wrote, "and we acted with one heart and soul for the well-being of our congregation."⁹

Rev. Mother Alphonse was a gentle, retiring, and compassionate person, whereas Rev. Mother Mary John was dignified in her speech,

proper in her bearing, and exacting and strict about observance of the rule. She had made many trips to Europe, particularly to Ireland, to recruit members for the Congregation. She knew the families of many of the sisters who left their homes to come to Texas with her. She became their guardian and their teacher.

Also as mistress of novices from 1893 to 1907, she had directed the early preparation of many sisters. After her election to the general administration, she often maintained the same role and relationship, correcting them for their failings. Many of them recall how they avoided passing the door of her office to offset the chance of another correction. She had taught the novices that fidelity in little things leads to fidelity in great things, and she urged the professed sisters to adopt the same exactness in minute details.

"She is very nervous and demands too much perfection of the sisters," Rev. Mother Alphonse had said of her some years earlier. "In the end it is my cross."¹⁰ Nevertheless, when it came time for the election of a new general superior she wrote, "Mother Mary John Baptist would be the best to replace me."¹¹ She is a very virtuous person, very religious and capable. Perhaps a little too severe. However, it is very often necessary to be severe, isn't it?"¹²

Before she joined the Congregation, Rev. Mother Mary John had been educated by the Presentation nuns to be a teacher in the schools of Ireland. It is not surprising, therefore, that she made every effort during her administration to continue the sisters' work in establishing schools and to foster their preparation as teachers, particularly through summer classes at the College and Academy of the Incarnate Word. Requests for admission to the program began to come from other congregations of sisters throughout Texas and from lay teachers in the San Antonio public schools. Mother Columbanus Robinson, who was the inspectress of schools, applied to the State Department of Education for approval of the courses leading to teacher certification.

The enrollment of the teachers brought a significant increase in students, and as Sister Clement Eagan says in her study of the institution, the College at this time began to emerge from the academy "in which it had its roots."¹³ By 1919, Father Garriga, who had previously been vice rector of St. John's Seminary, was named president, and Sister Columkille Colbert was appointed academic dean.¹⁴ Under their direction the College became accredited in 1919 by the state department of education as a junior college.

Two years later it was approved as a senior college. In 1921, the good news came from Emma Mitchell, State College Examiner: "We are enrolling Incarnate Word College among the senior colleges of

Texas. I congratulate you on the wider field of usefulness thus open before you."¹⁵

Classes were still being held in the motherhouse, and dormitories were set aside there for ninety-five boarders. With the increase in the numbers of both sisters and students, it soon became necessary to construct a separate building. Plans for the expansion had been under consideration since 1912. In that year the Congregation borrowed \$150,000 to start the building, but the loan was not large enough to cover the cost of construction. The building was delayed for several more years. In the meantime, the United States became involved in World War I, and all construction materials were restricted to military projects.

It was not until 1921, when enrollment in both the academy and the college reached 270, that ground could be broken for the administration building. In the archdiocesan newspaper it was called "the greatest Catholic educational enterprise in the State."¹⁶ The new building was planned to accommodate a student body of 500.

In 1923, Mother Columkille Colbert succeeded Father Garriga as president and began a long and successful term in this position. She had just received her doctoral degree in classical studies at The Catholic University of America and was one of the first women at the University and the first sister in the State of Texas to earn that distinction. She was a woman of great determination and let nothing stand in the way of what she wanted to accomplish for Incarnate Word College. Although her education had prepared her to be a scholar in Latin and Greek, she soon proved to be a builder rather than a scholar, a builder of the College faculty and of the College campus.

Working with her was the scholar, Sister Clement Eagan, who succeeded her as academic dean and began an unusually long term of service of forty-two years in that position. She was not only the principal, and at times the only, academic administrator, but she was also a professor of English on the faculty and dedicated to the translation of the Latin works of the Fathers of the Church.¹⁷

The Academy had been approved in 1915 by the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and the College was recognized by the regional accrediting agency in 1925. At the same time it was recognized as a member of the Southern Association of Women's Colleges.¹⁸

Under the leadership of Rev. Mother Mary John, several other new institutions were established, although the number did not compare to that of the preceding decades. An appeal from Bishop Anthony J. Schuler of El Paso led to the opening of St. Margaret's Home, an orphanage for boys and girls. The property for the home was donated by

J. E. Morgan, a philanthropic businessman of the city. The institution was named in memory of his wife.

Although the orphanage was owned by the diocese, the sisters took on the responsibility for raising the money to keep the home in operation in addition to their care of the children. In the agreement with Bishop Schuler, they stated that the home would be maintained "by means of collections by the sisters appointed for that purpose."¹⁹ In 1919, Mother Prudentiana Kniffen became the administrator. Working with her in the new home were Sisters Bibiana Heinrich, Pierre Sweeney, and Mary of the Angels Barret.

In addition to the orphanage in El Paso, a new home for girls was constructed in 1929 to replace the old St. Joseph's Orphanage located on W. Commerce St. in San Antonio. St. Joseph's had been the second foundation made by the sisters, following the establishment of Santa Rosa, and its closing marked the end of an era. The home had greatly deteriorated, however, and for many years the Congregation had planned to replace it. When the archdiocese took over the responsibility for replacing St. John's, the orphanage for boys that had been destroyed by fire, it was determined that in the future an adjoining building would be constructed to replace St. Joseph's. With the opening of the new unit for girls, the home was called St. Peter's-St. Joseph's. Although the building was constructed with archdiocesan funds, the sisters continued to serve on the staff, and Mother Mary Calvary LePage was superior and administrator.

Several new schools were opened during the 1920s, including one in Louisiana, a new territory for the Congregation's ministry. As in other situations, the sisters' move into the deep South occurred in response to the appeal of someone who had been their friend and benefactor. It was Archbishop John Shaw, who invited them to open St. Francis de Sales School in New Orleans.

Archbishop Shaw had lived at the Brackenridge Villa and had located his chancery office at Santa Rosa during the years of his episcopacy in San Antonio, 1910-1918. He had been a great personal friend of the sisters, and when his letter came asking for help in opening a school in his diocese, the general council responded generously, deciding to send him "five or six sisters as soon as he might desire."²⁰

Mother Peter Nolasco Keenan was named superior, and Sisters Liboria Weiland, Luitgardis Ziermann, Joseph Augustine Molloy, Catherine of Siena O'Connell, and Mary Majella Dwyer became members of the first community. The school was blessed on October 27, 1919, and opened with 365 students.

Seven years later, in 1926, the Congregation established a second school in the New Orleans area, St. Catherine of Siena, located in the suburb of Metairie. Mother Canice Murphy was superior and principal, and working with her in the new school were Sisters Kiaran Cadden, Emily Corbitt, Clementia Carey, and Jane of Jesus Donegan. The school opened with 100 students. By 1964, the enrollment had increased to 1669.

When Father Mariano S. Garriga asked for sisters to staff a new school in San Antonio, he received the same ready response as Archbishop Shaw had merited in New Orleans. As a young boy, Mariano Garriga had been placed in St. John's Orphanage and was reared under the care of the sisters. He had been ordained and offered his first mass in the Incarnate Word Convent Chapel, had been chaplain at Santa Rosa, and had served as the first president of Incarnate Word College.²¹

When St. Mary's and St. Gerard's parishes in San Antonio were divided in 1919, a new parish was formed and named St. Cecilia's. Father Garriga was named pastor. With so many relations to the Congregation, it is understandable why Rev. Mother Mary John responded readily to his request for teachers. St. Cecilia's School opened on October 19, 1921, with Mother John Berchmans Curtis as superior and principal. Four other sisters were appointed to the community: Sisters Bernardinus Minogue, Joseph Augustine Molloy, Martina Gruna, and Peter Claver Waters.

Just two years later, in 1922, St. Ann's School in San Antonio was established by Sister Bethania Curran as superior, together with Sisters Mary Wilfrid Reid, Valentina Panke, and Rose Agnes Quinn. Located in an area of San Antonio that was growing rapidly, the school registered 102 students on opening day. St. Cecilia's and St. Ann's became two of the largest parochial schools in San Antonio.

Other schools established in Texas during these years were Our Lady of Victory School, Paris (1920); St. Rita's School, Ranger (1921); St. Joseph Academy, Eagle Pass (1922); Immaculate Conception Academy, El Paso (1923); Incarnate Word School, Ysleta (1923); and St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles School, San Antonio (1926).²²

In Missouri, the sisters opened St. Joachim School, Old Mines (1924) and Immaculate Conception School, Macon (1924). They moved farther north when Mother Columbanus Robinson opened St. Frances of Rome School in Cicero, Illinois (1924), and Mother Maria de la Salle O'Connor established St. Agnes School in Woodland, Maryland (1925).

Although the revolution in Mexico was still causing many problems for the sisters during the 1920s, they were able to open three new schools in that area also: Colegio Central in Puebla (1923); a school in Tepatitlán, Jalisco (1925); and Colegio Nazareth in Puebla (1929).²³

As the sisters' ministry continued to expand, the Congregation adopted a new organizational structure. As early as 1909, they had approved at their general chapter the establishment of provinces, which had been authorized by Rome in 1901 with the publication of the *Normae*.²⁴ Rev. Mother Alphonse had proposed the change because of the growth in membership as well as in the number of hospitals, schools, orphanages, and homes for the aged spread over several areas of the United States and Mexico. It had become increasingly difficult to maintain communication between the general administration and the sisters. Through the formation of provinces in different geographical locations, the sisters could be grouped together under a provincial administration that would report to the general council. It was decided also that each province would establish its own novitiate.

The proposal seemed reasonable enough to some of the sisters but met with considerable opposition from the older members of the Congregation who had strong ties to the motherhouse and felt that the province structure would distance them from the general administration. Respect for Rev. Mother, the superior general whoever she might be, had been instilled in their minds and hearts from their novitiate training. Many were not ready to give up their direct responsibility to her. Because of the strong opposition, the province structure, although approved in 1909, had never been implemented.

By the time of the general chapter of 1918, however, the Congregation had grown to over 600 members. Their sixty different places of ministry were scattered across the United States and Mexico. The need for establishing provinces became more urgent.

The Mexican sisters became strong advocates for the change, some even proposing a complete separation from the Congregation if the establishment of a separate province was not approved. One of their principal concerns was the danger of losing their schools and convents in the political turmoil of their country. "A provincial house in Mexico," as Mother Columbanus wrote, "would be considered by the government as autonomous and not dependent on the American foundation, thus avoiding unpleasant interference and possible confiscation of property."²⁵

By 1918 the proposal had been discussed sufficiently to make it more acceptable, although not totally pleasing, to a majority of the sisters. Mother Alphonse wrote to explain the change to the sisters in France: "The division of the Congregation into provinces had already been voted on at the last chapter six years ago, but we have not been able to implement the decision. This year it must be done at any cost. . . . So, dear mother, let's say our '*Fiat!*' The voice of the people is the voice of God."²⁶

The change in structure required the approval of the Sacred Congregation of Religious in Rome. The sisters' petition asked for three provinces and offered detailed information on the number of houses and members to be included in each as well as maps indicating the various locations. They feared the appeal might be turned down because the Congregation was still heavily in debt from construction of the mother-house and chapel as well as St. Mary's Academy in Amarillo.

Much to the surprise of the general administration, when the authorization came back from Rome, it carried with it a directive to establish five rather than three provinces. Although the decision suggested a strong support for the proposed provincial structure, the increase in number was not anticipated. Planning had to begin all over again.

According to the geographical locations of the schools, hospitals, and orphanages, it seemed logical to divide them into one province in Mexico and two in the United States, in San Antonio and in St. Louis. It did not seem reasonable to create a fourth and fifth division. Moreover, the establishment of five provinces would involve additional expense—more sisters in administration as well as the purchase of more land for each provincial house. In obedience to the directive from Rome, however, the sisters considered adding two more provinces, one in New Orleans and another in Chicago, but found it impossible to provide the necessary funds to finance the construction and maintenance of five provincial houses.

Another request was sent to Rome asking for approval of four provinces rather than the recommended five, but leaders of the Sacred Congregation were insistent that their directive be carried out. Permission was granted to establish four provinces on the condition that "a fifth province be opened as soon as possible, and that the matter be brought before the meeting of the next general chapter."²⁷

Communication with Rome over the matter continued over the next three years. The sisters tried hard to convince the Church authorities that the division into five provinces would create a financial burden and would not be the best way to serve the needs of the Congregation, but all of their arguments failed. At last, they had to accept the decision. Their response was a humble submission as recorded in the minutes of a meeting of the general administration: "Without the slightest hesitation, the council unanimously agreed to conform to the wishes of the Holy See in this matter."²⁸

The province of Mexico was the first to be established with the purchase of property in Tacubaya, a suburb of Mexico City. Rev. Mother Mary John, Mother María Loyola Coindreau, and Mother Marcelina Cantú took possession of the house on Dec. 3, 1920. The convent was

blessed on Dec. 8 by Archbishop José Mora y del Río of Mexico City.²⁹ Mother Berchmans O'Connor was appointed provincial, Mother María Loyola Coindreau, assistant and secretary; Mother Avellina Meyer, consultant; and Mother Marcelina Cantú, treasurer. Mother Mercedes Estrada was named the mistress of novices. The province had 77 sisters and 9 houses, 8 in Mexico and 1 on the Texas border:

Provincial House, Tacubaya
English Academy of the Incarnate Word, Mexico City
Colegio de San José, Monterrey
Colegio La Purísima, Saltillo
Colegio Jesús María, Torreón
Incarnate Word Academy, Tampico
Academia del Verbo Encarnado, Chihuahua
Hospicio Ortigosa, Monterrey
St. Joseph's Academy, Eagle Pass, Texas³⁰

The following year, the sisters established Academia de Idiomas y Artes del Verbo Encarnado at the provincial house. The school was opened at the request of the archbishop of Mexico and in response to the families in Tacubaya who were seeking "a select day school" for their children. Classes began on January 3, 1921, with 200 students enrolled.

The novitiate, called Nazareth, was opened in the same year with five postulants, the first to receive their initial formation in Mexico: Isabel Sánchez, who became Sister María de San José; Rosa Saviñón, who was later Sister María Cecilia; Josefina Romo, who was called Sister Josefina Inés; María del Roble García, who was Sister María de Guadalupe; and Angelina Treviño, who was known as Sister María del Verbo Encarnado.

St. Louis was an appropriate location for the second provincial house. For thirty-four years, from 1889 to 1922, the sisters had been working as nurses at the Missouri Pacific Hospital in that city. They had served for a short time at St. Joseph's Sanitarium and from 1902 to 1906 at the Josephine Hospital. They were teaching at Blessed Sacrament School, which they had opened in 1914 at the request of Father Patrick H. Bradley.

They were interested in expanding their ministry in the Midwest, and a provincial house in St. Louis could be conducive to recruiting young women from that area as well as to the opening of new schools and hospitals. When they approached Archbishop John Joseph Glennon about making the city a center for the province, however, they were offered little encouragement. The establishment of a provincial house he approved, but not the opening of a high school or hospital in connection with it. Parish schools would be acceptable, but "the academy idea is

over done," he maintained. St. Louis had "more than enough" convent schools and hospitals.³¹

With the consent they needed, even though it was not strongly supportive, the sisters purchased a tract of land for \$10,500 to be used for their provincial house in Kirkwood, a suburb of St. Louis. Here they met with a similar lack of enthusiasm over their presence in the area. The Rev. C. D. McEnniry, provincial of the Redemptorist Fathers, complained to the general administration that "the proximity of [the] convent to his college . . . might be a motive for evil-minded persons to spread hurtful reports."³²

The sisters explained that they were not establishing a school for young women but rather a convent for the provincial administration, and that they had already bought and paid for the property and could not change their plans. The strong opposition of their neighbors, however, finally convinced them to sell the land in Kirkwood and look for another location.

Assisted by Father Bradley, who had been influential in bringing the sisters to the Missouri Pacific Hospital and had later invited them to staff his parochial school, Blessed Sacrament, they settled on the Lucas estate in Normandy, a suburb located north of the city. The property was not only ideally situated in a quiet residential area and close to Marillac, the provincial house of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, but it was also a tract of land that had historical significance. It was owned by members of a prominent French family who in 1784 had come to the United States from Normandie. Their entry into the country had been made possible through the intervention of Benjamin Franklin, who was then American minister to France.

At the time of the Louisiana Purchase, Jean Baptiste Charles Lucas was sent to St. Louis as a representative of President Thomas Jefferson and was later appointed Commissioner of Land Claims and Judge of the Territorial Court. For the work he had performed for the government, Lucas in 1805 was given a grant of land just north of the city. Here he settled with his family, naming the area Normandy after their original French province.

In 1921, the sisters purchased approximately eight acres of this estate, including the home of Charles Lucas, son of Jean Baptiste, which was used as the first provincial house.³³ They paid \$15,000 for the land and borrowed part of the amount from Father Bradley. By 1923, they had constructed Incarnate Word Convent, Our Lady's Mount, a two-story stucco building facing Lucas Lane, which was later named Normandy Drive. Adjacent to the building, Father Bradley erected a large crucifix that marked the entrance to the property. The convent was

blessed on September 24, 1922, by Archbishop Glennon. An additional eight acres of land that adjoined both Marillac and Incarnate Word were purchased the following year.

Members of the first provincial administration were Mother Casimir Quinn, provincial superioress; Mother William Cullen, assistant; Mother Alcantara Bedford, secretary; and Mother Mary Clare Cronly, mistress of novices. Initially, financial matters of the province were handled by the motherhouse in San Antonio. In 1922, however, Mother Mary Clare was appointed provincial treasurer, and all administrative matters were handled at the provincial house.

In addition to the convent in Normandy, the province had 113 sisters working in 5 hospitals, 5 schools, and 2 orphanages scattered over Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas:

M.K.&T. Railway Hospital, Sedalia, Missouri
 St. Mary's Infirmary, McAlester, Oklahoma
 Missouri Pacific Railway Hospital, St. Louis, Missouri
 St. Joseph's Infirmary, Paris, Texas
 St. Mary's Hospital, Sedalia, Missouri
 Blessed Sacrament School, St. Louis, Missouri
 St. Francis Xavier School, Taos, Missouri
 Immaculate Conception School, Jefferson City, Missouri
 St. Joseph's School, Norman, Oklahoma
 Notre Dame Academy, Paris, Texas
 Dunne Memorial Home, Dallas, Texas
 St. Joseph's Orphanage, Dallas, Texas

When Rev. Mother Mary John returned in 1922 from a trip for the recruitment of new members in Ireland, the province received its first four postulants who became Sisters Mary of the Incarnate Word Ryan, Marie Immaculata Kennedy, Mary Joseph Maher, and Mary Brigid Fennel.

By 1928, the provincial administration in St. Louis decided that a larger convent was needed, particularly to accommodate the increasing number of sisters returning to the provincial house each year after the close of the schools for the summer months. A large four-story brick and stone structure of Romanesque architecture was built at an approximate cost of \$200,000 and was blessed on October 28, 1928, by Archbishop Glennon.

The establishment in San Antonio of the third province began in 1922 with Mother Nativity Henebery as provincial; Mother Alexis Harrison, secretary; Mother Crescentia Alt, consultor; and Mother Mary Calvary LePage, treasurer. Mother Antoninus Cuffe was the mistress of novices. Rather than purchase additional property, it was decided that the

CHANGING LEADERSHIP, CHANGING STRUCTURES

administration would be located at the motherhouse. The province included 350 sisters and 29 houses. Thirteen were located in San Antonio:

- Incarnate Word Convent
- Incarnate Word College and Academy
- St. Patrick's Academy
- St. Cecilia's School
- St. Ann's School
- St. Philip's School
- Our Lady of Guadalupe School
- San Francisco School (Espada Mission)
- San Fernando School for Girls
- St. Joseph's Orphanage
- St. Peter's Orphanage
- St. Francis Home
- Santa Rosa Hospital

Located outside the city were:

- St. Ann's School, Kosciusko
- St. Joseph's School, St. Hedwig
- St. Mary's Sanitarium, Boerne
- Spohn Hospital, Corpus Christi
- St. John's Sanitarium, San Angelo
- Holy Angels Academy, Boerne
- Notre Dame Academy, Kerrville
- Our Lady of Guadalupe School, Kerrville
- Immaculate Conception Academy, San Angelo
- St. Joseph's Institute, Marshall
- St. Joseph's School, Bandera
- St. Joseph's School, Panna Maria
- St. Mary's School, Yorktown
- St. Boniface School, Hobson
- St. Joseph's School, Cestohowa
- Texas-Pacific Hospital, Marshall

For the fourth province, the sisters decided on New Orleans, but their initial efforts at finding a proper location for the provincial headquarters were unsuccessful. It was decided, therefore, to establish the provincial administration temporarily at St. Joseph's Infirmary in Fort Worth. Until a proper site could be found, the province was considered a vice province of San Antonio.

It was not until 1925 that a separate provincial administration was appointed. Mother Berchmans O'Connor was named provincial superior; Mother George Daly was assistant and administrator of St. Joseph's Infirmary; Mother Longinus Goergen, treasurer; and Mother Columbanus

Robinson, secretary. Mother George died suddenly just five months later and was replaced on the council by Mother Robert O'Dea.

Members of the provincial administration had 129 sisters and fourteen houses under their jurisdiction, with only one school, St. Francis de Sales, located in New Orleans.³⁴ All of the other houses were in various parts of Texas:

St. Joseph's Academy, Seguin
 Sacred Heart Academy, Del Rio
 Our Lady of Guadalupe School, Del Rio
 St. Mary's School, Marfa
 St. Margaret's Orphanage, El Paso
 Incarnate Word Academy, Ysleta
 St. Mary's School, Windthorst
 Mount Carmel Academy, Fort Worth
 St. Mary's Academy, Amarillo
 St. Rita's School, Ranger
 St. Anthony's Sanitarium, Amarillo
 St. Joseph's Infirmary, Fort Worth
 St. Boniface School, Scotland

In 1930, J. G. Agar, a successful businessman in New Orleans, offered the Congregation the use of a residence on Prytania Street, and the provincial administration moved to the new location. A separate novitiate was not established, since by this time it was decided to re-open the central novitiate at the motherhouse in order to maintain "uniformity in the religious training of the novices."³⁵

Just six years later, in 1936, the New Orleans Province closed. With most of the schools and hospitals located so far from the provincial headquarters, a great deal of time and money had to be spent on travel. Communication between the houses was also difficult because of the great distances that separated them.

The houses were divided between the San Antonio and St. Louis provinces. Mt. Carmel Academy and St. Joseph's Infirmary in Fort Worth became part of the San Antonio Province as well as the schools in Del Rio (Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Guadalupe), New Orleans (St. Frances de Sales and St. Catherine of Siena), and Seguin (St. Joseph's and Our Lady of Guadalupe). The St. Louis Province was given St. Mary's Academy and St. Anthony's Sanitarium in Amarillo; St. Mary's School, Windthorst; St. Boniface School, Scotland; St. Rita's School, Ranger; St. Margaret's Home, El Paso; Incarnate Word School, Ysleta; and St. Mary's School, Marfa.

With the establishment of provinces and the introduction of a new level of governance, administration of the Congregation became



Garden view of the Mexican provincial house in the San Angel area of Mexico City. The provincial administration was moved to this location from Tabubaya in 1942.



Incarinate Word Convent was constructed in 1928 in Normandy, Missouri, to serve as the St. Louis Provincial House and later as an academy for young women.

increasingly complex and brought about the change that many sisters had feared—a disappearance of close family relationships, particularly with the general administration. Over the years that followed, many of the sisters in the St. Louis, Mexico, and New Orleans provinces would scarcely know the motherhouse or the members of the general council.

Another change brought about by the Chapter of 1924 was the closing of the house in Holland that had been established for the reception of European candidates. Since World War I, travel to and from Holland had been very difficult. Even after the armistice had been signed, candidates were detained as long as four years waiting for the necessary papers to enter the United States. It was now decided to relocate the house for European candidates in Ireland and to transfer the young women from Germany who were at that time in the house of formation in Holland.

Several sites were considered, and one in particular in the suburbs of Dublin seemed most desirable. When the sisters visited Archbishop Walsh of that city, however, he was reluctant to give them permission to establish a house for the acceptance of candidates. Too many religious houses, he felt, had already been opened in Dublin, and there was no need for another.

With the approval of the archbishop of Tuam, Most Rev. Thomas P. Gilmartin, the sisters decided on Dunmore in County Galway. A private residence located on thirteen acres of land was purchased in 1925, and

Mother Cleophas Hurst was appointed the first superior. She was joined by Sister Florence Byrne, Sister Finbar Mitchell, Sister Luitgardis Ziermann, Sister John of the Cross Doherty, Sister Matilda Mullen, and Sister Isabella Holohan. With a growing number of candidates both from Ireland and from Germany, it was soon decided to construct an addition to the building. Ground was broken for the new structure on February 5, 1926.

In addition to establishing provinces and opening a new house of formation in Ireland, the sisters now became involved with another revision of their constitutions in order to comply with the codification of canon law. Strangely enough, the revisions were sent to Rome in 1924 and approved by the Sacred Congregation of Religious before they were submitted to a general chapter of the sisters. Only afterwards were they read to the delegates at the 1924 Chapter, who took exception to some of the changes proposed or supported by the Sacred Congregation, in particular the admission of widows and the questioning required of applicants with regard to legitimacy of birth. They also once again voted against a provision for the establishment of a fifth province.

Another major change was made in the omission of care of the aged as part of their apostolate. By this time, admissions at St. Francis Home had been limited to sisters because of the ever-increasing need for such accommodations. Only one other home for the aged was still in existence, Hospicio Ortigosa in Monterrey. The sisters decided it would be better to concentrate their resources on expanding and developing their ministries in teaching, in care of the sick, and in the care of orphans. "The personnel for the work and the means of support for [the care of] the aged are both found to be insufficient," the general council recorded. "Another consideration was the fact that the Holy See does not approve of a multiplicity of works by the same congregation."³⁶

Also introduced in the revised constitutions were the offices of the Inspectress General of Schools and the Inspectress General of Hospitals as part of the general administration. Mother Kevin Murray was appointed to the school position; Mother William Cullen was chosen to supervise the hospitals. Three years later, it was decided also that a congregational supervisor of church and school music be appointed. Sister Infant Jesus Brennan was named to this position.³⁷

One final change of the period took place in 1928 with the dedication of the cemetery at the motherhouse.³⁸ Prior to this date, the sisters who died in San Antonio or the surrounding areas, were buried in the Catholic cemetery, San Fernando.³⁹ In 1930, the bodies of the sisters buried in San Fernando were transferred to the motherhouse cemetery, and in later years those buried in nearby Boerne as well as in Eagle Pass

were brought to the cemetery also. Mother Gabriel wrote, "How sweet it is to think that we can stay so near to our chapel and to the sisters when the divine Master comes for us."⁴⁰ With the establishment of the St. Louis Province, a congregational cemetery was opened also in Normandy.

In 1930, Rev. Mother Mary John completed her second term of office as the superior general, and the sisters prepared to elect her successor. The Congregation had passed through a significant period of change, becoming increasingly separated from and independent of its French origin and at the same time becoming strongly influenced by the number of Irish sisters who had been elected or appointed to positions of authority. Changes in governance had led to a de-centralization of authority, a complexity of administrative structure, and different relationships with the general administration. Changes in the College were moving the sisters into a position of leadership in education while their work in the care of the aged was coming to an end. Not until the 1960s and the close of Vatican II would the Congregation witness so many changes in such a short period of time.

CHAPTER X

FROM PERSECUTION TO CELEBRATION

The conflict between the Catholic Church and the government of Mexico continued throughout the 1920s, particularly during the presidency of Plutarco Elías Calles. When it was reported that Archbishop José Mora y del Río of Mexico City publicly protested in 1926 that bishops, priests and Catholic laity of the country could not accept any provisions of the Constitution of 1917 that deprived them of their religious liberty, Calles seized the situation to force the hierarchy out of the country.¹

Archbishop Mora, together with Bishops Valdespino of Aguascalientes, Echavarría of Saltillo, Anaya of Chiapas, and Uranga of Cuernavaca were arrested by armed federal agents, accused of leading a revolution against the government, and forced to board a train taking them out of the country. At Nuevo Laredo they were met by United States government officials who escorted them across the border. A short time later, the Most Rev. Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, apostolic delegate to Mexico, met with a similar fate of exile at the hands of the government.

The *Southern Messenger* reported in 1926 that "with the arrest of one more Mexican bishop and driving of another into hiding the number of members of the Catholic hierarchy now under arrest, in exile, in hiding, or otherwise removed from their flocks through the persecution, rose to sixteen. This is effectually half of the archbishops and bishops in charge of dioceses in Mexico, there being thirty-three dioceses."²

Many of the bishops sought refuge in San Antonio as they had in 1914 and were once again taken in as guests of the Incarnate Word motherhouse. They were provided with living accommodations at

Brackenridge Villa, which became in essence a center for the operations of the Catholic Church in Mexico and from which directives were sent to the laity and to the clergy still living under the oppression of the Mexican government urging them to defend their rights and resist the revolutionary party.³

The bishops' activities were carried on in great secrecy for fear of drawing attention to their location and of giving cause for some form of reprisal. While the sisters welcomed the hierarchy with warm hospitality that was characteristic of the Congregation, they realized they were placing themselves and the sisters in Mexico in the way of possible retaliation if their involvement became known. They maintained a strict secrecy regarding the presence of their guests.⁴

Even the consecration of the Rev. Jesús José López as Coadjutor Bishop of Aguascalientes, which was held in the motherhouse chapel on March 28, 1928, had to be conducted secretly and with only the sisters in attendance. Bishop Ignacio Valdespino, the aging head of the Aguascalientes diocese who was in failing health, was anxious that before his death, his successor be named and consecrated as a member of the hierarchy in order to secure the continuity of Church leadership. Immediately after the ceremony, the newly consecrated Bishop López left San Antonio disguised as a simple layman and returned to his diocese incognito.⁵

Sister Mary Gabriel Wheelahan wrote to tell the sisters in Lyons about the significance of having the consecration of the bishop in the motherhouse chapel, a ceremony usually performed only in a cathedral, and of the great secrecy surrounding the event. After witnessing the ceremony, she said that she could well appreciate how the early Christians had to practice their religion in hiding and the "anxiety in the catacombs."⁶

In the meantime, retaliation against the bishops brought about a new wave of confiscation of church property, including convents and monasteries. Many churches and schools were closed; some were ransacked and completely destroyed. In her recollection of this time of terror and fear, Mother Benedict Joseph Cassidy wrote, "Every day brought news of some convent or Catholic school being closed, of religious being deported, and of some poor unfortunate or rather fortunate priest receiving the crown of martyrdom after suffering most cruel tortures."⁷

Any gathering of priests, religious, and laity for the celebration of the Eucharist had to be in secret, usually in the middle of the night and always at a different place. "We knew in advance where it [the mass] would be said," Mother María Loyola Coindreau wrote. "Sometimes

our poor sisters were obliged to get up at two or three o'clock in the morning in order not to be seen or recognized in the streets."⁸

Many parish priests lived in hiding, she said, "continually evading the secret police and expecting to be put to death every day."⁹ She told also of a woman who in the face of death asked as her dying wish to receive Communion. "Luckily," Mother Loyola added, "we were able to find a priest in disguise who brought her the Holy Eucharist concealed in a basket of eggs, and we told the doorman to allow the egg merchant to enter when he arrived."¹⁰

The sisters themselves lived in constant fear of being recognized as members of a religious congregation and continued to disguise themselves by wearing secular clothes. In 1926, the young women in the postulate and novitiate at the provincial house in Tacubaya were sent to the United States for protection. Mother Mercedes Estrada, mistress of novices, and her assistant, Sister María del Consuelo Cano de los Ríos, brought twenty-nine novices to the motherhouse in San Antonio, while Mother Genoveva Carranza brought the postulants to St. Joseph's Convent in Eagle Pass. They left the country under conditions of secrecy, experiencing many difficulties along the way.¹¹ A short time later the provincial house and the adjoining school were taken over by government forces.

The Constitution of 1917 required that only native-born Mexicans could be accepted as members of the clergy, and the government was forcing priests of foreign birth to leave the country. Superiors in San Antonio feared that the sisters who were not originally from Mexico might be subject to similar harassment or violence and like the priests, forced into exile. They urged them to leave their convents and to take refuge in San Antonio. However, Sisters Angélique Descombes and Aimée Bachelard, who were originally from France, and Mother Benedict Joseph Cassidy from Ireland asked to remain and "to face the fate of the Mexican sisters."¹² Rev. Mother Mary John told the superiors in Lyons how many of the sisters were "devoted enough to sacrifice themselves." She prayed that "Christ the King and Our Lady of Guadalupe [would] soon come to the rescue of the poor persecuted country."¹³

In some areas, the sisters moved their students out of the classrooms and into private homes to avoid the watchful eyes of government officials. In other situations they placed a lay person in charge of the school in an effort to disguise the school's affiliation with a religious congregation, being very careful to appoint someone in whom they had great confidence and who would not expose them to government agents.

In spite of the many precautions, the academy in Tampico, Colegio del Sagrado Corazón, which had been forced to close in 1913 but had reopened several years later, was taken over by the military in 1927 and converted into a soldiers' barracks. The sisters had to leave their convent and search for a place to live. According to Mother Benedict Joseph's report, "They found an old building in a lumber yard, like a cheap hotel, and rented it at an exorbitant price."¹⁴

The persecution continued into the 1930s. "Things have not changed here," Mother Zeferina Porras wrote to the motherhouse. "On the contrary, private schools, above all those of a known religious character, are the government target at the present. All of which means more vigilance, more disguise, etc., on our part."¹⁵

One of the most disastrous incidents took place in Torreón, where fire broke out about midnight on July 4, 1930, and destroyed Colegio Jesús María. The sisters were quite sure that the blaze had been set deliberately. Fortunately, all of the boarding students as well as the teachers escaped injury, but the building itself and all of its contents were in ruins. The sisters stood barefooted dressed only in their night-clothes watching their school and convent being destroyed. Mother María Luisa Muñoz' greatest distress was not the loss of the material things in the classrooms but the fact that they had not been able to remove the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle in the chapel.

Undaunted by such violence, the sisters were determined to carry on their work of teaching the children in Torreón and immediately rented a nearby house where they reopened the school. Catholic parents supported their efforts, continuing to send their children for instruction in the makeshift classrooms. Enrollment even began to increase in the following months, and three years later, in 1933, Colegio Jesús María, which had been renamed Colegio La Paz, celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding.

'Shortly after the fire in Torreón, the sisters faced the confiscation of their property in Monterrey. Mother Benedict Joseph was notified in 1931 that the school would be taken over and that the sisters might have to vacate the building very soon. For four years they lived in constant fear of the closing until the property was finally seized in 1935.

In a history of the school written some years later, it is recorded that when the sisters asked for help, most people "closed their doors . . . because of fear." Only one person, Ms. Octavia Rivero, "a faithful alumna," offered them shelter.¹⁶ From 1935 to 1941, the academy continued to function in private homes under the most adverse circumstances but survived and even flourished in spite of the many threats to its existence.

In 1932, the government confiscated also the English Academy of the Incarnate Word in Mexico City and Colegio La Purísima, which had been renamed Colegio Saltillense, in Saltillo. The loss of their property was a cause of great sorrow for the sisters. They had built the schools and convents with hard-earned congregational funds. What distressed them even more, however, was the government suppression of their work with the people.

The disturbances in Mexico were a particular cause for prayer at the motherhouse. As they had done so many times in the past, the sisters turned especially to St. Joseph and asked for his protection. Each time a new outbreak of violence was reported, more prayers were added. The following entry appears in the motherhouse records: "Novena in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was begun this evening after night prayers for the protection of our sisters and our property in Mexico. Conditions there are very unsettled, and there is danger of [the sisters] being molested and the property confiscated by the government at any moment."¹⁷

It may have been this urgent need for prayer in a time of such danger that prompted Rev. Mother Bonaventure Burns to seek approval from Rome for the sisters to have perpetual exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the motherhouse chapel. The practice began on Sept. 8, 1932, with two sisters spending an hour at a time throughout the day and night in prayer of adoration and thanksgiving for God's blessings, for the well-being of all of the sisters of the Congregation, for the success of its works, for the leaders of the Church, and for the people of God throughout the world.

In the beginning, the hours of adoration were kept in the motherhouse chapel. Rev. Mother Bonaventure had planned that a separate oratory be constructed for this purpose, but the Congregation was still trying to cope with the economic strain of the depression and funds were not available. She called on the sisters to help with any donations they might receive or by economizing on their own expenses. "We will need at least \$20,000 to build this chapel," she said. "At present there is less than \$2000 invested. God grant that our donations may increase rapidly, so that we may have the happiness of seeing a beautiful adoration chapel completed in the near future."¹⁸

By 1935, the money had been raised and an area on the second floor was converted into the long-awaited adoration chapel. In blessing the oratory, Archbishop Drossaerts compared it to "a dynamo or spiritual power house from whence will radiate innumerable graces and blessings upon [the] Congregation and its works."¹⁹

It was under the leadership of Rev. Mother Bonaventure also that the Congregation became involved in seeking the beatification and canonization of the original foundress of the order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in France, Jeanne Chézard de Matel. In 1931, the general administration appealed to the sisters in Lyons setting forth the following proposal: "Wouldn't it be beautiful for the whole order and for our congregation if our foundress were to be canonized? She was so holy and so favored by Our Lord and we think that if her cause had been taken up at the time of her death by all the illustrious persons who knew her and who would have been able to vouch for the saintliness of her life, we could now be honoring her on our altars."²⁰

The French sisters had long desired that their foundress should be canonized, but for many years they had not been in a position of security or financial stability to begin the process. They had suffered greatly during the time of the suppression of religious orders in France and had spent years in Switzerland in enforced exile from their convent home. The costs involved in researching the writings of Mother de Matel, in submitting the necessary documentation to Rome, and in securing support from members of the hierarchy were beyond their means.

The proposal from San Antonio was received, therefore, with great enthusiasm, and the sisters responded by asking Rev. Mother Bonaventure to assume the responsibility for the effort, promising her that they would write to all of the foundations established by the order in Mexico and in the United States to gain their support. Mother Kevin Murray took over the leadership of the project and contacted the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris asking him to promote the cause. She sent letters to bishops throughout the world asking them to write to Rome to support the effort.

The Mexican bishops still in residence at Brackenridge Villa, particularly the Most Rev. Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, Apostolic Delegate to Mexico, and the Most Rev. Luis M. Martínez, Auxiliary Bishop of Morelia, encouraged her and offered to contact persons who would be able to assist in getting the cause introduced in Rome. Donations began coming into the motherhouse and were placed in a special burse to cover expenses associated with the process.

Mother Kevin wrote to the sisters frequently, giving them reports on the advancement of the cause and asking their continued support: "This Holy Year, which also marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the re-establishment of the Monastery of the Incarnate Word at Lyons, seems to be a very opportune time, and we hope the Incarnate Word may deign to aid us in promoting this work so dear to our hearts. Fervent

prayer is necessary to obtain results. Since Mother de Matel had great devotion to St. Joseph, and we know he is all-powerful with his Divine Son, we feel confident that a crusade of prayer offered in his honor will not be said in vain." She urged the sisters also to distribute literature on the French foundress to students, patients, and other persons with whom they came in contact. "Try to spread devotion to Mother de Matel in every way possible," she pleaded. "Speak of her intercessory powers with God and the many miracles wrought by her during her lifetime."²¹

By 1936, the cause had been introduced in Rome. Canon Nasalli Rocca of the Vatican was appointed Postulator, and Canon Bisch of the Palatial See of Lyons was named Vice Postulator. It had taken five years for the process to advance this far, but the sisters were encouraged that it would succeed with continued efforts and patience on their part.

In 1940, Mother Kevin announced that a miraculous cure was attributed to Mother de Matel's intercession. A fifth-grade pupil from San Francisco School, Espada Mission, had a broken arm that was not properly set. After repeated efforts of doctors to re-set the bone, the arm continued to swell, causing the child severe pain. According to Mother Kevin's report, "Mother Alma [Neilan] pinned a relic of Mother de Matel on the arm, and on the next visit of the doctor he found it cured, thanks to the child's faith in prayer."²²

Correspondence regarding the canonization became increasingly difficult, however, as World War II broke out in Europe. Meanwhile, some of the sisters began to lose confidence in the process and to maintain that the leadership should not be in their hands but rather taken over by the sisters in Lyons or by the orders of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Mexico and in other parts of the United States that were directly related to the French foundation and who recognized Mother de Matel as their foundress.

Opposition to the effort continued to grow until the time of the General Chapter of 1942. The sisters were divided on the issue, some favoring a continuation of the process and others maintaining that the whole matter should be dropped and the money raised returned to the donors. After much discussion, the chapter delegates determined that the true founder of the San Antonio foundation was Bishop Claude Dubuis rather than Jeanne de Matel, although the spirituality of the Congregation could be traced to the writings and teachings of Mother de Matel, who should be recognized as "Spiritual Mother." On this basis, it was decided that the Congregation would no longer assume any direct responsibility for the cause of the canonization.

The decision caused great disappointment on the part of those who had dedicated much time and effort to the project. Mother Kevin, who

had directed it for eleven years and who had gained widespread support for the cause, was particularly crushed by the action of the chapter.²³ The decision created dissension among other sisters as well and led ultimately to at least one member leaving the Congregation, Mother Hermenegilda Armendáriz, who had been in the provincial administration in Mexico and had served in many critical situations during the time of the persecution. When arguments were presented for the recognition of Bishop Dubuis rather than Mother de Matel as the founder of the Congregation, Mother Hermenegilda had written a comprehensive defense of the latter. "Year by year we can trace an unbroken line of facts that prove our glorious descendance from Mother de Matel," she argued, "proving that the spirit wherein she formed the Order has been passed on to us; that it has faithfully been kept; that such has always been the care of the Superiors of the Congregation."²⁴ She insisted that Bishop Dubuis had not intended to be the founder of the Congregation and had been too involved in his missionary journeys throughout the whole of Texas to attend to the spiritual formation of the early sisters.

A short time later, she determined that she would ask for a dispensation from her vows so that she could enter the order of the Incarnate Word in Lyons. She had inherited money from her family and wished to dedicate not only her own service but also her patrimony to assisting the French foundation and to furthering the canonization of Mother de Matel. She obtained the necessary dispensation from Rome and was accepted by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Lyons. Although she was seventy years of age and had already spent more than forty years in religious life, she began her period of training all over again by making her novitiate in the French monastery. A short time later she was elected superior general and successfully opened new foundations in Madrid and in Salamanca that became helpful in sustaining the French order.²⁵ She also continued to support the cause of canonization of Mother de Matel and gave a large portion of her inheritance to underwrite the cost of the process.²⁶

The canonization process was not the only matter demanding the attention of the Congregation at this time. Like the rest of the country, the sisters were concerned over the drastic changes taking place in the economy. Banks were beginning to close; many businesses were failing. The country was on the brink of the Great Depression.

The sisters could not have foreseen how widespread the effects of the economic failure would be when they decided to open a new academy in the St. Louis Province. During the early days, the resources of the province would be strained to the limit to keep the new school in operation.

The academy was established at the provincial house in Normandy, where the Lucas estate, similar to the motherhouse property in San Antonio, offered an ideal setting for an academy for young women. Moreover, no Catholic high school had been opened in that particular part of St. Louis, and the sisters were anxious to expand their work in the recently established St. Louis Province.

Under the direction of Mother Peter Nolasco Keenan, who was provincial superior, the sisters began planning for the school and obtained the necessary authorization from Archbishop John Joseph Glennon of St. Louis. Previously, he had discouraged them from considering such a venture, but with the growth of the archdiocese and its expansion to the suburbs north of the city limits, he realized the need for more Catholic schools in the area.

By September, 1932, the academy was ready to open with 40 students: 24 freshmen, 6 sophomores, and 10 juniors. Serving on the faculty were Mother Bridget Crowley, Mother Luitgardis Ziermann, Sister Imelda Walshe, Sister Bernadette Synan, Sister Francis Xavier Brannan, Sister Rose Genevieve Redmond, and Sister Jeanne de Matel Hogan.

Academically, the school was successful from the very beginning. Just one year after the opening, it became affiliated with the University of Missouri, and in October, 1934, was fully accredited by the North Central Association's Committee on Accredited Schools and Colleges.

Financially, however, the school was in trouble. Tuition was only \$35 a semester, but in spite of the minimal cost many families who were hard hit by the depression could not afford to take on an extra burden. Sister Mary Magdalen Cross recalled how "Mother Peter Nolasco stood at the front window of the convent, looking down the long road that led up to the building from the city bus line, watching and hoping each day to see a few more students."²⁷

Long before the federal government established work-study programs, the academy provided opportunities for students to pay their bills by working in the cafeteria, the library, or the principal's office. Nevertheless, building up the enrollment was a constant struggle over the next ten years. Without much income from tuition it was difficult to provide many improvements or laboratory equipment, much less to consider plant expansion. When some of the classrooms became overcrowded the best that could be done was to renovate the old home that had been used as the sisters' first convent and that was still standing on the property. By 1935, the building was reopened and called Senior Hall. The small class environment of the academy, however, and the closeness of faculty to students provided an atmosphere that was conducive to fostering the individual talents of each student and to the

creation of strong bonds between the students and the school. The expansion in new buildings, library holdings, and laboratory equipment would come at a later date, after the academy had survived the struggles of the depression.

People were fond of saying that everything came late to Texas and that even the depression did not hit the state until three or four years after the disastrous crash on Wall Street. By 1933, however, 267,000 persons in the state were unemployed and the effects of the failing economy were being felt everywhere. Parents could not pay the cost of sending their children to the parochial schools, and it was often difficult for pastors to pay the salaries of the sisters. In the congregationally owned academies and college, the sisters scraped and saved and economized in every possible way to keep their classrooms open and to help students stay in school.

Some families living on Texas ranches or farm lands made arrangements to pay their bills in meat or produce. It was not unusual on registration day at Incarnate Word College to see a truck pull up to the front door bringing a boarding student with all of her belongings ready to move into the dormitory as well as a load of potatoes and squash to pay the cost of her tuition, room, and board. "A student will never be turned away from Incarnate Word College," Mother Columkille always said, "simply because of her inability to pay."²⁸

Hospitals, too, suffered the effects of the depression when people could not afford to seek the professional care of a doctor or be admitted for hospitalization. At the same time, the bread lines of hungry, unemployed men formed at the back door of the institutions. Shabbily dressed, downtrodden, and carrying their rust-covered tin cans, the men lined up each morning and evening seeking food for themselves and often for their families. The sisters watered down their own soup and stretched the leftovers as far as they could go, but they never turned away the hungry at their back door.

Because of the depression, very few new schools were opened during this period. Not until the end of the 30s did the Congregation begin once again to receive requests for sisters. In 1936, Mother Walburga Wiesen opened Our Lady of Guadalupe School for Mexican children in Seguin. The following year, 1937, Mother Justin Maybury went to Pampa to open Holy Souls School, and in 1939, another school for Mexican children, St. Mary's, was started by Mother Ita Gorry in San Angelo.

In the 1940s four more parochial schools were established in Texas. Mother Mary Benignus McCarthy started St. Joan of Arc School in Weslaco in 1940; Mother Eleanor Pennartz opened Sacred Heart

School in Rockport in 1942; Mother Patricia Murphy directed the opening of St. Mary Magdalen School in San Antonio in the same year; and Mother Catherine of Bologna Ryan established Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Dallas in 1946.

In spite of the number of parochial schools that now existed throughout the country, many Catholic children were still enrolled in public schools and receiving no formal teaching in catechism. To remedy this situation, pastors began to schedule religion classes during the summer, giving rise to what became known as the summer vacation school. The programs usually lasted four weeks and were directed principally at the preparation of the children for their First Communion. In Floresville, Mother Pauline Fierro and Sister Joseph Augustine Molloy staffed what became the first summer vacation school in the archdiocese of San Antonio. By 1943, just fourteen years later, sixty-three sisters were teaching in summer programs in twenty-nine parishes throughout Texas and Missouri.²⁹

Meanwhile, in San Antonio, the sisters established a new ministry in the field of social work with the opening of the Guadalupe Community Center. The center was the inspiration of Father Carmelo Tranchese, S.J., Pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, who appealed for help in ministering to the poor people of his parish. The parish was located on the west side of San Antonio, where many Mexican people suffered the effects of extreme poverty brought on by the depression as well as by discrimination. Large families were living in substandard housing; fathers were unemployed or working in low-paying jobs; mothers were trying to care for their children in poverty-level conditions.

The sisters had taught in Our Lady of Guadalupe School since 1918 and shared Father Tranchese's earnest desire to help the parishioners. Together they started the community welfare center in 1940. Sister Mary of Victory Lewis, who had been director of the nursing education program at Incarnate Word College, volunteered to lead the effort and was assisted by Sister Imelda Walshe, Sister Martha Murphy, and Sister Pauline Fierro. Two years later, Sister Ana Guadalupe Gamero became a member of the staff and for many years played a significant role in developing the center.

The parish rented a small, dilapidated, two-story house on the corner of Durango and S. Pinto Sts., but after paying the rent Father Tranchese found he had no funds for operations. Almost immediately after the center opened, it was going to have to close.

"It was so terrible," Sister Mary of Victory said. "We had no money and he had no money." Then she added, "I sat down on the front

steps and deliberated.”³⁰ Her deliberations resulted in getting \$1600 from the Community Chest (later called the United Way), even though all of the allocations of funding had been made for the year, and in convincing the leaders of the Congregation to donate the sisters’ services completely, accepting no money even for their room and board. She appealed also to other houses of the Congregation for help. Santa Rosa Hospital sent medical supplies, and the students at Incarnate Word High School and Incarnate Word College volunteered to teach religion to the children. A group of dedicated women volunteers, the Pan American League, was organized to help with fund raising as well as with securing donations of food and clothing.

“The first year was simply dealing with starvation, which I met for the first time,” Sister Mary of Victory said. “We set up a lunch program, equipped a dining room and fed 250 to 300 children each day.”³¹ They were soon operating a nursery school; a clinic for mothers and infants; arts and crafts activities; a recreational program; and classes in religion, English, citizenship, and child care.

Just three years later, a letter from the motherhouse told of all the good that was being accomplished. Food, clothing, fuel and medical supplies had been distributed to over fifty families. The clinic was being staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses as well as staff from the Public Health Department. Adult education classes in English and citizenship were being offered by W.P.A. workers for students ranging in age from 15 to 69, and women were learning how to recondition used clothing for their families. Catechetical instruction was offered during the after-school hours for children attending the public schools.³²

The sisters’ work at the center began to attract the interest of outstanding citizens in San Antonio who became members of a newly formed board of directors. By 1955, the board had raised \$75,000 to build a new center. Sub-clinics offering medical and dental services had been opened, and programs had been expanded to include counseling, group work, vocational rehabilitation, employment placement, and immigration service. The success was due primarily to the dedication and untiring service of Sister Mary of Victory. She liked to say her name was Victory, and that was what she intended to achieve. Before her retirement in 1955 because of illness, she had realized her goal. She was succeeded by Sister Margaret Mary Loughrey, who directed the center from 1955 to 1962, and later by Sister Ethna Scanlon, who was in charge from 1962 to 1969.³³

Located near the Guadalupe Community Center and serving the same area of the city in which there was a concentration of very poor Mexican families, the sisters began working in 1945 at the Santa María

Maternity Clinic. Sisters Adelgunda Klein and Ana María Rada took charge of the nursing care. With strong encouragement from Archbishop Robert E. Lucey and financial support from the archdiocese, the clinic was established under the direction of the Catholic Welfare Bureau.³⁴

During this period and in spite of the revolution, the sisters in Mexico entered a new form of ministry also. The province's first involvement in health care began in 1930 when Sisters Micaela Valdés, María Martha Echenique and María Alacoque Cerisola began working at San Salvador Hospital in Monterrey. Although their work here was shortlived and the hospital was closed in 1934, the beginning was significant and was to lead to the staffing of more health care institutions in different areas of Mexico and to the educational preparation of Mexican sisters as nurses, instructors in nursing, and hospital supervisors.

In the same year in which San Salvador Hospital closed, 1934, the sisters began their work at Hospital Muguerza located also in Monterrey. The institution was founded by José A. Muguerza, who discovered during the illness of his daughter that the city lacked adequate facilities to care for patients who were seriously ill. By constructing the hospital, which was named in his honor, he was determined to provide the finest accommodations, the most up-to-date equipment, and the highest standards of health care. He appealed to the Incarnate Word sisters to assist in the planning of the 100-bed facility and to take over the administration. Fourteen sisters were appointed to the staff, and Mother Herminia Fuentes was named superior of the community.

Sister Alacoque Cerisola established a school of nursing at the hospital in 1940. Both the hospital and the school became leaders in offering training for nurses in highly specialized areas of health care. Many of the sisters from the Mexican Province as well as the directors of other nursing schools throughout the country became graduates of the program.

Hospital Muguerza soon became the largest private hospital in Monterrey.³⁵ Although it was never owned or under the complete direction of the Congregation, the sisters played a significant role in administering the institution and in directing the school of nursing. Over the years to come many would serve forty to fifty years on the staff and become recognized as the persons particularly responsible for the operation of the hospital and for the quality of its care: Sister Ana Guadalupe González, who directed the school of nursing; Sister María Raquel Ruelas, who supervised the medical records department; Sister María Verónica Osorno, who was in charge of the operating room and in later years served as a nurse in the emergency room. Also, Sister María Angela Botello, who for many years was in charge of nursing service;

and Sister Celestina García, who served as night supervisor. According to Sister Esther Alicia Guzmán, who was not only born in the hospital but who has spent most of her life serving on the staff, "The presence of the sisters always gave a human quality to the technologically advanced medicine practiced at Muguerza."³⁶

Following the opening of Hospital Muguerza, the sisters participated in 1938 in the establishment of Clínica Médico Quirúrgica in Torreón, although their work here continued for only five years. However, in the same year in which the clinic closed, 1943, they became involved in a major development in health care when Dr. Ignacio Chávez founded the Instituto Nacional de Cardiología in Mexico City, a government owned institution dedicated to research and teaching as well as to the practice of medicine. Dr. Chávez had visited Hospital Muguerza and had been so impressed with the professional quality and religious orientation of the work of the sisters that he urged General Manuel Avila Camacho, President of Mexico, to appoint them to the staff of the new institution.³⁷ The sisters were involved in planning the initial organization of the hospital, just as they had done at Hospital Muguerza. They also became nurses, heads of departments, and directors of the school of nursing.

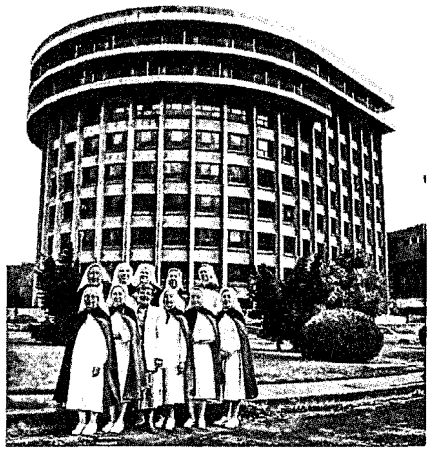
Sister Alacoque Cerisola was named Assistant to the Medical Director and Director of Nursing Service, and eight other sisters were appointed to the staff. Some would have many years of service at the institution and become greatly responsible for its development: Sister María Felicitas Villegas, who later became the head of nursing; Sister María del Roble Rodríguez, who directed the school of nursing; Sister Margarita María Escalante, who supervised the dietary department; and Sister María de Belén Palacios, who was in charge of the X-ray department.

Other sisters who later joined the staff and served for many years include: Sister Martha Echenique and Sister Catalina de Sena Martínez, who were both in charge of nursing service; Sister Bertha María Montalvo, who supervised the surgical unit; Sister Teresa de Jesús (Berta Elia) Zúñiga, who was in charge of the medical-surgical department; and Sister Beatriz Zambrano, who was director of the school of nursing. Also Sister Martha Elena Hernández, who spent twenty-eight years supervising the third floor and the X-ray department and who was so young when she was first appointed to the hospital that Dr. Salvador Aceves teased her about "keeping her dolls hidden under her desk!"³⁸

Instituto Nacional de Cardiología was the first teaching hospital in Mexico dedicated to cardiovascular medicine and research and attracted students as well as physicians, nurses, and other health care practitioners from Europe, Central America, South America, and Africa as



Hospital José A. Muguerza, S.A. de C.V., was established in 1934 in Monterrey. The Incarnate Word sisters were involved in the early planning and administration of the hospital and in the opening of the school of nursing in 1940.



Members of the staff of the Instituto Nacional de Cardiología in Mexico City, back row, left to right: Sisters Bertha Ma. Montavo, Luz del Carmen Ruvalcaba, Teresa de Jesús Zúñiga, Ma. Guadalupe Suárez, and Yolanda Guadalupe Rodríguez. Pictured in the front row with Mrs. Rosalina Treviño: Sisters Altagracia Hernández, Emma Téllez, Ma. de Belén Palacios, Martha Elena Hernández, and Ma. de las Nieves Navarro.

well as from various parts of Mexico. The school of nursing became recognized for its outstanding graduates and became a training ground for future directors of nursing programs in other parts of Mexico. According to Sister María Guadalupe Suárez, some nursing schools even in other parts of the world “had their birth at Cardiología.”³⁹ The Mexican Association for Nurses, later called Colegio Nacional de Enfermeras, also had its origin in the work of the sisters at the hospital.

As political conditions began to change in Mexico, the sisters were able to make new foundations also in education. By 1929, they had taken over the operation of Academia del Verbo Encarnado in Puebla, and two years later, in 1931, the sisters in Mexico City joined with two other religious congregations in establishing a school for very poor children. Escuela de Los Angeles opened with 900 students under the direction of Mother María de la Paz Ambía. To avoid the possibility of the school being identified as an institution operated by the sisters and therefore subject to government closure, the children had to be taught in private homes scattered throughout the area.

“Living for Catholics became easier,” Mother Jacinta González wrote, “although no change had been made in the laws. Our sisters . . .

reopened the schools and started the reorganization of each one."⁴⁰ By 1936, Mother Benedict Joseph Cassidy reported, "We have been enjoying comparative peace and a certain amount of toleration for some months now, but we never know whether it is good will or a bait."⁴¹

All of the efforts toward suppression of the schools over the past twenty years seemed to have merely sparked the determination of the sisters, of other Church leaders, and of the Catholic laity to guarantee freedom in the teaching and practice of religion. In the late 1930s and 1940s, three new schools were started, Instituto Hispano-Inglés in San Luis Potosí (1937), Academia del Verbo Encarnado, Parral (1939), and Instituto Victoria, Manzanillo (1946).⁴² In Mexico City, the sisters took charge also of an orphanage for girls, Instituto Mier y Pesado, which was established through the generosity of Isabel Pesado de Mier, wealthy philanthropist who left her estate to causes benefitting the poor, the elderly, the homeless, and persons afflicted with incurable disease.

In addition to the schools, the sisters established in 1938 in Tacubaya a new home for the retired sisters of the province, many of whom were exhausted from their struggles to keep the schools in operation, to protect their convents from being appropriated by the government, and to safeguard their own lives. Called Betania del Verbo Encarnado, the center was under the direction of Mother María Carlota Salmón. With the gradual addition of more and more retired sisters, the accommodations soon became overcrowded, and the center was moved to a larger house in the suburb, San Pedro de los Pinos. By 1942, the provincial administration decided to purchase property in the San Angel area of Mexico City and to combine the retirement facilities with the provincialate offices and novitiate. A chapel was added to the complex in 1945.⁴³

By this time, the Congregation had survived the persecution in Mexico, had weathered the depression, and was beginning to expand once again. On November 11, 1941, however, the sisters faced another sorrow within their own family and an unexpected change of leadership with the death of Rev. Mother Bonaventure Burns. As a member of the general administration since 1906 to the time of her death, she had represented a continuity of direction, and the sisters had developed great respect for her as a person and as a religious superior.

Mother Bonaventure had been born in Sneem, County Kerry, and had come to San Antonio to enter the Congregation in 1885 at the age of seventeen. As a very young sister, she showed remarkable abilities for leadership, and immediately after she made her final profession of vows was named superior and principal of the public school operated by the sisters in Meyersville, Texas. She had taught also in the schools of

Mexico and was responsible for opening Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Victoria (1899), and the English Academy of the Incarnate Word, Mexico City (1906).

Like other superiors before her, she was a truly humble person who felt unworthy to lead the Congregation. She wrote to the sisters in Lyons: "I do not know why Our Lord has permitted this except to prove that He can accomplish His work with any kind of instrument, however worthless that instrument may be. Please pray that I may not be an obstacle to his work or to the accomplishment of his will."⁴⁴

With all of the uprisings in Mexico as well as the years of depression in the United States, Mother Bonaventure had led the Congregation through a very difficult time and had proven to be a strong leader with a great understanding of human nature and a determination to be fair-minded with her sisters and with others. It was this fair-mindedness that had prompted her to make the trip to Galveston that eventually led to her death. The Incarnate Word sisters who had established their motherhouse in 1866 in that city, the same congregation from which Sisters Madeleine, Pierre, and Agnes had come to San Antonio, were celebrating their diamond jubilee. For many years, a division had existed between the two institutes, going back at least to 1883 when Bishop Gallagher had replaced the sisters of the Galveston congregation with those of San Antonio in the operation of St. Mary's Orphanage.⁴⁵ Rev. Mother Bonaventure was determined to heal the break and made the trip to Galveston to attend the jubilee celebration precisely for that purpose.

During her stay, she unfortunately experienced a severe fall. Upon her return to San Antonio she went immediately to Santa Rosa but never recovered from the injuries of the accident which led to further complications of a heart condition from which she had suffered for some time. She had accomplished what she set out to do, however. She had restored friendly relationships between the two religious congregations, although it had ultimately cost her her life. On the day of her funeral, the San Antonio Catholic newspaper paid special tribute to her with the following statement: "Humble, unassuming, peaceful, hidden in God, did her life pass, and so did it close—alone with God."⁴⁶

At the next general chapter held in 1942, the sisters elected Mother Laserian Conlon as the general superior, a person similar in some ways to Rev. Mother Bonaventure in her humility and in her understanding of human nature. Rev. Mother Laserian, however, was a very simple, down-to-earth kind of person who had very little of the propriety and reserved bearing of her predecessor. At the time of her election, Mother Mary Calvary wrote to tell the sisters in Lyons about the new superior whom they had never met: "She has loved everyone, and thought of

everyone except herself.”⁴⁷ Sister Marie Aimée Bachelard, writing to Lyons also, assured the French sisters that the new congregational leader would follow “the example of our former mothers.” She added the following words, “She is a young person, likeable, full of life and very active and generous.”⁴⁸

Mother Laserian had been mistress of novices as well as a college and high school teacher and principal of the academy in Normandy. She had served also as Assistant Provincial in St. Louis and Provincial in San Antonio, but most of her work had been with young people, and she no doubt found a big change from her usual surroundings when she moved to the quiet, somber atmosphere of the generalate. She found a distraction, however, in a small garden that she planted outside her office where flowers soon began to sprout up in response to her loving care and where the numerous squirrels on the motherhouse grounds found a friend who always carried nuts in her pocket.

Like her predecessor, Rev. Mother Laserian was to lead the Congregation through many difficulties, some developing from the United States’ involvement in World War II that created a decline in the number of young women entering the novitiate. Although the convent of Dunmore in County Galway remained open and young women from Ireland continued to apply for admission, there were no applications from other European countries. Moreover, with wartime restrictions on travel it became impossible for even the young women in Ireland to come to the United States to complete their training.

Before the war broke out in Europe, the sisters had determined at the general chapter of 1930 that the novitiate should be extended to two years and that it should be centralized in San Antonio in order to provide for “uniformity in the training of the novices,” a continuity of the Congregational spirit, and the creation of “a bond of union” among the sisters of the different provinces.⁴⁹ With the many difficulties of wartime travel, however, that decision had to be reversed. The sisters appealed to Rome for permission to establish a separate novitiate in Ireland and another in Mexico. In 1943, a group of eight postulants received the religious habit and nine sisters made first vows in the chapel of Dunmore.⁵⁰ It would be three more years before they could travel to the United States to take up their work in the Congregation.

With a decline in the number of sisters ready to begin teaching in the schools or nursing in the hospitals, all plans for expansion of ministries came to an abrupt halt. Also, construction materials were reserved for military purposes, and it was almost impossible to consider building a new school or adding a new wing to a hospital.

The war years also required that the sisters in the United States take on many wartime efforts in addition to their regular ministries of nursing and teaching. Some became certified in civilian defense; others trained as air wardens and as Red Cross first aid instructors. Student nurses were trained for the United States Cadet Nurse Corps.

With so many doctors and nurses involved in the military branches, the operation of the hospitals grew increasingly difficult. Unable to procure the necessary assistance, administrators frequently called on the sisters to work extra shifts to relieve the shortage. Meanwhile, all of the congregational hospitals were put at the service of the government. Spohn Hospital in Corpus Christi became the receiving station for all of the maternity cases of the Corpus Christi Naval Base Hospital, which was overcrowded with military personnel. In Fort Worth, St. Joseph's Hospital admitted patients from the air base at Eagle Mountain Lake that had been recently established but still lacked a hospital center.

By 1944, although the nations of the world were still involved in World War II, it was a time for the Congregation to observe a milestone in its history, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding in San Antonio. In an effort to preserve part of the history, and in particular the life of Bishop Dubuis, who was now recognized officially as the founder, the general administration commissioned L. V. Jacks of Creighton University to write Dubuis' biography. Entitled *Claude Dubuis, Bishop of Galveston*, the book was published in 1946 by the B. Herder Book Co.

The four-day jubilee celebration opened with mass in the chapel of Santa Rosa Hospital on Dec. 3, 1944, the anniversary of the sisters' first mass held in the infirmary in 1869. Two days later, on Dec. 5, a Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated by Archbishop Robert E. Lucey in the motherhouse chapel. On Dec. 6, a mass for the living members of the Congregation, friends and benefactors was offered by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Patrick J. Geehan, Vicar General, and on Dec. 7, a requiem mass for the deceased members, friends and benefactors was said by Bishop Mariano S. Garriga of Corpus Christi.

In a letter regarding the jubilee, Mother Helena Finck reflected on the coming of the first sisters from France "with no knowledge of the native language, with not a house they could call their own." From their "little adobe house on Military Plaza," she noted had "stemmed San Antonio's first Catholic orphanage and its first Catholic hospital, as well as the seventy-six houses" in which the sisters were engaged in ministry in the jubilee year.

She stated also that "of the fifty young women who entered the new community in the first ten years of its existence only twenty

remained.”⁵¹ By 1944 the records showed that a total of 2,901 applicants had been admitted. Although many had died and others had left for various reasons, 950 sisters were still serving in the hospitals, schools, orphanages, homes for the aged, and social welfare centers owned or operated by the Congregation. They were ministering in seventeen archdioceses and dioceses of the Catholic Church in Mexico, in the United States, and in Ireland.

Archbishop Lucey, in his sermon at the mass of thanksgiving, praised the work of the Congregation with the following words: “For seventy-five years the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word have sown the good seed of the Gospel and have been a precious leaven in the lives of many thousands of people who came within their influence. They have preached the word of God not from the altar of a church, but from the pulpit of a teacher’s desk and at the bedside of the sick and the dying.”⁵²

CHAPTER XI

PEACE AND STABILITY ON THE EVE OF CHANGE

As World War II finally came to an end in 1945 with the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the postwar years offered promise of peace and stability. For religious congregations, the stability began to show itself in an increase in the number of women seeking admission. Many young people, not only those who had fought on the battlefields but even those who had been too young to become involved in military service, had been deeply affected by the ideals of patriotism, sacrifice of self for a noble cause, and service to others. It was a time for a new awakening of moral and spiritual values, a time that was just right for a growing appreciation of religious life and an interest in a life-long commitment of service.¹

The number of young women entering the Incarnate Word novitiate in San Antonio during the postwar years did not equal that of the early 1900s when a class of novices, or band as it was called, might include as many as sixty to seventy young women.² What was promising about the situation, however, was that for the first time in the history of the Congregation, several applicants each year were coming from the United States. Since its foundation, the Congregation had grown in size primarily because of young women entering from Europe, first from France and later from Ireland and Germany. A steady flow of applicants had come from Mexico also, particularly since the beginning of the Mexican province in 1921. From the United States, however, the numbers had always been small.

Now the situation began to change. In 1944, only one young woman from the United States, Sister Mary Ruth Murphy, entered the novitiate.

By 1947, the number had grown to twelve, and by 1959 it had increased to twenty-seven. The growth was slow but significant. The Congregation was beginning at last to attract members from its American foundations and to establish a new base for membership in the future.

At the same time, the sisters lost two longtime friends, Father Albert A. Lohmann and Father Fridolin Schneider, C.P.P.S. Both priests had come to San Antonio for the benefit of their health, had lived at the Brackenridge Villa, and had served the Congregation for many years. Father Lohmann was originally from Illinois and had been ordained in Holy Name Cathedral, Chicago. He had studied at the Regensburg Church Music Conservatory in Germany and at the University of Leipzig. When he came to San Antonio in 1910, he began teaching both the novices at the motherhouse and the students at Incarnate Word College. He spent much of his time in composing masses and hymns for liturgical feasts and became an authority in Gregorian Chant. He also directed the sisters' choir, which sang his compositions for special celebrations in the motherhouse chapel. For forty-four years, the sisters' liturgical observances had been enriched with Father Lohmann's music, and they mourned his death on May 8, 1954.

Just a few months later, on July 25, they experienced another great loss in the death of Father Schneider, a dear and devoted friend and longtime chaplain at the motherhouse, who had come from Indiana to San Antonio in 1898. He had served the Congregation faithfully for fifty-six years, had presided each day at the early morning mass in the motherhouse chapel, and had taught religion to both the novices and the College students. Like Father Lohmann, he had lived at the Brackenridge Villa and had always served as Congregational host to the many priests and bishops who visited there over the years. He had set up a bookbindery in the basement of the building and had preserved many old volumes collected in the Villa and in the convent. He had also spent many days in identifying and caring for the trees and shrubs on the grounds of the motherhouse. Father Schneider died at the age of eighty-seven, after a prolonged illness at Santa Rosa. When Mother Mary Calvary wrote to tell the sisters the sad news, she described him as "a very saintly priest, whose charity, patience, punctuality, and devotedness to duty should be an inspiration to all of us."³

Replacing Father Schneider as chaplain at the motherhouse was Father Thomas A. French, who like his predecessor gave courses in theology to the novices and to the College students and presided at all of the liturgical functions in the motherhouse chapel.⁴ Like Father Schneider also, Father French would hold this position for many years and become recognized for his faithfulness and dedication to his priest-

hood, his scholarly pursuit of theological studies, and his great willingness to serve the needs of the sisters.

In the 1950s, the increase in the number of retired sisters was posing a new concern for the Congregation. Although the original St. Francis Home, opened in 1895 for the aged and infirm members, had been replaced with a new and larger structure in 1906 which accommodated over fifty sisters, the facility had for many years been overcrowded. Additional space was provided in the motherhouse, but even these accommodations were becoming fully occupied. For many years, the administration of the San Antonio Province had been trying to secure enough funds to alleviate the situation by building a new retirement center. At last, in 1954 Mother Mechtildis Dryburgh, provincial superior, announced that a new home for the retired sisters, St. Joseph's Convent, would be constructed on part of the motherhouse property. The site was to be called Marian Heights in observance of the Marian Year being celebrated in the Catholic Church.

The building was dedicated by Archbishop Robert E. Lucey, and on July 1, 1955, all of the retired sisters from St. Francis Home and the motherhouse infirmary moved in. They ranged in age from 59 to 94, and they came in wheelchairs and on walkers, by ambulances, automobiles, and even the Incarnate Word High School bus.

The main chapel of St. Joseph's Convent, a gift of Annie Sullivan, John Cotter Sullivan, and Mrs. John Lincoln Clem, was dedicated as a memorial to their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Sullivan. The chapel contained a magnificent altar and statues of Italian marble as well as stations of the cross designed by Sister M. Alphonsine Seiwert. When the adoration chapel was opened on the second floor, the practice of having exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and perpetual adoration was moved from the motherhouse to the new location.⁵

Construction was taking place during this time also at the far end of the motherhouse grounds with the building of a new Incarnate Word Grade School and High School and the separation of the two institutions from the College. Enrollment had been increasing on all three levels creating a need for additional classroom and dormitory space. Also, having all three educational units on the same campus and under the administration of the College had resulted in a complete overshadowing of the high school and the elementary grades. The campus had over 280 acres with plenty of room for expansion. It was time to separate one from the other.

In 1950, plans were drawn up for a new high school and grade school to be constructed on the western edge of the motherhouse property at some distance from the College and on a height that offered a magnificent view of the city. Since the very early days of the Congregation,

the setting had been a favorite spot, because of its natural beauty, for the outings of the sisters, particularly for the novices during their Thursday afternoon recreation periods. It had been named Madeleine Field in memory of the foundress, Rev. Mother Madeleine Chollet.

Incarnate Word School had been one of the first institutions that the sisters had established through their own resources, opened first in the central area of San Antonio and later moved to the west wing of the motherhouse.⁶ They had always taken great pride in the institution and now determined that they would invest whatever was needed to build a modern, attractive facility with spacious, well-lighted and well-equipped classrooms, laboratories, and library; a large gymnasium; and pleasantly furnished apartments for resident students.⁷ The cost of construction was \$1,000,000, and upon completion, the building was described as "the million-dollar school with the million-dollar view."

Mother Columkille, President of the College with authority also over the high school and grade school, decided that the campus should reflect the Irish heritage that by this time was very strong in the Congregation. The campus was called Mt. Erin, the building was adorned with a prominent Celtic cross, and the entrances and hallways were paved with green terrazzo. The school colors were green and white, which matched the green and white uniforms worn by the students. A huge green shamrock was even worked into the materials used for the roof.

At the same time, the sisters in Mexico were expanding their work in health care. In 1951, they were invited to take on the direction of nursing services and other departments at Sanatorio Metepec in Puebla, where a hospital was established for workers in the textile factories of the Atlixco region.⁸ Sisters who served in the health center for many years included Sister Ma. Ligorio Ureña, who directed the school of nursing; Sister Ana Ma. Rada, who was night supervisor; and Sister Octavia Ma. Bernal, who directed the kitchen and laundry.

In 1955, the sisters took on additional responsibilities in health care at Sanatorio San José in Mexico, D. F. Mother Bertha Elia Zúniga was appointed director of nursing service.

In the same year, at the request of Bishop Sergio Méndez Arceo, the sisters took over the direction of Dispensario La Inmaculada in Tepetates, Cuernavaca. Members of the first community were Sisters Ma. de la Dolorosa Romero, Ma. de la Cruz Valenzuela, Ma. Guadalupe (Ma. del Tepeyac) Brambila, and Patricia Ma. Hernández. The sisters combined their work in the dispensary, which served the needs of the poor people of the area, with catechetical work. They worked with groups organized by Father William Wasson and called "Our Little Brothers and Sisters." Their work was interrupted in 1972, when they were asked to take respon-

sibility for nursing at the Red Cross hospital. The dispensary was reopened, however, in 1983. Sister Ma. de la Providencia Guzmán was greatly responsible for developing the service for the poor.

Another new foundation in health care was made with the opening of Hospital Balbuena in Maravatío, Michoacán. Mother María del Roble Rodríguez, Sister María Carlota Salmón, Sister María Isabel (Carmen) Leal, and Sister María de la Providencia Guzmán began their work there as supervisors of nursing service in 1956.

Just four years later, in 1962, they began working at the Sanatorio San José, Zamora, Michoacán, at the request of Drs. Alberto and Enrique Sahagún. Here they became involved also in the establishment of a school of nursing which was incorporated in the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

At the request of Governor Oscar Soto Mainos and through their contact with Father Anacleto Aguilera, the sisters took on responsibilities for health care in 1962 at Hospital Central in Chihuahua. The first sisters to begin working there were Mother Catalina de Sena Martínez, Sister Josefa del Real, Sister Carmen (Ma. de la Anunciación) Salas, and Sister Graciela (Josefina) Sotelo.⁹

The postwar years were important also for the opening of more parochial schools in Catholic dioceses throughout the United States. All construction had been halted during the 1940s, but ten years later pastors were once again asking for more teachers to staff new schools.¹⁰ Within a ten-year period from 1953 to 1963, the sisters helped to establish nine new parish schools:

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|------|--|
| 1953 | St. James School, Potosi, Missouri
Mother Henrietta Oliver, Principal |
| 1955 | Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, Corpus Christi, Texas
Mother Mechtildis Dryburgh, Principal
St. Sebastian School, St. Louis, Missouri
Mother Edwin McCarthy, Principal |
| 1957 | St. Dismas School, Florissant, Missouri
Mother Domitius O'Connor, Principal
St. Patrick School, St. Patrick, Missouri
Mother Angela Hipwell, Principal |
| 1959 | St. Catherine Laboure School, Cahokia, Illinois
Mother Albeus Hartigan, Principal
St. Elizabeth School, Lubbock, Texas
Mother Matilda Fagan, Principal ¹¹ |
| 1961 | Mary Immaculate School, Kirksville, Mo.
Mother Mary Rose Forck, Principal |
| 1962 | St. Alice School, Fort Worth, Texas
Mother Kiaran Cadden, Principal ¹² |

One of the major changes in the parochial schools during this period was the introduction of lay teachers in the classroom, a situation unheard of earlier. Appointing a lay teacher in 1945, perhaps the first in the parochial schools operated by the sisters, was such an important happening that Mother Helena wrote about it in the monthly letter from the general administration: "Many pastors in our vicinity [have] found that it is easier to erect a new building than it is to secure additional teachers, hence some, like the reverend pastor of St. Mary Magdalen's School, engaged a secular teacher. A former student of Incarnate Word College is now a member of his faculty and is efficiently handling the seventh grade pupils."¹³ The presence of a lay teacher at St. James School, Seguin, was so unusual that when Mrs. Elizabeth Vetter joined the faculty the children called her "Sister Elizabeth."

The postwar baby boom created unprecedented increases in parochial school enrollments far exceeding the growth in the number of sisters. Rev. Mother Mary Clare wrote to the pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral School in San Angelo: "Will the people understand that death and old age are thinning out our ranks and the incoming classes are not adequate to fill the vacancies? . . . In one of our parochial schools this year the number of secular teachers has mounted to six. This of course does not console you, Monsignor. I mention it to show you the shortage of sisters. . . . Parents do want sister teachers for their children. Rightly so, but where are we to secure them!"¹⁴

By 1951, almost every school recorded the addition of lay persons to the staff:

At St. Catherine of Siena in Metairie a record enrollment of one thousand and forty-one children is cared for by a staff of ten sisters and seven lay teachers. Construction has begun on a new building which will help to relieve the crowded conditions of the classrooms. St. Peter Prince of the Apostles has four lay teachers to help the sisters with an enrollment of over five hundred pupils. Two new classrooms and five hundred and fifty children in St. Mary Magdalen's required the employment of three secular teachers, and St. Ann's with an enrollment of seven hundred reports the same condition, along with the lack of classroom and playground space. At St. Frances of Rome in Cicero, eight hundred and seventy pupils are enrolled, and three lay teachers are employed as regular faculty members. In addition to the lay teacher of home economics at St. Mary's Academy, Amarillo, three lay teachers have been employed to help with an enrollment of over four hundred and fifty children in the grades and kindergarten. The elementary department at Old Mines is overcrowded, but lay teachers could not be found to relieve the situation.¹⁵

Another change in the schools came about as a result of the U. S. Supreme Court's decision in 1954 that overturned the "separate but equal" rule and ushered in the move toward integration. The action of some Catholic bishops had preceded that of the courts, and some parochial schools were integrated before the Supreme Court ruling. In St. Louis, Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter ordered the desegregation of the Catholic schools in 1947, and in San Antonio Archbishop Robert E. Lucey issued the same directive one year before the Supreme Court's decision. In the St. Louis area, the sisters were quick to respond to Archbishop Ritter's mandate, and the parochial schools were integrated almost overnight. Enrollments began to drop in many city schools such as Blessed Sacrament, however, as the racial characteristics of the neighborhood changed and white people moved to the suburbs.

Similarly, in New Orleans, where integration took place at a much slower pace, white families moved out of the neighborhood of St. Francis de Sales School, and the number of children enrolled began to drop significantly. By 1963, only sixty pupils were attending classes, making it impossible to maintain the school on a sound financial basis.¹⁶

In most of the areas of South Texas, the black population was small and the number of black children in the parochial schools so small that integration was accomplished easily. The principal effect of the move toward integration was seen in the merging of Mexican children with Anglo children and the gradual disappearance of the substandard and crowded classrooms attached to the parochial school and operated solely for the Mexican children.

The sisters opened two private Catholic high schools during this period. The first, Archbishop Chapelle High School, was established in 1962 under the auspices of the archdiocese of New Orleans and named after Archbishop Placide Louis Chapelle, the sixth archbishop of the diocese. Mother Beatrice Hogan was appointed superior and principal, and working with her were Sisters Frances Therese Phillipus, Mary Georgia Munro, John Bosco O'Driscoll, and Edmund Brennan. In sending the sisters to staff the new school, superiors of the Congregation had agreed to increase the size of the faculty to twenty by sending five more sisters each year for four years. Chapelle was the only Catholic high school for girls in the East Jefferson Parish of New Orleans, and opened with an enrollment of 235 freshmen.¹⁷ As another class was added each year, the school grew rapidly to over 1200 students.

The second new high school was opened in Dunmore, County Galway, Ireland, at the convent that had been established in 1925 as a house of formation for young women entering the Congregation from European countries. Over the years, large groups of candidates,

particularly from Ireland, had spent their first years of training there. During the war years the convent had even served as a novitiate.

In the early 1960s, however, young women were no longer entering from Germany and France, and even the number of Irish candidates was beginning to decline.¹⁸ At the same time, the people of the area were asking for the establishment of a secondary school. By 1963, it was determined to convert the convent into a coeducational school offering, according to the educational standards of Ireland, curricula leading to either an Intermediate Certificate or a Leaving Certificate. In addition to the usual secondary school subjects, students were taught Irish. With Sister Rita Prendergast as principal, the facility called Incarnate Word College opened with a registration of sixty students. By 1967, enrollment had increased to such an extent that it became necessary to build a new school accommodating 200.¹⁹

In Mexico, the schools were expanding also as the country experienced some measure of peace and the Church emerged from the years of persecution. The sisters opened Colegio Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra in 1962 in San Andrés, Tuxtla, Veracruz, at the request of Bishop Arturo Zsymanski. The city of 30,000 people had for over thirty-five years been without priests or sisters to minister to their spiritual needs. The school was under the direction of Sister Lucía Zendejas as principal.²⁰

A few years later, in 1967, growth in enrollment at the Instituto Miguel Angel in Mexico City prompted the construction of another school in Colonia Florida. In 1967, Mother María Goretti Rivera, together with seventeen other sisters, established the new Instituto Miguel Angel with provision for 1800 students.

In the United States as well as in Mexico, the sisters responded also to the increasing demand for more social welfare centers serving in particular the needs of women and children. In 1952, at the request of Bishop Thomas K. Gorman of the Dallas-Fort Worth Diocese, they opened St. Teresa's Home, a shelter established by Catholic Charities for unwed mothers and their children. Mother Raymund Borgmeyer, Sister Agnes Teresa Turner, and Sister Edith Louise Pastore operated the home located in Fort Worth.²¹

Just two years later, in 1954, Centro Social Juana de Arco, or the House of the Jacarandas as it was often called, was established by Father Julio J. Vértiz in Mexico City, and Mother María Dolorosa Romero and Sisters Matilde Velázquez, María de los Dolores Tamariz, María del Rosario Prado, and Juana de Arco Díez began their work of training teenage girls in vocational skills, in teaching religion, in operating a medical dispensary, and in serving meals to as many as 300 hungry children a day.

From as early as 1875, when the postulant, Louise Reibe, later known as Sister St. John, became the first member of the Congregation to earn a teacher's certificate, the general administration had been concerned about the adequate preparation of the sisters for their work in the schools and in the hospitals. Summer classes for the training of teachers had been established as early as 1903 at the motherhouse. At the same time, the Santa Rosa School of Nursing had been opened for the preparation of sisters and lay women in health care. Advancement in education became increasingly important, however, in the 1940s and 1950s, and the sisters were constantly challenged to improve their level of professional competency.

Every sister could not be released full time for study, however. Institutions had to remain open, and teachers and nurses had to carry on their work. Many sisters teaching in the parochial schools tried to complete their degrees by taking courses after school hours and on Saturdays. They bore a heavy strain of trying to balance study with a full-time teaching position in addition to a daily prayer schedule of over three hours that included two half-hours of meditation, recitation of the Rosary and of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, spiritual reading, morning prayers, evening prayers, noontime prayers—all in addition to attendance at mass and sometimes benediction.

When the school year came to a close, the sisters packed their bags, closed up their mission houses and came home to the motherhouse or to the provincial house for summer school in which they registered for a maximum course load of academic subjects, sometimes in addition to required attendance at a series of daily lectures given to update them in their theological background.

In 1945, Mother Helena Finck reported on the opening of summer school at the motherhouse and the establishment of the theology lectures at which attendance was not optional: "Reverend Mother extended a heartfelt greeting to each sister and announced that all would have the privilege as well as the obligation of attending the course in theology. . . . Obedient to the instructions received, over one hundred sisters registered for the classes . . . which were conducted by the Rev. Lawrence O'Brien, C.M., S.T.D., of St. John's Seminary."²²

Sisters in the St. Louis Province enrolled in courses offered through a branch of St. Louis University at the provincial house in Normandy or traveled by bus across the city to Fontbonne College. In addition to their course work they too attended required lectures in theology.

For the sisters in health care also it was the age of professionalism, and trying to keep the various hospitals in operation and at the same

time release the sisters for further education was a constant challenge. Writing for the general administration, Mother Helena Finck reported in the 1940s on the sisters who would be assigned to study in order to meet the needs of the future:

Technicians will be at a premium; therefore the present program is to qualify as many of our sisters as is consistent with the daily needs. In the furtherance of this plan, the number of our sisters now registered at Incarnate Word College has been increased to ten, the following having entered classes at the opening of the second semester: Sisters Catalina de Sena [Barajas], Marcela [Moreno], Augustina Jost, and Bridget Mary [Brennan]. Sister Mary Concepta Maher, who has been pursuing the pharmaceutical course at Loyola University, New Orleans, has had to defer graduation in order to prepare for her perpetual vows in August. Sister Mary of Jesus [Singleton] and Sister Annunciata [Camargo] spent a month in Chicago, completing a post-graduate course in Standard Nomenclature of Diseases and Operations and Methods of Cross Indexing. Sister Mary Paul Leidel has registered at the University of St. Louis for a course leading to the Degree of Registered Record Librarian. Sister Cornelia [O'Leary] has successfully passed her examination and is now a laboratory technician and a member of the Society of Clinical Pathologists.²³

The far-sightedness of the general administration in directing the educational preparation of the sisters for their ministry as well as updating their background in theology anticipated a direction that was soon to become widespread in all religious congregations. In 1950, Pope Pius XII called for religious superiors throughout the world to come to Rome to attend the First General Congress on the States of Perfection. Rev. Mother Laserian Conlon and Mother María Luisa Cortés, provincial superioress of the Mexican Province, attended the meeting which addressed the need for adapting various aspects of religious life to modern times, including the sisters' educational and spiritual preparation.

The issue received additional attention with the establishment in 1953 of the Sister Formation Conference. The organization focused the attention of congregations throughout the United States on formation programs that combined the spiritual, social, intellectual, and professional preparation of sisters.

At the same time, the Texas Association of Colleges adopted a new policy stating that students working toward the Bachelor of Arts degree must complete their course of studies within a five-year period. Although all of the sisters involved in teaching had been enrolled in classes at Incarnate Word College or other institutions of higher education, many of them had been pursuing course work only during summer

sessions. Under such circumstances, it was not unusual for a sister to take fifteen to twenty years to complete her bachelor's degree.

Prompted by the concerns of the Holy See, the urging of the Sister Formation Conference, and the new regulation of the Texas Association of Colleges, the general administration decided that an even more determined effort must be made to have every sister complete her degree program as soon as possible. More sisters would be assigned each year to study at the College, and in the future no young sister would be sent out to the schools or the hospitals without having completed her education. At the same time, the involvement of the Congregation in the parochial schools could not be expanded. A letter was sent to Archbishop Lucey in San Antonio and to pastors of parishes, advising them that "no additional sister teacher [could] be sent to any of the schools staffed by the congregation."²⁴

From forty to sixty sisters were assigned each year throughout the 1950s to complete their education. Those studying for their nursing diplomas were enrolled in training programs at Santa Rosa Hospital, the Muguerza Hospital, and the Instituto Nacional de Cardiología. Sisters working on their baccalaureate degrees attended Incarnate Word College, and for their master's and doctoral degrees they enrolled at various universities, including The Catholic University of America, Loyola University in New Orleans, The University of Texas, Marquette University, the Institutum Divi Thomae, the Chicago Conservatory of Music, Peabody College, St. Louis University, the University of Houston, the University of Wisconsin, and Notre Dame University.

Some sisters preparing for their teaching positions at the College were even sent to prestigious universities in Europe. Sisters Alacoque Power and Mary Daniel Healy went to Oxford University and the University of Fribourg; Sister Claire Eileen Craddock studied French at the Sorbonne; and Sister Rosa María Icaza attended the University of Madrid. To prepare for work in formation, Sisters Mary Jarlath Conneely and María Eucaristía Scougall studied at Regina Mundi in Rome. As a result of this intense concentration on higher education and professional preparation, the sisters became a well educated group of women whose college, schools, hospitals, and social welfare centers were highly respected for their efficient organization and management.

As a means of continued updating of their education they became involved in national organizations related to their professions and came together annually for meetings sponsored by the Congregation as means of sharing their information. Strange as it may seem, the sisters had never come together before this time as professional teachers, nurses, or

hospital administrators to discuss their common problems, to share their expertise, and to challenge each other in their ministry.

Religious congregations throughout the country were beginning to work together in a similar way. Through the Conference of Major Superiors of Women, later called the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), established in 1956, general administrations were studying their common ministries, their programs of religious formation, and their approaches to updating religious life. During the next decade, sisters were to face profound changes in their congregations and within the whole Catholic Church as a result of the Second Vatican Council. Their advancement in education as well as their establishment of networking organizations prepared them to cope with the challenges.

Although the postwar years leading up to the opening of the Vatican Council were relatively untroubled times for the Congregation, one serious conflict arose between the sisters and civic leaders in the City of San Antonio. To respond to demographic changes, city officials planned the construction of a northbound expressway and turned to state highway engineers for the proposal of different routes for its construction.

One suggestion offered was to follow the tracks of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, the shortest and most direct route but one that would involve a considerable sum of money for the purchase of property to gain the right-of-way. A second plan was to have the expressway follow the route of an existing thoroughfare, such as McCullough, but this direction would pass through a densely developed area of the city and be very costly to construct also.

Another proposal was to have the highway cut through the adjacent City of Olmos Park, but citizens of the small upscale metropolis immediately rejected the idea of surrendering any property for the right-of-way. The fourth plan involved the use of a part of Brackenridge Park and the Incarnate Word campus, a route which proponents for the expressway argued would be the least expensive. They would not have to pay for the park land owned by the city and expected to secure the 16-acre right-of-way through the Incarnate Word property at low cost.

Following this route, the expressway would cut the motherhouse property in two, separating the recently constructed Incarnate Word High School from the even newer St. Joseph's Convent for the retired sisters as well as from the motherhouse and college. The land had been designated for expansion of Incarnate Word High School and construction of a new building for the elementary grades. The sisters were determined to preserve it.

San Antonio voters initially turned down a \$3.5 million bond issue for the new road, but when the matter was presented the second time, in

1961, and was combined with other key proposals they voted in favor of the construction. Represented by prominent San Antonio attorney and former county judge, Al Heck, together with lawyers Pat Maloney and Jack Pasqual, the sisters took the matter to court to resist the right of the city to condemn the land in order to gain the right-of-way.²⁵ Judge Peter Michael Curry issued a temporary injunction because the condemning authorities failed to show the necessity of the route selected. This decision was reversed by the Court of Civil Appeals in Waco. The matter was appealed to the State Supreme Court, that affirmed the appellate court's decision. It was finally carried to the U. S. Supreme Court, which rejected the sisters' appeal.

In the meantime, public antagonism, fueled by the proponents for the highway, mounted against the sisters who were described as obstructionists to the future development of San Antonio. From the very beginning the issue became an emotional one. The construction of the highway became synonymous with the future development of San Antonio. The local newspapers suggested that the sisters did not care about the expressway or the progress of San Antonio. The 16.8-acre parcel of land which they were trying to protect was described as an unsightly ditch. They were falsely accused of trying to hold on to a piece of property which had been donated to them by Colonel George Brackenridge, although all of the evidence was available to show that they had paid in full for the purchase of the land. County Commissioner Sam Jorrie even called for a county tax assessment on land owned by the Congregation.

Because the proposed route cutting through the Incañate Word campus would also take a portion of the Brackenridge Park Golf Course and Zoo, the Conservation Society became involved in the argument. The proponents for the road were attacked for the use of public funds for the desecration of a public park and a public zoo as well as severing a college campus.

The argument even reached the floor of the Texas Senate when Senator Franklin Spears contested a rider to the state appropriations bill providing that the State Highway Department could not spend money for an expressway passing through park land. The inclusion of the rider had been the work of Representative Jake Johnson.

In a public hearing on the issue held at MacArthur Park and attended by approximately 500 citizens, Mother Calixta Garvey, secretary general, argued for an alternative route. "If the expressway is built," she said, "motorists will have effective access to the city, but the IWC campus will be choked into narrow limits. . . . The greater good [education] should not be hampered at the expense of the lesser good

[the expressway] especially when the expressway will be just as effective in another location."²⁶

Mayor Walter McAllister, prime mover in the whole controversy, gave a formal presentation in which he attacked the sisters for thwarting the will of the people who had approved the bond issue. He marched out of the meeting before it was over, refusing to be questioned by Pat Maloney and others representing the sisters.

Several other persons offered their views both in defense of and in opposition to the expressway route. One of the most sensational proposals was offered by conservationist Wanda Ford, who dramatically suggested that as a last resort opponents might "throw themselves in front of the bulldozers."²⁷

Not until 1966, five years after the bond issue had been approved, was the controversy settled. The sisters had earnestly wanted to preserve their property from being divided. They wanted to keep their four institutions, Incarnate Word High School, St. Joseph's Convent, Incarnate Word College, and Incarnate Word Convent, connected on the same campus to provide accessibility for the sisters who frequently walked back and forth between the different locations.²⁸ They were anxious to keep their recently constructed St. Joseph's Convent for the retired sisters as well as Incarnate Word High School free of the noise and pollution from an adjacent expressway that was expected to carry 100,000 cars a day by 1980.²⁹ Finally, they wanted to preserve their property for future expansion of the high school and grade school.³⁰

The sisters' opposition, however, had aroused so much public resentment that they finally decided, against the advice of the attorneys and other persons connected with the case, to drop the suit. The sisters felt, however, that the Congregation had not come to South Texas a hundred years ago to create dissension but rather to serve the needs of humanity. Their mission had never changed.

In a letter to all of the sisters, Mother Calixta Garvey reported:

At last we are able to make a final statement about the long-disputed north expressway. Agreement has been reached between the City of San Antonio and the congregation; the expressway will run through our property between Incarnate Word High School and St. Joseph's Convent, and the congregation will receive \$1,200,000.00 for the property taken and severance. . . . We can honestly say that we did our utmost to prevent the severance of our property. We thank you for having prayed so long and fervently for this intention. Whatever will happen now will surely be for the best.³¹

Even the settlement became a dispute, however. Attorney Pat Maloney had initially argued that the sisters should be compensated for

their land at its replacement value rather than market value and estimated the amount at \$32 million, but the money had never been the primary concern of the sisters. In a private meeting with Mayor McAllister, they asked for a settlement of \$1.5 million to cover the cost of the land as well as severance damages. The mayor made a counter offer of \$1.2 million, half of which he would procure from the state and half to be provided by the city. He followed up his meeting with Rev. Mother Mary Clare by a letter in which he stated: "Actually, I did not have authority to offer \$1,200,000. . . . I would recommend such action to the Council and would do my best to persuade the Highway Department to go along. I believe they will." He concluded his letter by saying, "Failing to accept this within one week, this offer will be withdrawn."³²

When the sisters accepted his terms, they assumed, of course, that they were agreeing to a settlement of \$1,200,000, the only amount of money that had been mentioned either in the conversation with Mayor McAllister or in his letter. Rev. Mother Mary Clare responded in good faith: "We accept the sum of \$1,200,000.00 contained in your correspondence of August 5, 1965." In a public statement, she maintained that the Congregation had opposed the route of the expressway because the sisters felt that it "would take more from the community and the people than it would give by reason of its construction." She announced also that "this date we are communicating with Mayor McAllister that his written offer heretofore made is accepted and we consider the matter to be concluded. We do this with full knowledge, according to our own legal and land experts, that we ultimately could realize a sum at least three times in excess of the amount offered. Money has never been the motivating factor in our resistance and obviously it is not now."³³

All litigation was dropped, and the settlement was announced publicly in the news media. Although it was less than they had originally requested, the sisters were left with the assurance that they were to receive the agreed-upon \$1,200,000 for the 16.8 acres of land. They even agreed to give the city an additional .556 of an acre strip along Hildebrand Ave. to widen the road in order to accommodate the increase in traffic. In the meantime, Mayor McAllister left on a two-month tour of Europe. When he returned to San Antonio, he found that the state highway department had agreed to pay only \$372,500 rather than the proposed match of the city's \$600,000.

He announced publicly that "there had been no commitment on the right-of-way price" in his earlier conversation with the sisters. "The situation came up and I said, 'Why not take the \$1.2 million and have at it?' Their eyes lighted up."³⁴

Almost five months later, Mayor McAllister notified Mother Calixta that he “did not offer \$1,200,000 in cash on August 3, 1965 [and] had no authorization to make such an offer.” He had said only that he “would endeavor to get the Highway Department to pay their one-half and the city the other one-half of the suggested \$1,200,000.”³⁵ The final offer of the mayor was \$600,000 in cash from the City of San Antonio and \$372,500 from the State Highway Department in addition to the building of a pedestrian bridge across the expressway costing from forty to fifty thousand.

In an effort to justify his actions, McAllister announced publicly, “I want to say the settlement is an exceedingly fair one, in fact, I have had some citizens say to me that the settlement is liberal. However, I feel they (the Sisters of Charity) should be treated as generously as possible.”³⁶ Wishing to conclude the matter and to cause no further public outrage, the sisters accepted the final figure of \$972,500, although they realized clearly that the settlement was neither honest nor fair. Despite the mayor’s repudiation and the advice of their attorneys, the sisters again capitulated in the interest of the public good.

Once an announcement was made that the sisters had withdrawn all litigation, persons from many parts of the city, particularly those whose property bordered on the route of the expressway, contacted them expressing disappointment that they had backed down on their opposition. Unfortunately, as Pat Maloney pointed out, these “belated friends” had not offered their support during the peak of the controversy.³⁷

At the same time, the media praised Mayor McAllister for “his fantastic ability to solve the apparently insolvable problems of a newly progressive city.”³⁸ One stretch of the expressway was later named in his honor.

These questionable conclusions were not shared by many, however. As Pat Maloney commented, “It was not McAllister’s finest hour.”³⁹ Throughout the long ordeal, the mayor had been evidently chagrined that his plans were thwarted by a group of Catholic sisters. His anti-Catholic sentiments were well known throughout the city, and in an era before the recognition of women’s rights he was not inclined to recognize or appreciate the sisters’ concern for their property.

While the controversy over the expressway continued on and on during the early 1960s, the sisters became involved in another important development. For several years, leaders of the Catholic Church had voiced their concern over the plight of the people of Latin America who were living in extreme poverty and often under political oppression. Pope John XXIII had expressed his concern over the situation in his two encyclicals, *Mater et Magister* and *Pacem in Terris*. Linked with a

growing awareness of the inhumane conditions of the people was a fear of Communistic takeover. Representing the Holy See, the Right Rev. Agostino Caseroli in 1961 appealed to religious congregations in the United States to pledge ten percent of their membership over a ten-year period to serve not only the religious needs but also the educational, economic, and social needs of the Latin American people.

Rev. Mother Mary Clare Cronly, who had been elected superior general in 1954, gave careful consideration to the plea. The Congregation had been founded as a missionary effort in the New World with the first three sisters coming from France to minister to the religious and social needs of the people of South Texas, but with the exception of their early expansion into Mexico, the sisters had not moved on to other missionary fields. They had chosen rather to concentrate their efforts in these two areas, with the exception of the recently opened high school in Ireland, which could not be considered a missionary endeavor.

Extremely conscientious of her duties as the superior general, Rev. Mother Mary Clare determined that the Congregation should respond to the appeal from Rome and establish a mission in South America. The sisters were already anticipating the celebration of their centennial which would be observed in 1969, and the missionary effort would be undertaken in gratitude to God for the many blessings of the Congregation since its founding almost 100 years ago.

Guided principally by Sister Charles Marie Frank, who was serving as Dean of the College of Nursing at The Catholic University in Washington, D. C., and who had broad experience in working with the ministries of health in Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and Peru, the general administration decided to begin their work in a remote area of Peru, in the city of Chimbote, approximately 250 miles north of Lima.⁴⁰ It was an area of over-population, extreme poverty, and the most primitive living conditions. It was an area that had been defined as ripe for Communism.

Arrangements were made with the ordinary of the Peruvian diocese, Bishop Charles J. Burke, O.P., and in 1963, Mother Calixta wrote to all of the sisters calling for volunteers who would "need to be self-sacrificing, generous, ready to live amid unaccustomed poverty, and most especially, they must love the poor and make themselves one with them as they work to improve their lot."⁴¹

The mission was placed under the direction of Sister Charles Marie, with Sisters María Felicitas Villegas, Rosalina Acosta, Louis Katharine Schuler, Mary Mark Gerken, and Gwendolyn Grothoff assisting her. Following a solemn departure ceremony in the motherhouse

chapel at which Bishop Stephen A. Leven presided, the sisters left San Antonio on April 23, 1964, for Ponce, Puerto Rico. Here they attended the Ponce Institute for Intercultural Communication at the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, participating in a sixteen-week intensive course designed for missionaries going to South America that included conversational Spanish as well as studies on Peru, apostolic methods, theology of the apostolate, spiritual formation, and field work.

When the sisters arrived in Chimbote on December 19, 1964, they found a city that had mushroomed in population over a ten-year period, growing from 5000 to over 120,000 in response to a rise in the fishing industry. People were living in houses made out of straw mats, with no sanitation, contaminated drinking water, little or no electricity, a scarcity of food, and all of the health problems attendant upon such conditions. Most of them had migrated from the Sierra, hoping to find opportunities for employment and a better life. The industry, however, had been exploited and almost destroyed by greedy owners; jobs were scarce; and workers were grossly underpaid. Chimbote was a city where even the atmosphere was completely contaminated by exhaust from the factories operated day and night in burning fish to produce fertilizer and from Peru's only steel mill located in the area. It was a city of displaced people trying to survive under the most inhumane conditions.

The sisters began their work in St. Francis of Assisi Parish, which encompassed over 80,000 people, approximately one-third of the total population of Chimbote. The parish was under the direction of the priests of the Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle, an organization of American clergy serving in Latin America that had been founded in 1958 by Cardinal Cushing of Boston. The pastor, Father Rudolph Masciarelli, directed the team of priests, sisters, and lay persons working to provide liturgical celebrations, religious education, and social services for the people of the parish.

In accepting the appeal to open a mission in Chimbote, the Congregation had agreed to provide not only the services of the sisters and to build a convent for their living accommodations but also to provide the financial resources to construct and support a clinic and medical dispensary until the operation could become self-sustaining. Named Centro Santa Clara in honor of Rev. Mother Mary Clare, the facility was soon serving over 1,000 persons each month, providing medical treatment, immunization programs, instruction, and home visits. Medicines and supplies were shipped to the center from the many hospitals operated by the sisters in the United States, the Catholic Medical Mission Board, and Project HOPE.



Six sisters left San Antonio in 1964 to establish a mission in Chimbote, Perú: Sister Charles Marie Frank, Sister Mary Mark Gerken, Sister María Felicitas Villegas, Sister Rosalina Acosta, Sister Louis Katharine Schuler, and Sister Gwendolyn Grothoff. Wishing them farewell were Rev. Mother Mary Clare Cronly (far right) and Mother Mary Calvary LePage of the general administration.



Sister Emma Hernández cares for two infants brought into the clinic in Chimbote for medical attention.



Sister Rita Prendergast, center, visits with women prisoners at the jail in Hauncané, Perú.

"Hepatitis, tuberculosis, bronchial pneumonia, bronchitis, carbuncles, and infections of every part of the body were common as well as a variety of endemic communicable diseases," according to Sister Charles Marie. "Little children came in the arms of their mothers. Many of them were suffering from infantile diarrhea and dehydration. Infants were brought in convulsing from tetanus infection. Many of the babies died before the sisters could attend them. . . . The mother's first words would be, '*La fe, Madrecita, la fe.*' She was asking for Baptism for her child."⁴² In addition to their ministry to the sick, the sisters became involved in working with youth groups, organizing a lay apostolate, establishing social services for families, and teaching religion.

Starting the mission in Peru demanded courage on the part of the sisters, particularly on the part of Rev. Mother Mary Clare, who spearheaded the effort. Quiet, reserved, and even timid in public appearances, she did not seem to be a person who would undertake such a challenge. She was always prim and proper, quiet and reserved. She had been mistress of novices for many years and also provincial superioress, and during her tenure in these offices had developed a conscientious concern for minute observances of the rule.

In one of her lectures to the sisters offered at the end of the summer retreats she told them, "Trifles make perfection but perfection is no trifle." She reminded them of many customs and practices which they were failing to observe—use of the appropriate title "Sister" when addressing each other, making the proper inclination to the crucifix upon entering the refectory, keeping their hands covered with the sleeves of the habit upon entering the chapel. All of these practices were important to her and gave evidence of exactitude and fidelity to the rule. "God measures the greatness of our actions by the love with which we perform them," she insisted, rather than by the importance of the deeds themselves.⁴³

She was so exact in everything she did herself that Mother Mary Calvary LePage, who served in the general administration with her, said it was possible to tell the exact time of the day by what Rev. Mother Mary Clare was doing. "She was monastically oriented," according to Sister Charles Marie and lived her religious life almost as if she were following the rules of the cloister. Ironically, during her years in administration, she had been thrust into the midst of the controversy over the north expressway, a situation totally opposite to the cloistered way of life she followed. Unable to assume the public role demanded of her during this ordeal, she had usually turned to Mother Calixta or to Dr. S. Thomas Greenburg, president of Incarnate Word College, to be the spokesperson for the Congregation.

Rev. Mother Mary Clare's whole personality seemed to lack the adventurous traits needed to reach out in a missionary endeavor in South America, but Vatican authorities had called for sisters to serve the needs of the poor. Always obedient to the authority of the Church, she responded without hesitation and without question.

Two years after the mission was established in Chimbote, another request came from Archbishop Romolo Carboni, the Apostolic Nuncio to Peru, to expand the work by taking over the direction of nursing service and other departments in Hospital Central de Policía in Lima. "If we could find sisters . . . deeply religious and apostolic, highly competent professionally, generous and cheerful in disposition," he said, "the Church could make a tremendous impression on the Police and their families here, virtually all of whom belong to the lower middle and poorer classes."⁴⁴ Once again Rev. Mother Mary Clare responded to the appeal of the Church, and Sisters María Felicitas Villegas, María del Roble Rodríguez, Manuela Montalvo, Clara María Sepúlveda, and Victor Hennessey began their work at the 500-bed facility in 1966.⁴⁵

With the exception of the years of conflict over the route of the north expressway, the 1950s and the early 1960s had been a quietly progressive period for the Congregation. It had expanded in its traditional works of teaching and health care and had made a bold new venture into the missionary territory of South America. The sisters themselves had advanced educationally and professionally. It had been a period during which Catholics in general had gained a measure of assurance and pride in their status as John F. Kennedy became the first Roman Catholic president of the United States.

It had been a time of great heroes with President Kennedy resisting Communist aggression; the first astronauts flying into space; Martin Luther King giving his inspirational speech, "I Have a Dream"; and Pope John XXIII being elected to head the Catholic Church. It was a time also of idealism in which young people sought to follow strong convictions and to serve others through such organizations as the Peace Corps and VISTA as well as through a lifelong commitment to religious vows.

By the mid 1960s, however, the stability and tranquility were coming to an end. The whole world was shocked with the assassination in 1963 of President Kennedy; civil rights demonstrations were a clarion call to the American people to correct social injustice; Angelo Roncalli was elected Pope John XXIII and challenged the Catholic Church to "open the windows." It was a time of dramatic change.

CHAPTER XII

THE VATICAN COUNCIL, CHANGES IN THE CONGREGATION, AND CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENNIAL

When the College of Cardinals assembled in Rome in 1958 to elect a successor to the recently deceased Pope Pius XII, they chose a man well advanced in years whom they expected would maintain the status quo of the Catholic Church through a short transition period. Pope John XXIII, however, completely reversed the cardinals' expectations. Just a few months after his election, he announced the opening of a second Vatican council to be convened in October, 1962, to address essentially the subject of *aggiornamento*, or updating of the Catholic Church, a council that would bring about radical changes in all communities of religious men and women as well as in the whole Catholic world.

Like the College of Cardinals and other members of the Catholic Church, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word could not have foreseen the far-reaching effects that Vatican II would have on their lives. The fundamentals of their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience would remain the same, but the understanding of their commitment would change. New forms of ministry and a new role in society would be established. An emphasis would be placed on scripturally based meditation rather than on prescribed prayers recited in common. Organizational structures would be altered; modes of governance would be transformed; formation programs for novices would be expanded and updated; sharing ministry with the laity would become commonplace; new forms of community living would be introduced, and the religious habit would be adapted to contemporary needs.

In 1961, just one year before the opening of the Council, the sisters showed how unsuspecting they were of the many changes that lay

ahead of them when they undertook a rewriting of their constitutions. The document was approved in 1962 by the Sacred Congregation of Religious, and Mother Calixta Garvey sent a mimeographed copy to every mission, telling the sisters: "We consider it advisable to wait until after the Ecumenical Council before having it printed, in the event that some decisions of the Council may have to be incorporated."¹ The sisters obviously expected that only minor changes, if any, would be necessary. How different would be the reality!²

In spite of the fact that they had not anticipated all of the changes, the sisters in general responded readily as the sessions of the Council progressed calling for radical adaptation in every aspect of the Catholic Church. C. J. Yuhaus in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* has pointed out that religious congregations of women showed a remarkable willingness to accept the directives of the Council. "No other group in the Church," he said, "responded to the call for reform and renewal as immediately, as vigorously, or with such extraordinary and costly effort."³

What Yuhaus failed to note was that many congregations were ready for change. Since 1950, when the First International Congress on the States of Perfection was held in Rome, they had been urged to renew their spirit, update their customs, simplify their form of dress, and pursue educational preparation for their apostolates.

Two years later, superiors of communities of religious women in the United States assembled at the University of Notre Dame, and once more they were encouraged to update their congregations. In the same year, another meeting was held in Rome, and the message was the same—the need to adapt various aspects of religious life. Pope Pius XII praised those congregations that had already begun to change and urged others to do likewise.

Also, sisters had become, for the most part, a group of well educated women, aware of the shifting values in society, sensitive to new attitudes that were developing toward women, and conscious of the need for adaptation in the Church. Most of them were prepared to incorporate these changes within their congregations. They were also trained to be obedient to authority in the Church, so that even sisters who were not too interested in adaptation as well as those who were outright opposed to it accepted a directive for change when it came from the Vatican.

It is not surprising, therefore, that before the close of the Council in 1965 under the leadership of Pope John's successor, Pope Paul VI, and the publication of all sixteen decrees, declarations, and constitutions on renewal produced by the Council participants, some changes were already taking place in the sisters' communities.⁴ At the motherhouse in

San Antonio, the general administration in 1964 launched into what became one of the most sensitive areas of adaptation—modification of the religious habit.

Four years earlier, when the sisters assembled for the 1960 general chapter, they found that twenty-five proposals had been submitted for changing the habit, suggesting that it be simplified in style and made of a lightweight material more suitable to warm climates. A grass roots movement was beginning to emerge for adaptation. Chapter delegates, however, were not yet ready, and the response to the proposals was firm and direct: "The form of the habit will not be changed."⁵

By 1964, however, it seemed inevitable to Rev. Mother Mary Clare Cronly and other members of the general administration that the change must come. Home economics teachers in the Congregation were called upon to create a new design, one that would make the religious dress more adaptable to warm climates and easier to keep clean. All of the details were spelled out precisely. The material was to be light serge and/or dacron viscose and the hem was to be 4" in depth and 3" from the floor. The heavily starched guimpe and the embroidered scapular were both eliminated. Since the details of the habit had been specified in the constitutions, the sisters had to submit both the old and the new designs to the Sacred Congregation of Religious for approval, although some justifiable complaints were voiced over the necessity of having male clergymen in Rome give their sanction to the religious dress of women in the United States, Mexico, and Peru.

The initial adaptation was not radical, but it called for a major adjustment on the part of many of the sisters. From the founding of the Congregation, they had considered the habit as symbolic of their religious dedication, something holy in itself, and something never to be changed.⁶ The original design had been chosen by the sisters in Lyons, and the emblem with the crown of thorns embroidered on the scapular had even been seen by Jeanne de Matel in a vision.⁷ Also, it was Rev. Mother Madeleine who brought the approved form of the habit from Lyons and presented it, "despite much opposition," to the first sisters in Galveston, together with the mandate from the French superior that it should never be changed.⁸

With so many traditions associated with the religious dress, it is understandable why the whole process became charged with emotion. Progressive changes continued over the next several years, however, until general guidelines were adopted which stated only that "simplicity and dignity should be characteristic of the dress of the Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word." The sisters were advised to follow the spirit of poverty in "the selection, care, and quantity of clothing" and to

dress in ways appropriate to their vocation.⁹ The wearing of the veil became optional.¹⁰

In addition to the change of dress, a profound change in the sisters' concept of their identity began to take effect with the publication in 1964 of "The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (*Lumen Gentium*). The document emphasized a universal call to holiness for all Christians and pointed out that religious life was "not a kind of middle way between the clerical and lay conditions of life. Rather it should be seen as a form of life to which some Christians, both clerical and lay, are called by God so that they may enjoy a special gift of grace in the life of the Church and may contribute, each in his own way, to the saving mission of the Church."¹¹

The document created much confusion regarding the role of sisters in the Church. Formerly, they had viewed themselves as following a unique and special call to holiness and as being co-responsible with the clergy for carrying out the work of salvation. Now that Council leaders were identifying them as members of the laity and proclaiming that all baptized persons were called to the fullness of the spiritual life, sisters were searching for a new identity. The confusion was noted by Sister M. Charles Borromeo Muckenhirn, C.S.C., in *The Changing Sister* when she said, "With its heavy emphasis on the new concept of the People of God, the Council must find an answer to the question of the place of religious in the modern Church."¹²

Another document produced by the Council that called for a change of attitude was the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (*Gaudium et Spes*), which proclaimed a "solidarity of the Church with the whole human family."¹³ Stressing the dignity of the human person and the "community of mankind," the document proclaimed the role of the Church within the world.¹⁴ Cardinal Leon Suenens, Archbishop of Malines-Brussels, and other theologians participating in the Council began to urge sisters to go out into the world and to become more involved with the people they served. "The religious must strive to bring her apostolate to the world *as it is*," Suenens said, "and . . . must be continually adapting to the demands of the moment."¹⁵

The message was a complete reversal of the attitudes that had prevailed among the Incarnate Word sisters since the time of their foundation. Stemming from the cloistered roots of the community in Lyons, enclosure and separation from the world were highly valued. Too much involvement in the world was considered even dangerous to the vocation of the sister, as suggested in the words of Rev. Mother Pierre in a letter that she wrote during one of her visits to Lyons in which she told Sister Alphonse how to direct the sisters in her absence: "Exhort them

to pray, to remain at home, and not be talking—to the doctors or the priest except when necessary. Let them occupy themselves well. Prayer, work, devotedness and distance from the world is their business.”¹⁶

Eighty years later in obedience to the directives of the Council, Mother Calixta urged the sisters “to become closer to the people, . . . to make [their] presence among the people more meaningful, . . . to broaden [their] sphere of influence.”¹⁷

The Council document that had the most influence on congregations of religious men and women was the “Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life” (*Perfectae Caritatis*) published at the fourth and last session of the Council held in 1965. Widespread changes were called for, and every community was to engage in a process of renewal, to return to the scriptures and to the spirit of the founders, and to adapt rules and regulations to the changing times:

The manner of living, praying, and working should be suitably adapted to the physical and psychological conditions of today’s religious and also, to the extent required by the nature of each community, to the needs of the apostolate, the requirements of a given culture, the social and economic circumstances anywhere, but especially in mission countries. The way in which communities are governed should also be reexamined in the light of these same standards.¹⁸

The following year Pope Paul VI issued the document *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, which contained norms for implementing the new directions. Congregations were to hold special general chapters “within two or, at most, three years,” and to rewrite their constitutions in accordance with the decrees of the Council.¹⁹ The process was to include participation of all members.

Before the general administration of the Incarnate Word sisters could plan for this special chapter of renewal, it was necessary to hold a regular chapter for the election of new members of the general council. Even before the renewal process was scheduled to begin, this chapter initiated many changes.

In preparation for the assembly, Rev. Mother Mary Clare directed that all of the sisters should reexamine the regulations on prayer, the horarium, customs, and apostolic works. In contrast to the recent revision of the constitutions that had been done solely by the members of the generalate, now the entire community was asked to study and discuss various aspects of the Congregation and to prepare propositions for change. Such questions as the following were sent out from the general administration to guide the sisters in their study: “Should we adopt the Divine Office rather than continue with the Little Office of the Blessed

Virgin?" "What can we do to strengthen the ecumenical spirit among the members of our congregation and to further their desire to help secure social justice for all?"²⁰

The sisters were advised also to study the decrees issued by the Council, which would be their guide in making the changes that were necessary. Writing as secretary for the general administration, Mother Calixta commented, "It is a consolation to know with a high degree of certainty what the Church, and therefore God, wants us to be and to do."²¹ Surely she had no idea of the hours, days and even years of study and discussion that were to follow on the contents of these documents, the reams of paper that would be circulated to expound their meaning, and the books and articles that would be written before any measure of certainty would be reached.

At the 1966 chapter, delegates elected Mother Calixta to serve as the new superior general. With the Congregation entering full-scale into the era of renewal, she was an excellent choice for the position. An intelligent and scholarly person, she was well read in the massive amount of literature being produced on change in the Church. She was open to new directions, but at the same time, she was cautious about moving too fast and too far from the well established traditions. "We should be careful not to be dazzled by the quest for novelty," she told the sisters. "The Sacred Congregation gives the norms to be followed and we are advised to proceed cautiously, prudently, wisely, circumspectly, and with enlightened clear-sightedness."²² Concerned about being able to interpret fully the new mind of the Church, she called upon a canonist, the Very Rev. Patrick M. J. Clancy, O.P., Vice-Provincial of the Province of St. Albert the Great, Chicago, to serve as consultant for the chapter.²³

Because of the many proposals for change that had been submitted by the sisters, the chapter continued over two sessions, the first held in Summer, 1966, and the second in Spring, 1967. Important decisions included the adoption of the Divine Office to replace the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin and to be recited in English rather than in Latin, establishment of a procedure for more participation of all of the sisters in the election of provincial superiors, the limitation of terms of office for persons in positions of authority, encouragement of the sisters to become involved in movements for civil rights and social justice, a revision of the formation program, and the development of summer renewal programs to update all members of the Congregation in changes taking place within the Church.

Responding to the recent emphasis on Baptism as the sacrament of initiation into the Christian life, sisters would henceforth have the

option of returning to their baptismal names or of feminizing a masculine name.²⁴ Like the adaptation of the religious habit, which was publicized in local newspapers, the change of names created much public attention. At times, it also caused much confusion, as at St. Anthony's Hospital in Amarillo, where it even became necessary to print the following directory of the sisters' former and present names in the hospital newsletter:

Sister Bridgetine Glass	Sister Lucy Glass
Sister John Climacus Daly	Sister Margaret Mary Daly
Sister Josephina Brosnan	Sister Josephine Brosnan
Sister Joseph Alexis Murray	Sister Margaret Murray
Sister Mary Concepta Maher	Sister Bridget Maher
Sister Perpetua Krekeler	Sister Kathleen Krekeler
Sister Eucharista Brandt	Sister Regina Brandt
Sister Philip Neri Grassmuck	Sister Mary Josephine Grassmuck
Sister Mary de Pazzi Walsh	Sister Nora Marie Walsh ²⁵

The chapter of 1966-67 had hardly closed before the sisters began to plan for the Special General Chapter or Chapter of Renewal called for by *Ecclesiae Sanctae*. In accordance with the requirement that there be maximum participation of all members of the community, committees were formed to research every aspect of the Congregation and to offer proposals for change, adaptation, and renewal of governmental structure, the theology of the vows, apostolic works, liturgy and prayer life, sister formation, and community living. An extensive bibliography was provided to assist the sisters in their studies. No previous chapter had been characterized by such intense preparation and such widespread participation.

At the opening of the chapter on December 23, 1968, Mother Calixta addressed the delegates and indicated the importance of the work before them: "Singular powers have been given to the Special Chapter—powers that we have never had before. This time the Church has seen fit to open doors wide. Try to use this power well."²⁶

Two consultants were brought in to assist the chapter delegates: Father Bert Van Croonenburg, C.S.Sp., Professor of Philosophy and Theology at Duquesne University, and Father Thomas Swift, S.J., Professor of Canon Law at St. Louis University. Because of the extensive study necessary for the Chapter of Renewal, a second session was held the following year to complete the work.²⁷

The sisters' general chapters had always been formal happenings with the membership characteristically limited to superiors. Much secrecy surrounded the proceedings, and the agenda of items to be discussed

was tightly controlled. In an unprecedented move, Mother Calixta told the delegates to the special chapter, "I want you to feel perfectly free in stating your opinions. None of us is here for herself. Under the action of the Holy Spirit, each of us has something to contribute. I find it important to emphasize that we have equal voice."²⁸

Because the thirty-three elected delegates did not include representation from the younger members of the Congregation, it was decided that three sisters who had made their perpetual vows within the past five years and three sisters with temporary vows be added to the chapter membership. To facilitate communication between the delegates from Mexico and the United States, earphones were installed and simultaneous translation from English to Spanish was provided for Spanish-speaking sisters. It was determined also that a periodic newsletter be published to keep all of the sisters informed of the chapter proceedings as they occurred.

Major changes were made in interpreting the meaning and the responsibilities of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; in adopting new forms and new areas of ministry; and in changing the forms of prayer. Additional participation in governance was introduced with the establishment of a Sisters' Advisory Committee and a Research and Planning Commission. Several regulations governing community living as well as traditional practices and customs were changed, including provision for more frequent home visits and for a monthly allowance of \$20.00 (150 pesos in Mexico) for each sister's personal needs. Approval was given for experimentation in new ways of electing local superiors and their assistants and in additional changes of the religious habit.²⁹

Not all of the decisions were arrived at readily by the chapter delegates. Neither were they implemented readily by all of the sisters. Many regulations which had been observed so faithfully for years now seemed to have lost their value, and the discontinuance of traditions and customs was sometimes interpreted as a condemnation of the past rather than as a move to adjust to the changes of the present. Whereas in the past it was generally considered that an exact observance of the rules and regulations spelled out in the constitutions and directory was synonymous with following the will of God, now sisters were challenged to exercise their personal responsibility, to make decisions for themselves.

Mother Calixta had warned the delegates at the opening of the chapter: "We know that we have to renew and to adapt. There is no use judging our congregation by standards of 80 or 100 years ago; judge it as it is now. We are living at the present moment. The world is present- and future-oriented, and so we, too, must be present- and future-orient-

ed. There is little avail in looking back and asking ourselves how Mother ____ would have thought of this action. We must decide the direction in which our congregation should go. We must also keep in mind the purpose of our being in religious life—to be able to give ourselves wholly to Christ and to others.”³⁰

New directives, not nearly as many or as explicit as the old ones, demanded new ways of looking at reality. Even the interpretation of the directives was difficult because they were written in a language filled with new terminology. Before they could put the changes into practice, sisters had to first determine what was meant by such terms as “*aggiornamento*,” “accountability,” “commitment,” “collegiality,” “consensus,” “corporate identity,” “participative decision-making,” “witness,” “shared responsibility,” “charism,” “solidarity with the poor,” “dialogue,” “corporate stewardship,” and “signs of the times.”

While much attention during the decade of the sixties was given to internal changes in response to Vatican II, the sisters were involved also in expansion in ministry. Sisters in the Mexican province joined the staff of Hospital de Jesús in Mexico, D. F., in 1968 and were responsible for reorganizing many of the departments. Just six months after they started their work, however, they decided to withdraw their services because of unjust employment practices in the institution.

The following year, 1969, they began working in Hospital San José, a new institution in Monterrey, where they organized the nursing service and trained personnel. In 1972, they accepted the direction of a hospital in Puebla that had been built by Bernardino Tamariz Oropeza, a generous Catholic layman and uncle of Sister Ma. de los Dolores Tamariz. Director of the school of nursing was Sister Tarcisia Villanueva.

In 1974, the sisters joined the staff of the Red Cross Hospital in Cuernavaca. Sister Martha Josefina (Bertha Inés) Rea was involved in the organization and planning of the institution. Other sisters who helped to establish nursing services at the hospital were Sisters Esthela (Luisa Ma.) Gagnière, Ma. Martha Echenique, Ma. de Alacoque Cerisola, Adriana Hoil, and Ma. de la Providencia Guzmán.

Meanwhile, administrators at Santa Rosa in San Antonio were planning to expand the psychiatric facilities of the hospital by constructing a new building in the medical center located in the northwest suburban area of the city. On a 25-acre tract of land donated by the San Antonio Medical Foundation, Villa Rosa Psychiatric and Rehabilitation Pavilion was opened in 1971. Sister Sara (Thomasine) Carter was appointed the first administrator; Dr. Wade Lewis served as medical director.³¹

A new form of ministry was introduced in 1968 that was to become a precedent for many later developments. At the request of Monsignor Robert P. Slattery, Pastor of St. Anselm's Parish, and Monsignor Paul Kaletta, Pastor of Incarnate Word Parish, both recently established in St. Louis, the sisters began working in parish ministry. Sisters Helen Ann (Ignatius) Collier, Alice Marie Rothermich, Joan (Theodore) Holden, and Jane Frances McGrail served as assistants to the pastor. They gathered the parish census, organized parish schools of religion, established parish organizations, visited the sick who had been hospitalized or confined to their homes, planned the various liturgical celebrations, and in short, did everything that was necessary to assist in administering the two parishes. Their work set a precedent for the involvement of many sisters in pastoral ministry over the years to come.

In another new direction for ministry, several sisters began working in institutions not directly related to the Congregation. Sister Charles Marie Frank, after serving as Dean of the School of Nursing at The Catholic University of America, served on the faculty of the University of Trujillo and became a consultant and campus coordinator for the Agency of International Development Nursing Program in Bogotá, Colombia. Sister Hilarion McCarthy was appointed the San Antonio Archdiocesan Supervisor of Schools; Sister Yolanda Tarango worked in the Archdiocesan Youth Office of El Paso; Sister Margaret (Lucille) Snyder served in the Archdiocesan Vocation Office in St. Louis; Sister Mary Julia Delaney became involved with Newman work in the Archdiocese of New Orleans; Sister Mary Vincent O'Donnell worked at the Cardinal Ritter Institute for the Aging in St. Louis, and Sister Rose Mary Manríquez served in the Patrician Center in San Antonio.

Sister Juliann (Rose Frances) Murphy taught nursing at St. Louis University; Sister Ann (Evangela) Quinn taught English at the University of Dallas; Sister Patricia (Ita Patrice) Kennedy taught chemistry at Morgan State College, Baltimore; and Sister Eleanor Ann (John Magdalen) Young became Associate Professor and Co-Director in the Division of Human Nutrition in the Department of Medicine at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio. Sister Mary (Athanasius) Cunningham worked in the Bawnmore Assessment and Advisory Center in Limerick, Ireland. In Mexico, Sister María de San José Novo began working in Escuelas Populares in Guadalajara, and Sisters Ancilla Castillo and Alicia Tarango became involved in Centro Social Juan XXIII in Huejutla.

All of the changes brought about by Vatican II became a contributing factor, although not the only one, to many sisters' withdrawal

from the Congregation. The exodus was not peculiar to the Incarnate Word sisters but became a worldwide phenomenon in the 1970s.

In the United States, the number of sisters had increased steadily during the pre-Vatican II era, reaching a peak of 181,421 in 1966. Twelve years later, in 1980, the number had dropped to 126,517, a decline of 30.26%. Following the national pattern, the Incarnate Word sisters recorded a 28.68% loss. The decrease was attributable to the number of deaths in the community and to a decline in the number of women applying for admission as well as to the increasing number of sisters asking for dispensations from their vows.

In earlier times, the number of sisters who chose to leave the congregation each year ranged from 0 to 3. The following figures show how the pattern changed during the 70s. While the loss of members through death remained consistent, there was a marked increase in sisters requesting dispensation from perpetual vows. From 1970 to 1980, a total of 102 sisters with perpetual vows left the Congregation. The figures would be even higher if those with temporary vows and those requesting a leave of absence or exclaustation were included.³² During the same period, 164 sisters died. The total decrease in membership was 266.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Requests for Dispensation</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
1970	8	14
1971	13	15
1972	7	17
1973	12	14
1974	12	11
1975	11	18
1976	11	14
1977	12	15
1978	7	11
1979	6	15
1980	3	20

All of the reasons for the sisters' leaving have not been fully examined, but certainly the changing attitudes within the Church had a great influence on their decisions. Some felt that they could accomplish as much or even more outside the Congregation now that the role of the laity in the Church had been defined. For some, the changes of Vatican II were too drastic and happened too quickly; they were not able to cope with the necessary adjustments. For others, the Congregation was not responding quickly enough, and they lost patience waiting for all of the changes to take place.

Some had entered the convent at a very early age, perhaps encouraged too strongly by parents or other sisters and now thought seriously of marriage. Some, no doubt, had realized much earlier that they should never have entered the Congregation, that the life was not suitable to their needs, but they had never left because of the stigma attached to forsaking a religious vocation. Such attitudes had now changed, and there was no disgrace attached to the decision to withdraw.

Sister Marie Augusta Neal, a sociologist who perhaps has done more research on women in religious congregations than any other scholar, has pointed out that the increase in the number of sisters leaving their communities "actually began in 1953, when systematic degree programs were introduced for all new members." This advancement in educational preparation could have been a contributing factor to the loss since "the very upgrading of sisters' professional training in the midst of the new women's movement offered so many more options for the women already in religious life and those considering religious life."³³

Combined with the loss of sisters who chose to leave was a decrease in the number of women seeking admission. In 1960, shortly before the Vatican Council opened and all of the changes took place, Mother Calixta had written in a letter from the general administration: "We now have 34 postulants and 50 novices here [San Antonio], with 14 postulants and 22 novices in Mexico City. Besides, there are 17 aspirants here and 18 more in Dunmore. A goodly number in all, for which we thank God."³⁴

The large number of women entering in the 1950s and 1960s even prompted the general administration to make plans for building a separate novitiate combined with generalate offices. The Sacred Congregation of Religious, however, did not approve of combining the facilities. Accordingly, the building plans were changed, and the novitiate was retained at the motherhouse while a new building was constructed in 1966 for the general administration. The decision was a fortunate one in the light of the future decline in numbers.³⁵

By 1970, only one young woman in the United States and two in Mexico were in the postulancy program. The United States provinces had two novices, and the Mexican province had six.

The decrease in the number of sisters made it imperative that the Congregation withdraw its services from many institutions, including San Francisco de la Espada Mission School, San Antonio, and Hospital San José, Zamora, Mich., México (1967); Our Lady of Victory School, Paris, Texas (1967); Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, El Paso, and Sanatorio Metepec, Puebla, México (1968); Mary Immaculate School, Kirksville, Missouri (1968); St. Joan of Arc School, Weslaco, Texas

(1968); St. Ann School, Kosciusko, Texas (1969); and St. James School, Potosi, Missouri (1969).

During the 1970s even more withdrawals were necessary:

- 1970 Guadalupe Community Center
- 1971 Instituto Científico de Antequera, Oaxaca, México
Blessed Sacrament School, St. Louis, Missouri³⁶
St. Catherine Laboure School, Cahokia, Illinois
- 1972 Dunne Memorial Home for Boys, Dallas, Texas,
Hospital Central de Policía, Lima, Perú
Dispensario La Inmaculada, Cuernavaca, México
- 1973 Our Lady of Guadalupe School, Del Rio, Texas
St. Mary's School, Marfa, Texas
St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles School, San Antonio, Texas
- 1974 St. Vincent de Paul School, Pampa, Texas
St. Elizabeth (St. Peter's) School, Lubbock, Texas³⁷
Dispensario Juana de Arco, México, D. F.
- 1975 Sacred Heart Academy, Del Rio, Texas
Holy Angels School, San Angelo, Texas
Hospital del Carmen, Guadalajara, México
Hospital San José, Monterrey, México
- 1976 St. Peter's-St. Joseph's Home, San Antonio, Texas
Holy Family School, Fort Worth, Texas
Colegio Saltillense, Saltillo, México
- 1977 Escuela América, Chihuahua, México
Instituto Tamaulipas, Tampico, México
- 1978 St. Mary Magdalen School, San Antonio, Texas
Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, Corpus Christi, Texas
- 1979 St. Joseph's Orphanage, Dallas, Texas
- 1980 St. Margaret's Orphanage, El Paso, Texas
Hospital Betania, Puebla, México
Cruz Roja, Cuernavaca, México

It was not the first time in the history of the Congregation that the sisters faced the necessity of consolidating their resources. Never before, however, had they withdrawn their services from so many places in such a short period of time, and never before had the changes been occasioned primarily by a decline in membership.

Closing an institution or withdrawing from a school or hospital had always been difficult for them because of strong relationships

developed with the people they served. To face the necessity of doing it so often during the late 1960s and 1970s was emotionally distressing. Moreover, the sisters had strongly identified themselves in terms of their work in these institutions. Now that part of their identity was lost.

On a more practical level, this loss of identity was accompanied by a loss of financial income. Although the salaries of the sisters in the parochial schools had always been very low, those serving in hospital administration and on professional staffs had been the major source of support for the Congregation.

The withdrawal of the sisters was equally distressing for the persons with whom they were associated in the institutions. Pastors were faced with the necessity of finding qualified lay people as replacements in parochial schools and of paying higher salaries for the new teachers. Parents were disturbed as well, and delegations came from some of the parishes to meet with superiors and to plead for the sisters to remain in the classrooms.

Sister Neomi Hayes, who was superior of the San Antonio Province in the 1970s, found that many Catholic parents felt that the sisters were abandoning them after many years of service in the parish school. "What made it all so hard," she said, "was [the fact that] we had never spoken publicly about our limitations. The image of the Congregation was that we were in control, we could always take on one more thing. Suddenly [and] publicly we were saying we have reached the crisis, . . . we have to let go."³⁸

The sisters' withdrawal caused some institutions to be closed; the result was particularly regrettable in places where they were serving the poor. Superiors agonized over the decisions that had to be made, and sometimes the local ordinary was more accusatory than supportive. When the sisters wrote to tell Archbishop Francis J. Furey of San Antonio that they were withdrawing from Our Lady of Guadalupe School, Del Rio, he responded: "Of course, this probably means the closing of Our Lady of Guadalupe parochial school. With each school closing, I feel that another nail is being placed in the coffin of Catholic education in this country."³⁹

In spite of all of the suffering involved, the action brought about some good effects that could not have been foreseen at the time but which were important for the future of the Church. In many of the institutions that were not closed, lay persons took over the duties of teachers, nurses, and administrators, and the school, hospital, or home for children was able to continue to serve the needs of the people. Perhaps even sooner than the Council had anticipated, the door was open for the laity to fulfill the call that had been given them in *Lumen Gentium* "to

share diligently in the salvific work of the Church according to their ability and the needs of the times."⁴⁰

While the sisters responded to the many changes brought about by the Vatican Council, many that involved a death or letting go of old ways and past traditions, they experienced the personal death of a man associated with the Congregation almost from its beginnings. Cy Collins had been brought to St. John's Orphanage in 1898 when his mother died. Cy was just nine years old at the time. He was always proud to say that he belonged to Mother William Cullen's band since she had made her vows in the same year. When the new motherhouse was constructed in 1900, Cy came to work there. He lived on the second floor of the laundry, while he learned how to become an engineer, mechanic, electrician, and plumber, and to attend to every maintenance job that needed to be done. He could even remember pulling off Sister Mary of Jesus' boots when she returned from her famous travels across the Texas plains.

The old Brackenridge barn was renovated, and a second story was converted into a classroom, where Cy and fourteen children from the neighborhood were taught reading, writing, and religion. The school closed three years later, but Sister St. John Reibe continued teaching Cy every afternoon on the back porch of the motherhouse. "The sisters thought Cy should become a priest," said his son Father Thomas Collins, "but he told them he had been thinking about girls since he was three years old, and he didn't think he should go to a seminary."⁴¹

Cy spent the rest of his life in the sisters' employ, serving, as he was pleased to inform everyone, under five superior generals—Rev. Mothers Madeleine, Alphonse, Mary John, Bonaventure, and Laserian. He knew the location of every pipe and electrical outlet in the motherhouse, because he at one time had repaired them, whistling his way through the hallways to announce his coming.

Cy was also the sisters' chauffeur on the rare occasions when they left the motherhouse in their horse and buggy or later in their shiny black Chevrolet, the only one they owned at the time. He had begun his work as a driver at Santa Rosa and loved to tell of racing the hospital ambulance "with galloping horses and clanging bells through the streets of San Antonio."⁴²

It was at the motherhouse that Cy met his future wife, Viola Gallagher, who had been with the sisters in St. Joseph's Orphanage since she was four years of age. She later became a seamstress, helping Sister Agnes Beehan make the sisters' habits in the convent clothes room. When Cy fell in love with the young Viola and gave her an

engagement ring, Sister Agnes would not let her wear it until Rev. Mother Alphonse had given her approval.

Cy and Viola spent their married lives in a small house built for them on the motherhouse grounds. Here they raised their five children—Patrick, Charles, Thomas, John, and Margaret. When Cy died on November 12, 1971, he was buried from the motherhouse chapel, and the sisters mourned the loss of their faithful and devoted worker and friend and the personal association with their past.⁴³

The letting go of the past continued when the sisters assembled for the general chapter of 1972, and elected Sister Eleanor Cohan as the first American-born superior general.⁴⁴ The election marked a turning point in the history of the Congregation, that had been founded and directed for over 100 years by sisters from Europe and had now passed to another stage of development, putting down firm roots in North, Central, and South America.

Sister Eleanor once made the remark, "God works in us [and] puts people where they need to be at the time they need to be there."⁴⁵ A compassionate, gentle person, Sister Eleanor herself was in the position of superior general at an appropriate time, a time when she could offer the necessary care and concern to many sisters enduring a painful struggle in coping with the changing reality.

Simple and unassuming, she reflected an openness and acceptance of new ways of thinking. After being elected at the general chapter, she said her reaction was that of "totally wishing it had not happened."⁴⁶ She was prepared, however, to understand the sisters, to trust them, and to give them the necessary freedom to respond to the challenges of change.

The sisters had planned to complete the renewal process by 1972. An attitude survey conducted by the Research and Planning Commission under the direction of Sister Rose Mary (Vincent Ferrer) Cousins, however, showed several tensions had developed between the old and the new ways of looking at the Church and at religious life, tensions between authority and collegiality, professional and religious identity, the old and the new forms of dress, the meaning of community as place and the understanding of community as a source of relationships. The rapidity of change had created much confusion, a loss of identity, and even a lack of self esteem among the sisters. The general administration under the direction of Sister Eleanor determined that the Congregation should participate in a program sponsored by the Institute for the Internal Resources of Renewal, familiarly called I²R². The program was under the direction of Father Thomas Swift, S.J., of the St. Louis University School of Divinity.

Sisters Mary Magdalen Cross, Dorothy (Marie Renee) Ettling, Francisca Javier Hernández, Marian Jordan, Sarah (Christina) Lennon,

and Doloretta Reynoso were appointed to work with the leaders of the Institute as members of the corporate renewal team. They were given an intense training program, together with the provincial superiors and both Sister Eleanor and Sister Margaret Mary (Lucilla) Curry of the general administration. The group offered workshops in community living, in values clarification, in the development of communication skills, in the quality of presence, and in the charism of the community.

Participation in the program continued from 1973 to 1978. The process was difficult but successful in creating new attitudes toward authority and leadership, living in community, the development of personal relationships, the importance of individual responsibility, and the means of communication. "We did a lot of praying and talking," said Sister Eleanor, "but we learned to communicate with each other honestly and truthfully, to be open to and respectful of each other's opinion. Without our participation in the program, we would have had a lot more trouble than we had in bringing about the process of renewal."⁴⁷

The renewal team developed a reflection process to be incorporated into decision making and established corporate reflection centers as a means of bringing all of the sisters together in small groups for involvement, discussion, and input on congregational matters of particular importance. Regular meetings, called C. R. (Corporate Reflection) Days, were held to address the mission and identity of the Congregation and to prepare for a revision of the constitutions and directory.

In the midst of all of the change, the sisters in 1969 celebrated the centennial of their foundation in San Antonio, and selected July 20, the anniversary of the death of Rev. Mother Madeleine Chollet, as the opening day of a week-long observance. Coincidentally the date was later chosen for the landing of the Apollo 11 astronauts on the moon. At a concelebrated Mass of Thanksgiving held in the San Antonio Theater for the Performing Arts and attended by more than 2,000 persons, Bishop Steven A. Leven compared the mission of the three young sisters arriving in 1869 to care for the sick in San Antonio to the mission of the three young astronauts one hundred years later landing on the moon. Archbishop Robert E. Lucey, who spoke at the end of the mass, congratulated the sisters and praised them for "seeing God in the sick, in the underprivileged, and in the poor" through their service in schools, hospitals, and homes for children. "God's hand," he said, "is seen in this entire picture covering a span of 100 years."⁴⁸

During the centennial banquet held in Marian Hall on the College campus, guests paused in the midst of speeches and messages of congratulations to watch on television screens set up throughout the dining room the landing of the astronauts on the moon. Although the

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sisters had not planned their ceremony to coincide with the event that marked a major step forward in America's space program and captured the interest of the whole nation, the joint celebration was significant. The sisters, like the astronauts, had journeyed to unknown worlds. They had come with faith and courage and dedication. One hundred years later, they were once again facing an unknown world of a changing Church and a changing congregation. The journey still demanded faith and courage and dedication.

CHAPTER XIII

COLLABORATION WITH THE LAITY AND RETURN TO ORIGINS

Vatican II was a turning point in religious congregations of women throughout the world, bringing about new attitudes toward the vows, new concepts of authority, new approaches to prayer life and to community living, new ideas about formation, and new forms of ministry. Sisters looked different, and they were different. They were living a far less restricted and regulated life; they were more concerned with the essentials of their religious profession; they were more conscious of their personal responsibilities and more sensitive to their femininity; and they were prepared to take leadership positions in their professions.

They were also searching for a new role in collaboration with the laity in the changing Church. The introduction of more and more lay administrators in both the hospitals and the schools prompted a concern for continuity of mission within congregationally owned institutions. The changing situation demanded a clear definition and exercise of the role of sponsorship, or the fulfillment of the Congregation's legal, moral, and fiduciary responsibility.

To achieve these goals within the hospitals, the general administration in 1981 established Incarnate Word Health Services, organizing the seven health care facilities in Texas and Missouri into a multi-hospital system.¹ Sister Bernard Marie Borgmeyer was appointed president, and Sister Rosita Hyland was elected chairman of the board of directors.

The newly formed corporation was given the responsibilities of "owning, constructing, leasing, maintaining, operating, managing and providing consultative services" for the hospitals within the system and for carrying out the congregational ministry of health care "in accordance

with the tradition and history of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word” and within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church.² The administrative staff of the system assisted the hospitals in planning and in financial operations, sponsored educational programs, provided system-wide insurance coverage, and coordinated economically beneficial group purchasing.

Meanwhile the Congregation continued throughout the 1980s to expand its ministry in health care in Texas by taking on the responsibility of three additional hospitals, all located in rural areas that were poorly served by medical facilities and were facing the possibility of closure. Huth Memorial Hospital in Yoakum, a 46-bed facility formerly operated by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament of Victoria, was purchased for \$537,900 and dedicated on August 11, 1984, as Yoakum Catholic Hospital.³ N. Alan LaConte was appointed president and chief executive officer.⁴

In the following year, the Congregation assumed the ownership of Coon Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home in Dalhart. The facility, which had been part of the Dallam-Hartley Counties Hospital District, was placed under the responsibility of St. Anthony’s Development Corporation in Amarillo with William Myers as president and chief executive officer. It was renamed Dalhart Catholic Healthcare Corporation.⁵

Just a few months later, Kleberg Memorial Hospital in Kingsville was added to Incarnate Word Health Services, bringing the total number of hospitals in the system to ten. The 136-bed acute care facility under the direction of Kleberg County Commissioners had been the first county-operated hospital in Texas and had been managed by the Hospital Corporation of America. With the transfer of ownership in 1985, it became a subsidiary corporation of Spohn Hospital in Corpus Christi and was named Spohn Kleberg Memorial Hospital. Chief executive officer was Allan Sonduck.

In addition to acquiring hospitals in rural areas, the Congregation began construction on a 200-bed general hospital in the South Texas Medical Center of San Antonio. The new facility was planned to expand the services of Santa Rosa to the growing northwest segment of the city and at the same time gain additional support for the operation of the downtown hospital. It was designed also to provide easy access to medical care for Villa Rosa and was built adjacent to the psychiatric hospital on the medical center campus. Completed in 1986, St. Rose Catholic Hospital was placed under the direction of Santa Rosa with Sister Angela Clare Moran as president and chief executive officer. Dr. Wade Lewis was appointed vice president and responsible for operations.

While the sisters saw the additional hospitals as means of spreading their mission to new areas of ministry, they also became concerned about studying their past and becoming more familiar with the origins of the Congregation and the charism of the founders.⁶ It was a direction that had been proposed to all religious congregations in the documents of Vatican II.

The sisters in the Mexican province were involved in this process in 1965, studying the life and letters of Bishop Claude Dubuis and the Congregation's heritage of spirituality centered on the Incarnation. The interest soon began to spread, and in 1975, Sister Rita Prendergast set up the Congregational archives, and Sister Kathleen (Calixta) Garvey translated the letters of Rev. Mother Pierre Cinquin from French into English.⁷ An interprovince heritage committee was established, with Sister Carol Ann (Consolata) Jokerst as coordinator, to research the spirit of Bishop Claude Dubuis and Jeanne de Matel, to gather and translate materials relevant to the Congregation that had been collected in the monastery of Lyons, and to plan annual meetings to foster an awareness of the inspiration that led to the founding of the Congregation. Charism retreats were offered at the motherhouse, and Sister Juanita Albracht began to conduct personal interviews for the compilation of an oral history.

Just as the sisters began to develop this new awareness of their heritage, they were reminded in a tragic way of how fragile that heritage could be and how easily an important symbol of it, their first motherhouse, could be destroyed. On the night of April 19, 1983, fire broke out in the Brackenridge Villa, causing extensive damage to both the building and its contents. Although the exact cause of the fire was never determined, it was thought to have been the result of workmen leaving, exposed in the solarium, cleaning rags that had been soaked in linseed oil and that ignited with the heat of the late afternoon sun.

The building had been undergoing restoration and stabilization funded by grants of \$25,000 each from the Ewing Halsell Foundation of San Antonio and the Moody Foundation of Galveston with matching funds from the San Antonio Province. The work was nearing completion at the time of the disaster.

Although the estimated damage to the villa, part of which was constructed as early as 1852, was approximately \$2 million, no lives were lost. Msgr. Thomas A. French, chaplain at the motherhouse, was in his room on the second floor when the fire broke out but was alerted by students from Incarnate Word College who discovered the flames leaping out of the windows just below his study. Their prompt reaction enabled him to escape the fast-spreading blaze.

Fortunately, the structure of the building was not damaged, although the roof of the three-story section, the solarium, and the front hallway, including the handsomely carved wooden staircase, were completely destroyed. All of the decorative stained glass windows were lost, and much of the furniture, some of which dated to the 1800s, was ruined. Every inch of the house was damaged by smoke and water.

The sisters mourned the loss of the beautiful villa that had been their first motherhouse. They also deliberated over what to do with the charred ruins that were left behind. When the San Antonio provincial administration, under the leadership of Sister Theresa (John of God) McGrath, considered the possibility of restoring the historic structure, they realized the cost would be prohibitive. Although the insurance settlement was approximately \$900,000, the total cost would far exceed that amount, and the province did not have the funds to undertake such a project.

The sisters debated also about the future use of the villa, in the event that the money could be raised for the restoration. Structural engineers urged them not to continue using it as a residence. The age of the building and the fact that it was constructed totally of wood offered a possibility of future disaster that might endanger human lives.

After facing all of these issues, the provincial administration approached Sister Margaret Patrice Slattery, who was serving as President of Incarnate Word College, and proposed that she direct the efforts to gain community and foundation support for the restoration, and that the College take over the use and responsibility for the building, although the legal ownership would remain that of the Congregation. Through the generous contributions of College benefactors and alumni, and support from the College itself, sufficient funds were raised, and the restoration was completed in 1985. Under the direction of architect Jack Duffin of the Robert Callaway Corporation, who was exact in maintaining the authenticity of the design, the building was restored to its original beauty. Interior decoration was planned and executed by students majoring in interior design at the College under the leadership of Assistant Professor John Lodek. The Villa was converted to use as offices for college administrators and for official entertainment of alumni and benefactors.

The return to origins was reflected not only in the study of the history of the Congregation, in efforts to recapture the spirit of the founders, and in the restoration of Brackenridge Villa, but also in changes in the sisters' ministry to the poor. Immediately following Vatican II and particularly during the years of the renewal process, a major focus had been on internal matters. Study groups, task forces,

committees, and chapters addressed changes within the organization. By the 1970s and 1980s, it was time to redirect that focus outward, to look at ministry and the people to be served, to search for more effective ways to meet the critical needs of society.

Conditions of the poor and oppressed peoples of society had become a major concern of leaders in the Catholic Church. Dating back to the 1960s, two encyclicals had been issued by Pope John XXIII calling for social reforms, *Mater et Magister* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963). These were followed by the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) and *Populorum Progressio* (1967) issued by Pope Paul VI.

The following year, the Latin American bishop's conference (CELAM) held in Medellín, Colombia (1968), drew attention in particular to social injustice in the Third World countries and the need to help the poor and oppressed in their struggle for liberation and freedom from exploitation by other nations as well as by privileged groups within their own countries. The Medellín document had a strong impact on the leaders of the Church in Latin America. It called forth a response also from sisters in the Mexican province who were keenly aware of the conditions of poverty in their country and of the need for change in social structures. Many identified the renewed concern for the poor with the original call of Bishop Claude Dubuis that had led to the foundation of the Congregation: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, suffering in the persons of a multitude of the sick and infirm of every kind, seeks relief at your hands."⁸

Determining that a new form of ministry was needed to serve the poor in remote areas of the country, Sister Ancilla Castillo sought permission from Rome to work and live among the indigenous people of the village of Sauz in the Mezquital Valley. Here she established a medical dispensary and began instructions in religion for the young people of the area. She also helped the people replace their adobe huts with houses built of stones carried from the nearby hills. After working for a time with the people in one village, she moved on to another, starting all over again to address the pastoral and social needs of the area. She was later joined by Sister María de Nazareth Esteinou, and together they went to Otongo, Hgo.; to Tampico, Tamps.; to Nuevo Laredo, Tamps.; and to Chihuahua, Chih. In each area they worked with those suffering both material and spiritual impoverishment.

Other sisters in Mexico soon began to develop what they called *pastoral popular*, a ministry to indigenous people in remote parts of the country as well as to persons living in extreme poverty in large metropolitan areas, all of whom were suffering from hunger, malnutrition, homelessness, a lack of health care, social injustice, and a corresponding loss of human dignity. They worked in small groups,

teaching religion and training teachers of religion, organizing literacy classes, offering courses in sacred scripture, establishing parish organizations, operating clinics and medical dispensaries, visiting the sick in their homes and the prisoners in the jails. They lived in houses like those of the village and among the poor people whom they served, believing it was important to share their way of life, to personally experience their sufferings, and to accompany and support them in developing their own response to their problems.

In 1973, the first *comunidades de pastoral popular* were established in Tres Zapotes, Ver.; Cuernavaca, Mor.; and Magdalena Atlazolpa, México, D.F. Sisters Laura Soto, Ana Ma. Pingarrón, Teresa Fernández, and Hilda Vásquez worked in Tres Zapotes with indigenous people who earned their living by cutting sugar cane, a back-breaking and poorly paid form of employment. Plantation owners often paid the workers in alcohol rather than money, a condition that gave rise to widespread alcoholism throughout the community. The villagers lived in poor adobe huts that were flooded once or twice a year. Health care was almost non-existent, and illness and disease made death a common occurrence. The practice of polygamy and belief in witchcraft were widespread.

The sisters organized classes to teach both children and adults how to read and write as well as the fundamentals of their religion. They also cared for the sick and helped in the work of the local parish. Soon they were able to train catechists who could assist them. In time, they found they were not only evangelizing the poor of Tres Zapotes, but they were being evangelized themselves by the people they came to serve.

From 1974 to 1979, other centers of the *pastoral popular* were established by different groups of sisters: Ejido San Agustín, Torreón, Coah. (1974); Comunidad Bowichi, Tarahumara, Chih. and Comunidad de Tlacojalpan, Tlacojalpan, Ver. (1977); Comunidad de Santiago, Santiago Tuxtla, Ver., and Comunidad de la Fe, México, D. F. (1978); and Comunidad Claudio María, Playa Vicente, Ver.

Also in 1979, four sisters went to Oaxaca, where their work began through contact with the National Episcopal Commission of Indigenous Missions (CENAMI) and the Rev. Clodomiro Siller, who introduced them to the archbishop, Don Bartolomé Carrasco y Briseño. At the bishop's suggestion, Sisters Mercedes Ofelia Martín, Madeleine Siller, Leonila González, and María Leticia Contreras went to the village of San Pedro El Alto and San Sebastián de las Grutas, where they determined that their primary goal would be the formation of Christian communities.

Like the people in the other *pastoral popular* centers, the indigenous people of Oaxaca were living in extreme poverty and suffering from lack of adequate housing and food. Most of the men and even some very young boys were employed by national forestry companies that were despoiling the area and paying substandard wages with no benefits to the workers. When the villagers in San Pedro El Alto began to organize and to demonstrate against such injustice, their leaders were put in jail and subjected to torture. The workers, however, continued to hold general assemblies and to search for ways to oppose the ruination of their land and the exploitation of their labor. They often looked to the sisters for advice not only on religious matters but also on political and economical issues. The sisters assisted them in learning how to organize, to confront injustice, and ultimately to establish their own companies, to hire the laborers themselves, and to offer just wages and better working conditions to their fellow workers.

The sisters encouraged the women of the villages to become actively involved in the communities' efforts at organization and also supported them in efforts to establish laws to stop the widespread use of alcohol that was destroying the lives of both men and women and bringing about the ruination of many families. Because of the lack of priests in the area, the archbishop authorized the sisters to baptize infants and in some cases to administer the sacrament of matrimony. They also conducted a literacy program, taught classes in religion, and organized scriptural study groups.

The *pastoral popular* was such a radical departure from the traditional forms of ministry in Mexico that some sisters had difficulty in accepting it. Nevertheless, the number of persons becoming involved continued to increase, and by 1980 there were thirty-five sisters working in the ministry throughout Mexico with other centers being set up: Comunidad de Tiberíades, Manzanillo, Col.; Comunidad de Tampico, Tampico, Tamps.; Comunidad de Santa María Ecatepec, Tehuantepec, Oax. (1980); and Torres de Potrero, México, D. F. (1981).

Although this particular form of ministry was unique to the situation in Mexico, some sisters in the United States were becoming involved also in non-traditional ministry to the poor, the margined, and the oppressed.⁹ Among them were Sister Mary Georgia Munro, who taught GED classes and gave courses in sacred scripture to the Tigua Indians in El Paso, and Sisters Bette Anne (Virginia) Bluhm and Marianne (Petronilla) Kramer, who worked with the Sioux Indians in South Dakota. Sister Margaret (Cabrini) Carew became Chaplain of the Bexar County Jail and Adult Detention Center. Sisters María Teresa (Micaela) Flores and Norma Rosa (Aurelia) García became involved in

a Cuban refugee camp at Fort Chafee, Arkansas. Sister Mary Daniel Healy directed a federally funded Minority Biomedical Research Support Program at Incarnate Word College, helping students from minority backgrounds break the traditional racial barriers in gaining access to medical schools and other health related professions.

Development of the ministry to the poor was given strong affirmation in 1979 when the Latin American bishops meeting in Puebla restated the need to work for the oppressed and to change the structures of society that create economic and social injustice. Together with Pope John Paul II, who attended the assembly, they challenged the whole Catholic world to adopt a "preferential option" for the poor.¹⁰

The Pope's support for the option for the poor, as well as the new direction taken by many of the sisters in ministry prepared the way for the 1984 general chapter of the Congregation. At the opening of the assembly, Sister Neomi Hayes, superior general, whose broad perspective enabled her to see the Congregational ministry in relation to the larger concerns of the Catholic Church, challenged the sisters to conversion on the personal level as well as on the Congregational level, to adopt a change in their "attitude of heart," to seek a new way of looking at the world through the eyes of the suffering and oppressed, and to renew their original commitment to serving the needs of the poor.

"We were called in the beginning to have a preferential love for the poor," she said. "As we progressed, we [did not exclude] the poor, but our emphasis shifted during years of expansion and consolidation. We became very concerned about our competency as individuals and as a Congregation. We stressed obedience to the will of God as expressed in superiors, regardless of the economics involved and regardless of our feelings. It was considered wrong to have any preferences for the rich or for the poor."¹¹

Responding to the leadership of the Church as well as to the challenge of Sister Neomi, delegates at the 1984 general chapter voted unanimously "to take a stand regarding situations of injustice and oppression" and to accept as a direction for the future "a preferential option for the economically poor."¹²

Chapter delegates invited all members of the Congregation to seek the "personal conversion" proposed by Sister Neomi and to become involved in "direct or indirect service with and to [the] economically poor."¹³ Institutions were directed to review their mission and their use of resources in relation to their service to the poor and to strengthen their commitment to the principles of social justice. At the same time, criteria were established to examine new areas of ministry in relation to the preferential option.

The delegates advocated also that the Congregation use its corporate power and take a stance on social issues and practices that reflected any form of injustice. In particular, they urged a monitoring of corporations in which community funds were invested.

Although the chapter delegates had voted unanimously to adopt the “preferential option,” their decision was not readily accepted or easily implemented in the Congregation. No one could disagree in principle. Serving the poor and infirm had been the very cause for the founding of the Congregation, yet there were uncertainties surrounding the decision of the chapter, perhaps because of a lack of understanding or of readiness on the part of many of the sisters. What did the preferential option really mean? Was the Congregation not already involved in serving the poor? How did the new emphasis on this form of service differ from the old? What changes would follow? What kind of personal and Congregational conversion was needed?

The terminology itself created confusion, a lack of understanding, and a questioning of the need to rephrase a commitment that had been expressed over and over again in community documents. The 1872 constitutions, for example, stated that the sisters were “to embrace for his [God’s] love and for the greater glory of God, all the corporal works of mercy, serving the Incarnate Word corporally and spiritually in the person of the poor, the sick, children or others.”¹⁴

The new terminology seemed to imply a criticism of traditional forms of ministry and even a turning away from previous commitments. Many sisters involved in the hospitals and schools owned and operated by the Congregation felt it proposed a withdrawing of support from the institutions that they had struggled to maintain for many years. The high schools and the college, in particular, were trying to keep sisters on their faculties in order to maintain the mission on their campuses. They were also trying to balance limited budgets, and the contributed services of the sisters had been a major source of funding, enabling the administrators not only to meet increasing costs of operations but also to offer scholarships, grants, and tuition discounts to poor students, and to do all of this without incurring significant debt. Although the schools, like the hospitals, had always been involved in forms of service to the poor, the “preferential option” seemed to propose a movement away from support for the established institutions.

Acceptance of the chapter decision was slow in coming. Throughout the history of the Congregation, however, the sisters had characteristically responded to directives and proposals of a general chapter, trusting that they were the result of prayerful preparation and that they were made by delegates who acted responsibly and with consideration for the best

interests of the community. In the same spirit of trust they would, in time, accept the 1984 decisions.

Over the following weeks, months, and even years, the “preferential option” was discussed and studied and reflected upon in committees, study groups, task forces, corporate reflection days, and even later chapters. Gradually, sisters working individually or in groups began to take up the challenge and to integrate the option in their personal lives and in their ministry. The response was incremental, growing year by year and step by step. Only by looking backward from the 1990s is it possible to see how acceptance of the “preferential option” evolved.

The sisters in Mexico continued to establish centers of the *pastoral popular*. In 1984, in response to an invitation from Bishop Samuel Ruiz of San Cristóbal Las Casas, Chiapas, Sisters María Guadalupe Angulo, Margarita Campos, Dolores María DiCostanzo, Bernarda Juárez, and Norma de Villa began their ministry among the Ch’ole and Tzetal indigenous people who spoke only a local Mayan dialect. When the sisters arrived, they were greeted warmly, particularly by the women of the area who assured them, “The heart is happy because the sisters chose to come to the poor.”¹⁵ In addition to the activities found in other *pastoral popular* centers—teaching catechism, establishing scriptural study groups, and working with the people to improve their nutrition and health care—the sisters in Chiapas helped to organize small coffee producers and to assist them in developing improved means of marketing their product.

Other *pastoral popular* centers established during this period included: Comunidad Tarahumara, Yoquivo, Chih.(1987); Comunidad de Tepetitlán, Hgo. (1988); Comunidad de Santa Fe, México, D.F., and Comunidad de Tehuantepec, Oax. (1992).

In the United States also more sisters began to seek out ways of ministering to the poor and the marginated. Sisters Mary Cunningham, Josephine (Urban) Kennelly, and Mary Alice Lang worked in drug rehabilitation through the Patrician Movement in San Antonio. Sister Mona (Annette) Smiley became Hispanic Coordinator of the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network (RAIN), and Sister Mary (Timothy) Muldowney cared for AIDS patients through the Santa Rosa Hospice. Sister Joan (Alverna) Moran earned her degree in law at the University of Missouri-Columbia, passed the bar examination in Missouri, and began working with Legal Aid of Western Missouri representing abused and neglected children. Sister Jean (Harold) Durel became Director of the Refugee Aid Project, an ecumenical group offering legal and social services to Central Americans.

Also, Sister Patricia Ann (Wendelinus) Kelley served as coordinator of Project Energy Care with Catholic Charities in St. Louis, Mo., while Sister Annette (Louis de Montfort) Pezold, also in conjunction with Catholic Charities, directed a program at Queen of Peace Center for women from low economic backgrounds seeking help in recovering from chemical dependency. Sister Michèle O'Brien became Coordinator of the Catholic Health Outreach Program in St. Louis and later Director of Primary Care Services at Santa Rosa Children's Hospital in San Antonio. In both efforts, she worked at securing health services for the poor. Sister María Guadalupe Moreno Castilleja was involved in a ministry to migrant workers in Michigan.

Several sisters became involved in pastoral ministry in poor parishes, most of them located in inner city areas: Sister Anne Catherine Shaw and Sister Joan Holden in St. Ann's Parish, St. Louis, Mo.; Sister Mary (Agnesine) Hanick in St. Edward the King Parish and later in St. Augustine Parish, also in St. Louis; Sister Elizabeth (Rose of Lima) Riebschlager in St. Philip Parish and St. Robert Bellarmine Parish, El Campo, Texas; and Sister Mary Teresa (Bernard) Phelan in Holy Family Parish, Brownsville.

Other sisters began teaching in schools in areas of extreme poverty: Sister Margaret (Joseph Augustine) Nugent taught reading in La Grulla Junior High School, working with young people from the migrant community in Rio Grande City, Texas, and Sister Bernardine Coyne became a bilingual teacher in Villarreal Elementary School in Olmita, Texas. Sister Francine Keane was coordinator of an education center for low income persons and taught English and basic learning skills to refugees in the Rio Grande Valley, most of whom were undocumented minors from Mexico and Central America. Some years later, in 1994, she established Bienvenida, a home providing foster care for abused and neglected children. Sister Mary Dolores (Baptista) Doyle became Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Brownsville Diocese, which served children from very poor families.

Sister Bette Anne Bluhm was Formation Director of Life Directions, Inc., working with young adults from low income areas in San Antonio in an effort to train them for ministry within their parishes. Sister Norma Rosa García established Partnership for Maximum Growth, Inc., a service to help marginal students or those who had dropped out of school to achieve their full potential through remedial education and counseling. Sister Eileen (Mary Hugh) O'Keeffe was assistant principal and social worker in St. Mary's Special School in St. Louis and worked with children with learning disabilities who were primarily from low income areas. Sister Rose Mary Cousins and Sister Joseph Alphonsus Dederichs

organized Remedial Education Program—Literacy, Inc. in Jefferson and Claiborne Counties, Mississippi. They worked with school dropouts and functionally illiterate as well as economically disadvantaged adults.

Some sisters became involved in educating others to follow a mission to serve the poor. Sister Rosa María Icaza joined the faculty of the Mexican-American Cultural Center and helped develop a program for ministers among Hispanics in the United States; Sister Rose Mary (Mary Gerard) Forck became involved with the Ministry to Ministers Program at Oblate School of Theology; Sister Yolanda Tarango organized the Westside Lay Ministry Training Program in the Westside Parish Coalition of San Antonio. Sister Martha Ann Kirk was co-director with Dr. Larry Hufford of a newly established master's degree program in Justice and Peace Studies at Incarnate Word College. Sister Martha Ann, Dr. Hufford, and Dr. Tarcisio Beal also directed college-credit study tours to give students an experience of working with the poor in Mexico, in Central America, and in South America.

Sisters Brigida Smiley, Anne (Judith) Birmingham, and Margaret (Huberta) Kelly organized Sisters Care to provide in-home services to the poor and elderly in San Antonio. Sister Juanita Albracht and Sister Lauren (Lorenz) Moynahan started Health Watch, a neighborhood-based service of Santa Rosa Health Care designed to assist persons in low-income areas who lacked access to proper medical resources.

A concern for the needs of homeless women and children prompted Sister Neomi Hayes and Sister Yolanda Tarango in 1985 to open Visitation House in San Antonio. To assist women who were struggling against poverty, suffering from discrimination in the job market, and lacking adequate housing, the sisters secured a large house in the near-downtown area of the city that could be used as a temporary shelter while the women tried to find suitable employment and to stabilize the living conditions of their families. They were offered help in applying for state income assistance, in learning the skills of parenting, and in preparing for their GED.

By 1993, a total of 920 persons had been accommodated at Visitation House, including 374 adults and 546 children. The sisters expanded the services by establishing a corps of volunteers as well as a board of directors and by securing financial help through grants and various fund-raising efforts. They also developed an advocacy program, working with religious and civic leaders throughout the city and state to bring about social change that would improve the conditions of the women they served.

Their next effort in the development of the program was the purchase and renovation of an adjoining apartment complex, La Posada,

which offered transitional housing and special services for a period of six months to two years to women and their children trying to establish themselves as self-supporting and self-reliant.

In addition to the many efforts to implement the option for the poor in Mexico and in the United States, the sisters expanded their work in Peru. In Chimbote, Sister Grace O'Meara began working with the Office of Social Justice of the diocese and was involved in finding homes for children of prisoners. In 1981, Sisters Rosaleen Harold, Louisa Mair, and Leonila González opened a mission in Cambio Puente, where they worked with the *campesinos*, a marginated and exploited group of people living outside the area of Chimbote. They taught classes in religion, trained catechists, and set up soup kitchens where meals were prepared each day and served to persons unable to provide food for themselves and their families. In order to live close to the people whom they served, the sisters built a simple house for themselves, which like all of the other homes of the area lacked electricity and modern-day plumbing.

In 1985, Sisters Rita Prendergast, Rosa Margarita Valdés, and Rosalina Acosta, at the request of Maryknoll Prelate, Alberto Koenigsknecht, went to work with the Aymara and Quechúa people of Huancané in the Department of Puno, a large state in the Andean Altiplano. The extreme poverty of the area, according to Sister Rita, had caused it to be "generally abandoned by the central government of Peru" and to be considered "a permanent disaster area" by the U. S. State Department. Terrorist groups created an on-going condition of violence and deprivation of human rights, resulting in approximately 25,000 deaths, 3,000 disappearances, and \$25 billion in material damages. People who had no power to defend themselves were subject to "arbitrary detentions, tortures, false accusations, and death," Sister Rita says.¹⁶

As in their other missions, the sisters lived the life of the poor people of the area and taught religion, trained catechists, organized youth groups, developed a parish council, and visited the sick in the hospital and the prisoners in jail. They also worked with several young women of the area who expressed an interest in entering the Congregation as well as with pre-seminarians for the Altiplano seminary. In 1987, Sister Hirayda Blácido became the first member of the Congregation to enter from Huancané.

Working in collaboration with the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in Houston, Sisters María Elena Jasso and Rosa Teresa Amparán went to Guatemala to staff a clinic serving people living in extreme poverty. They worked with the young and the old, with people suffering from malnutrition and disease, with women who had been persecuted by soldiers, and with women who had spent their lives as prostitutes.

Also in conjunction with sisters from the Houston congregation, Sisters Marian Jordan and Laura Edith Campos in 1986 began working in El Salvador, where people were enduring a prolonged civil war. The troubled conditions of the country could be traced back to as early as the 1880s, when the government had passed laws dispossessing indigenous people of their lands. In a 1932 rebellion, 30,000 people had been massacred, and violence and fear became a way of life that continued for over fifty years.

In the 1990s, the people were still suffering from severe poverty, from malnutrition and from a lack of health care and education. The Catholic Church had denounced the oppression of the poor, and many religious congregations and Catholic dioceses from the United States as well as other parts of the world had sent missionaries to aid the Salvadoran people, to help them in securing their basic human needs, to assist them in their struggle against political oppression, and to instruct them in their religion.

At the invitation of Archbishop Rivera y Damas, Sisters Marian and Laura Edith began their work in the small village of San José Villanueva, fifteen miles outside the capitol city, San Salvador. "When we arrived there," Sister Marian said, "one of the hardest things was to find a place to live. We went from door to door asking for a house or even a room to rent. It reminded me of Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem."¹⁷ Large families were crowded into small huts with no room to spare. Finally the sisters found a house that they shared with a mother and her daughter. Like other homes in the village it had no running water, and cooking, cleaning, and bathing were possible only by carrying large pots from the village well or from a tank outside the house where water was collected during the rainy season.

Working in conjunction with Our Lady of the Pillar Church located in the village of Zaragoza, the sisters assisted the priest in ministering to the pastoral needs of the parish. They taught classes in religion, prepared children for the sacraments, and trained catechists who could work with them in bringing the word of God to the people, most of whom were Catholic but had little knowledge of their religion. They also offered literacy and job-training programs and operated a medical dispensary. Approximately 2,000 persons lived within the village, but the sisters' ministry included 5,000 others in the surrounding areas.

Their lives were often filled with fear as violence and terrorist activities continued to break out in the war-torn country. Because many foreign priests and sisters had become involved in aiding the guerillas in their struggle for the rights of the poor, the government was suspect of all missionaries.¹⁸ Everyone who worked with the Church, according to Sister

Laura Edith, was “considered a subversive” and under “constant pressure to sever contact and communication” with the authorities.¹⁹

Sister Marian recalls spending one night lying on the floor of the parish house in Usulután while bombs exploded all around the area. The next morning, in response to a loud pounding on the door, she opened it to find five soldiers all pointing guns in her face and demanding to search the premises for evidence of subversive literature or weapons.

In spite of such terrorist activities, the sisters were able to accomplish much good. San José Villanueva had never had a parish church, although four dilapidated walls stood to remind them of an earlier effort that failed. Through Sister Marian’s efforts at securing funds from friends in New Jersey; from her own native parish in Kilbeg, Ireland; and from Trocaire, a Catholic agency in Ireland dedicated to world development, the necessary materials and furnishings were secured and the church was completed.

Although the sisters working in El Salvador, like those in Peru, often found themselves surrounded by terrorism and violence, they were fortunate enough to escape any personal injury. Strangely enough, it was in neither of these countries that the Congregation suffered a loss of one of its sisters working for the poor.²⁰ Rather it was in a large metropolitan area of the United States, in St. Louis, Missouri, that Sister Patricia Ann Kelley in 1987 was raped and strangled. She was executive director of Missouri Energycare and the founder of Dollar-Help, Inc., organizations that assisted the elderly and poor find public and private money to pay their utility bills.²¹

Like the sisters in the *pastoral popular*, Sister Pat both lived and worked among the poor and dedicated many years of her life in securing adequate heating for their homes in winter and cooling in the summer. She had helped raise over \$1.5 million for the disadvantaged people of St. Louis and often lobbied for financial aid at the Missouri state capitol in Jefferson City. In 1984, she became the first woman to receive the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* Humanitarian Award in recognition of her service to others.

In many ways, Sister Pat Kelley’s death symbolized how in spite of the initial opposition to the chapter decisions of 1984, the preferential option for the poor had turned the Congregation around. The sisters were not only prepared to work with and for the poor. They had also taken on the sufferings of the poor. It was the same service and suffering to which Bishop Claude Dubuis had called them over a century ago. They had returned to their origins. The circle had come to a close.

CHAPTER XIV

CONTINUING CHANGE AND CELEBRATION

The changes set in motion by the Second Vatican Council continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s. For so many years, the Congregation, like the Catholic Church itself, had seemed to be impervious to change and to resist any deviation from its well established regulations, traditions, and structures. Once the process had begun, however, it seemed that one adjustment called for another.

An important change in province structure was initiated in 1981 in response to the overall decrease in membership in the United States. Sister Theresa McGrath, superior of the San Antonio Province, and Sister Juanita Albracht, superior of the St. Louis Province, began the process of combining the two entities into what became known as the United States Province. The unification, completed in 1984, made it possible for sisters to move freely from one region to another and to respond readily to the needs of ministry wherever they occurred. Also, the number of sisters in administrative positions was reduced.

In an effort to locate the administrative offices in an area that was midway between the two provinces but not identified with either one, property was purchased in Grapevine, a suburb of Dallas, situated close to the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport. After several years, however, provincial administrators found that they were spending an excessive amount of time and money, and experiencing a great deal of personal strain and fatigue, in traveling throughout the geographically wide-spread province. In 1992, therefore, it was determined that the property in Grapevine should be sold and the administrative offices moved to San Antonio.

A second major change in structure was a reorganization of the missions in Peru. Because of the increase in the number of sisters working in the area and because of the unique character of the situation, it was determined that a regional administration be established. In 1986, the first regional assembly was held, and Sister Rosaleen Harold was elected coordinator. The sisters also purchased a house in Lima to be used as a regional center as well as a novitiate.

In Mexico, although the number of women seeking admission declined, the groups were still large enough to justify opening a new novitiate in 1984 in Querétaro. A short time later, a pre-novitiate program was established in Hidalgo for young women from indigenous backgrounds.

By 1989, the sisters in Peru were prepared to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the mission. Their work had expanded from Chimbote, to Cambio Puente, to Huancané, and to Lima. Membership was increasing, a novitiate house had been established, and the sisters had elected their own regional administration.

A new interest in religious life was emerging in Peru as it was in other third world countries, such as Africa, India, and Asia.¹ In response to this development, the sisters established pre-novitiate and novitiate programs, and opened a house of formation in Comas, located on the periphery of Lima.

Another important development of this period was the sisters' revision of their constitutions and directory. The revision had been called for as early as 1966 in the Vatican document *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, which established the norms for renewal in religious congregations. At the request of the general administration, an interprovince committee made up of Sisters Joan Moran, Luz María Castelazo, Theresa McGrath, Alacoque Power, María del Carmen Marquéz, Nora Marie Walsh, and Stephen Marie Glennon undertook the task of guiding the revision process and began "to study [the] charism, to read the signs of the times, and to seek out the new horizons that lay before [the Congregation]."²

After several years of study and revision involving all of the sisters, the new constitutions were submitted to the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes in Rome and were finally approved in 1985. In clear, concise language, the new version stated, "The mission of the Congregation is to actualize the saving and healing love of the Incarnate Word by the promotion of human dignity."³

In addition to revising the Constitutions, the sisters realized the need of formulating a long-range pastoral plan that would direct their ministry for the future, particularly in fulfilling their commitment to the

option for the economically poor. Under the general direction of Sister Juanita Albracht, member of the General Council, a group of over 150 persons, both lay and religious, became involved in drawing up the pastoral plan entitled "Living the Mission Today." Committees were formed to examine the areas of communications, corporate power, formation, institutions, space utilization, fund development, and investments. Proposals were discussed in corporate reflection gatherings, and the entire Congregation was involved in developing the document.

The plan, which was completed in 1987, included four major objectives: (1) to promote unity in mission, (2) to find concrete ways to live the preferential option for the poor in different ministries and in daily life, (3) to insure that the corporate power of the Congregation was used for social justice, and (4) to encourage collaboration between sisters and laity in fulfilling the mission. In presenting the document, Sister Dorothy Ettling, who had been elected superior general in 1984, said, "The plan is intended to clarify our corporate community direction and priorities over the next ten years. . . . The Congregation is indeed at a favored time. We are asked to rediscover the reason for its being, to re-articulate it, and to pave a way for the future. We are asked to dream as our founders did and invite others to join our dreaming."⁴

The fourth goal of the long-range pastoral plan, collaboration between the sisters and the laity, became increasingly important in the face of the continued decline in congregational membership. The sisters realized that if their mission were to continue it would have to be in collaboration with others. Such collaboration had been emphasized in the documents of Vatican II. The whole Catholic Church was moving in the direction of lay participation in the liturgy, of lay leadership in parish administration, and of lay involvement in ministry.

As early as 1974, the Interprovince Committee on Education and Child Care had proposed the concept of an associate membership that would be open to lay men and women. The concept was not a new one. Jeanne Chéizard de Matel, foundress of the Incarnate Word order in France, had envisioned such an association in connection with the cloistered foundations that she established in the 17th century. Called the Confraternity of the Incarnate Word, the organization had been approved in 1669 by Pope Clement X.

Over three hundred years later, in 1983, the general administration in San Antonio approved the establishment of the Incarnate Word Association. Lay men and women had often expressed an interest in some form of affiliation with the Congregation, and the association offered them an opportunity to pursue this interest. The organization became a means for sisters and lay associates "to strengthen, support

and challenge one another to grow in the daily living of Incarnational Spirituality.”⁵ The organization grew rapidly, and ten years after its establishment there were fifteen associate communities with a total of 144 lay men and women as well as sisters who had become members.

Three groups were established in the St. Louis area: Mary’s Well Associate Community, Ruah Associate Community, and St. Louis Associate Community. Three more were organized in San Antonio: Caritas Associate Community, Holy Spirit Associate Community, and San Antonio Associate Community.

The following groups developed in other areas of the United States where the sisters were involved in ministry: Crescent City Associate Community, New Orleans; Jeanne de Matel Associate Community, Jefferson City, Missouri; St. Joseph’s Associate Community, Fort Worth; Amunah Associate Community, Eagle Pass; Brownsville Associate Community, Brownsville; and St. John the Baptist Associate Community, El Paso.

Mrs. Bridget Lawler-Brennan in 1984 was appointed the first lay director, and serving with her on the Core Committee to set direction for the organization were Ms. Cathy Dulle, Sister Carol Ann Jokerst, Sister Helena Monahan, Ed Robustelli, and Dr. Jordan Grooms.

In Mexico City, where the members were known as *apóstoles asociados del Verbo Encarnado*, three communities were established: *Comunidad de la Encarnación*, *Comunidad al Servicio del Verbo Encarnado*, and *Comunidad del Amor de Dios*. Other groups were in the process of formation in Monterrey, San Luis Potosí, and Santiago Tuxtla, Veracruz.

In the formation of the associate program, the emphasis was on sharing in community and in the spirituality of the Congregation. The associates participated in Corporate Reflection Days, in committees and study groups, and in general and provincial chapters. In a way similar to the sisters’ public profession of religious vows, the associates made a public commitment, initially for one year and then for three years, to personal growth in the charism of the Congregation and in fidelity to its mission.

With the successful establishment of the association, the general administration next began to consider establishing an organization of lay missionaries. The responsibility of the laity in Church ministry had been one of the most important issues of the Second Vatican Council. In the document *Lumen Gentium*, it was stated that all members of the Church had the obligation of spreading the faith to the best of their ability.⁶ Lay involvement in the works of the Congregation could be an effective way of expanding the option for the poor.

CONTINUING CHANGE AND CELEBRATION



As part of her service as a Volunteer in Mission, Lucy Fuchs works with a youth group in Chapantongo, Hidalgo, México.

In her involvement in the pastoral popular, Sister María Luisa Vélez encourages women in the barrio of Santa Fe in Mexico City to exercise their voting rights in public elections.



Sister Juanita Albracht, working with the Santa Rosa Health Watch, conducts a survey in a low income neighborhood of San Antonio to determine the health needs of the community.



Sister Laura Edith Campos offers religious instruction to a young woman in San José Villanueva, El Salvador.

Under the leadership of Sister María Luisa Vélez, recruitment began in 1986 for the Volunteers in Mission (VIMs). In a way similar to that of the associates, members of this group shared in the spirituality and community life of the Congregation and made a temporary commitment, usually from one to three years. Their primary affiliation was in the form of service.

Through a generous contribution of prominent San Antonio attorney Pat Maloney, an endowment for the program was set up in 1986.⁷ At the same time, a Congregational advancement office was established under the direction of Sister Helen Ann (Ignatius) Collier in the United States and Sister María Teresa Valdés in Mexico to raise funds for missionary efforts, including the work of the Volunteers as well as other projects and programs in the United States, Mexico, Peru, and El Salvador.

Volunteers participated in a training program for cross-cultural ministry and in learning to speak Spanish. They were paid a monthly stipend of \$100.00 for food and personal needs, with other expenses covered by the Congregation. Patricia Mañón of Mexico City was appointed the first coordinator, and serving on the Board of Directors were Sisters Luz María Aguilar, chairperson; Luz Roday; Ana María Sepúlveda; Jean Durel; Margaret Snyder; Francine Keane, and María Luisa Veléz.⁸

The first group of five volunteers began a ten-week orientation in 1987 and were prepared to begin their pastoral work in Mexico. Therese O'Driscoll and Miriam Bannon, both from Ireland, worked in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua; Carmelina Santiago of Mexico, together with Rose Nagy and Ed Cieslinski of Detroit, Michigan, were involved in pastoral ministry in Itundujia, Oaxaca.

By 1990, there were ten volunteers who had come from different parts of the United States—Texas, Kansas, Michigan, and Maine—as well as from Ireland, Australia, and Mexico. They were operating a secondary school in Yoquivo, Chihuahua, and doing pastoral work in Temixco, Morelos, as well as in Itundujia, Oaxaca. They were involved also in literacy and health education programs in Cambio Puente, Perú; in helping homeless women and children at Visitation House in San Antonio; and in teaching religion in El Paso.

As both the Incarnate Word Associates and the Volunteers in Mission became well established, the next step was to change their status from a simple affiliation with the Congregation to full membership. At the general chapter of 1990, the sisters passed the following resolution: "We affirm that membership in the Congregation includes persons called to different forms of commitment: canonically vowed members,

associates, and volunteers in mission.” Anticipating that the movement could continue to grow, they declared also an openness “to other emerging forms [of membership].”⁹

As in other periods of change, the Congregation had its share of sorrows in the 1980s and 1990s that demanded a letting go of past associations and past traditions. In 1986, the general administration, together with the United States provincial council, determined that the motherhouse in San Antonio would have to be completely restored or replaced by a totally new structure. Constructed in 1900, the building had greatly deteriorated. Walls were badly cracked and in some areas had even begun to crumble; plumbing and electrical systems were inadequate. Heating and cooling the building to make it comfortable for daily living was almost impossible because of the very high ceilings, cracks in window fittings, and obsolete equipment. Although it had originally served as the location for administrative offices for both the general administration and the San Antonio provincial administration, as well as the site of the novitiate and the College and Academy of the Incarnate Word, it was now being used for retired and semi-retired sisters, many of whom were suffering from the illnesses associated with aging and who were in need of comfortable surroundings.¹⁰

The possibility of completely restoring the building was seriously considered, but architects and engineers advised the sisters that such a move would cost far more than construction of a totally new building. They suggested also that the restored structure would not be completely satisfactory for use as a retirement home. After carefully reviewing all of the alternatives, the provincial and general administration decided that the motherhouse should be razed and replaced by a new structure closely resembling the old in order to preserve as much as possible the heritage of the Congregation. The facility would also be enlarged with additional units for retirees as well as a center for extended care.

Realizing that in time the complex could be more extensive than needed to accommodate the number of retired sisters, the general and provincial administrators determined that it would be open to lay persons who might be interested in joining the sisters in their retirement community. The arrangement would provide new opportunities for the sisters to work with the aged, and the additional income would help to supplement congregational support. As a part of the overall plans, St. Joseph’s Convent would be sold, and proceeds from the sale would be designated for the cost of construction.

To tear down the motherhouse demanded a letting go of the past, and many of the sisters found it hard to give up so many old traditions and associations. Most of them had made their novitiate in the old building. It

was also the location for annual retreats, for jubilee celebrations, for general chapters, and for profession days. It was the place that many who taught in the elementary schools came home to in the summer for continued study. It was the place from which they also departed to new missions, sometimes leaving behind old friends and secure surroundings for unknown places of ministry. It was a place of past joys and past sorrows.

In particular, it was a place that had become hallowed by its association with the founding sisters, Rev. Mother Madeleine and Rev. Mother Pierre, whose portraits hanging in the community room, together with those of all of the superiors who followed them in the general administration, provided daily reminders of the history of the Congregation and motherhouse.¹¹ It was difficult to see the building torn down. Most of the sisters, nonetheless, could realize the necessity of replacing the old with the new and of providing comfortable living accommodations for the elderly.

However, the response of many persons within the City of San Antonio, particularly the San Antonio Conservation Society, was quite different. In fact, when the decision to raze the motherhouse was announced, the sisters were surprised to find that they were in the middle of a city-wide controversy.

Conservationists were determined to preserve the building that had been designed by Alfred Giles, English architect who came to San Antonio in 1873 and who had designed other important buildings in the city—the Crockett Hotel, the Menger Hotel, Joske's Department Store, and the San Antonio Museum of Art. They protested in public meetings and in the media that the sisters were destroying an important part of the history of the city and displayed banners proclaiming "Save the Motherhouse" across Broadway immediately outside the entrance to the motherhouse grounds. Petitions were circulated to gain support for preventing the destruction of the building. Appeals were even sent to Pope John Paul II, to whom members of the society hoped to present their case personally during his forthcoming visit to San Antonio planned for September, 1987.

The sisters tried to respond as reasonably as possible to the arguments, although their explanations were not well accepted. "It was not a decision we [took] lightly but the future needs of the order had to be our foremost priority," Sister Dorothy Ettling, superior general, said. "We can't afford to have the building as a museum piece. . . . Our work is education and health care, not building buildings."

"We honestly feel we are doing the right thing," said Sister Rosita Hyland, who as treasurer general of the Congregation and director of the project, became the spokesperson to respond to many of the public out-

cries.¹² Newspaper articles, editorials, and letters to the editor multiplied. Some supported the approach of the conservationists; others championed the right of the sisters to respond to their own needs.

Paul Thompson, outspoken columnist for the *San Antonio Express News*, offered a forthright defense: "To some observers, the idea of Conservation Society women arrogating to themselves the right to barge in and tell Incarnate Word what it should do with its own property rates as bizarre. . . . 'Alter your plans, ladies, because we know better than you what you should do with your own property,' is the essential conservation message to Incarnate Word nuns." As he watched for the outcome of the on-going war of words, Thompson concluded, "My money is on Sister Rosita."¹³

The controversy reached such an emotional level that it could not be resolved, and only time would help to heal the sensitivities. Meanwhile, the sisters proceeded with their plans to demolish the old building and to replicate the original design in the new structure.

Since the cornerstone for the original motherhouse had been blessed on October 15, 1899, they selected the same date, just eighty-seven years later, to break ground. Construction began first on the adjacent wings of the complex that were planned by JonesKell Architects to match the design of the nearby Brackenridge Villa. When these sections were completed, all of the sisters living at St. Joseph's Convent and at the motherhouse moved into the new facilities.

The motherhouse was then torn down and replaced by a completely new building. The stone entrance, the only unique part of the Giles design, was taken down piece by piece and reassembled as part of the new structure. The rest of the building on the exterior closely resembled the old, but on the inside the Motherhouse and Retirement Center, as the complex was now called, differed greatly.¹⁴ The large dormitories where as many as twenty-five or more sisters once slept in neatly arranged, white-curtained beds, each with a single chair and nightstand, were replaced by attractively designed one and two-bedroom suites with adjoining sitting rooms and private baths. The extended care unit offered all of the facilities necessary for patients in need of special assistance and the attention of professionally prepared nurses.

What was most distinctive about the Motherhouse and Retirement Center was the makeup of the community. Sisters who had always lived secluded lives in their private convents, where lay persons rarely even visited, were now situated in apartments side by side with those of lay men and women, sharing the same common areas of dining room, chapels, and parlors, and discovering friendly neighbors who were delighted to become members of the Incarnate Word community. Some

were alumnae of Incarnate Word High School and Incarnate Word College; some were physicians formerly on the staff of Santa Rosa Health Care; others were persons who may have had no previous association with the Congregation but found the community of sisters and lay persons, the access to liturgical celebrations held in the chapels, and the comfortable surroundings satisfying to their needs.

In addition to seeing the motherhouse torn down, the sisters faced the necessity of sacrificing some institutions in which they had served for many years. Because of the many nationwide changes in health care and the heavy burden of debt that had been incurred in the hospitals, they were forced to sell St. Joseph Hospital in Fort Worth to the Daughters of Charity National Health System-West Central Region and St. John's Hospital and Health Center in San Angelo to the Quorum Health Group, Inc. of Nashville. Both hospitals had been founded in cities that had no health facilities at the time. Although in the 1990s only a few sisters remained on the staffs, giving up the sponsorship of the institutions was difficult for members of the Congregation as well as for persons in the local communities.

The sisters had begun their health care ministry in Fort Worth as early as 1885, when they were invited to staff the Missouri Pacific Hospital, that was replaced in 1889 by St. Joseph's Infirmary. The town was a rough-and-ready place filled with cowboys and railroad workers, and because of its reputation as well as its distance from San Antonio, Rev. Mother Pierre had hesitated in sending the sisters there.

In spite of many difficulties, the hospital had developed into a highly respected medical center, and by 1989 the sisters celebrated 100 years of caring for the sick in the city once called "cow town" that had grown into a thriving metropolis. Fort Worth was overpopulated with health care facilities, however, and St. Joseph Hospital was struggling to maintain its share of patients. It also had a \$48 million long-term building debt that was beginning to strangle its daily operations. The Daughters of Charity, who operated St. Paul's Hospital in Dallas, expected to realize considerable savings by combining services in the two facilities located in adjoining cities.

The only satisfaction in giving up the ownership of St. Joseph Hospital was the fact that it was being transferred from one congregation of sisters to another and an assurance that it would retain its Catholic identity and compassionate care for the patients.¹⁵ Five sisters were serving on the staff of St. Joseph at the time of the transfer and chose to continue their work there under the direction of the Daughters of Charity: Sisters Alfreda Folan, Bridget Mary Brennan, Magdalen (Magdalen de Pazzi) Hession, Florence (Gregoria) Zdeb, and Brigid Conlon.

Financial obligations prompted the sale also of St. John's Hospital and Health Center in San Angelo. In announcing the transfer, Sister Nora Marie Walsh, chairperson of the board of directors of Incarnate Word Health System, said, "While St. John's has had a positive cash flow, it also has a very high debt service which limits the availability of cash for anything else."¹⁶ She noted that San Angelo had many fine hospitals to serve its citizens and that the Congregation was focusing its health resources "on communities that [were] not as privileged . . . in regard to the availability of health care services."¹⁷

In spite of the fact that the Quorum Health Group, which took over the ownership of St. John's, was the country's largest hospital management and consulting firm and committed to quality care, the West Texas community as well as the sisters regretted the transfer. "To longtime residents, St. John's Hospital and Health Care Center seems almost as integral a part of San Angelo as the Concho rivers themselves," the *San Angelo Standard-Times* announced.

The sisters shared the loss of the local community. They had operated the health care facility for eighty-one years, having established it in 1910, when they had come to San Angelo at the urging of the local businessmen who helped them financially to purchase land and construct the first building. Although only a small percentage of the population in San Angelo had been Catholic at that time, the sisters found strong support for their work in the West Texas community and were able to develop an institution that was highly respected for the quality of care offered to patients of all religious backgrounds.

At the time of the transfer in 1991, only two sisters remained on the staff of St. John's—Sisters Brigid (Benignus) Mollaghan and Doris Marie (Arsenius) Irlbeck. Both chose to continue their service to the people of West Texas and were offered positions at what became known as Concho Valley Regional Hospital.

While the directors of Incarnate Word Health Services were negotiating the sale of the two hospitals, the administrators of the United States Province were discussing another transfer of ownership. Incarnate Word Convent in Normandy, Missouri, which at one time had been the location for a novitiate and high school and for many years had served as a provincial house with offices as well as residence and retirement facilities for the St. Louis province, was sold in 1993 to the University of Missouri in St. Louis.

With the unification of the two provinces in the United States, the building was no longer needed for administrative offices. At the same time, many of the retired sisters had moved to the newly constructed retirement center in San Antonio, and maintaining the large convent

became financially unfeasible. In 1992, the sisters leased one wing to the University of Missouri for offices, classrooms, and dormitory facilities of the Pierre Laclede Honors College. The following year, on December 21, 1993, a contract was signed for the sale of the property.

For the many sisters who had spent years in the St. Louis Province and had returned each year to Normandy to spend the summer months in studying for degrees and in making their annual spiritual retreat, it was a sorrowful ending to an era. Located on Our Lady's Mount, a beautiful tree-lined campus, the buff granite and white stone building had been designed by a long-time friend of the sisters, Father Patrick H. Bradley, Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish. The building was constructed in 1928 on a part of the historic Lucas estate, owned by a family that in the eighteenth century had come from France to the United States and had developed the suburban area north of St. Louis, calling it Normandy after their original province in France.

Once the negotiations for sale of the property had been settled with the University, arrangements were made for auctioning most of the convent furnishings, including the pews, stained glass windows, and statues of the chapel. Some of the retired sisters still living at the convent were welcomed as residents at the Marillac Provincial House owned by the Daughters of Charity and located on an adjoining tract of land. Those who needed special nursing care were admitted to the skilled nursing facilities at Incarnate Word Hospital.

The razing of the motherhouse, the loss of the two hospitals, and the sale of the provincial house in Normandy were all experiences of sorrowful dispossession for many of the sisters. It seemed as if the Congregation as a whole was being called upon to practice poverty. The greatest loss was not in the buildings themselves nor in the finances invested in their construction and reconstruction, but rather in the associations developed over so many years of service and sacrifice.

Although these happenings occurred one right after the other, not all of the 1990s were filled with sorrow and with letting go of the past. On February 14, 1994, Spohn Hospital System of Corpus Christi opened a new full-service primary care facility, Spohn Hospital South, and an adjacent building for medical offices and special programs, Spohn South Health Plaza. The 102-bed hospital was built in response to a need to provide health care in an area that was the fastest growing part of Corpus Christi but the most lacking in full-service medical facilities. In a new design for improving the quality of care, each of the three floors of the hospital was dedicated to a specific area: ambulatory services on the first floor, women's health services on the second, and fam-

ily health services on the third. Jane Bakos was appointed the first administrator of the new facility.

Another important development of the 1990s was the restoration of the Incarnate Word Convent Chapel. Like the motherhouse, the adjoining chapel, constructed in 1906, was situated on shifting soil and had deteriorated over the years. The walls of the building had become so badly cracked that the entire structure was in danger of complete collapse. On the advice of structural engineers, the sisters in 1985 had discontinued using it until the work of restoration could be undertaken to make it safe once again. The building needed also to be brought up to standard codes for safety.

It was determined that the work of restoration would be done simply and economically, and while some changes would be necessary to comply with building regulations, as much as possible the original design would be retained. Under the direction of Jack Duffin, architect, and Cosmo Guido, contractor, the work was begun in 1989 with stabilization of the foundation. Meanwhile, the congregational advancement office conducted a fund-raising campaign. Byron LeFlore, President of Jefferson State Bank, and Bebe Canales Inkley, Incarnate Word High School and College alumna, were named chairpersons of the Chapel Preservation Committee and took on the task of raising \$3 million from friends and benefactors. Working in conjunction with the community-wide campaign was a group of sisters called the US Committee-CCVI's, who volunteered to organize fund-raising efforts and to spread information on the restoration. Included in the committee were Sisters Rose Mary Cousins, chair; Joseph Alphonsus Dederichs; Nadine (David) Luebbert; Margaret Rose (Bonaventure) Palmer; Mary (Alphonse) Pezold; and Audrey O'Mahony.

When the first two phases of the restoration had been completed, a mass celebrating the reopening of the chapel was held on October 21, 1992, with Archbishop Patrick Flores presiding. Plans called for the beginning of the third and final phase, refurbishing the interior, upon completion of the capital campaign.

While work continued on the chapel, other efforts were directed at restoring the original barn that had been built behind the motherhouse and which had served for 100 years or more as a working structure, providing shelter and milking equipment for the cows raised on the property that supplied dairy products for the novices and sisters living at the motherhouse.¹⁸ Through the efforts principally of Sister Michelle Belto, the building was reopened in 1991 and transformed into a center for spirituality and the arts called ReBarn. Under the direction of Sister Michelle and later Sister Alice (Margaret) Holden, it was used for classes in art and

spirituality, for religious gatherings, and for exhibits of paintings and sculpture.

By 1993, the sisters were prepared to celebrate the 125th year of the founding of the Congregation. At the opening mass held December 3 in the motherhouse chapel, Sister Carol Ann Jokerst, who had been elected superior general in 1990, announced that the celebration was to be called, "Year of Jubilee—Year of Grace." The concept of jubilee was taken from the Book of Leviticus, where such a celebration was described as a time when "the land was not tilled or planted, it was restored to its original owners, slaves were freed, debts were forgiven."¹⁹ It was a time allowed for both lands and people to recover their source of energy, to be renewed in spirit. So also the sisters' jubilee was to be a time for them to renew their faith and courage in "respond[ing] to God's loving call and the challenges ahead."²⁰ The "year of grace" was derived from the letters of St. Paul, where it was presented as "a time of blessing, of gratitude, of joy, of celebration."

For the sisters, the anniversary was a time to reflect on the founding of the Congregation, to recall historical events of particular importance, to remember the great women who had gone before them, and to recapture the spirit of the founders. From the United States to Mexico, and from Peru to El Salvador, celebrations were held in all of the institutions sponsored by the Congregation—the hospitals, the schools, and the college; in the many parishes in which they were involved in pastoral ministry; and in the missions where they were living in solidarity with the poor.

Although it was a time of uncertainty for the future of the Congregation, an uncertainty that could be compared to that of the first three sisters who responded in 1869 to the call of Bishop Claude Dubuis to come to a strange land, to learn to speak a foreign language, to begin an unfamiliar ministry, and to serve an unknown people, it was also a time of rejoicing. It was a time to transcend the doubts of the present and the future by rediscovering the faith and trust of the founders. It was a time to believe in God's presence in the here and now and to place confidence in the divine plan for what was yet to come. It was a time, as proposed in the scriptures, to renew in spirit and to rejoice and give thanks for God's blessings in the Year of Jubilee—Year of Grace.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹*Texas in Turmoil* (Austin: Steck-Vaughn Co., 1965) 115.

²Elise Waerenskjold, quoted in William C. Pool, Claude Elliott, Lucille Raley, *Texas: Wilderness to Space Age* (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1962) 333-334.

³*The Daily Herald*, 1867. Quoted in Pat Ireland Nixon, M.D., *A Century of Medicine in San Antonio* (San Antonio: privately printed, 1936) 118.

⁴Nixon 118-119.

⁵*Missionary Adventures in Texas and Mexico*, trans. from the French under the author's supervision (London: Longmans, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1858) 96.

⁶"Health of the City" 19 Sept. 1866: n.p.

⁷Nixon 134.

⁸Nixon 134-135.

⁹Full-length studies on the life and missionary work of Claude Marie Dubuis have been done by Abbé Jean Perichón, *Vie de Monseigneur Dubuis, L'Apôtre du Texas* (Lyons, 1900), trans. Hectorine Piercey, 1978, and L. V. Jacks, *Claude Dubuis, Bishop of Galveston* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1946).

¹⁰"The Dubuis Family Papers," trans. Sister M. Consuelo Coffey, C.C.V.I., ts., 1983, Archives, Motherhouse of the Incarnate Word, 17. (Hereafter referred to as AMIW.)

¹¹Letter to Archbishop Jean Marie Odin, 2 Oct. 1863, trans. Sister Rita Prendergast, C.C.V.I., AMIW.

¹²10 Nov. 1864, AMIW.

¹³The terms "nun" and "sister," as well as "order" and "congregation" are sometimes used interchangeably, but historically they are distinct. A religious institute whose members make solemn vows and are primarily dedicated to a life of prayer and contemplation is identified as a religious order; its members are appropriately called "nuns." An institute in which the members make simple vows and are dedicated to some form or forms of apostolic work is designated as a religious congregation. The members are referred to as

"sisters." The institute in Lyons is known as the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, whereas the foundation in San Antonio is called the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

¹⁴21 Sept. 1866, AMIW.

¹⁵The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* defines third orders as "associations of the laity whose members, while living a secular life, strive after Christian perfection by observing a papally approved rule, under the direction and in the spirit of a religious order. . . . They differ from their respective religious orders through the absence of public vows and community life." S. Hartdegen, "Third Orders," XIV, 93.

¹⁶The sisters sailed for Galveston on September 29, 1866. Five other religious women were among the sixty-one passengers: two Ursuline nuns, two Sisters of Divine Providence, and Sister St. Regis of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Victoria.

¹⁷Twohig was a local businessman who because of his many charitable donations was frequently called "the breadline banker of St. Mary's Street." Albert Curtis, *Fabulous San Antonio* (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1955) 58.

¹⁸"Fire" 23 Mar. 1869: n.p.

¹⁹"Sketch of the Annals of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of the Foundation in San Antonio, Texas, 1869-1919," ts., AMIW, 45. (Hereafter referred to as Annals.) Although this document is not signed, part of it appears to have been written by Sister Gabriel Wheelahan. After Sister Gabriel's death in 1911, it may have been completed by Mother Bonaventure Burns.

²⁰In 1870, the federal census recorded the population of San Antonio as 12,256.

²¹Domenech 175.

²²*Samuel Maverick, Texan: 1803-1870* (San Antonio, privately printed, 1952) 386.

²³"The Indian Outrages" 26 Oct. 1870: n.p.

²⁴For more details of the announcement and a complete history of Santa Rosa see Vol. II, "Santa Rosa Hospital: Responding to Cries for Help."

²⁵Annals 5.

²⁶"San Antonio Hospital and Infirmary," *The Weekly Express* 25 Nov. 1869: n.p.

²⁷"The Hospital of Santa Rosa," *The San Antonio Weekly Express* 5 May 1870: n.p.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹The de Matel home exists to the present time. It has passed through a number of different ownerships and been converted to various uses. In 1990 it was in the process of being renovated for use as a school for Japanese boys coming to study in France.

²Abbé P. G. Penaud, *Venerable Mother Jeanne de Matel*, trans. Rev. F. G. (San Antonio: Maverick Printing House, 1890) II, 59.

³Quoted in P. G. Penaud, II, 25-26. Jeanne was ordered by her spiritual director and by the Archbishop of Lyons to write her autobiography. This work, together with her other writings on spiritual matters, was preserved even during the destructive period of the French Revolution by her sisters in Lyons and other convents in France.

⁴Quoted in Penaud 26. Jeanne had initially considered calling the order the Daughters or Religious of Jesus the Lamb, but by 1626 or 1627 she had determined it should be the Order of the Incarnate Word.

⁵John M. Lozano, C.M.F., *Jeanne Chézard de Matel and the Sisters of the Incarnate Word*, trans. Joseph Daries, C.M.F. (Chicago: Claret Center for Resources in Spirituality, 1983) 75.

⁶It is interesting to note that although the order was to be cloistered and involved only in the work of teaching, in one of Jeanne's visions she saw "a hospital for the destitute poor." Penaud 53.

⁷*Autobiography*, quoted in Penaud, II, 27.

⁸Alphonse-Louis du Plessis de Richelieu, Archbishop of Lyons, was the elder brother of the historically significant Armand-Jean du Plessis Richelieu, Cardinal and Minister to Louis XIII, who read Jeanne's writings also and was greatly impressed by them.

⁹"Confirmation of the Constitutions by Pope Innocent X," quoted in Rev. Mother Saint Pierre of Jesus, *Life of the Reverend Mother Jeanne Chézard de Matel*, trans. Henry Churchill Semple, S.J. (St. Louis: Woodward & Tiernan Co., 1922) 644.

¹⁰The Confraternity anticipated the 1981 foundation of the Incarnate Word Associates and the 1987 establishment of the Volunteers in Mission by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio.

¹¹Quoted in Penaud, II, 1.

¹²Additional foundations of the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament were established later in Victoria (1866), Corpus Christi (1871), and Houston (1873). Another foundation branched off from Victoria in 1882 and was established in Hallettsville. In Shiner in 1897, a convent was opened by sisters who had branched off from Victoria and Houston.

¹³Most Rev. Laurence J. FitzSimon, "Lyons and Texas," *The Amarillo Register* 25 May 1951: 8.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹Quoted in Sister Mary Helena Finck, *The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio, Texas* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America, 1925) 46.

²Her name appears in congregational records in different forms: Sister Marie St. Madeleine, Sister St. Madeleine, Sister M. Madeleine. She is most frequently referred to as Sister Madeleine or Rev. Mother Madeleine, after she was appointed superior.

³"Account Written by Sister Mary of Jesus [Noirry] Concerning the Foundation of the Community of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in Galveston, Texas," trans. from the French, n.d., AMIW, 3.

⁴Annals of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, Lyons, 417.

⁵Noirry 3.

⁶Noirry 3.

⁷The record of Sister Mary of the Incarnation's death is given in the historical account written by Sister Mary of Jesus Noirry and also in that of Sister Helena Finck. Sister Mary Loyola Hegarty, *Serving with Gladness* (Houston: Bruce Publishing Co, 1966) 180, says that the death occurred after a series of treatments for mental illness.

⁸Noirry 6.

⁹Noirry 6.

¹⁰Sister Clarencia Kavanagh, personal interview, 25 June 1992.

¹¹During her second term as superior general of the Congregation, 1894-1906, letters from Rev. Mother Madeleine were written by the secretary general.

Characteristically, they are signed: "Sister M. Madeleine by Sister Mary Gabriel."

¹²Silvie Simpasteur was born in Lyons, but at the time of her entry into the Congregation she was living with her uncle, Father Francis Bouchu, who was a priest in San Antonio. María Esparza was from San Antonio also. Her grandfather, Gregorio Esparza, died in the battle of the Alamo, and her father, at the age of eight, together with his mother, brothers and sisters, was in the fortress during the historic siege. Anastasia Krawiec came from St. Hedwig, Texas, and was the first of many sisters of Polish descent serving in the Congregation.

¹³Rules of religious orders and congregations are characteristically based on one of the rules of the four early founders of religious communities: St. Basil, St. Benedict, St. Augustine, and St. Francis of Assisi.

¹⁴22 Sept. 1872, AMIW.

¹⁵Finck 55.

¹⁶Mother St. Pierre Cinquin, letter to My Reverend and Good Mother, 15 Dec. 1885, Letters of Mother Saint Pierre Cinquin, trans. Sister Kathleen Garvey. (Hereafter referred to as LSPC.)

¹⁷Rev. Mother Angelique Hiver, letter to Sister St. Pierre Cinquin, undated, AMIW.

¹⁸Sister Calixta Garvey, letter to Dear Sisters, April 1973, AMIW.

¹⁹Letter to the sisters, 27 May 1895, AMIW.

²⁰Garvey.

²¹Annals, 21.

²²Quoted in Finck 53-54.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹On the occasion of receiving the religious habit, the novice was given the title "Sister" as well as a name different from the one she had received in Baptism. The change of name symbolized the change of life.

One of the customs developed in the monastery of Lyons and transmitted to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word was the practice of appending to the religious name what was called a "mystery"—reference to some event in the life of Christ, such as the Passion; some doctrine of the Catholic religion, such as the Trinity; or the name of a particular saint, such as St. Joseph. The sister was expected to have particular devotion to her patron saint as well as to the "mystery," but the second part of the name was not always used. Thus, Sister St. Pierre of the Passion became Sister St. Pierre or simply Sister Pierre.

²Annals, 41.

³In contrast to the general practice in later years of sisters making a temporary profession of vows each year for five years before they made their final profession, both Sister Madeleine and Sister Pierre made perpetual vows immediately after the completion of their novitiate training.

⁴Annals, 41.

⁵Letter to My Loved Sisters, 2 Apr. 1891, LSPC.

⁶Letter to My Good Alphonse, 8 July 1886, LSPC.

⁷Letter to Sister Gabriel, 4 Jan. 1888, LSPC.

⁸Letter to Sister Alphonse, 5 Feb. 1889, LSPC.

⁹Letter to Sisters of the Novitiate, 11 Aug. 1881, LSPC.

¹⁰Letter to Very Rev. Mother Marie de Jesus [Lyons], 31 May 1883, LSPC.

¹¹Letter to Loved Sisters, 15 Jan. 1888, LSPC.

¹²Letter to My Dear Gabbie, prob. 15 Jan 1889, LSPC.

¹³Letter to Sisters of the Novitiate, 11 Aug. 1881, LSPC.

¹⁴Letter to Beloved Sisters, 18 Dec. 1889, LSPC.

¹⁵Letter to Dear Sisters, 14 Sept. 1889, LSPC.

¹⁶Letter to Beloved Sisters, 20 Jan. 1891, LSPC.

¹⁷Letter to My Dear Sister, 9 Aug. 1887, LSPC.

¹⁸Letter to Very Rev. Mother Marie Salomé de Jesus [Lyons], prob. May 1883, LSPC.

¹⁹"Santa Rosa Hospital," ts., 1946, AMIW, 40.

²⁰25 June 1874: 3.

²¹"A History of the Catholic Church in the United States," *Catholic Church, U.S.A.*, ed. Louis J. Putz, C.S.C. (Chicago: Fides Publishers Assn., 1956) 23.

²²20 Mar. 1884, AMIW.

²³"Golden Jubilee Souvenir Booklet," AMIW, n. p.

²⁴5 Oct. 1900, AMIW.

²⁵St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum Remark Book, 12 Sept. 1889, AMIW.

²⁶18 July 1882, LSPC.

²⁷1 July 1885, LSPC.

²⁸Fort Sam Houston was established in 1876, but prior to 1890 was always referred to as the Post.

²⁹St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum Remark Book, 1 Nov. 1888, AMIW.

³⁰Hegarty 214.

³¹Letter to Rev. Mother Pierre, 8 Oct. 1873, AMIW.

³²Annals, 11.

³³Annals, 12.

³⁴LSPC, 267.

³⁵Bishop Pellicer's consecration took place in 1874, when San Antonio was established as a diocese. He had earned his own education from the Jesuits at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. When he came to San Antonio, he found that the schools were pitifully few in number. Only two public schools had been established by the year 1869, "one for white and one for colored pupils," according to the *San Antonio Express*. "The white school numbered about 125 children, most of them Americans with a few

of Mexican descent. . . . The colored school [was] in a wooden church building on the outskirts of the town and [had] an attendance of ninety-eight scholars, of all shades of complexion and of all degrees of mentality." "Schools in San Antonio" 13 Mar. 1869: n.p.

³⁶The school was closed in 1878 because of insufficient funding.

³⁷Another tidal wave in 1885 completely destroyed the town of Indianola.

³⁸Letter to Rev. Mother M. of Jesus [Lyons], 3 May 1883, LSPC.

³⁹2 Jan. 1881, LSPC.

⁴⁰Motherhouse Diary, Aug. 1883, AMIW.

⁴¹Letter to Beloved Sisters, 19 Apr. 1884, LSPC.

⁴²14 June 1883, LSPC.

⁴³Letter to Sister of the Assumption, 1 Dec. 1884, LSPC.

⁴⁴Cornerstone Document, Santa Rosa, 17 Apr. 1884, AMIW.

⁴⁵See Sister Mary of Jesus Noirry, 6; also Letter to Very Rev. Marie Salomé of Jesus [Lyons], prob. May 1883 and 3 May 1883, LSPC.

⁴⁶Bishop N. A. Gallagher, letter to Mother St. Pierre, 18 Apr. 1883, AMIW.

⁴⁷Letter to Very Rev. Marie Salomé of Jesus [Lyons], 3 May 1883, LSPC.

⁴⁸Sister M. Raphael Albinger, letter to Rev. V. Withmourez, 11 Sept. 1884, AMIW.

⁴⁹Letter to Very Rev. Mother Marie of Jesus [Lyons], 19 June 1884, LSPC.

⁵⁰LSPC, 113.

⁵¹Letter to Sisters S. Heart and St. Raphael, prob. May 1888, LSPC.

⁵²Letter to Sisters S. Heart and St. Raphael, prob. May 1888, LSPC.

⁵³Letter to Rt. Rev. N. A. Gallagher, D.D., 9 Aug. 1885, LSPC.

⁵⁴Letter to Sisters S. Heart and St. Raphael, prob. May 1883, LSPC.

⁵⁵Letter to Dear and Loved Sisters, 1 June 1888, LSPC.

⁵⁶Letter to Very Rev. Mother Marie Salomé of Jesus [Lyons], prob. May 1883, LSPC.

⁵⁷The epidemic broke out again in 1891, and the sisters returned to the Pest

House to care for the victims. Among their patients was one of the novices who had contracted the disease.

⁵⁸"From Our Community of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas," 24 Dec. 1882, LSPC.

⁵⁹Letter to Rev. Mother Marie of Jesus [Lyons], 3 May 1883, LSPC.

⁶⁰Letter to Very Rev. Marie of Jesus [Lyons], 14 Sept. 1882, LSPC. This letter should probably be dated 1883.

⁶¹Letter to Sister St. Angela, 25 Apr. 1884, LSPC.

⁶²Letter to Very Rev. Mother Marie of Jesus [Lyons], 19 June 1884, LSPC.

⁶³29 May 1885, Business Letters, AMIW.

⁶⁴Quoted in Sister Calixta Garvey, letter to Dear Sisters, April 1973, AMIW.

⁶⁵In 1929, a pious union was established between the Society of Mary and the sisters through which the members of each congregation shared in all of the masses, prayers, and good works of the other. As a part of the union, the sisters daily recited special prayers during the 10:00 a.m. visit to the Blessed Sacrament. These included the ejaculation: "May the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be glorified in all places by the Immaculate Virgin Mary."

⁶⁶Letter to Rev. T. Mas, S.J., 30 Apr. 1885, LSPC.

⁶⁷Letter to Rev. and Good Father, 14 Feb. 1890, LSPC.

⁶⁸Sister María Antonia Fernández in her history of the Congregation in Mexico, says that the first community included Sisters Manuela Mateus, Mónica Montes de Oca, Augustine Curran, Berchmans O'Connor, and Angelique Descombes. *More than One Hundred Years of Missionary Presence* (San Luis Potosí, S.L.P.: privately printed, 1989-1992) 1: 51.

⁶⁹Letter to My Beloved Sisters, 10 Dec. 1890, LSPC.

⁷⁰The first railroad to come into San Antonio was the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway called the Sunset Line, which later became the Southern Pacific.

PROMISES TO KEEP

⁷¹Letter to Dear and Beloved Sisters, 8 Apr. 1885, LSPC.

⁷²For a complete history of St. Joseph's Infirmary in Fort Worth, see Vol. II, "St. Joseph Hospital, Fort Worth: The Locomotive Whistle and a Call to Care."

⁷³For a detailed study of the sisters' work at the Missouri Pacific Hospital and at Incarnate Word Hospital in St. Louis, see Vol. II, "Incarnate Word Hospital: Serving God Through Service to Others—Without Fuss or Fanfare."

⁷⁴Letter to Sister St. Alphonse, 17 Jan. 1890, LSPC.

⁷⁵Letter to Beloved Sisters, 18 Feb. 1890, LSPC.

⁷⁶Document placed in the cornerstone of St. John's Orphanage, 22 Apr. 1890, AMIW. The Congregation was still under diocesan direction, and in this document Bishop Neraz is recognized as "absolute superior of the . . . Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word established in his diocese." In his last years, Bishop Neraz lived at the orphanage in order to be close to Santa Rosa.

⁷⁷Letter to My Beloved Sisters, 10 Dec. 1890, LSPC.

⁷⁸Sister Gabriel Wheelahan for Rev. Mother Madeleine Chollet, letter to Dr. B. E. Hadra, 30 May 1898, AMIW.

⁷⁹Letter to Very Dear Sisters, 6 Jan. 1885, LSPC.

⁸⁰Rev. Mother Pierre, letter to Very Rev. Mother Marie Salomé of Jesus, 12 Jan. 1886, LSPC.

⁸¹Letter to Beloved Sisters, 15 May 1891, LSPC.

⁸²12 June 1891, LSPC.

⁸³LSPC.

⁸⁴Annals, 39.

⁸⁵Mother Pierre was buried at the monastery in Lyons. In keeping with the tradition of preserving the body or parts of the body of a saint, her heart was brought back to Texas by Mothers Madeleine and Alphonse, preserved in a metal urn and placed in the sisters' chapel. (It was later moved to the archives.) Four years later her body was brought from France and buried in the San Fernando Cemetery of San Antonio where other deceased members of the Congregation had been buried. The remains of all of the sisters buried in San Fernando were transferred in 1930 to the motherhouse cemetery.

⁸⁶Letter to My dear Sister Ignatius and all our beloved Sisters, 20 Dec. 1891, LSPC.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

¹In addition to the number of living members, there were twenty-four sisters who had died before 1891 and 137 who had entered the Congregation and left for various reasons. Both figures seem very high, and it is impossible to identify any single cause either for the many deaths or for the sisters' decisions to leave, usually after spending a very short time in the Congregation. Many came from foreign countries, and the climatic and cultural adjustments demanded of them in addition to the difficulties of their living conditions may offer some explanation.

²This occurrence was reported to Sister Clarenca Kavanagh by Sister Modesta Murphy.

³Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 3 Nov. 1894, AMIW.

⁴Finck 107.

⁵Rev. Mother Pierre Cinquin, letter to Rev. Mother Marie of Jesus [Lyons], 19 June 1884, LSPC.

⁶Sister M. Madeleine Chollet by Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 3 Nov. 1894, AMIW.

⁷Rev. Mother Ignatius Saar, letter to Cherished Sisters, 23 Jan. 1893, AMIW.

⁸For more information on Incarnate Word High School and Incarnate Word College, see Vol. II, "Incarnate Word College: Glory for God, Utility for Others, Trouble for Ourselves."

⁹Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan for Rev. Mother St. Ignatius, letter to Dearly Loved Sisters, 21 Sept. 1892, AMIW.

¹⁰Cornerstone document, 23 Apr. 1893, AMIW.

¹¹Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan for Rev. Mother St. Ignatius, letter to Dear and Loved Sisters, 25 Feb. 1893, AMIW.

¹²Annals, 49-50. In the monthly letter to the sisters describing the details of the cer-

emony, Sister Gabriel adds the following information: "The Catholic Knights, St. Albert's Polish, St. Joseph's German, and the Hibernian Societies marched in procession to escort our Bishop at 6 p.m. They were met by the children of the school, accompanied by the sisters. The whole parade was worthy of the Catholicity of the city. The bell was blessed first and received the name Ignatius." 22 Aug. 1893, AMIW.

¹³Sister Gabriel Wheelahan for Rev. Mother Ignatius Saar, letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 22 Aug. 1893, AMIW.

¹⁴Cestohowa continued in operation until 1926, St. Hedwig until 1935, Panna Maria until 1944, and Kosciusko until 1969.

¹⁵Cornerstone document, 12 July 1894, AMIW.

¹⁶Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan for Rev. Mother Ignatius Saar, letter to Dear and Loved Sisters, 5 June 1894, AMIW.

¹⁷Rev. Mother Pierre Cinquin, letter to Rev. Mother Marie of Jesus [Lyons], 19 June 1884, LSPC.

¹⁸24 May 1892, AMIW.

¹⁹Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan for Rev. Mother Ignatius Saar, letter to Dear and Loved Sisters, 13 Feb. 1894, AMIW.

²⁰Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan for Rev. Mother Ignatius Saar, letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 30 July 1894, AMIW.

²¹Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 3 Nov. 1894, AMIW.

²²Finck 110.

²³Her heart, like that of Rev. Mother Pierre, was preserved and placed in a metal urn in the motherhouse.

²⁴Sister Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Dear and Loved Sisters, 26 Jan. 1895, AMIW.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

¹"Rules Given to Our First Mothers on Leaving France, 1869" trans. Sister Kathleen Garvey, AMIW. The date on this document should be 1867, the year in which Sister Madeleine Chollet brought the rules from Lyons to Galveston.

²"Rules. . . ."

³"Rules. . . ."

⁴"Rules. . . ."

⁵"Statutes and Constitutions of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word," 1872, AMIW.

⁶"Statutes and Constitutions," 32.

⁷"Statutes and Constitutions," 29.

⁸"Directory," 1.

⁹Rev. Mother Pierre Cinquin, letter to Rev. and Good Mother, 15 Dec. 1885, LSPC.

¹⁰"Decisions of Chapter and General Reunion of the Members of Our Community of the Charity of the Incarnate Word," 23 Aug. 1885, AMIW.

¹¹*Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word*, 1885, 3.

¹²*Constitutions*, 37.

¹³Sister Alphonse Brollier, letter to Mother St. Pierre, 12 June 1897, AMIW.

¹⁴"Observations . . . ," undated [prob. 1895], 2.

¹⁵AMIW.

¹⁶Rev. Mother Madeleine Chollet, letter to the sisters, 20 Apr. 1905, AMIW.

¹⁷Quoted in Finck 141.

¹⁸Sister Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Beloved Mother and Sisters, 27 Aug. 1905, AMIW.

¹⁹The Sacred Congregation for Religious was established in 1906 by Pius X as a special office of the Roman Curia.

²⁰Marilyn McAdams Sibley discusses the speculation that existed in San Antonio regarding the source of Brackenridge's wealth. *George W. Brackenridge* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973) 80-81.

²¹Finck 126.

²²The City of San Antonio sold the property to Sweet in 1852 in order to raise money for the building of City Hall on Military Plaza. The sale was criticized by some persons who felt that the city should

have retained ownership of the headwaters of the San Antonio River. Some time after Brackenridge purchased the property, he offered to sell it back to the city fathers. The mayor and city council were in favor of the purchase, but public opinion by this time was against it. Years later many San Antonians realized what a mistake had been made and regretted that the city had missed such an opportunity.

²³William Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar: A Guide and History* (San Antonio, Texas: Bainbridge & Corner, 1890) 52.

²⁴Dr. Richard E. Roehl, Professor of English at Incarnate Word College, described the home with a rhetorical flourish: "Encircled by stately elms and oaks, it testifies by romantic decor and eminent traditions to the spirit and ideal of early Texas, linking those days to the era of Spanish-American culture that preceded them and to the Anglo-American civilization which has followed. . . . The dining room (an adaptation of that in the palace which Maximilian prepared for Carlota), with its ceiling and frieze of elephant hide, its crystal Viennese glass, and its exquisitely hand-carved details and patterns of Mexican mahogany, and gorgeously lusted chandelier, is a resplendent metaphor of the aesthetics of which it was conceived." "Brackenridge Villa," *Pan American Round Table Brochure*, San Antonio, 1937.

²⁵Karen E. Stothert. *The Archaeology and Early History of the Head of the San Antonio River* (San Antonio: Southern Texas Archaeological Association, 1989) 6. In 1978, the area was designated the Source of the River Archeological District and entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

²⁶George W. Brackenridge and M. Eleanor Brackenridge to The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, 31 May 1897, Vol. 158, 544-46, Office of the County Clerk of Bexar County, Texas.

In 1899, Col. Brackenridge donated 344 acres to city. The donation was made

in the name of the Water Works Co., which Brackenridge owned. The property became the site of Brackenridge Park.

²⁷Sister Alphonse, letter to Mother St. Pierre, 12 June 1897, Letters from Lyons, AMIW.

²⁸Warranty Deed, 31 May 1897, AMIW.

²⁹George W. Brackenridge, letter to Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, 9 June 1897, AMIW.

³⁰Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan for Rev. Mother and Community, letter to George W. Brackenridge, 10 March 1898, AMIW.

³¹Rev. Mother Madeleine Chollet per Mother M. Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to George W. Brackenridge, 16 Mar 1898, AMIW.

³²Stories are told of how Brackenridge had very little confidence in the sisters' ability to manage their affairs and felt certain that they would default on the annual payments. Even after he turned over the ownership to the sisters, he insisted that the property be kept in its natural state and regularly came out to inspect it to determine whether a tree or a bush had been removed. No doubt, he fully expected to be able one day to reclaim the estate, including the books, and to make additional money off the interest paid by the sisters.

³³Sibley 143.

³⁴Stark Young's letter that is quoted in Sibley's biography and refers to the sisters' later efforts to sell the books cannot be confirmed by any records in the archives of the motherhouse. See Sibley, 143.

³⁵Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 14 Apr 1900, AMIW.

³⁶Rev. Mother St. Madeleine, letter to Gebr. Wiegmann, 21 Mar. 1897, AMIW.

³⁷Release of Liens, 29 May 1920, Deed Records, Bexar County, Texas.

³⁸One year later, on Jan. 27, 1899, the sisters sold back the water rights on the property to Col. Brackenridge at a cost of \$3300.00. They later negotiated several agreements with other parties for the sale of portions of the land. In 1914, they sold fifteen acres to J. N. Lott. Two years later, in 1916, they sold a portion to J. K. Burr

for \$3145.00 for construction of Burr Road. Two and one-half acres were sold to G. A. C. Halff in 1920, and in 1921, they sold 22.5 acres east of Broadway described as "bounded West by River Avenue [Broadway], North by Via Madre, East by North New Braunfels Avenue, and South by property conveyed . . . to J. K. Burr." This portion, which would later become part of Terrell Hills, was sold to D. D. Harrigan and Alexander Joske for \$45,120. Warranty Deed, 12 Jan 1921, Deed Records, Bexar County, Texas. Twenty-five additional acres were sold to the City of San Antonio in 1925 for the construction of Olmos Dam, and in 1928, 10.8 acres were sold to H. N. Thorman.

³⁹In later years, when the house was used as a chaplain's residence and for visitors to the campus, it was frequently referred to as the Guest House.

⁴⁰"First Mass and Benediction at the Brackenridge Villa," *Southern Messenger* 1 July 1897: 8.

⁴¹Sister Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 1 Apr. 1898, AMIW.

⁴²1 Apr 1898, AMIW.

⁴³Motherhouse cornerstone document, 15 Oct. 1899, AMIW.

⁴⁴In 1901, the grounds of the motherhouse became the site for the city-wide Corpus Christi procession, as described in the *Southern Messenger*: "Three handsomely decorated altars had been erected, two under wide-spreading trees and the third at the main entrance of the Sisters' new building. The attendance of visitors from the city was very large, and in addition to these the orphan boys and the community took part in the procession. Fully 140 sisters and novices carried lighted candles and sang appropriate hymns while a large number of acolytes, by turns, strewed flowers and incensed the Sacred Host along the route." The motherhouse continued to be the setting for the Corpus Christi celebration for many years. "The Fête Dieu at Brackenridge Villa," *Southern Messenger* 13 June 1901: 8.

⁴⁵Letter to My Dear Mama, 12 Oct. 1905, trans. JoAnn Ott, AMIW.

⁴⁶Father Bednarek also taught classes in Latin and mathematics to the students of Incarnate Word School once it was opened at the motherhouse. He was recognized not only for his skill in architectural design but also for his work as a scholar and teacher.

⁴⁷Document enclosed in the cornerstone of the chapel 22 June 1906, copy in AMIW.

⁴⁸Sister Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 12 Mar. 1906, AMIW.

⁴⁹Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan for Rev. Mother St. Madeleine, letter to My Very Dear Sisters, 17 July 1906, AMIW.

⁵⁰Wheelahan.

⁵¹Rev. Joseph Weckesser, S.M., letter to Mother M. Gabriel Wheelahan, 24 July 1906, AMIW.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

¹Thomas T. McAvoy, *A History of the Catholic Church in the United States* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969) 265.

²Quoted in Neil G. McCluskey, S.J., ed. *Catholic Education in America: A Documentary History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964) 94.

³18 Dec. 1885, LSPC.

⁴Many of the young women from Canada had been recruited from an orphanage in Quebec. Eleven of them left after only a few weeks in the Congregation.

⁵31 Dec. 1886, AMIW.

⁶Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Dear and Loved Sisters, 26 Jan. 1895, AMIW.

⁷Letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 22 Dec. 1898, AMIW.

⁸In 1913, a school for poor Mexican children was annexed to the academy. The sisters' work at both institutions ended in 1923, when the mines in Thurber were closed, and the workers moved on to find other jobs.

⁹Sister Rose Mary Cousins, "Address Given at Centennial Celebration of Angelo Catholic," San Angelo, 1988, AMIW.

¹⁰Although the salary was higher in the public school than it was in the Catholic institutions, Texas still ranked very low in the nation both in the length of school term and in payments to teachers. As late as 1900, the required term was only 108.2 days, and teachers were paid \$260.32 per month. Arthur Lefèvre, *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction*

(Austin: Von Boeckmann Schutze and Co., 1902) 6-7.

¹¹Sister Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to My Dear Sisters, 21 Sept. 1892, AMIW.

¹²Letter to Dear and Loved Sisters, 6 Jan. 1895, AMIW.

¹³"It is Getting Warmer," *San Antonio Daily Express* 20 Aug. 1891: n.p.

¹⁴Letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 8 Oct. 1896, AMIW.

¹⁵James M. Carlisle, *Ninth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Scholastic Years Ending August 31, 1893, and August 31, 1894* (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., 1895) xxxiv.

¹⁶Texas was not the only state in which statutes were established forbidding sisters to wear their habits in the public school. In Pennsylvania and New York, such laws were even tried and upheld in the courts.

¹⁷Letter to Dearly Beloved Sisters, 22 Dec. 1898, AMIW.

¹⁸These three schools, together with many others, were closed in 1913 during the Mexican revolution. The revolutionaries took possession of the house in Lampazos, plundered it, and partially burned it.

¹⁹*Catalogue of the Academy of the Incarnate Word 1903-1904*, Incarnate Word College Library, n.p.

²⁰[Sister Clement Eagan], "A History of Incarnate Word College," ts., vol. 1, 1944, 27. In a spirit of humility, sisters characteristically did not sign articles, books, musical compositions, and often art works which they had executed. For a complete

history of Incarnate Word College, see "Incarnate Word College: Glory for God, Utility for Others, Trouble for Ourselves," Vol. II, 317-373.

²¹Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Dear Sisters in Charge of Schools, either as Superiors or Teachers, 19 May 1899, AMIW.

²²Sister Mary Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Beloved Sisters, 1 Nov. 1901, AMIW.

²³Sister M. Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Beloved Sisters, Sept. 1904, AMIW.

²⁴In 1925, All Saints Academy closed, and students were transferred to the newly established Mount Carmel Academy.

²⁵Titles used by the members of the Congregation sometimes vary from "Sister" to "Mother," depending on their position in the community and also upon the current practices. The superior general had always been called "Rev. Mother." In 1901, it was decided that her assistant would have the title of "Mother." In 1909, all other members of the general council and superiors of local missions were given the title "Mother." That practice continued until the 1960s.

²⁶Mother Bonaventure Burns, letter to Beloved Mother and Sisters, 27 Nov. 1915, AMIW.

²⁷Sister Raphael Eccell, "San Francisco de la Espada Mission School," unpublished essay, 6 Jan. 1979, AMIW.

²⁸Mother Bonaventure Burns, letter to Beloved Mother and Sisters, 24 Sept. 1915, AMIW.

²⁹Additional classrooms were opened in 1932, and the school remained in operation until 1967, when financial difficulties forced its closing.

³⁰The Incarnate Word sisters did not start Blessed Sacrament School. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet had taught there from 1907 to 1913.

³¹Gilberto Hinojosa, "Mexican American Faith Communities in Texas and the Southwest, 1900-1965," *Mexican Americans in the Catholic Church, 1900-1965*, ed. Jay P. Dolan and Gilberto Hinojosa (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) 50.

³²Economic discrimination and class distinction were characteristic of the culture in Mexico. To serve the educational needs of the poor, many private schools supported separate institutions for children whose parents were unable to pay the costs of tuition.

³³Pastoral letter, 5 April 1954, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

³⁴"St. Peter's School, San Angelo," unpublished essay, n.d., AMIW.

³⁵Sister Mary Climacus Shelly, "The History of the San Antonio Province," unpublished essay, n.d. (prob. 1964), AMIW.

³⁶In spite of the drop in enrollment, the sisters tried to maintain the school in Clarendon located just ninety miles south of Amarillo. In 1911, however, a severe epidemic of scarlet fever broke out, and the school had to be closed. At that time it was decided not to reopen the institution.

³⁷In 1945, the academy was sold to Sacred Heart parish for \$85,000 and became a parochial school. In 1967, the senior and junior high departments were moved to Alamo Catholic High School. St. Mary's continued to offer classes from kindergarten through the sixth grade.

³⁸Some years later the girls' home was transferred to a building on Oak Lawn Avenue that had been occupied by the University of Dallas. Another location was secured later in Oak Cliff in the Virginia K. Johnson home, which was replaced in 1971 with a new St. Joseph's Center for both boys and girls.

³⁹Finck 119. In 1920, it was decided that the sanitarium should be closed. The small number of sick sisters who were hospitalized there were sent to the nearby Holy Angels Academy, which had no longer been used for school purposes because of its proximity to the sanitarium. In 1930, the sisters were moved to St. Francis Home in San Antonio, and the institution in Boerne was sold.

⁴⁰A detailed history of St. Anthony's Hospital can be found in Vol. II, 121-158.

⁴¹For a complete history of the Josephine Hospital, later named Incarnate Word Hospital, see Vol. II, 249-268.

⁴²For a complete history of Spohn Sanitarium, see Vol. II, 159-193.

⁴³For a complete history of St. John's Sanitarium, see Vol. II, 195-220.

⁴⁴For a complete history of St. Joseph's Infirmary, see Vol. II, 221-248.

⁴⁵AMIW.

⁴⁶Minutes of the General Council, 16 Feb. 1921, AMIW.

⁴⁷The hospital continued its service until 1972 when it was merged with McAlester General Hospital.

⁴⁸"St. Francis Home for the Aged" 15 Aug. 1895: 8.

⁴⁹Quoted in Sister Kathleen Garvey, letter to Dear Sisters, Christmas 1973, AMIW.

⁵⁰Annals 62.

⁵¹Over the years, more and more space was needed for retired sisters, and by 1924, the Congregation could no longer accept lay residents at St. Francis Home, although the men and women who were patients at the time were cared for until their deaths.

⁵²Sister Mary Gabriel Wheelahan, letter to Beloved Mothers and Sisters, 12 Mar. 1906, AMIW.

⁵³"Notes from Old Diaries," Feb. 1945, AMIW. In 1955, a new convent for retired sisters was built on the property of the motherhouse, and two years later St. Francis Home was sold to another religious congregation, the Daughters of Mary Immaculate. It was used as a home

for working women and renamed Villa Maria.

⁵⁴Rev. Theo Van Hulse, letter to Rev. Mother Alphonse, 14 Nov. 1907, AMIW.

⁵⁵Rev. Mother Alphonse Broilier, letter to Rev. Mother St. Pierre [Lyons], 18 Dec. 1907, AMIW.

⁵⁶Letter to Rev. Mother St. Pierre [Lyons], 19 Sept. 1908, AMIW.

⁵⁷Mother M. Bonaventure Burns, letter to Beloved Mother and Sisters, 4 Sept. 1911, AMIW.

⁵⁸In 1917, the sisters sold Villa María, which was too small to accommodate the growing number of candidates and was subject to excessive dampness that was injurious to their health. A larger house was purchased in the town and called St. Mary's Convent. This institution remained open until 1925, when the sisters decided to close the candidacy in Holland. Following World War I, the number of young women entering from Germany declined.

⁵⁹Letter to Rev. Mother St. Pierre [Lyons], 18 July 1906, AMIW.

⁶⁰Letter to Rev. Mother St. Pierre [Lyons], undated (prob. Sept. 1906), AMIW.

⁶¹Finck 179.

⁶²Letter to Rev. Mother St. Pierre [Lyons], 16 Sept. 1907, AMIW.

⁶³M. Spenner, letter to Mother St. Alphonse Broilier, 6 Oct. 1906, AMIW.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

¹Letter to Sister Alphonse Brollier, 7 Jan. 1890, LSPC.

²7 Jan. 1890, LSPC.

³23 Dec. 1890, LSPC.

⁴The sisters later contested the report of the fire marshal that said the fire was caused by oily rags. The place where these materials were stored was not burned. In the annals of the Congregation, the cause is attributed to defective electric wiring.

⁵Although it was thought at first that one child had wandered off in the confusion, the remains of his body were found later in the ruins of the building.

⁶Herff, II, 333-334.

⁷Several years later, the sisters and the Marianist priests and brothers offered many prayers to Father Joseph Chaminade, hoping that the restoration of her health might serve as a miracle to be used in the process of his beatification. Sister remained an invalid, however, until September 15, 1965, when she died at Santa Rosa Hospital fifty-three years after the fire.

⁸The San Antonio newspapers offered different names of the children as well as details of their deaths. Those given here are taken from the records in the San Antonio Archdiocesan Archives.

⁹St. Louis College was the original name of St. Mary's University.

¹⁰Quoted in Shortall 60-61.

¹¹The location of the former St. John's on the grounds of Santa Rosa was used later for the construction of the first nurses' training school.

¹²Quoted in Finck 165-166.

¹³Quoted in Finck 175.

¹⁴It is not within the scope of this history to give a complete account of the Mexican Revolution and of the years of political turmoil that followed. The brief details included here are meant to serve only as a background for understanding the struggles which the sisters endured.

¹⁵Letter to Mother Alexandre of the Sacred Heart [Lyons], 8 Apr. 1912, AMIW.

¹⁶Minutes of the general council, 5 May 1914, AMIW.

¹⁷Fernández 82.

¹⁸Cecil C. Freston, Letter to Sister Jacinta González, 8 June 1914, AMIW.

¹⁹Only four of these institutions were able to be reopened at a later date: Colegio del Sagrado Corazón, Tampico; Colegio Guadalupano, Chihuahua; Colegio San José, Oaxaca; and Colegio Jesús María, Torreón.

²⁰"Reign of Terror in City of Mexico," *Southern Messenger* 10 Sept. 1914: 1.

²¹Letter to Mother Alexandre of the Sacred Heart, 19 May 1914, AMIW.

²²Minutes of the General Council, 11 Dec. 1914, AMIW.

²³Personal Interview by Sister Juanita Albracht, 20 Sept. 1983, AMIW.

²⁴See Sister Bonaventure [Margaret Rose] Palmer, "Bishop John William Shaw and the Diocese of San Antonio, 1910-1918," diss. The Catholic University of America, 1960.

²⁵According to Sister Margaret Rose Palmer's study, others were given sanctuary at Our Lady of the Lake College, the Holy Ghost Convent, the Ursuline Convent, and the rectory of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish.

²⁶Letter to Madame Alexandre Corteys [Lyons], 22 Apr. 1915, AMIW.

²⁷Francis Clement Kelley, *Blood-Drenched Altars* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1937) 232.

²⁸Article 130. Quoted in David C. Bailey, *¡Viva Cristo Rey!* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974) 23.

²⁹Article 5.

³⁰Article 27.

³¹Article 3.

³²Letter to Madame Alexandre Corteys [Lyons], 12 Mar. 1917, AMIW.

³³Minutes of the General Council, 10 Apr. 1917, AMIW.

³⁴Letter to Rev. Mother Alexandre [Lyons], Aug. [prob. 1917], AMIW.

³⁵Pat Ireland Nixon, M.D. *A Century of Medicine in San Antonio* (San Antonio: privately printed, 1936) 287.

³⁶Letter to Rev. Mother and Beloved Sisters, 27 Dec. 1918, AMIW.

³⁷Annals 121.

³⁸Letter to Mother Alexandre of the Sacred Heart [Lyons], 2 Mar. 1919, AMIW.

³⁹Sister Catherine of Bologna's sister entered the Congregation just a few years later and took the same name of Catherine of Bologna. The two are not to be confused.

⁴⁰For a complete history of Spohn Sanitarium, see Vol. II, 159-193.

⁴¹Rev. Mother Madeleine wanted the building to be constructed of brick and had worked with an architect in San Antonio to draw up the original plans. Unfortunately, the people of Corpus Christi felt they could not raise enough money to build the sanitarium according to her design and proposed that a frame structure be erected instead. When the ruins of the hurricane were examined after

the storm, it was found that only one building in the North Beach area remained standing—a brick hotel. Had the sanitarium been constructed as Mother Madeleine had proposed, it too might have withstood the storm.

⁴²Mother M. Bonaventure Burns, letter to Beloved Mother and Sisters, [no day] Dec. 1915, AMIW.

⁴³Quoted in "Golden Jubilee of the Congregation of Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word," *Southern Messenger* 7 Aug. 1919: 1.

⁴⁴Quoted in "Golden Jubilee. . .," 4.

⁴⁵Quoted in "Golden Jubilee. . ."

⁴⁶"Closing Jubilee Celebration," *Southern Messenger* 4 Dec. 1919: 1.

⁴⁷Mother Mary John O'Shaughnessy, letter to Dear Mother and Sisters, 20 Feb. 1915, AMIW.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IX

¹Minutes of the General Chapter, 1918, AMIW.

²Letter to Rev. Mother Alexandre [Lyons], August, prob. 1917, AMIW.

³Letter to Rev. Mother Alexandre [Lyons], 11 Apr. 1918, AMIW.

⁴Mother Alphonse remained in the general council as the assistant to Rev. Mother Mary John for the next twelve years. By 1927, she began to lose her eyesight and was suffering from other physical ailments that caused her to be confined to a wheelchair. When she became seriously ill several years later, the doctors suggested that she be moved to Santa Rosa, but she longed to spend her last days in the motherhouse, where she died on March 8, 1939. In announcing her death to the sisters, Mother Mary of Lourdes Hickey said, "During her last days on earth her communications with God were almost uninterrupted, and repeatedly she told those who visited her that she was most anxious to go home to God. For all who were privileged to come into contact with her during those days, Mother had words of gratitude and encouragement." Letter to Very Dear

Mothers and Sisters, 24 Mar. 1939, AMIW.

⁵Many letters written by Mother Alphonse to the French sisters are retained in the Congregational archives. She sent them a regular account of what was happening in San Antonio.

⁶Letter to Rev. Mother Alexandre, 17 Jul. 1918, AMIW.

⁷Irone Lambert from Sarthe, France, entered the Congregation in March, 1907, but left just four months later. Emelie Flasseur, who was from Lyons and a niece of Rev. Mother Alphonse, entered in 1914 and became Sister Mary Gabriel.

⁸See minutes of the general chapter, 1924, AMIW.

⁹Letter to Mother Alexandre Corteys [Lyons], trans. Joann Ott, 17 Jul. 1918, AMIW.

¹⁰Letter to Rev. Mother St. Pierre [Lyons], 16 Sept. 1907, AMIW.

¹¹She later dropped the last part of her name and became known as Sister Mary John.

¹²Letter to Rev. Mother Alexandre [Lyons], 11 Apr. 1918, AMIW.

¹³Eagan 9.

¹⁴The general administration evidently thought Father Garriga would be more acceptable as president because he was a man and a priest. He remained in the position only two months and resigned to become pastor of St. Cecilia's parish. In the meantime, Sister Columkille was completing her doctoral degree at The Catholic University of America and being prepared to take over the presidency.

¹⁵Letter to Mother Kevin Murray, 15 Mar. 1921, College Archives.

¹⁶*Southern Messenger*, quoted in Eagan 60.

¹⁷Sister Clement, together with Dr. Roy J. Deferarri, published *A Concordance of Statius* (Brookland, Washington, D. C., 1943). Her translation, *The Poems of Prudentius*, was published in 1965 by the Catholic University of America Press.

¹⁸For a detailed history of the College, see Vol. II, 317-373.

¹⁹Minutes of the General Council, 3 June 1919, AMIW.

²⁰Minutes.

²¹Father Garriga was consecrated Coadjutor Bishop of Corpus Christi in 1936 and was the first native Texan named to the episcopacy. He celebrated his first pontifical high mass in the Motherhouse Chapel.

²²Incarnate Word School, Ysleta, had been established originally as Immaculate Conception Academy in 1920. The name was changed when the Incarnate Word sisters began teaching there in 1923. Many years later, in 1962, the name was changed again when a new school was built by the parish. It was called Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parochial School.

²³The school in Jalisco endured scarcely a year. It had such a short existence that either it was never given an official name or the name has been lost. For more information on the schools in Puebla, see Vol. II, 269-315.

²⁴As early as the thirteenth century the Church had allowed the province structure to be established in orders of priests and brothers. Only in the twentieth century was it permitted in congregations of sisters.

²⁵"In the Rome of the West," ts., 1946, AMIW, 7. In her history of the Mexican Province, Sister María Antonia Fernández reports that in 1918 Mother Brigid Crowley made a trip to Mexico in response to an invitation from Mrs. Concepción Cabrera de Armida, who wanted to communicate to her an important message—that the Incarnate Word wished her to propose at the next general chapter the division of the Congregation into provinces. Although both Mother Brigid and Sister Angélique Descombes were present for the interview, the message supposedly was heard only by Mother Brigid. Mrs. Cabrera de Armida, a person recognized for her holiness, later became the foundress of the Sisters of the Cross. Fernández 3-4.

²⁶Letter to Mother Alexandre Corteys [Lyons], 17 Jul. 1918, AMIW.

²⁷Quoted in the minutes of the general council, 3 Feb. 1921, AMIW.

²⁸24 Nov. 1921, AMIW.

²⁹Several years later, in 1928, Archbishop Mora died in Santa Rosa. He had been driven out of Mexico and was living in exile at the Brackenridge Villa.

³⁰St. Joseph's Academy was assigned to the Mexican province so that the novices and postulants might be sent across the border during particularly dangerous periods of political disturbance. It became impossible, however, to gain the necessary recognition of the academy as a school for foreign students, and immigration authorities would not authorize the entrance of the young women into the country. In 1943, St. Joseph's was transferred to the San Antonio Province.

³¹Rev. John Shuman for Archbishop John J. Glennon, letter to Mother Mary John, 20 Nov. 1919, AMIW.

³²Reported in minutes of the general council, 20 Aug. 1920, AMIW.

³³The land grant given to Jean Baptiste Charles Lucas became the site not only of Incarnate Word Convent but also of several other Catholic convents and institutions: St. Ann's Parish, the Convent of the Immaculate Heart, the Cenacle Retreat House, St. Vincent's Orphan Home,

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Marillac Convent, and the Oblate Sisters of Providence. Anne Lucas Hunt, Lucas' daughter, donated much of the land to the various religious congregations staffing these institutions.

36 St. Catherine of Siena School was opened four years later in 1926.

37 Mother Bonaventure Burns, letter to His Holiness Pius X, 1 Sept. 1930, AMIW.

38 Minutes of the General Council, 27 Feb. 1922, AMIW.

39 Sister Infant Jesus composed the congregational hymn to the Incarnate Word.

40 Two sisters, Sister Lucy Powell and Sister Vincent Costigan, were buried in

the cemetery in 1927 before the date of the official dedication.

41 Sisters who died at hospitals or missions outside San Antonio were usually buried in Catholic cemeteries in those locations. The motherhouse archives has a listing of those buried in San Angelo, Amarillo, Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, and Dallas, Texas; St. Louis, Missouri; McAlester, Oklahoma; and County Galway, Ireland.

42 Letter to Rev. Mother Presentation [Lyons], trans. JoAnn Ott, 30 Mar. 1928, AMIW. Five Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament were transferred from the cemetery in Boerne also.

NOTES TO CHAPTER X

1 According to some accounts of the situation, the archbishop later denied that he had made such public statements and said that the report was contrived simply to bring about the action against the bishops.

2 "Hate of Hierarchy Driven from Posts by the Persecution" 2 Dec. 1926.

3 Leopoldo Ruiz, Delegado Apostólico, *Al Episcopado, Clero y Católicos de México*, 12 Dec. 1934.

4 The t

²³Mother Kevin had held positions of leadership in the Congregation as the first inspectress general of schools and as provincial secretary. She had also been one of the first sisters to study for a master's degree and was well qualified to teach on the high school and college level. After her disappointment over the decision regarding the canonization of Mother de Matel, she taught for a few years at Incarnate Word Academy in Normandy and then withdrew from any position of prominence in the Congregation. She spent her last years working quietly and peacefully in the Dunne Memorial Home for Boys in Dallas until her retirement in 1964.

²⁴"Is Mother de Matel the Foundress of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word?" ts., 24 May 1942, AMIW, 21.

²⁵Responsibility for the French order, whose members were greatly diminished, was ultimately taken over by the Congregation of the Incarnate Word in Mexico.

²⁶Even after the death of Mother Hermenegilda, income from the endowment that she had established was used to finance the cause of Mother de Matel. Promotion of the cause was later taken over by the Congregation of the Incarnate Word in Mexico City, who united with the sisters in Lyons. Sister Carmen María González, CVI, was appointed Vice Postulatrix of the Cause. Working closely with her was Sister Carmelita Casso of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Victoria. Sister Mary Teresa Daly and Sister Francisca Xavier Hernández, both members of the San Antonio congregation, continued to assist in the work of translation. By 1984, all of the documents had been collected and presented in Rome, and in January, 1992, Jeanne de Matel was declared "Venerable" by Pope John Paul II. The declaration officially and publicly attested to her virtue and advanced the cause of her sainthood to the investigation of miracles attributed to her. "Mother de Matel Declared Venerable," *Today's Catholic* 7 Feb. 1992: 1.

²⁷Personal Interview, 20 July 1993.

²⁸This statement by Mother Columkille is not recorded anywhere in writing but is part of the oral history of the College.

²⁹Summer vacation schools were opened in many parts of Texas, including Weslaco, San Angelo, Runge, Rankin, Borger, Del Rio, Seguin, and San Antonio.

³⁰"Sister Sparks Community Project," *San Antonio Light* 29 Oct. 1950: 7B.

³¹*San Antonio Light* 29 Oct. 1950.

³²Sister Helena Finck, letter to Loved Mothers and Sisters, 15 April 1943, AMIW.

³³In 1970, the sisters decided to withdraw from Guadalupe Community Center. Social work had never been a primary focus of their ministry, and very few sisters had been educationally prepared to hold administrative positions in this apostolate. When Sister Ethna resigned, a lay man was appointed as director. Only one sister remained on the staff, Sister Angelina Frésquez. In a letter to Lee Davis, President of the Board of Directors, Sister Bridget Mary Brennan, San Antonio provincial, offered reasons for withdrawing support: "It is the mind of the Church that religious should in time of need organize a service and assume responsibility for it as long as necessary. Then when it is well established, it should be left to the leadership of the lay people. . . . The members of our General Chapter were of the opinion that Guadalupe Community Center is ready to be left to the responsibility of the lay people." 5 Feb. 1970, AMIW.

³⁴In 1947, the archdiocese withdrew its support from the clinic because of a lack of funds.

³⁵In 1984, the hospital celebrated its fiftieth anniversary of medical service in Monterrey.

³⁶Personal interview, 7 Jan. 1994.

³⁷Dr. Chávez' request is recorded in the collection of his writings: "*No las pido, le dije, por el hecho de que sean religiosas, sino por el hecho de que son enfermeras altamente calificadas y que además son religiosas, con esa conjunción de calidades podremos tener el servicio ideal que buscamos para el Instituto.*" Ignacio Chávez, *Humanismo Médico, Educación*

y *Cultura*, Vol. I (Mexico City: El Colegio Nacional, 1978) 449.

³⁸Personal interview with the sisters at Instituto Nacional de Cardiología, 10 Jan. 1994.

³⁹Personal interview, 10 Jan. 1994.

⁴⁰"Memories for Mother Columkille," 1959, ts., AMIW.

⁴¹December, 1936, AMIW.

⁴²For more information on the Academia Inglesa Welcome in San Luis Potosí, see Vol. II, 269-315.

⁴³The provincial house on Lerma Street was closed in 1943 and a few years later, in 1948, the property was sold. The novitiate was later moved from San Angel to Querétaro (1961).

⁴⁴Letter to Rev. Mother Presentation [Lyons], 11 Sept. 1930, AMIW.

⁴⁵No records in the archives give the exact reason for the strained relationship, although several early letters written to the sisters in Lyons make references to it. The division might have developed as early as 1867, when Sister Madeleine insisted that the sisters in Galveston should adopt the habit that was given in Lyons.

⁴⁶"Last Rites Held for Mother Bonaventure, Superior-General of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word," *Southern Messenger* 20 Nov. 1941: 1.

⁴⁷Letter to Rev. Mother Augustin, 3 Apr. 1945, trans. JoAnn Ott, AMIW.

⁴⁸Letter for Mother Loyola Coindreau to Rev. Mother Augustin, 23 Apr. 1945, trans. JoAnn Ott, AMIW.

⁴⁹Decisions of the General Chapter, 2 June 1930, AMIW.

⁵⁰When a quota was placed on immigration to the United States in 1932, young women from Ireland could not obtain passports and had to spend their year of postulancy as well as part of their novitiate in the convent in Dunmore. It was not until November, 1933, that their applications for immigration were accepted and they were able to transfer to the central novitiate in San Antonio. The temporary postulancy and novitiate in Dunmore were then discontinued until ten years later when World War II created difficulties in trans-Atlantic travel.

⁵¹Letter to Loved Mothers and Sisters, Easter 1944, AMIW.

⁵²"Archbishop Praises Influence of Sisters," *Alamo Register* 24 Nov. 1944: 2.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XI

¹In 1946 the number of sisters in the United States reached 139,218. By 1958, it had jumped to 164,575 and continued to increase until 1966. In that year, 181,000 women were members of the over 500 religious congregations and orders throughout the country.

²The band of 1901 numbered seventy; that of 1912 reached sixty-five.

³Letter to Dearly Beloved Sister Superior and Sisters, 8 Sept. 1954, AMIW.

⁴Father French was appointed chaplain in 1952.

⁵In 1960, an annex was built adjacent to the convent in Normandy to provide additional room for the retired sisters of the St. Louis Province, and in 1974, the Mexico province purchased a large house

in Cuernavaca which was used for the same purpose.

⁶The first Incarnate Word School was opened in 1892 in a rented house in downtown San Antonio on Avenue D, later called North Alamo St. The original building was demolished in 1957 to make way for a modern expressway.

⁷In 1958 a chapel was built adjacent to Madeleine Hall, the student dormitory, and during the 1960s a science building, swimming pool, and extension of the library were added to the complex.

⁸The sisters continued their work in Metepec until the factory closed in 1968.

⁹The sisters working in nursing care withdrew from the hospital in 1988, but in 1993, other members of the Congregation took up the work of pastoral ministry in Hospital Central.

¹⁰According to James Hennesey, "In 1949 there were 10,183 Roman Catholic elementary and high schools in the country, with 2,607,879 pupils. By the end of the next decade, some 5,600,000 students, 11 percent of the total school population, were in private schools, 90 percent of them Catholic." *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) 296.

¹¹The name of St. Elizabeth School was later changed to the name of the new parish and dedicated to St. Peter.

¹²The name of St. Alice School was changed in 1965 to Holy Family School.

¹³Letter to Loved Mothers and Very Dear Sisters, Christmas 1945, AMIW.

¹⁴Letter to Msgr. John A. Steinlage, 22 Aug. 1950, AMIW.

¹⁵Letter to Dear Mothers and Sisters, 15 Dec. 1951, AMIW.

¹⁶When the sisters withdrew from St. Francis de Sales, they opened Archbishop Chapelle High School in New Orleans.

¹⁷By 1981, there were 1250 students in Chapelle High School. In spite of the continuing growth, however, the sisters had to withdraw from the school in 1984 because of the decline in membership in the Congregation. Some years later, Sisters Martha Maguire and Kathleen O'Driscoll returned to serve on the faculty and staff of the school.

¹⁸From 1960 to 1964, a total of thirty-three young women entered the Congregation in Dunmore, whereas shortly after the opening of the house of formation, from 1928 to 1932, seventy-eight had entered.

¹⁹With a further decline of sisters in the late 1960s and the difficulty of providing faculty who were educationally prepared to teach in the Irish school system, it became necessary for the sisters to withdraw from Dunmore. In 1979, the school was turned over to the Sisters of Mercy of the Archdiocese of Tuam.

²⁰For more information on Colegio Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, see Vol. II, 269-315.

²¹The sisters were forced to withdraw from St. Teresa's in 1964. The work was taken over by a community of sisters from Italy.

²²Letter to Very Dear Mothers and Sisters, 8 Sept. 1945, AMIW.

²³Letter to Loved Mothers and Sisters, 15 Apr. 1943, AMIW.

²⁴Rev. Mother Laserian Conlon, letter to Rev. Msgr. John A. Steinlage, 8 Feb. 1954, AMIW.

²⁵After completing his law degree at the University of Notre Dame, where he also taught on the faculty, Al Heck came to San Antonio, where he became a successful and highly respected attorney and served as a county judge in Bexar County. For many years, both before and after the highway suit, he served as a personal advisor to the sisters on legal matters involving the Congregation and the College. Pat Maloney and Jack Pasqual both began their practice with Judge Heck and went on to become prominent personal injury lawyers. They continued to represent the sisters in legal situations.

²⁶Quoted in "Mother Calixta Hits Proposed Freeway Route," *Alamo Messenger* 18 Oct. 1963: 10.

²⁷"A Dream . . . A Fight . . . A Reality . . . McAllister Expressway," *San Antonio Express-News* 29 Jan. 1978: 4-H.

²⁸In the early 1960s, very few sisters drove automobiles. Their principal access to St. Joseph's Convent from Incarnate Word High School, Incarnate Word College, and the motherhouse was a well-worn footpath.

²⁹The buildings at Incarnate Word High School were later air conditioned not only to provide cooler temperatures but also to block out the noise from the expressway which interfered with work in the classrooms. St. Joseph's Convent had been air conditioned when it was constructed, but the expressway made it impossible to open the windows of the building without admitting noise and pollution which was disturbing to the retired sisters.

³⁰Plans for building the elementary school were dropped, and in 1966 grades

1-6 were discontinued because of a need for more space for the high school.

³¹Letter to Dear Mother and Sisters, 23 Aug. 1965, AMIW.

³²5 Aug. 1965, AMIW.

³³"Statement of Mother Mary Clare Relative to Northbound Expressway," 5 Aug. 1965, AMIW.

³⁴"Questions, Mail Welcome Mayor Home," *San Antonio News* 13 Oct. 1965: 7A.

³⁵Letter to Mother Calixta Garvey, 22 Dec. 1965, AMIW.

³⁶"IWC Will Cede Small Hildebrand Strip," *San Antonio Express-News* 23 Jan. 1966: 1.

³⁷Letter to Mother Calixta Garvey, 7 Feb. 1966, AMIW.

³⁸"North Expressway Problem Solved," Report on an Editorial Broadcast by WOAI Radio and Television, 6 Aug. 1965.

³⁹Commentary, 28 Sept. 1993, AMIW.

⁴⁰Sister Charles Marie had been Dean of the School of Nursing at The Catholic University of America since 1957. She had been a consultant with the People-to-

People Health Foundation (Project HOPE) to Peru, Colombia, and Venezuela and had served as a consultant also for USOM/ICA (United States Overseas Mission/International Coop. Administration) to Columbia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru.

⁴¹Letter written for Rev. Mother Mary Clare Cronly to Dear Mother and Sisters, 18 Dec. 1963, AMIW.

⁴²"Chimbote: The Story of Our First Peruvian Mission, 1964-1987," ts. 1988, AMIW, 38-39.

⁴³"Some Remarks and Reminders Given at the Close of the Retreats in the Summer of 1955," AMIW.

⁴⁴Letter to Rev. Mother Mary Clare Cronly, 13 Dec. 1965, AMIW.

⁴⁵In 1972, it became necessary to withdraw the sisters from the hospital in Lima, when they were reassigned from supervisory positions to manual tasks of laundry, cleaning, etc. It was decided that the professional nursing skills of the sisters could be used more effectively in other health care facilities.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XII

¹Letter to Dear Mother and Sisters, 8 Sept. 1962, AMIW.

²In 1966, "*Ecclesiae Sanctae*," the *motu proprio* for implementing the Council's decree on the renewal of religious life, called for a study of the constitutions and changes in accordance with the conditions of the times.

³"Renewal of Religious Life," 17: 572.

⁴Pope John XXIII died on June 3, 1963, just six months after the close of the first session of the Council. Pope Paul VI was elected on June 21 of the same year.

⁵Minutes of the 1960 General Chapter, AMIW.

⁶The *Ceremonial*, which contained precise guidelines for the ceremonies of investiture and of profession of vows, specified that the habits should be blessed by the presiding bishop. The *Directory* stated that the sisters should kiss the various parts of the religious habit when

putting them on each morning, an outward sign of the sacred character of their dress.

⁷See Chap. II, 13.

⁸*Directory*, 1926, AMIW.

⁹"Statement on Religious Dress," 30 Nov. 1974, AMIW.

¹⁰The first changes in 1965 were directed by the general administration and required of all members of the Congregation. Because the later changes were optional, some sisters chose to retain the 1964 model. For some older sisters, the adaptation was particularly difficult. "I have never worn a short skirt in my life," said Sister Columba Colley, who had entered the Congregation when women's fashions still called for hemlines that reached the ground.

¹¹Austin P. Flannery, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975) Article 43. All quotations from

Vatican II documents are taken from the Flannery edition.

¹²(Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Publishers, Inc., 1965) 7.

¹³Preface.

¹⁴*Gaudium et Spes*, 40.

¹⁵*The Nun in the World* (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1963) 34.

¹⁶8 July 1886, LSPC.

¹⁷Letter to Dear Sisters, 8 Nov. 1968, AMIW.

¹⁸*Perfectae Caritatis*, 3.

¹⁹*Ecclesiae Sanctae*, 3.

²⁰Rev. Mother Mary Clare Cronly, letter to Dear Mother and Sisters, 23 Aug. 1965, AMIW.

²¹Letter to Dear Mothers and Sisters, 20 Dec. 1965, AMIW.

²²Retreat Conference, 1967, AMIW.

²³From this time on, the sisters characteristically invited consultants to assist at their general chapters. Usually, they were members of the clergy. In the later years, however, in keeping with new attitudes toward feminism, they called upon sisters from other congregations to serve in this capacity.

²⁴Customarily, at the time of her reception of the habit, a sister was given a different name which symbolized her new way of life and her giving up of everything from the past. The name was always that of a saint, but often one that had long since passed out of use or one that was masculine rather than feminine.

²⁵"St. Anthony's Hospital Sisters Change Names," *The News Capsule*, July, 1967: 3. From this point on in the text a sister who changed her name in the 1960s or later is referred to by her baptismal name. The first time the baptismal name is used it is followed in parenthesis by the name she had been given in religion.

²⁶23 Dec. 1968, AMIW. Mother Calixta Garvey later chose to use her baptismal name of Kathleen. Since the change did not occur until after her retirement from the general administration, however, she is referred to in this part of the text by the name of Calixta.

²⁷The second session opened on December 27, 1969.

²⁸23 Dec. 1968, AMIW.

²⁹Delegates approved also the establishment of a retirement fund for the sisters. A few years later, the general administration approved of the sisters' participation in Social Security. Both decisions were important for the future economic stability of the Congregation.

³⁰Address to Delegates at the Chapter of Renewal, 23 Dec. 1968, AMIW.

³¹For more information, see Vol. II, "Villa Rosa Hospital: Pioneer in Psychiatric Care," 69-77.

³²Both a leave of absence and exclaustation permitted a sister to live outside the community for a specified period of time. A leave of absence was characteristically requested for health reasons, for the purpose of caring for parents, or for further study. Exclaustation, meaning out of cloister, required an indult from the Sacred Congregation for Religious and was granted to a sister only "for very grave reasons," usually for the purpose of discerning her vocation. (*Constitutions*, 1985) During her absence, usually for only one year, the sister was required to observe the obligations of the vowed life as far as possible and was subject to the authority of the general superior. In 1982, with the revision of Canon Law, the time of exclaustation was extended to three years and required only the authorization of the superior general. The designation of leave of absence was discontinued, since sisters no longer needed to separate themselves from the Congregation for purposes of care of parents or further study.

³³*From Nuns to Sisters: Three Significant Changes* (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1990) 32.

³⁴Letter to Dear Mothers and Sisters, 15 Dec. 1960. The term "aspirant" was used to identify a young woman who had expressed an interest in becoming a sister and was studying in one of the houses of formation, but was not yet old enough to enter the postulate, the first year of preparation.

³⁵Two years later, in 1968, Centennial Hall was built to replace the old St. Cecilia's Hall and to serve as a recreation

center particularly for the many novices, postulants, and junior sisters.

³⁶The facilities of Blessed Sacrament School were used for Bishop Healy School, and the sisters taught there from 1971 to 1974.

³⁷In 1962, a new school was constructed outside the city limits and named St. Peter's.

³⁸Oral History, AMIW.

³⁹Letter to Sister Eleanor Cohan and Sister Bridget Mary Brennan, 4 Apr. 1973, AMIW.

⁴⁰Article 33.

⁴¹Personal interview, 8 Apr. 1994.

⁴²"Cy Collins Rounds Out Fifty Years as Utility Man at I. W. C.," *Southern Messenger* 30 Nov. 1944: 8.

⁴³Viola continued living in the Collins' home until her retirement to St. Joseph's Convent and later to the recently constructed Motherhouse and Retirement

Center, where she died on August 28, 1991. All of the Collins children, like their parents, were educated by the sisters. Thomas was later ordained a priest and continued his relations with the sisters, presiding and assisting at many liturgical celebrations in the motherhouse chapel. Margaret married Marvin Reininger, who spent his life working for Incarnate Word College.

⁴⁴From the time of the general chapter of 1972, the title of "Rev. Mother" or "Mother" was no longer used for the superior general. Use of the title "Mother" to refer to other superiors had been discontinued in 1966.

⁴⁵Oral History, AMIW.

⁴⁶Personal Interview, 11 Nov. 1993.

⁴⁷Oral History, AMIW.

⁴⁸"Incarnate Word Sisters Praised for Serving Poor," *The Alamo Messenger* 25 July 1969: 7.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XIII

¹As early as 1978, under the leadership of Sister Mary James Whelan, who was coordinator of health care facilities, the hospitals had developed a plan for sharing services and joint purchasing. Sister Juanita (Mary Cyril) Albracht was appointed director of the program in 1980.

²"IWS Mission Statement Adopted," *CORE-Incarnate Word Health Services Report* April 1982: 2.

³In 1988, the name was changed to Yoakum Community Hospital in an effort to make the facility more accessible to persons of other religions.

⁴Ten years later, in 1994, plans were under consideration for the hospital to be returned to the Yoakum Hospital District.

⁵Because of the impossibility of securing physicians to serve the hospital, the cooperative arrangement with Dallam-Hartley Counties had to be terminated in 1989.

⁶The term "charism" is often used to describe the spirit of a founder of a religious congregation that is transmitted to the members of the institute.

⁷Several years later, in 1989, Sister María Antonia Fernández began compil-

ing the historical record of the Mexican province.

⁸Letter to Rev. Mother Angélique Hiver, 21 Sept. 1866, AMIW.

⁹Many sisters also continued to carry on the traditional forms of ministry to the poor through the schools and the hospitals. At Our Lady of Refuge School in Eagle Pass, for example, the sisters had for over 100 years taught children from extremely poor backgrounds. Similarly, at Santa Rosa and other health care institutions, clinics and other special services had long ago been established for the needs of the poor.

¹⁰Puebla, 1134, quoted in John Eagleson and Philip Scharper, eds. *Puebla and Beyond*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979) 264.

¹¹"Sister Neomi Challenges Chapter Delegates for Future," *CCVI Communiqué* Jan., 1984: 1-2.

¹²"Acts of the General Chapter, 1984," 1-2, AMIW.

¹³"Acts of the General Chapter, 1984," 8.

¹⁴AMIW.

NOTES

¹⁵Sisters Bernarda Juárez, Ma. Guadalupe Angulo, Margarita Campos, Norma de Villa, and Dolores Ma. DiCostanza, "New Horizons in Chiapas," *CCVI Communiqué* Feb./Mar. 1985: 12.

¹⁶"The Huancané Mission," AMIW.

¹⁷Personal interview, 27 Mar. 1994.

¹⁸In 1980, four sisters, all members of religious communities in the United States, were killed by terrorists in El Salvador: Sisters Maura Clarke, Dorothy Kazel, Ita Ford, and Jeanne Donovan. Sister Stanislaus Mackey of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of Houston was shot in 1989.

¹⁹"El Salvador in Review," *The Monthly Letter* Aug. 1991: 5.

²⁰In 1991, Sister María Agustina Rivas of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd was murdered on the outskirts of Lima by members of the Sendero Luminoso. See also note 15.

²¹Three years later, Jerry Little, Jr., was charged and convicted of the murder of Sister Patricia. He had raped and killed three other women in the same area of St. Louis.

NOTES ON CHAPTER XIV

¹Other congregations that had established missions in third world countries, particularly in Africa, India, and Asia, began to experience the same increase in young women applying for admission in these areas.

²*Constitutions and Directory*, 1985, iv.

³*Constitutions and Directory*, 1985, Article 3.

⁴"Call to Pastoral Planning Issued," *CCVI Communiqué* Oct. 1985: 1.

⁵"Incarnate Word Association: Membership Booklet," 1990, AMIW.

⁶Article 33.

⁷Pat Maloney's long association with the sisters could be traced back to the 1960s controversy over the northside expressway and its severing of the motherhouse property.

⁸Sister Jean Durel was appointed director in 1991, and Karen Gosetti assumed the position in 1994.

⁹Minutes of the 1990 General Chapter, AMIW.

¹⁰Making provision for the increasing number of retired sisters became a major concern for the Congregation during the 1980s and 1990s.

The general administration had wisely established a retirement fund in 1969, and in 1973 had elected to have sisters in the United States participate in Social Security. Both provisions made it possible

to provide the necessary care for retired members of the Congregation.

¹¹The oil portraits were made at the time of the diamond jubilee of the Congregation by Madame Maria Bartha, instructor in art at the College. They are now displayed outside the congregational archives in the new Motherhouse and Retirement Center.

¹²David McLemore, "Convent Clash Pits 2 Civic Icons," *Dallas Morning News* 8 Feb. 1987: 45A.

¹³*San Antonio Express* 11 Dec. 1986: E2.

¹⁴Although the structure no longer functioned as a motherhouse, the sisters decided to continue to use the name in referring to the new facility, principally because it was so well known in the San Antonio community as the Incarnate Word Motherhouse.

¹⁵Unfortunately, in 1994, the Daughters of Charity found it necessary for financial reasons to sell the hospital to Columbia HCA/Corporation.

¹⁶"St. John's Hospital Changing Ownership," *San Angelo Standard-Times* 31 May 1991: 1A.

¹⁷"Sisters sell St. John's Hospital in San Angelo," *West Texas Angelus* 7 June 1991: 1.

¹⁸The archives contain no recorded date for construction of the barn. Financial records show, however, that the sisters started buying cows shortly after their

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move to the Brackenridge property. The first cow was purchased for \$50.00 on August 23, 1897, and before the end of the year, five or six more had been added. The barn was probably part of the Brackenridge property and ready for use when the sisters took over the ownership of the estate. An examination of the stone construction suggests that it may have been built at the same time as the Sweet House (1852), the home of Alderman James R. Sweet, who sold the property in 1869 to Col. Brackenridge.

In her report on archaeological investigations of the property, Karen E. Stothert gives the date of 1922 for construction of

the barn, but no records have been found to support this date. Stothert, *The Archaeology and Early History of the Head of the San Antonio River* (San Antonio, Texas: Southern Texas Archaeological Association Special Publication Number Five and Incarnate Word College Archaeology Series Number Three, 1989), 78.

¹⁹"Homily for Opening of 'Year of Jubilee—Year of Grace,' 125th Anniversary of the Founding of the Congregation," 3 Dec. 1993, AMIW.

²⁰Sister Carol Ann Jokerst, *Generalate Letter* Nov. 1993.

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