



Congregation of the Humility of Mary

**BIOGRAPHY OF  
MOTHER MARY OF THE ANGELS MAUJEAN  
FOUNDER OF THE WESTERN FOUNDATION  
OF THE SISTERS OF THE HUMILITY OF MARY  
1828-1902**



**THE IOWA STORY  
ORIGIN OF MOTHERHOUSE  
AT LIBERTY, MISSOURI AND  
RELOCATION TO OTTUMWA, IOWA**



**BY SISTER MARY EULALIA WARIN, CHM**



Congregation of the Humility of Mary

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## PREFACE

The year 2002 marks the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary in Iowa. The early history of the sisters, their founding in France and emigration to the United States has been well documented and written about by many, the most recent being Sister Bernadine Pieper's Footprints, 1978. She closes with a short paragraph indicating the move to Iowa, then Montana, concluding with "more to come." The Iowa Story is a beginning of that "more to come."

Sister Eulalia Warin did extensive research on the community in Missouri and the eventual relocation in Iowa. She wrote numerous documents that include an historical perspective of the time as well as many direct quotations (often the entire article) from the Ottumwa Courier and other papers as she tells the story of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary.

It seems appropriate in this anniversary year that her writings become a part of the anniversary remembrance. I have attempted to include the highlights of our history, leaving them, as much as possible, in the original version. When Sister Eulalia speaks of "today" or the "present time" she is referencing her time of writing in the mid to late 1950's. Much of her grammatical style is preserved as well. Many of the original documents contain detailed footnotes that tell another whole story in themselves.

The biography of Mother Mary of the Angels reflects Sister Eulalia's personal association with her as well as her life beginning in France, emigration to the U.S., foundress of the western foundation and moving the community to Iowa.

The Iowa Story begins with a brief summary of the Missouri missions. It continues with the first motherhouse in Iowa, care of mental patients, care of orphans, Tally Hospital, second motherhouse and third motherhouse, concluding with a reference to the fire and temporary relocation at the airbase in Ottumwa. The next section describes the first schools in Iowa 1877-1890. The final section deals with what Sister Eulalia calls the religious aspects of the congregation.

Hopefully, the biography of Mother Mary of the Angels and the edited and abridged "Iowa Story" will be an incentive for you to read the full documents available in the congregational archives.

Joan Sheil, CHM  
Archivist  
April 2002

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Congregation of the Humility of Mary



**BIOGRAPHY**  
**OF**  
**MOTHER MARY OF THE ANGELS MAUJEAN**  
**1828 - 1902**  
**FOUNDRESS OF THE WESTERN FOUNDATION**  
**OF THE**  
**SISTERS OF THE HUMILITY OF MARY**  
**BY**  
**SISTER MARY EULALIA WARIN, CHM**

Congregation of the Humility of Mary

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## FORWARD

This short biography of Mother Mary of the Angels Maujean is based upon my own personal acquaintance with her from April 11, 1896 to February 25, 1902; also upon reliable historical sources obtained from Mazeley, Vosges, France, the village where she was born and reared. Much information was secured from three letters written by her to her sisters. Other sources have been early records from Dommartin, France and from Villa Maria, New Bedford, Pennsylvania; letters written to her by Bishop Hogan during her missionary activities in the St. Joseph, Missouri diocese in the 1870's; and newspapers, pictures, etc. Many of the foregoing listed materials were lost in the fire which destroyed the Motherhouse in Ottumwa, October 8, 1957. Fortunately I had already made a transcript of the principal facts in an account I saved of our history that I had written, covering the period from 1870 to 1890.

This biography was undertaken by me as a mark of my gratitude, esteem, and love for Mother Mary and for those loyal pioneer Sisters whom she trained in the religious life and to whom we owe the very existence of our religious congregation.

I have attempted to portray the life of Mother Mary so as to reveal her characteristic traits and outstanding virtues – her zeal for souls, her heroic courage in her missionary undertakings, her spirit of self-denial and mortification, her love of poverty, and finally her deep faith and resignation during her many trials, especially in her last agony, at which I had the great privilege to be present and to hear the last words she uttered on earth.

Sister Mary Eulalia Warin, CHM  
Written at Villa Marie, Ottumwa, Iowa  
1959

Congregation of the Humility of Mary

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MOTHER MARY OF THE ANGELS MAUJEAN  
1828-1902

Mother Mary of the Angels, the founder of the Western group of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, was one of the original members of that congregation, founded at Dommartin, Lorraine department, France in 1854. She ranked as the sixth member of the eleven Sisters who emigrated to America in 1864 and was the superior of the pioneer members of the congregation who began the missionary work in the St. Joseph diocese in Missouri in the 1870's.

She was born in the St. Die diocese, located in the Vosges department, France, about ten miles southeast of Mattaincourt, where the tomb of St. Peter Fourier is located. He is one of the patron saints of the congregation.<sup>1</sup> Her baptismal record contains the following entry:

"Mary Catherine, legitimate daughter of Nicholas Maujean, proprietor, living at Mazeley, and, Marguerite Fourier, his spouse, was born at five o'clock in the evening of April 26, 1828 and was baptized by me, the undersigned. She had for godfather, Matthew Monchatlon, son of Matthew Monchatlon, a farmer at Fomerey, and for godmother, Mary Catherine Fourier, her maternal aunt, who have signed."

M. Monchatlon

M. C. Fourier

Boye

Cure of Guigney<sup>2</sup>

Her parents at the time of her birth lived in a house at Mazeley, which is now occupied (1958) by her niece Madame Maujean.<sup>3</sup> A record of the immediate members of her family

contains a brief statement about each one.<sup>4</sup> Additional information in this account gives a more intimate knowledge of each one.

Her father was a farmer living at Mazeley, near his farm.<sup>5</sup> In one of Mother Mary's letters to her sister Melanie and her husband, dated May 3, 1876, she wrote of her parents thus: "The catechism that my father taught me is that I best remember. May the good Lord have mercy on him. He has instructed us in our duties . . . and our mother was a good Christian who made for us good reflections . . . ."

Her brother, Joseph Napoleon, was two years her senior, and a carpenter. He was killed by falling off a roof. In a letter to Melanie, November 30, 1875, she expresses great sorrow and anxiety over his sudden death,

"The death of my poor brother has given me much pain. If I would be able only to know how he is—perhaps he was working on Sundays and perhaps he has not been able to be reconciled with God before death—He died far from you all, having no one to intercede for his poor soul . . . May the good God receive him in His mercy . . . ."

A small history of France belonging to him with his name written on several pages in beautiful handwriting was destroyed in the 1957 fire.

Eugene Maujean was two years younger than Mother Mary. He had two children. There exists but little information about him. In Melanie's letter dated May 3, 1876, Mother Mary inquires about his health.

Her sister Melanie married Jean Joseph Pierre after Mother Mary came to America. It was with her and her

husband that Mother Mary carried on correspondence. Three of her letters are still extant in the archives of the congregation, and from these some information has been obtained of her missionary work in Missouri and of the first year in Ottumwa, Iowa. In her letter to them, February 21, 1878, after the Sisters came to Ottumwa, she states:

"It is now more than eighteen years since I have seen you last on the bridge of Dommartin . . ."

Marie Josephine Maujean, the youngest member of the family, inherited the ancestral home at Mazeley. After her death in 1893, the property reverted to the three remaining members of the family, Mother Mary, Eugene and Melanie. A legal document, authorizing the other two to sell the property, was signed by Mother Mary. The original copy was destroyed by the fire. Fortunately a copy of the original was saved, and is quoted here:

Ottumwa, Wapello Co., Iowa  
April 5, 1893

"I, Mary Catherine Maujean, give my brother and sister, Eugene and Melanie, the right to sell the house which was left us as a heritage by our sister Marie Josephine Maujean, who died March 14, 1893 at Mazeley, canton of Chantel, Department of Vosges."

Mary Catherine Maujean  
(in religion known as Sister Mary of the Angels)

The property was purchased by Melanie's daughter Marie, who had married a man having the same family name of Maujean, and uncle of hers through marriage. Madame Maujean, a widow now lives in "La Maison Natale" (1958).

Besides Marie, Melanie had a son, Emile, and another daughter, Celine, who married Monsieur Rullier, and who, a

widow now lives in Mazeley. It was she who generously gave Abbé Chaudet the three letters belonging to her mother, Melanie; also the family tree and other information pertaining to the members of their family. (The letters will be found at the end of the notes.) She also gave him to send to us a picture of Mother Mary in the old habit, first adopted after the separation from the eastern foundation. She said that "*Elles ont entendu dire par leur mere que la tante etait partie de Saint-Nicholas-du-Port, avec toute se communautè pour l'America.*"

Marie Rullier's son Emile left no descendants. In a notebook belonging to Mother Mary was the following insertion concerning him, her nephew, "Emile Pierre, a soldier in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reg., Gerryville, Algeris." This book and the picture of two small children taken at Bayonne, France, were lost in the disastrous fire. Could the pictures have been those of Eugene's "*deux enfants*" listed in the family tree? Undoubtedly they were the children of one of the immediate members of the family, since she cherished them so highly. Eugene was the only other member of the family who had a family, besides Melanie who lived at Mazeley.

The preceding paragraphs contain a brief account of the immediate members of Mother Mary Maujean's family. During his research in the Archives at Epinal, Msgr. André Laurent, canon of the diocese of St. Die and Director of Free Education, living at Epinal, (Vosges) discovered the names of two other families, dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which may have belonged to the same ancestral line of descendants, since there exists the difference of only one letter in the three family names and they all came from the same part of France.

Canon Laurent recognized such possible ancestral connections, for he headed his findings thus: "*Ancestres presumes de la Famille Maujean.*" The following is an



English translation of his findings; his letter containing them is dated November 30, 1958.

"In the genealogy of Jeanne d'arc, I have found that one of her grand-nephews, John Hordel of Lys, married about 1500 to Jeannon Mauljean. The date is not precise." (For second finding, see note<sup>1</sup>)

"Jean Mauljean, raised to the rank of nobility of the Duke of Lorraine, Charles IV, September 21, 1570, Squire, Lord of Liauville, captain of calvary.

His daughter Elizabeth married Quirin Viriot, light-horseman of his Highness, the Duke Henry of Lorraine. From this marriage is born at Mazelay, July 8, 1656, a son Joseph.

Joseph Viriot marries at Mazelay, January 25, 1689 with Claude Frances Mathis.

His third child, Joseph, has for godfather, February 24, 1693, Claude Maljean, Junior, of Mazelay.

Clement Mauljean, of Mazelay, married his daughter, Marie, February 24, 1734."<sup>6</sup>

Canon Laurent, added the following: "According to hand written notes preserved by a family at Gigney," (about 2 kilometers from Mazelay – 1-2 miles). These notes have been copied by Dom Alphonse Potier, Benedictine.

The writer of the above notes bears the same family name as our foundress, Antoinette Potier. Could he have been a distant relative of hers?

Whether Mother Mary knew of these possible progenitors of hers is not known. In her great humility she would not have mentioned them even had she known them. There exists but little information of her early life at Mazelay or of her religious life at Dommartin. In her notebook, she stated she made her first communion at the age of twelve, May 17, 1840 and was confirmed the following year May 9, 1841.

She received her early education at the village school at Mazelay "according to the instructions of that time." Evidently a thorough knowledge in the use of the French language was stressed as manifested by her skill in the teaching her native language both in the school at Liberty, Missouri and of adults when she arrived in Ottumwa. Among the latter were no other than A. W. Lee, editor of the Ottumwa Courier and the originator of the Lee Syndicate of Newspapers; also Miss Emma Nye, county superintendent of schools of Wapello County, Iowa. She also gave French lessons to the young Sisters.<sup>7</sup>

Her religious training so zealously begun by her parents was augmented during her novitiate from 1859-1862 at Dommartin. She had the privilege of having for her instructors and guides in the religious life, the holy founder and foundress of the congregation themselves. In her notebook, a part of which was written as a diary, she wrote of those happy days spent under their guidance and of the desolation and grief she experienced at the death of her beloved superior, Mother Mary Magdalen Potier.

Her English education was begun soon after the arrival of the congregation in America. An American lady, well versed in both the French and English languages, was engaged for the double duty of interpreter and instructor of the Sisters at New Bedford, Pennsylvania.

Previous to her entry into the novitiate at Dommartin in 1859, she belonged to the "Association of the Holy Humility of Mary" and had experience in the training of children and young girls at Mazelay. This assumption is based upon an account of the religious and social activities engaged in by the Association, sometimes referred to as "The Daughters of Abbé Begel." After the original French Rule, which Abbé Begel presented to Bishop Menjaud for his approval in 1858, he followed it with an account of what the members of the Association were engaged in, namely, the religious instruction and training of children in poor village parishes, and the training of young girls in what appears to have been a sort of "workshop", somewhat similar to the "simultaneous method" employed by St. Peter Fourier in the "Free schools" he established at Mattaincourt.

The type of work undertaken by the members of the Association of the Holy Humility of Mary for the older girls was intended for the same purpose as that introduced by St. Peter Fourier in the method he adopted to prepare them for some useful employment, so as to "help them to live with decency and dignity." The work for these girls that Abbé Begel introduced in his schools consisted in various forms of hand crafts, such as fine needle work, embroidery, the making of vestments, artificial flowers, etc.

The Rule, which he submitted to Bishop Menjaud for his approval, contains the names of places where mission schools were already established. In the diocese of Nancy, where the congregation originated, the Motherhouse was at Dommartin with mission schools at Laitre, Againcourt, and Moulin (Blanzet); in the diocese of St. Die, were the mission schools of Epinal, Urimenil, Mazelay, and Charmes.

An evidence of Mother Mary's membership in the Association is found in a letter written to her September, 1869, five years after her arrival in America and while she was stationed at New Bedford, Pennsylvania. It was written by an

old acquaintance of hers and signed "Dida." He wrote, "I have not forgotten you or the things you have done in Mazelay for the religious life."

In a letter from Abbé Chaudet, March 21, 1958, containing the above information is the following: "The two nieces (Mmes. Maujean and Rullier) do not know who Dida was. The work to which Dida refers is the establishment at Mazelay of a sort of workshop where the girls of the village used to assemble in order to work together. This was done before she became a member of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary." She appears then to have been a member of the Association previous to her entrance in the novitiate at Dommartin in 1859.

Two other young ladies, also from Mazeley, must have been members of the Association – Mmes. Marie and Julia Grandjacquot. The vow book shows that they pronounced their religious vows on the same day as Mother Mary, then Sister Mary of the Angels, May 1, 1862. Marie Grandjacquot was known as Sister Antoine and Julia Grandjacquot, as Sister Mary of the Cross. They did not persevere but returned to their home at Mazeley when the rest of the congregation emigrated to America in 1864. Madame Rullier in an interview with Abbé Chaudet, cure of Mazeley in March 1958 stated that she knew them both, that they did not marry, and died at Mazeley.<sup>8</sup>

#### FATHER BEGEL BRINGS THE HUMILITY SISTERS TO THE UNITED STATES

The depth and genuineness of Sister Mary of the Angels' zeal for souls is manifest in her breaking the family ties at Mazeley when she entered the new congregation at Dommartin in 1859, and later in her determination to sacrifice also her country as a missionary in a foreign land in 1864.

Abbé Begel had encountered difficulty with the civil authorities at Laitre even before she made her vows in 1862, and it became evident that he and his newly founded congregation would be obliged to leave France if they desired to carry on their apostolic work.

Sister Mary of the Angels remained steadfast in her resolve to devote her life for the salvation of souls, but her two companions from Mazeley were unwilling to make this supreme sacrifice of all they held most dear, and returned to their home when the rest of the courageous and generous members – eleven in all – departed for America in May, 1864.

When the little band of French missionaries arrived at New York harbor, June 13, 1864, less than ten months before the close of the Civil War, things were in a rather chaotic state. The economic, political and social life of the country were more or less disrupted by the long and bitter struggle between the North and the South, followed by the usual aftermaths of war – poverty, disease and crime. Mother Mary and her companions found many evidences of the bitterness of the struggle when they began their missionary work in Missouri, even five years after the close of the Civil War. Missouri was one of the border states and where a bitter struggle between the pro and anti-slave inhabitants occurred. Indeed, Liberty, the site of the first western Motherhouse, was in the very center of the struggle; A United States arsenal was located just three and a half miles from there on the Missouri River.

Bishop Amadeus Rappe, by whom they had been invited to come and work in his newly created Cleveland diocese, had promised them a place to locate, but owing to the disturbed conditions of the times, he was unable to carry out his original choice of a site for them to establish their Motherhouse and was forced to offer them the only available place he possessed for them. This was a 300-acre farm, which had already been abandoned by three different religious groups, a

diocesan seminary, a religious order of men and a religious order of women.

There was a large brick building, originally built for the seminarians, located on it, but the farm itself was in a deplorable state, unfit for cultivation, swampy and covered with a forest; far from a railroad station, with only the little hamlet of New Bedford, Pennsylvania about three miles away. Besides it was not even located in Ohio, but on the eastern side of the state line in Pennsylvania. (By a special arrangement it was included in the Cleveland diocese.) The Sisters were forced to accept the place, realizing that "Beggars cannot be choosers." Such was the original home of the Sisters of Humility of Mary.

The poverty of the little community of eleven, new customs and language, the desolateness of their surroundings, the magnitude of the task of making the place habitable so as to eke out an existence there were enough to discourage even the bravest. After a short stay there, they decided, as the three other attempts that were made, to abandon it also.

With this intention Mother Anna Tabourat, who had succeeded as superior after the death of Mother Magdalene Potier before they emigrated to America in 1864, accompanied by Sister Odile Philbert and Sister Mary of the Angels, set out on foot to Youngstown, Ohio, the nearest railroad station, to go to see Bishop Rappe at Cleveland and acquaint him with their extreme poverty, the impossibility of the place he had assigned for them, and request his permission for them to return to their homeland.

Bishop Rappe received them with kindness, listened with great sympathy when learning of their straitened condition, (he, like them, was born in France) promised them help, gave them some money to care for their immediate needs, but persuaded them to return and remain to assist him in

his diocese with the education of children in the poor rural parishes.

In compliance with the Bishop's wishes and encouraged by his kindness and promise of aid, they returned with renewed courage to their desolate home. Their simple childlike obedience was soon rewarded. A young lady, Miss Susan McClain (later Mrs. Martin Clark of Youngstown, Ohio) was sent by the Bishop to instruct them in the English language; also persons whom the Bishop had acquainted with the Sisters' urgent needs became their patrons; some men assisted them by draining the swampy places on the farm and clearing some land of trees for the cultivation of crops. Gradually as conditions continued to improve, more buildings were added. Today this thrice abandoned site has become the beauty-spot of that section of the country – a literal fulfillment of the old adage, "An obedient man shall speak of victory," but in this case a group of obedient religious women.

Mother Mary, then Sister Mary of the Angels, was among the first to offer to assist in the laborious task required to make this, the first Motherhouse in American, habitable. No undertaking, however difficult, deterred her from attempting it if it was for the unfortunate, the poor and sick, or for the salvation of souls. This spirit of charity and self-sacrifice was apparent when she volunteered to nurse the members of an indigent family at Youngstown, Ohio.<sup>9</sup> She succumbed to the then malignant disease; weakened by lack of rest and proper food, she lost her eyesight, which was miraculously restored three months later through the intercession of St. Peter Fourier.

When the Sisters first arrived in America, they went to Louisville, Ohio,<sup>10</sup> where a French Catholic settlement existed. Here they were given a most hearty welcome, for they were expected to open the parish school there. It was their pastor, Father Louis Hoffer, who had invited them to teach his school. It was then that Mother Mary, and probably when she returned

later on became acquainted with the Gladieux family, who later on moved to Chillicothe, Missouri. When the Pastor, Father A. J. Abel, a Franciscan missionary, was searching for Sisters to open his parish school, it was Mr. and Mrs. Gladieux who informed him of the missionary work that the Sisters of Humility were doing at Louisville, Ohio.

Her friendship with this French family was renewed when she met them at Chillicothe, Missouri in 1870; and when she opened the school at Liberty, Missouri, they sent their daughter to be educated by her. This warm friendship was continued, even after she was living in Ottumwa, Iowa, judging from the letters she had received from them, which unfortunately were destroyed by the fire.

All accounts of Mother Mary during those difficult days while the little community was adjusting itself to new customs and environment and learning a new language lead to this conclusion: that Sister Mary of the Angels was recognized then as possessing the necessary qualifications for leadership – courage, strength, and stability of character in addition to a heroic spirit of self-sacrifice and a great zeal for souls. She was one of the chosen three to acquaint Bishop Amadeus Rappe of the condition of the place he had assigned to them, of their dire distress, etc. It was also she who was chosen by Abbé Begel as superior to open missions in the poor parishes in the then struggling, sparsely populated Catholic settlements in the new diocese of St. Joseph, Missouri.



MOTHER MARY OF THE ANGELS, SUPERIOR  
OF THE WESTERN FOUNDATION

The principal events of Mother Mary's missionary activities the first seven years of the 1870s are recorded in the account of the five mission schools opened under her guidance two years after the St. Joseph Diocese of Missouri was established. The accounts of these schools are preceded by a brief description of the conditions that existed in the newly created northwestern diocese of Missouri when Mother Mary and her co-workers arrived there in 1870.

The outlook for successful Catholic settlements was most discouraging. Nearly all the requisites necessary for the establishment of parochial schools were lacking – Catholic population, priests, money, etc. All that existed was the zeal of Bishop John Joseph Hogan, the first bishop of the diocese, and of the missionary priests and Sisters, and the cooperation of the few and widely scattered Catholic settlers. The wonder is that the Sisters accomplished anything.

Were there no spiritual benefits these few but sturdy Catholic pioneers derived from their association with Mother Mary and her spiritual daughters during their sojourn of those initial years in St. Joseph Diocese in Missouri?

During a research trip to four of those former missions in the summer of 1953 made by me (Sister Eulalia Warin) and companions, we were fortunate to meet John Fraher, aged 90 years, who had attended the school at Liberty while our Sisters taught there. He told what Mother Mary and her Sisters had done for the Catholic life of that place. The Liberty Tribune, the local paper, gave them unstinted praise for what they had accomplished in such a short time. The children of the Sisters' former pupils and old residents of Easton, Carrollton, Chillicothe, and recorded events of those early days, testify to the esteem and veneration in which Mother Mary, Sister Anna

Maria, Sister Angeline, Sister Vincent and Sister Joseph were held. (The last three of these pioneer Sisters eventually were elected as superior generals of our congregation.) The thirty letters of Bishop Hogan to Mother Mary contained many messages of confidence in Mother Mary's missionary activities and his deep appreciation of what she and the Sisters were doing for Catholic life in his poor diocese.

Probably the greatest encomium our pioneer Sisters received was found in a letter to Mother Mary by the Benedictine missionary, Father Fintan, later Abbot Fintan of St. Meinard Archabbey, Indiana, on his return to his monastery there. He had worked with the Sisters in the neglected rural parishes in the St. Joseph diocese and saw "first hand" the good they were doing, not only for the children of those places but for the parents themselves.<sup>12</sup>

Only in eternity will the good be known that Mother Mary and those Sisters who remained loyal to her were instrumental in accomplishing for the salvation of souls and also for the congregation. Without her and her staunch religious daughters there would not exist a Motherhouse of the Sisters of Humility in Ottumwa, Iowa today.

Why did Mother Mary abandon those poor neglected Catholic parishes in Missouri? The reasons are to be found in the history of these mission schools, and these reasons have been justified many times since the Sisters left Missouri. The factors essential for a flourishing Catholic diocese were lacking as Mother Mary seemed to have foreseen.

In 1956 ecclesiastical authorities deemed it advisable to merge the St. Joseph diocese with the Kansas City diocese, nearly eighty years after our Sisters left there, a fact that shows the wisdom of Mother Mary's decision to establish the Motherhouse of the Western foundation of our congregation in a more promising locality. Bishop Hogan left the diocese

three years after the Sisters had left it and was transferred to the Kansas City diocese, but he remained as administrator of the St. Joseph diocese until 1892.

Since our Sisters left there, no parochial school has existed in Easton or Liberty (1956 report); a man (Guy Enson) was employed to teach the public school where our Sister's taught; but after he left, it was permanently closed. The Catholic Directory of 1956, contains this information of the other two missions where our Sisters taught. The total enrollment of the grade and high school at Chillicothe, Missouri was 143, taught by Franciscan Sisters, who were exiled from Austria by the Nazis during World War II. Four of these Sisters attended our junior college at Ottumwa, Iowa, shortly after it was opened. After our Sisters gave up this school in 1872, they were succeeded by the St. Joseph Sisters, who after building an academy there in connection with the parochial school, left in 1935 for a more promising field. Their property was purchased by the Austrian exiles.

Our former Carrollton mission, opened when the General Shields family resided there, reveals even less progress. The 1956 Catholic Directory gave the total enrollment of the parochial school as only 91 pupils for their five instructors, Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis. These Sisters had been preceded by two other religious orders of Sisters, the Mercy Sisters who succeeded us after a few years and then by the Dominican Sisters. In fact, this school was opened and closed by four different groups of religious teachers.

## MOTHER MARY AS I KNEW HER

Incidents associated with Mother Mary after her arrival in Ottumwa, Iowa in August, 1877, are related in the accounts of the Sisters of Humility of Mary during their first twenty-five years in Ottumwa. That includes the short residence at "Paradise" on Fifth Street, the twelve years on North Court Street, and the twelve years she lived on Fourth Street until the date of her death, February 25, 1902.

Mother Mary, when I first met her in April, 1896, had not yet reached her 70<sup>th</sup> year. She was small of stature, well-proportioned, erect and very active. She greatly resembled my Grandmother Warin in looks and size. She also was an emigrant from Alsace-Lorraine, France; singularly they both died in February, 1902.

Time for Mother Mary was a precious gift to be employed solely in the service of God and for the benefit of others. When not attending the religious exercises prescribed by Rule, she was busy with her needle-work or care of the altar. She had no time for idle gossip. Her conversations concerned religious and educational subjects; the giving of religious instructions to the young Sisters or advice to those who sought it. Father H. B. Kelly, who succeeded Father John Kreckel as pastor of St. Mary's parish in Ottumwa, Iowa, on several occasions came to Mother Mary for comfort and advice in the problems he encountered when he came to Ottumwa.

Secularization of education in France under the Ferry Laws (1881-1886) was the cause of much grief to Mother Mary. She deplored the prohibition of religious orders to teach in the school system established by Jules Ferry, Minister of Education and a strong anti-clerical. Newspaper reports of the enforcement of these laws and the exodus of religious teachers were like so many "stabs in Mother Mary's heart." Many times have I heard her lament the evil results of these laws –

the decline in the moral life of France. She would say, "France will return to God when she is humbled." Is the existing condition of France (1958-9) the beginning of Mother Mary's prophecy? Has the deep humiliation she had endured following World Wars I and II, and is still enduring, brought her as a nation to the realization that her future success depends upon the Author of all that she values as the most precious? Will the Fifth Republic under Charles De Gaulle be the beginning of the return of the "eldest daughter of the Church" to God? God grant that such may be the result!

At the time I entered, Mother Mary was engaged in making vestments for the convent chapel. Her room was the corner room on the fourth floor, one window overlooking Fourth Street and the other, St. Mary's Church. Her room served for many purposes – her workshop, classroom, reception room and bedroom. Here she spent the last twelve years of her life leaving the congregation the beautiful sets of vestments – white, black, red, gold, and a benediction set, stoles, etc. She would first embroider designs, consisting of church emblems, flowers, etc. on another piece of cloth, then cut them out and applique them on vestments. She was an artist along her own line of work which was much admired and valued. She had her "second eye-sight" when she made her most artistic piece of work – the gold vestment. A corn had developed on the first joint of the index finger of her left hand, caused by the constant rubbing of the heavy cloth on that joint. Those precious heirlooms were among our great losses October 8, 1957.

Other creative products of Mother Mary's artistic skills were the artificial flowers she made to decorate altars.<sup>13</sup> In the cupboards of the sacristy in the convent chapel on the fourth floor on Fourth Street, Ottumwa, were pairs of artificial flowers: roses – white, pink, red; carnations – three colors; also, lilies and fuchsias. These she used to adorn the altars on different feast days of our Lord and His Holy Mother. She not

only decorated the altars but laundered the linens, folded and pleated them, and placed them in a box, just so. I have often seen her pleating the linens, altar cloths, albs, surplices, etc during spiritual reading in the evenings. She was meticulous in the care of everything used in Divine worship.

The older Sisters of the congregation, whom she had received in Missouri and on North Court Street, Ottumwa, Iowa, were taught by her the fine French needle-work and embroidery. Sister Mary Vincent Lawler, who became the fifth general superior, and Sister DeChantal O'Riley (O'Reilly) were her most apt pupils.

During our postulancy, Sister Mary Dolors, nee Dora Norman, and I were given French lessons by Mother Mary. This she offered to do when she learned that all my grandparents and my father were born in Lorraine, France, and that the ancestors of Sister Dolor's father, August Norman, were French.<sup>14</sup> We also had the good fortune to have her for Christian doctrine, another subject she was well qualified to teach. Her religious training was begun in early childhood in a home where a deep religious atmosphere prevailed and continued during her postulancy and noviceship under the guidance of the saintly founders of our congregation. She entered the congregation a year after the Rule was approved by Bishop Menjaud, in 1858, when the members of the newly founded congregation were imbued with great religious fervor and zeal.

Mother Mary had many years of experience in the religious training of children and youth both in France and in the United States and of adults as a religious superior through the training in the religious life of the first members of the Western congregation of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary. What a source of edification those trained by her have been to those who had the privilege of knowing them! The spirit of poverty, humility, piety, self-sacrifice and zeal as exemplified

by Mothers Angeline, Joseph, Ligouri, and Sisters Anna Maria, Mary Peter, Theresa, Euphrasia, Aloysius, and Clare, were the most precious legacies left to our Sisters for imitation.

Although religious training was the first requisite she stressed for her religious daughters, she insisted that those who were to become teachers should possess a thorough knowledge of the subjects they were required to teach. The value she placed on a broad and well-balanced education is evident in tracing her life as an educator both at Mazeley, France and at Liberty, Missouri. Those under her charge were trained in acts of piety, in the participation in the ceremonies of the Church, and in self-discipline. Her older pupils in addition were given a practical education so as to prepare them to become useful and self-supporting citizens.

The educational program that Mother Mary had adopted was that of her holy founder and superior, Abbé John Joseph Begel, a scholar, scientist and social worker, who insisted on the education of the "whole (wo)man." Mother Mary belonged to the Association of Humility of Mary founded by him for several years before she entered as a postulant in the newly established congregation. She had acquired his ideas on the training of children and youth. She also was fortunate to have had for her mistress and first superior, the foundress, Mother Mary Magdalene Potier, an educated lady, who in turn had received a good education from her grand uncle, Abbé Pierre Voinier, a scholar and a man of great piety and courage. He refused to take the constitutional oath in 1791, required by the atheistic French government, and remained in exile in Germany until 1797.

Mother Mary was the first in the exact observance of the Rule. She never would have succeeded in instilling the love and the practice of the beautiful virtues which characterized the lives of the older Sisters trained by her, if she had not practiced them herself. The first thing that attracted

my attention was her prompt obedience in answering the bell for the various community exercises during the day.<sup>15</sup> She was always the first in the chapel at 5:20 a.m. for morning prayers and meditation. Even in the coldest weather in winter, before the chapel was warmed up, I can see her yet kneeling or sitting erect in her pew. Her position always was that practiced by a mortified religious and a refined lady. I never saw her sitting with her legs crossed or in a lounging position even in her own room where she sat on a straight backed chair with her feet on a footstool when sewing.

Her spirit of mortification was similar to that described in the lives of saints. She never used a fan even in the hottest weather. At that time we wore our old habit, which was beautiful but very uncomfortable. The stiff starched bonnet, guimpe and bandeau and the pleated heavy black serge habit were both hot and unsanitary.<sup>16</sup> I never heard her complain of cold, heat or food. At the table she ate what was served for all, never requested any special dish to be served her.

No elevator existed in the convent on Fourth Street. This necessitated the climbing of the long flight of stairs to make our morning and noon visits to the Blessed Sacrament following our meals in the dining room located on the basement floor. The ceilings of all the floors except the basement were exceptionally high. It was an exhausting journey after our meals even for the young members of the congregation. Sometimes when Mother Mary would reach the top flight of stairs she would lean over and rest on the bannister to get her breath, and looking down at the Sisters many years her junior slowly ascending, would murmur with an amused look: "Look at zee old ladies!"<sup>17</sup>

Mother Mary possessed a sense of humor and took an active part in our evening recreations. Especially did she enjoy the jokes and impersonations of Mother Mary Angeline Wogan and the times when she or Mother Joseph Galvin



would read aloud the supposed conversation between Dooley and Hennessey that was being published in the newspapers by the humorist, Peter Dunn, depicting the foibles of society at that time in his famous "Mr. Dooley" series.

Copies of letters received by Mother Mary while at Liberty, Missouri, which were from Bishop Hogan and Father Fintan and one written by her to Bishop Hogan reveal her deep humility, spirit of poverty and zeal for souls.

In her letter, dated April 13, 1874, requesting Bishop Hogan's permission to build a convent and new school at Liberty, she wrote:

"Now, dear Father, do not be afraid to disprove me if you do not think it is right. I will accept it and be very much pleased to obey, for my constructions (sic) often are not very good."

In the two letters from Bishop Hogan, written soon after in April, giving her permission to proceed in the erecting of the building, he wrote:

"Dear Mother Superior:

I have the greatest confidence in you, for God, from whom all good proceeds, has blest your undertakings beyond all expectations. I will not oppose you . . . ."

And again a week later, April 28, 1874, he wrote after Mother Mary had submitted her entire plans for the new building:

"I know your zeal and how you rely upon the help of Almighty God, and therefore, I give you permission to do more than, according to rules of human prudence you are able to do under the circumstances."

The letter of Father Fintan, OSB (November 7, 19873) contains his appreciation and admiration of what Mother Mary and her religious daughters had accomplished and were doing in the poor, scattered parishes in the St. Joseph diocese in the 1870s. In referring to these poor neglected country parishes he wrote:

You humble Sisters are best suited to go after these lost souls and live among them; teach their children . . . you prepare them for His coming; you edify them by the constant example of piety, virtue and self-denial; you pray for them and make them pray with you; . . . God bless you for all these works of mercy, good Sisters! . . .

If the importance and real worth of utterances either spoken or written, are valued according to the character and position of the one who utters them, then the foregoing excerpts of the estimate of Mother Mary's missionary work in the parish schools in the initial years of St. Joseph diocese are the strongest evidences of her deep religious spirit and holiness. Bishop Hogan was the foremost of the missionary priests during the 1850s and 1860s in northwestern Missouri; Father Fintan became the second abbot of St. Meinrad's Abbey, Indiana and was known as "The saintly Abbot Fintan."<sup>19</sup>

Even a local paper, The Liberty Tribune, in its July 13, 1873 issue voices the sentiments of the public – their admiration, gratitude and praise – after witnessing the religious ceremonies which occurred in St. James' Catholic Church, July 13, 1873:

But how can we express sufficiently our gratitude to the good Sisters, to whom may be traced the origin of this joyous occasion and

whose devoted labors have made it a grand success. Theirs is a truly noble work! Only three months ago we gladly hailed their advent amongst us, because of the good we hoped from them, but far beyond the expectations of the most sanguine have they succeeded, and their kindness, piety and humility evoke the praise of all.<sup>20</sup>

Congregation of the Humility of Mary

## A CROSS IS A CROWN BEGUN

In the book entitled At the Foot of the Cross by Father Frederick Faber, D. D., he wrote "Earthly sorrows are the roots of heavenly joys. A cross is a crown begun." (p. 106) According to this great spiritual writer, Mother Mary's crown must have been ready for her when she was called to her eternal reward, February 25, 1902.

She had endured trials of many kinds, but the bitterest ones came in the later years of her forty-three years of religious life.

In a study of the history of the founding of religious congregations and orders this fact stands out: that their founders invariably underwent a long period of contradictions, difficulties and trials of all sorts; "founders must always win their way *per aspera ad astra*" and "there is a peculiar cunning attending the different stratagems used against young orders, as though the devil tried every obvious and subtle method possible to frustrate the progress of the new congregations."<sup>21</sup>

Apparently God permits these trials as a sort of novitiate for the founders themselves to test their sincerity, strength of character and perseverance in carrying out their holy designs, also to ground them in solid virtues, especially humility, deep faith and trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The founders of the congregation of the Holy Humility of Mary before they succeeded in the establishment of their congregation also "walked the Royal Road of the Cross." They persevered in their holy resolution to dedicate themselves and their service to God, in the education of children in poor rural parishes, in the care of orphans, and of the sick, in spite of the many difficulties they encountered in France – hostility of the French government, death of their holy foundress, Mother Magdalene Potier, the seizure of her property by her relatives,

etc.; the extreme poverty and hardships of all kinds they endured when they arrived in the United States, both in the eastern and western foundations. The survival of their congregation and its growth attest that it had Divine approval and has been blessed by God.

The "Royal Road of the Cross" was not unknown to Mother Mary. The sacrificing of the members of her family with the knowledge that the parting was final must have pierced her loving heart. In a book containing retreat notes which she wrote while residing in the convent on North Court Street, she touchingly expressed her great longing to see once more her loved ones. Homesickness, as all who have experienced it realize, make the longing to see one's parents, brothers and sisters, at times almost unbearable.

The physical sufferings endured by Mother Mary resulting from poverty and the many hardships of pioneer life were generously offered by her to God for the salvation of souls, for whom she had dedicated her life, and they were bearable. Some of her heaviest crosses came from members of her own community while residing in Missouri.

Two Sisters, Sister Agnes Kane and Sister Assumption Hannan, who were but newly professed, the former February 19, 1870, and the latter December 9, 1870, both less than a year, were sent out to assist Mother Mary. They were in reality but "black novices," and apparently had not yet acquired the virtues that a good religious should possess – especially obedience and humility. In their conceit they set themselves up as critics of Mother Mary – one of the original members of the congregation, professed in France in 1862, who had many years of experience in the training of children and young girls.

From all attainable records relating to the first few years in Missouri may be gleaned the fact that they were jealous of Mother Mary, their superior, who was receiving much praise from Bishop Hogan, priests and Catholics. "Jealousy is the strongest weapon of weak souls." They sent many letters to Mother Anna, filled with complaints and charges against Mother Mary, and she evidently believed these charges of the young and undisciplined religious rather than the one whom she should have upheld.

The nature of these charges against Mother Mary may be deduced from letters found in the archives at Villa Maria, Pennsylvania; two written by Sister Assumption, and one by Mother Anna. Sister Assumption's two letters were sent from the Motherhouse at Bedford, Pennsylvania, with the approval of Mother Anna. The one to Father Hanley, secretary of Bishop Hogan, dated October 31, 1874, possesses all the marks of a neurotic person – containing wild and unsupported charges, clear evidences of an unbalanced mind.

Her letter sent May 16, 1879, to Father Kreckel, nearly two years after Mother Mary and her faithful daughters had arrived in Ottumwa, proves her to have been a vindictive person, possessing a very revengeful nature. This letter is strangely constructed. A part of it reads as though it were written by Mother Anna, e.g., where she writes "that Sister Vincent also wishes to return. As for her, I do not consider myself obliged to receive her, for when I went to Missouri, about four years ago, I invited her to come with me, but she refused." (This part was either written or dictated by Mother Anna.) The letter then continues, "But thanks to our good God our exile will not last forever . . ." although she had not been under the jurisdiction of Mother Mary for five years. She then continues rambling on with interspersed scriptural references as "quoting the word of holy Job. . ."

The charges contained in the above letters were of a personal nature – misrepresentations of a biased and

prejudiced mind except the following one which was absolutely false – based on suspicion like the rest.

Mother Mary was accused of having requested Bishop Hogan to write a new Rule for the western missions which would not permit the professed Sisters to return to New Bedford after January 1, 1875, and “prohibit the novices to leave the Diocese without his Lordship’s permission . . . .” A refutation of this charge is to be found in a letter received from Bishop Hogan in 1874 by Mother Mary. He informed her that he was working on an English translation of the French Rule, doubtless at Mother Mary’s request, for the use of the American Sisters, since they could not read French. In another letter dated March 23, 1876, he stated that he had finished the English translation of the Rule and was sending it to her with Sister Presentation on her return to Liberty from the Nodaway??? mission.

The reaction of Bishop Hogan to the charges made against Mother Mary is to be found in an excerpt from a letter written to her November 17, 1874, shortly after the three eastern Sisters left there: “I am glad you are well and at peace. I got several letters from New Bedford, from Mother Anna and the Sisters who left here but did not answer them as I could not do so without being uncharitable.”

Another evidence of the falsification of events is to be found in the archives at New Bedford , Pennsylvania pertaining to the separation:<sup>23</sup>

. . . Father Begel returned, bringing Sister M. Josephine (whom it was claimed had accompanied him to replace Mother Mary as superior) and Sister Agnes (Kane) with him. He sent Mother Anna to them to bring back home all who wished to return, and to explain to the Sisters that all who remained would no longer belong to the Motherhouse . . . .

In the diary written by Abbé Begel of the trip he made to Liberty, Missouri when the question of separation was being considered, he states that "he came alone, returned alone" and made no mention of have been accompanied by any Sister or Sisters.

In the analysis of the letters found in the files of the archives of the eastern motherhouse, relating to the separation, namely, the two by Sister M. Assumption Hannan and the one by Mother Anna, the logical question arises: "Why did they continue their persecution of Mother Mary? It appears that it was motivated by a spirit of revenge and not for the cause of religion. Card #415 states emphatically that at the time that separation was contemplated, those who did not return to the eastern motherhouse at New Bedford, Pennsylvania "would no longer belong" there.

The lack of sincerity of this statement is verified by the fact that Sister Sacred Heart Gerardin was graciously received back there nearly five years after the separation was supposed to have occurred. Also their letters, to Bishop Hennessy and Father Kreckel were intended to blacken Mother Mary's reputation, and caused her to be deposed and to influence the Sisters who had remained loyal to her to return to the eastern house.

This persecution of Mother Mary continued until Bishop Gilmour wrote to Mother Anna, December 6, 1881, thus:

I would not advise you to take back these seceders from your community. Nothing but trouble will come from their return. Their property would only increase your trouble, as they would build rights upon that to which they have a right. Send them your blessing and so let them stay.<sup>25</sup>



The above quotation from Bishop Gilmour's letter in response to one from Mother Anna is another misrepresentation of the truth. There exists no evidence that the western Sisters were begging to return to the eastern house.

Unfortunately both Bishop Hennessy and Father Kreckel accepted the charges against Mother Mary as true, and Mother Mary was deposed. Father Kreckel became aware of the serious mistake made by the deposition of Mother Mary a few years later. (This will be discussed later on in this narrative.)

To verify the statement made in one of the letters from New Bedford, Pennsylvania that Abbé Begel had written to Bishop Hennessy, sometime in 1881, requesting that Mother Mary and her Sisters be forbidden to use the title "The Sisters of the Holy Humility of Mary" and containing charges against her, I wrote to the Archchancery office at Dubuque, Iowa. We were invited to come and do the research work ourselves. Two other Sisters and I went there in July, 1956, but found nothing pertaining to our Sisters at that time. Father David Wheeler, the Vice-chancellor, assured me that no letter or documents are to be found in their archives relating to Mother Mary, that no letter is to be found written by Abbé Begel.

What was the attitude of Abbé Begel, the founder of the congregation towards Mother Mary and also towards the separation? There exists nothing in the archives of the eastern house of charges against or censure of Mother Mary made by Abbé Begel. (I especially requested that if such existed that I would be permitted to read them during a research trip there in June, 1956. I was assured by Mother Lorita, the superior general, that no censure is to be found in their archives by Abbé Begel against Mother Mary.)

Neither in the diary of his trip to Missouri, which he wrote in 1874 when the separation was being considered, is

there to be found one word of condemnation of Mother Mary. This diary was carefully read by one of our French scholars, and photostatic copies were made of pages in which he related his trip to Liberty and meeting with Bishop Hogan. We had permission to bring it home to Ottumwa to examine and return it.) On the contrary he wrote as follows:

Monsignor, Bishop Hogan, received me with cordial goodness and gave me the faculties of the Sisters . . . He told me previously how much he was pleased with them – their spirit of poverty, simplicity and zeal for the salvation of the souls of the children. He assured me that he would not fail to write to Rome to request for their approbation.

The underlined words seem to imply that an understanding had been reached between him and Bishop Hogan as to the status of the western Sisters, that they were to be recognized as an independent congregation and even that papal approbation was being considered for them.

#### MOTHER MARY'S CALVARY CONTINUES

The mental sufferings endured by Mother Mary with a little respite of about two years after her arrival in Ottumwa, Iowa were enough to have completely discouraged any religious person. The humiliations and injustices she was subjected to for nearly twelve years, and to which she humbly submitted as the will of God, is an outstanding proof of the holiness of her life.

In retreat notes during this period of her life while residing in the North Court Convent, she reveals the mental anguish she was experiencing in accepting this injustice to her as the will of God, and offering it up to Him for the salvation of souls.<sup>26</sup>

To the misrepresentations and charges sent against her from the eastern house at New Bedford, to Bishop Hennessy and Father Kreckel was this additional one: She was charged with establishing the Motherhouse in Ottumwa without the permission from Bishop Hennessy of Dubuque in whose diocese Ottumwa was then located.

At the time when Father Kreckel invited Mother Mary to bring her entire community to Ottumwa, he promised that he would obtain the permission from Bishop Hennessy for her to do so. When Mother Mary and the Sisters arrived there during the summer of 1877, she supposed that the necessary permission had been obtained, since she received no notification to the contrary. On being informed by letters from the eastern Sisters that Mother Mary had established herself and her Sisters in Ottumwa, Bishop Hennessy ordered them to leave. Evidently Father Kreckel informed Bishop Hennessy of his neglect in keeping his promise to Mother Mary for he canceled the order, permitting the Sisters to remain in Ottumwa, but demanded that Mother Mary be deposed as superior. This was a great injustice to Mother Mary and resulted in serious disturbing and economic conditions in the little community, even endangering its very existence.

Sister Francis Mangan apparently was appointed superior by Father Kreckel, since no record exists of an election having taken place. (She was teaching his boys' school located in the basement of his parochial residence at the time.) In his letter to Father Trevis, secretary of Bishop Cosgrove, who had succeeded Bishop McMullen, the first bishop of the new diocese of Davenport, to which Ottumwa then belonged, he wrote November 29, 1890, "I suppose that both the Bishop and you are aware that the Sisters of the Humility of Mary were taken out of my charge and their direction given to Father Ward and Father Brazille by Bishop Hennessy . . . ." This change occurred sometime on 1880 before the Dubuque diocese was divided.

My opinion that Mother Francis was appointed and not elected (which may be a faulty one) is based upon my personal acquaintance with older members of the congregation who had been trained by Mother Mary and who had always shown the greatest love and respect for her. The following reasons are the basis of my opinion:

1. She was the only Sister who had been received and trained by Mother Mary to have abandoned her at the time of the separation and gone to the eastern motherhouse.
2. All the professed Sisters who were qualified to vote knew of her defection and were loyal to Mother Mary. They were esteemed as most fervent religious and for their high ideals of life. It appears that they would not have chosen Sister Francis for such an important position.
3. Sister Francis was too young for such a position. She was only 24 years of age at the time, had no experience as a superior nor of the economic management of a household, which at that time consisted besides the Sisters, of orphans and for a time some insane patients belonging to the county and later on the Tally Hospital.

If an election had taken place, the logical Sister to have been elected certainly would have been Sister Mary Vincent Lawler. She was at that time the second member of the council, the assistant superior; she was older and more mature; had previous experience as a local superior in Easton and at Carrollton. Besides she had received her entire novitiate training at the Motherhouse at New Bedford, and therefore,

under the direction of the founder of the congregation. Her choice of attaching herself to the western foundation under the leadership of Mother Mary was made after her comparison of the two places where she had resided and was based upon her conviction as to the one best suited to fulfill the purpose of her becoming a religious – the salvation of her own soul and that of others.

She was born in Ottawa, Canada March 8, 1850 of devout Catholic parents, and was brought by them to Cleveland, Ohio when ten years of age, to become a citizen of the United States. Her sound religious principles were recognized by the congregation, for she was elected as general superior in 1903 and again in 1915, each for six-year terms, and was a member of the general council for forty years.

The unfortunate and unwise selection of Sister Francis Mangan as general superior during this serious crisis of the young congregation may be judged by events which followed the deposition of Mother Mary from 1880 to 1890, while residing at North Court Street. When Sister Francis, now Mother Francis, succeeded Mother Mary as general superior and took over the government of the congregation, her inexperience in financial matters almost led to the bankruptcy of the congregation, and threatened its very existence. When she assumed control of the government of the congregation, the property, consisting of the convent, the Tally Hospital and surrounding acreage was free of debt.

In order to pay the debts for living expenses and for property she had purchased in Marshalltown, etc., she sold at different times parts of the grounds on North Court Street, then mortgaged the rest of the property. She completely ignored Mother Mary, never consulted her or sought her advice nor that of her Council. Conditions became so serious that Mother Mary in desperation, October 28, 1889 wrote to Bishop Cosgrove, who had succeeded Bishop McMullen in the new diocese of Davenport, acquainting him with the serious

conditions that existed in their congregation and begging him to come to their rescue.

Bishop Cosgrove heeded her petition and appointed Father Louis De Cailly, of Fort Madison, Iowa, nephew of Bishop Loras, and Father John Kreckel to make a complete investigation of the financial conditions of the congregation and send him their findings. Their findings revealed that the finances of the congregation were far worse than Mother Mary suspected. The following are the most significant excerpts of their report to Bishop Cosgrove, October 29, 1890:<sup>27</sup>

1. The property here has been mal-administrated as will be seen by the debts incurred for living alone, and the Councilors have not been consulted.
2. We have itemized accounts of nearly everything, but they are enormous for the support of a small family, (Here follows an itemized account of the most outstanding expenditures.)
3. There are twenty-three Sisters in the Community, only four of them professed since Bishop McMullen's death, some without the consent of the Council.

The report contained these recommendations to the Bishop:

1. As to the means of support there remains three pieces of property – Marshalltown lots: home on the Hill; and the new Convent with an incumbrance of \$26,250 mortgage. Besides the \$1,000 mentioned (found listed in statement #2), there is a debt of \$3,411 as per enclosed bill.

2. The best course proposed is to authorize Father Kreckel to mortgage the Hill property for paying off all other mortgages and bills, the Sisters being very glad to do it.

Two more statements were added in concluding this report:

Finally the ex-superior must be made to understand no office is opened for her in the future, and that if she wants to remain in the Convent, she has to obey her superior in all things.

It is suggested that the Rt. Rev. Bishop assist Father Kreckel in procuring in the East at a cheap rate \$12,000 on a mortgage on the Hill property which is more than worth the money. The Sisters with their industry and saving will have to manage the other small bills.

Signed,                      L. De Cailly  
   John Kreckel

The indebtedness of the community as reported by the two priests to Bishop Cosgrove, October 29, 1890, amounted to \$29,681. Mother Joseph, who was appointed to complete Mother Francis's unfinished term of office, reported unpaid bills amounting to nearly a \$1,000, thus totaling an indebtedness of over \$30,000.

To us at the present time (1959), the indebtedness does not appear very great; but when judged according to conditions existing at that time, it was an enormous sum for the young struggling congregation to pay. The purchasing power of a dollar then was nearly three times what it is today; roughly evaluated the debt now would amount to over \$90,000. Besides the Sisters' income from their missions then, which were few and poor, was very little.

Mother Francis was not solely to blame for the conditions existing in 1890 and reported by the two priests to Bishop Cosgrove. All those who were responsible for the unjust deposition of Mother Mary in 1880, shared in the blame. Mother Francis was young, entirely too young, to have been placed at the head of any congregation; she lacked experience, discretion and other requisites, for such an important position. She ignored the provision contained in the Rules of all religious congregations for the guidance of religious superior, namely, a council, whom she was supposed to consult on all important affairs relating to the government of the congregation. Instead, she relied upon the advice of her mother and brothers in the administration of the affairs of the congregation, according to the members of community living at that time.

The two crises which the western foundation of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary experienced were but the "stratagems" of the devil "to frustrate its progress," and should be regarded as marks of honor and distinction, as wounds received by heroes in their fight against the enemy of their country. Practically all young religious congregations have undergone similar trials, found recounted in the history of their congregation or order. Their very survival proves that they had Divine approbation.



## VINDICATION AND DEATH OF MOTHER MARY OF THE ANGELS

The findings, as disclosed in the report sent to Bishop Cosgrove in 1890 by Father Louis De Cailly and Father John Kreckel, were indirectly a vindication of Mother Mary. It was her letter to Bishop Cosgrove on October 28, 1889, which prompted him in ordering the investigation to be made, and the statements found in her letter were verified by them. Moreover, he was persuaded to accept some of her suggestions as to measures to follow in rectifying existing conditions.

Evidently Bishop Cosgrove was impressed with her spirit of humble obedience and simple trust in him, as expressed in the following excerpts from a letter.

My Lord: The last time I spoke to you, you told me to put my case in the hands of God. I obeyed. I had done it before, but I received it (your word) as an order from God. I did so more resolutely. No matter what (word omitted, probably, "happened") since, I have borne it without complaints. What I am going to write is not for me, it is for the community. (And again,) I will not complain for myself. God has given me the grace to bear it, though my life is a martyrdom. I am no better but resigned. To live or to die is the same to me . . . .

It was fortunate that Father De Cailly was one of the examiners. He was a friend of Mother Mary and the Sisters of Humility. In 1885 he had chosen them to teach the parochial school in St. Joseph's parish of which he was pastor. Previously it had been taught by teachers of two other religious orders. He probably knew of the Sisters' troubles and of the injustice done to Mother Mary, had acquainted the Bishop with it, and may have been a factor in heeding his Lordship's Mother Mary's petition.

Mother Mary's *Golgotha* ended with the appointment of Sister Mary Joseph Galvin as general superior and she passed the remaining years of her life in peace, surrounded by those who loved her. An election was held in July 1891, resulting in the election of Sister Mary Angeline Wogan, who was re-elected again for another term of three years. She was succeeded by Mother Joseph Galvin, Mother Mary Vincent Lawler, Mother Mary Ligouri Ketterer, each serving two terms. These Sisters possessed deep faith, sincere humility, and great love for their congregation, serving it with great devotion and zeal.

Under their kind and wise government the congregation prospered. Many new subjects were received, which fact permitted the congregation to undertake new religious activities – the opening of many new missions, the erection of a new Motherhouse at Ottumwa Heights and a new St. Joseph Hospital – all paid for.

Since then the congregation increased in numbers and additional fields of labor were begun, the opening of a junior college at Ottumwa Heights, and a four-year college, Marycrest, Davenport, Iowa; the opening of new schools in four other states, missionary work among the black (colored) children in Mississippi, numerous vacation schools, etc.

The success of the western foundation of the Sisters of Humility of Mary is evidence that God has been pleased to bless the work of Mother Mary. The many crosses she bore with so much humility and resignation were priceless treasures bequeathed to her congregation. Many good religious have become saints by the proper acceptance of the crosses sent to them by God. I do not hesitate to declare that our western foundress was one of them.

I had the great privilege of being present at the deathbed of Mother Mary. She died after a short illness from pneumonia February 25, 1902. She remained conscious to the

last, answering the prayers being said for her by the Sisters surrounding her bed. Mother Joseph, aided her in holding the lighted blessed candle, and in repeating the aspirations for the dying. Just a few minutes before she breathed her last, I heard her whisper to Mother Joseph, "You will tell the Sisters when I am gone." I never learned what it was she desired Mother Joseph to tell the Sisters. Doubtless the older members of the congregation were told. I was just a young professed Sister at the time. I have often since regretted that I did not ask Mother Joseph what it was. Probably it was some information related to her troubles she had undergone at the time of her deposition in 1880.

Congregation of the Humility of Mary

OBITUARIES OF MOTHER MARY PUBLISHED IN THE LOCAL  
NEWSPAPER AND IN THE DIOCESAN CATHOLIC PAPER OF THE  
DAVENPORT DIOCESE

Nobel Woman Gone

Mother Mary of the Angels died at the Convent in this city this morning . . . A life ended which had been full of charity and usefulness in this world. The sister has been in this country many years and has labored in Ottumwa since 1877.

Mother Mary of the Angels died this morning at 12:05 (February 25, 1902) from pneumonia at St. Joseph's Convent in this city. The deceased was born in France in 1828 and her early womanhood was spent in her native land teaching and supervising schools. At the request of Bishop (Amadeus) Rappe of Cleveland, Ohio, she with a small band of co-laborers came to America in 1864. At that time smallpox was very prevalent and in a most malignant form. She volunteered as a nurse in the city of Youngstown, Ohio. The city authorities tried to provide sufficient provisions, but the sister of charity was nursing in a family of seven and oft-times denied herself that her patients might not want. Through want of proper nourishment and rest she contracted the disease which rendered her blind. After a period of three months her sight was miraculously restored. The authorities wished to make some remuneration for unselfish devotion, contributed a large sum of money to an orphan asylum.

She remained some years in Ohio giving herself to the good work carried on by the sisterhood to which she belonged.

In 1877 with three companions she came to Ottumwa and from their efforts the St. Joseph's Convent of this city had its beginning. She has resided in Ottumwa since 1877 and her devotion to the sick and the poor has been proverbial. Her later years have been devoted to sewing for the poor of the city.

The funeral services will be held February 27 (1902) at 9 o'clock, from St. Mary's Catholic Church. Further announcements of the services will be made later.

Ottumwa Courier, February 25, 1902

### FUNERAL OF MOTHER MARY

Many visiting Sisters and priests will be in attendance.

The funeral services of Mother Mary of the Angels, whose death occurred at St. Joseph Convent in this city Tuesday morning, will be held at St. Mary's Catholic Church tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock. Rev. F. W. Hoppman, dean of St. Mary's, will have charge of the service, assisted by the priests of this city and the visiting priests. The Requiem Mass will be rendered by the choir of St. Mary's Church under the direction of Prof. Chas. Koett. James Swirles will render a solo at the offertory.

Masses will be said at the convent chapel tomorrow morning from 6 until 9 o'clock. Any one desiring to attend can do so. The remains of Mother Mary are resting in the beautiful chapel at St. Joseph's Convent. Friends wishing to view them can do so this evening and tomorrow until 9 o'clock when the casket will be closed and the remains taken to St. Mary's where the services will be held. Many Sisters from the missions of the Sisters of Humility of Mary in the state have arrived to pay their last tribute of respect to their beloved Mother Mary.

The following priests have sent word that they will come to the obsequies tomorrow: Fathers Ward, Iowa City; Lenihan, Marshalltown; Bassler, Mt. Pleasant; Drexler, Neola, Failenschmidt, Exira. Many others will also attend besides Fathers Foley and O'Farell of this city.

Ottumwa Courier, February 26, 1902

*The following is an excerpt from an account of Mother Mary's life, death and funeral. Source: an old newspaper clipping – date and name of newspaper not contained on it.*

The interior of St. Mary's Church was draped in somber colors and the altar was covered with mourning veil. St. Mary's choir, under the direction of Prof. Koett, rendered the requiem. The absolution was performed by Rev. Father Hoppman.

After the first gospel the sermon for the day was delivered by Rev. Father Lenihan of Marshalltown, who said in part:

Our Blessed Savior came to this earth and endured the trials and sufferings of this life that He might show us the royal road to heaven. He lived the life of poverty, the life of humility and charity. Throughout His entire career He manifested a spirit of love not only to His neighbors but also one of forgiveness even to His enemies, in whose behalf He sought the Father's forgiveness even while hanging on the cross. He showed the spirit of sympathy and many other beautiful degrees of charity and left with us the message for us to learn of Him.

Mother Mary of the Angels knew well these virtues and in her early days in France sought for the way in which she might best serve and exemplify by her life the teaching of the Master. From the many various orders she chose that of the Sisters of Humility as she thought it the best in which to practice the virtues taught by our Lord. After coming into the order she saw a mission for her in the western country and with a few faithful companions came to this country,

and in 1877 came to Ottumwa with four companions and established the order which is at the present time yielding such good fruits in the various parts of the state.

Mother Mary of the Angels exemplified in her personal life all the virtues of humility and meekness which are characteristic of the order. During the past few years in which she has given to others the more exacting duty of the oversight of the Motherhouse her time was devoted specially in the care of the needy and of orphans.

We know that our God is a God of justice. In accordance with the customs of our Church in which we pray for the departed, let us ask you all to join with the clergy in prayer for our departed Sister, for we believe that if the soul of the departed one does not need them the prayers will be offered for one who may need them. Let us pray God to give us peace of mind and soul which belonged to our Sister. Let us learn to practice the virtues of our departed Sister and thereby be drawn closer to our Father.

#### MOTHER MARY RESTS

*Funeral services held this morning at St. Mary's Church. Touching tribute to her memory. Requiem Mass celebrated by Father Ward of Iowa City, assisted by other priests. Many Sisters of Humility of Mary present.*

The funeral services over the remains of Mother Mary of the Angels, whose death occurred at St. Joseph's Convent in this city early Tuesday morning, February 25, were held this

morning in St. Mary's Church at 9 o'clock. At this time requiem Mass was said with Father Francis Ward of Iowa City, as celebrant, assisted in the performance of the funeral rites by several visiting priests. There were also in attendance at the funeral services a large number of visiting Sisters from various towns throughout the state.

### Sad Occasion

By 9 o'clock, the hour for the service, the church was filled with the many friends who had come to participate in the service and pay their last tribute of respect to the departed. The pupils of St. Joseph's Convent and the Sacred Heart school, in charge of the Sisters, occupied the seats on either side of the church. A large number of visiting Sisters of the order were present and ten priests were within the sanctuary. The altar and sanctuary were draped with black and white. Upon the casket, which was placed in front of the sanctuary, were placed many beautiful floral offerings, gifts of many loving and admiring friends.

### The Service

The service was most impressive throughout and there was manifest the spirit of deepest sorrow and sympathy by all present. Solemn requiem was celebrated by Rev. Father Ward of Iowa City, assisted by several visiting priests. The choir of St. Mary's Church was under the direction of Prof. Chas. Koett. A beautiful and touching sacred solo entitled "Far From My Heavenly Home" was rendered by James Swirles, at the offertory. Following the Mass dean Hoppman of St. Mary's Church performed the service of absolution. Rev. Father Lenihan of Marshalltown preached the sermon and gave a most tender and beautiful eulogy in remembrance of the deceased. The service closed with the singing of the hymn "Nearer My God to Thee" by the choir as the funeral cortege passed out of the church. (Here was given the sermon of Father Lenihan which is already found in another account of the funeral services.)



In the services the following priests assisted: celebrant of the Mass, Father Ward of Iowa City; deacon, Father McCarvill of Armah; sub-deacon, Father Mahoney of Parnell; master of ceremonies, Father Brownrigg of Melrose. Other priests within the sanctuary were Fathers Hoppman of St. Mary's; Lenihan of Marshalltown; Bassler of Mt. Pleasant; Loftus of Newton; Foley of Sacred Heart Church; Kempker of Bauer; Fallenschmidt of Exira.

#### Interment at Calvary

After the service at the church the remains were taken to the Calvary cemetery where the interment was made. The pallbearers were selected from the young men of the church in this city and were: Joseph Byrnes, Henry Mascheck, Henry Bremhorst, George Morrissey, James Curran, and Albert Cheadle. Michael Canny took charge of the floral offerings.

#### DEATH OF MOTHER MARY OF THE ANGELS

Mother Mary of the Angels, founder of the order of the Humility Sisters, died early Tuesday morning at the Motherhouse in Ottumwa. Death resulted from pneumonia.

The deceased was 75 years of age, having been born in France in 1828. The early years of her work as a Sister were spent in her own country teaching and supervising the work in the schools of that country. In the year 1864 at the request of Bishop Rappe of Cleveland, Ohio, she, with a devoted band of co-laborers, left her native land and came to this country. Several years of life immediately after coming to America were spent in the earnest and enthusiastic work in the state of Ohio. She was one of the many who volunteered to go to Youngstown, Ohio, to nurse the people of that place who were afflicted with a terrible scourge of smallpox. She entered a home which consisted of several members who were all taken with the disease and during the weeks of their sickness

ministered kindly and faithfully to their needs and later contracted the disease herself from hunger by denying herself food that she needed to supply the wants of those recovering from the scourge. During the time in which she was afflicted with the disease she lost her eyesight, but after about three months of suffering it was miraculously restored.

In 1877 with four other Sisters, Mother Mary went to Ottumwa and established in that city the order of the Sisters of Humility of Mary and was for many years in charge of the motherhouse there. This was the pioneer order to enter the state of Iowa. During the years in which Mother Mary has been connected with the convent she had endeared herself to many. During the past few years of her life she has not been actively in charge of the house in Ottumwa. The past few years of her life have been devoted especially to administrations to the sick and orphans, whom she served and assisted in many ways. Her life was characterized by most earnest and enthusiastic devotion to her work, and by her devoted life she inspired all those with whom she came in contact and the good works originally set by her in which she was so faithful during her life will be carried on by her co-workers of the sisterhood.

The funeral of Mother of the Angels was held in St. Mary's Church, Thursday morning, February 27<sup>th</sup> at 9 o'clock.

Catholic Messenger – Davenport, Iowa. March 1, 1902

*These three letters of sympathy received by the Sisters after the death of Mother Mary are the only ones that have been preserved.*

Davenport, Iowa  
February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1902

Dear Mother Joseph:

Your telegram announcing the death of Mother Mary came during my absence in Dubuque. I am very sorry that I cannot attend the funeral as I have an appointment here for tomorrow.

God left Mother Mary with us so long for some wise end and now He has called her to heaven. I will not forget her and I hope she will speedily be admitted to the enjoyment of her work.

Wishing you all every blessing  
I remain yours in Xto.

Henry Cosgrove, Bishop of Davenport



Maloy, Iowa  
February 28, 1902

Sister Mary Peter  
Davenport, Iowa

Dear Sister Peter:

Yours of the 25<sup>th</sup> inst. at hand. I was very sorry to learn of the death of Mother Mary.

You all have my sympathy. I shall comply with your request and say Mass for her. May her soul rest in peace!

Kindest regard to all the Sisters,

Yours sincerely in Christ.

J. J. Condon



All Saints Church  
Stuart, Iowa  
March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1902

Dear Sister Peter:

I received your letter, but I am sorry I was not able to go to Mother Mary's funeral.

I have devotions on Wednesday evenings and, of course, had to be there, and then there was no train after that to get me to Ottumwa in time.

I am sorry to learn of her death, but knowing her as I did, I know she is happy now and free from all worry and trouble and that she is at rest in the bosom of Him she served so faithfully.

Sincerely yours,

Henry Maniett

Congregation of the Humility of Mary



## NOTES

1 St. Peter Fourier (1865-1640) was born at Mirecourt, Lorraine in 1565; at the age of fifteen he entered the university at Pont-a-Mousson directed by the Jesuits; joined the Canons Regular of St. Augustine at Chaumousey; was ordained priest in 1589; appointed curé of Mattaincourt in 1597. This place was "contaminated by Calvinism and rotten with evil living," which had spread from Switzerland, bordering the Vosges department on the east.

Here he labored for over thirty years and succeeded in stamping out Calvinism and securing a return to "virtuous living." He is known as "*le bon pere de Mattaincourt*." His tomb is one of the principal pilgrimages of St. Die diocese, which is located in the Vosges department of France.

The saint was a "man of ideas in education" and in cooperation with Alix le Clerc (Cléroq) and three other volunteers, he opened a "free school for children." These four French ladies became the nucleus of the congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame. St. Peter Fourier was canonized in 1897 and his partner and co-foundress of the new congregation, Alix le Clerc, was beatified in 1947.

Abbé Begel, in founding the congregation of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, was greatly influenced by his educational methods and introduced some used by him in the congregation he founded. He adopted St. Peter Fourier's "simultaneous method" in teaching the older girls.

Canon Laurent sent the following historical data (November 30, 1958) of a member of the congregation

he founded, who may have been a distant relative of Mother Mary:

It remains to be known also if this Maljean is of the family (the Maujean) that one believes originally (came from) Pont-a-Moussen, about 30 kilometers from Nancy.

In the letters of Saint Peter Fourier (died in 1640) there is mention of a Magdalaine Mauljean, religious of the congregation of Notre Dame of Pont-a-Moussen. The Notre Dame Congregation had been founded by St. Peter Fourier and the blessed Alix le Clerc in 1598.

- 2 This record was sent me by Abbé Chaudeur, curé of Mazeley, Vosges, February 8, 1957. She was baptized either at the little village of Guigrey or by the priest from there at Mazeley. (Abbé Chaudeur in his letters to me spelled the name of this village with an a in the last syllable. Other records from that place and also the map of the Vosges department spell the name with an e in the last syllable – Mazeley).
- 3 The picture of this building, also sent me by Abbé Chaudeur, was given to him either by Madame Maujean or Madame Rullier – two old nieces of Mother Mary.
- 4 This family genealogy was secured by Abbé Chaudeur from Madame Rullier, still living at Mazeley (February, 1957).

5 It was the custom in those days for farmers to live in a little village near their farms. My paternal grandfather, Nicholas Joseph Warin, a weaver of men's clothes, lived in the little village of Labeuville, Lorraine (population of the village in 1854, about 2000) and owned a small farm nearby where he cultivated flax for the garments he made.

6 This slight difference in the spelling of the family name of "Mauljean," and "Maljean" and Mother Mary's family of "Maujean" often occurs in tracing the genealogy of French families. For example, in our own ancestors, our paternal ancestors were "Varin" not "Warin;" our maternal ancestors as found in the 1839 "Who's Who" in enumerating the French emigrants who settled in Darke county, Ohio in the 1830s, states that the family name of "Grillot" was also spelled "Grilliot" and Grillo."

7 While I was in the novitiate, my companion, Sister Mary Dolors Norman, and I had her for our instructor in French and also for Christian Doctrine. She had previously instructed a number of the older Sisters in the French language.

8 Other members known to have belonged either to the Association or after it was approved as a religious congregation were: Mlle. Julia Claudel, who taught at Moulin (Blanzet) and continued to do so even after the Sisters emigrated to America. She was buried there and was known as "Sister Julia." Mll. Haillant, Sister Dieudonne, who taught at Urimenil, and was the third member to enter the new congregation, and a Sister Hyacinth who taught at Agincourt. There doubtless were other members of the Association who had taught or were teaching in one of the other seven village schools.



Smallpox which had been raging among the soldiers during the Civil War since 1862, finally spread to the larger cities and later on to the civilians who lived even in the country. Mother Mary must have nursed the stricken family at Youngstown, Ohio, sometime in the late 1860s, for she had left for the Missouri missions during the summer of 1870. Finally the epidemic reached the farmers in the neighborhood of New Bedford, Pennsylvania. The Sisters went into the homes of the farmers to nurse the sick members; they even turned their convent into an emergency hospital for the children. An article in the Mahoning Vindicator of the Lowellville News, published in 1872 contained the following:

“The Sisters of Charity from the New Bedford Catholic Institution are doing noble work here and shall ever be held in the highest estimation by our citizens.”

Board of Health, J. A. Johnson, President

Excerpts from two publications are here inserted which show the work done by the various Sisterhoods during that period.

Nursing the sick had not yet come to be recognized as among the most honorable professions. Skilled nurses were then unknown except among the Sisterhoods of the Catholic Church.

Ryan, Ellen Jolly: Nuns of the Battlefield  
Providence Visitor Press, 1827, p. 21.

## Nursing, Civil War (Epidemic)

President Abraham Lincoln knew that most of the good nursing of that day was being done by the religious Sisterhoods, chiefly Catholic orders. They had helped in many epidemics . . . He called on them to undertake the war nursing, and they responded nobly . . . .

Goodnow, Minnie: Nursing History  
W. B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia, pp. 154-155

The Sisters of the Humility of Mary had arrived in the United States in June, 1864, less than ten months before the close of the Civil War. Without doubt had they arrived sooner, they would have been among the "Angels of the Battlefield," so revered by the veterans of the Civil War, for they proved that they possessed the same heroic spirit as those who had nursed the soldiers on the battlefields, by endangering their health and even their life in nursing the civilian population afflicted with the same malignant disease.

10 As early as 1861 Father Hoffer, himself a French missionary and pastor of the French settlement at Louisville, Ohio, requested Abbé Begel for three of his religious daughters. His request was not granted until 1864 when the entire congregation emigrated to America because of difficulties with the civil authorities at Laitre, France.

Abbé Begel, having received a pressing invitation to establish his new congregation in his diocese at

Cleveland, Ohio, easily obtained the permission of Msgr. Lavigerie, Bishop of Nancy and Toul at that time, to accept Bishop Rappe's invitation.

Bishop Lavigerie, later consecrated Cardinal has been called "the Lincoln of Africa." He was the founder of the White Fathers and White Sisters of Africa, and was the fourth bishop of the then Nancy-Toul diocese. Preceding him were Forbin-Janson (1824-1844), Manjaud (1844-1848) who approved our Rule in 1858, and Darboy (1859-1863).

- 11 Nodaway Island no longer exists. The Nodaway River which separated it from the mainland of Missouri was gradually filled up with silt deposited in the bed of the river during floods which inundated the Missouri Valley basin. No trace of the island now exists. A state highway now crosses the tract of land where the Sisters once taught.

- 12 Father Fintan Mundwiller was a Swiss missionary from Einsiedeln, who came to the United States in 1860, four years before our Sisters arrived here. He was sent by his abbot of the Priory of St. Meinrad, Indiana, to open the Benedictine monastery at Conception, Missouri. While supervising its construction, he aided in the missionary work in St. Joseph diocese at the request of Bishop Hogan.

Father Fintan's letter will be found in the account of Liberty Mission School. In his History of St. Meinrad Archabbey by Albert Kleber, OSB (published 1954) he has devoted three chapters – Chapters X, XI, XII to the life of Abbot Fintan Mundwiller, whom he calls the "saintly Abbot Fintan." He reveals the fact that he, like Mother Mary, was misrepresented and maligned by one of his own members. The malicious charges against him, as in the case of Mother Mary, were proven to be

false. Chapter XII, entitled *Visitation and Vindication of Abbot Fintan, His Death* relates the nature of the accusation against him, his exoneration, and the fate of his calumniator, who was found by physicians "of unsound mind" and sent to the Alexian Brothers' mental hospital at St. Louis.

13

In those pioneer days artificial flowers alone could be procured to decorate the altars during seasons when natural garden flowers were not growing. In some of the wealthier churches in large cities natural flowers were obtained from hot-houses to decorate the altars. Even in the cathedral church of St. Joseph, Missouri, for many years after it was established, artificial flowers were used to adorn the altars of the cathedral. Mother Mary, during the years she spent in Missouri, sent on different occasions the artificial flowers she had made to Bishop Hogan to adorn the altars of his cathedral. In several letters (lost in the 1957 fire) to Mother Mary he thanked her for the beautiful flowers she had sent him. In another letter he thanked her most profusely for the exquisite set of vestments she had made and sent to him.

14

In the first years in Ottumwa, Iowa, her ability as a French instructor was such as to attract adult pupils. Among them was the editor of the Ottumwa Courier, Mr. A. W. Lee, and the founder of the Lee Group of Newspapers. I still can hear her ask Mother Angeline, who would be reading the evening Courier during our recreation, "What has my boy, Lee, written today?" She was always interested in his editorials. Another outstanding pupil of hers in French was Miss Emma Nye, the county superintendent of schools of Wapello County, Iowa. She became a great friend of our sisters and aided them in securing county teachers' certificates and in their educational work in Ottumwa.

During our first year of noviceship Sister Dolors and I were unable to continue our French Lessons because of the many duties assigned to us. Mother Mary greatly deplored this, saying that the education of the young Sisters should come first.

15 Mother Mary Ligouri Ketterer, a close imitator of Mother Mary in the exact observance of the Rule, counseled the Sisters on many an occasion in promptness in answering the community bell, "Do not stop to even complete a word which you may be writing."

16 In those days when we assisted at Mass in the church, also when going down town, we wore a face veil over our head veil, which we would pull down on returning from Holy Communion or in the streets. One morning on returning from Mass in the church she had removed her face veil, forgot about it and went to her room and removed her head veil, then proceeded to the chapel for morning visit. I noticed it and went up to her and whispered, "Mother, you have no veil on." She put her hand to her head to verify my statement and exclaimed in a low voice, "Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu," and hurried out of the chapel.

17 I am inserting here the answer to the question asked me on several occasions why so many of our Sisters died of tuberculosis when they were living on Fourth Street?

Among the many duties assigned to me was that of cleaning Mother Mary's room once a week. This included the "bugging of her bed." Our Sisters had moved into the Visitation Convent as soon as it was vacated by them. Several of their Sisters had died of tuberculosis the last few years they were living there. All the walls were unpainted and contained large

cracks which harbored not only bedbugs but tuberculosis germs. The floors were of soft white pine and unpainted or varnished. Our Sisters, not aware of the lurking dangers, did not take the precautionary measures, now in use but rarely used then, of fumigating and using insecticide in the building before moving in. The result of this neglect was the loss of seven of the members of their community in ten years, ten months and seven days – from June 28, 1902 when the first death from the disease occurred to May 5, 1913, when the last death took place. The victims in the order of their deaths were as follows: Sisters Bernadine Kurtz, Regina Herbert, Cyril Fitzgerald, Evangelista Dugan, Benedict Smith, Euphrasia Kenney, Genevieve Cottingham. Four of the Sisters were in their early 30s.

The death of Sister Bernadine seemed to have awakened the Sisters to the fact that tuberculosis was a very infectious disease and they began to take steps to prevent the spread of the disease, but alas not soon enough, as the other six Sisters had already contracted the dreaded disease and were coughing. The victims were more or less isolated, special precautions taken with articles used by them, etc; the walls of all the rooms were painted, iron beds replaced the wooden ones. Our congregation was very small at that time and the loss of seven of their members was keenly felt.

There is one article which I shall never forget from the days I cleaned Mother Mary's room, because I had to adjust it every time I made her bed. It was what she called a "dovey," which was really an unusually large pillow, about a third the size of an old fashioned feather-bed, which she placed over her feet in cold weather.

18

These letters are found in our archives.

19

In a letter I received from Father Albert Kleber, OSB, author of the History of St. Meinrad Archabbey, published in 1954, he wrote,

Father Fintan was pleasant to deal with. He was of an unassuming humility – a virtue all the more striking in a man of the high intellectual qualities that were his. I might add that the *very name of your community* would have endeared the community to him. He was known as “the lovable Father Fintan” and later “the saintly Abbot Fintan.”

His letter to me was in response to my inquiry if there existed in their archives a letter or letters Mother Mary had written to Father Fintan. He wrote that if any had been preserved, they would have been destroyed in the fire of 1887, which had consumed their monastery and all its contents.

In his history of St. Meinrad's Archabbey Father Kleber devoted 67 pages to the period when Father Fintan, then Abbot Fintan, was the superior. He related the bitter trials he endured after the destruction of the monastery and the false accusations against him sent to Rome by one of his monks, who was later excommunicated and sent to a mental institution. Father Nazar Werner, OSB, a contemporary of Abbot Fintan, wrote in his Memories of St. Meinrad's, “Of all memories the most holy is that of Abbot Fintan, a man holier than whom I have never known.”

20 The account of these ceremonies are given in the  
history of the Liberty Mission.

21 "With the Silent World" by Bruno Hagspeel, SVD, p.  
27.

22 Cards file #s410, 411, 412

23 Card file #410

24 Card file #415

25 The rest of the letter dealt with matters concerning the  
difficulty Mother Anna was having with a Sister in the  
eastern house. "Sisters must not be a source of  
irritation," etc.

26 This book was lost in the October 8<sup>th</sup> fire, 1957.

27 The number of their statements found in their report are  
given. The report was preceded by the following  
information from Father De Cailly . . .

I was able to reach Ottumwa  
with considerable inconvenience  
to myself and I fear for little  
purpose, as the ex Mr. Francis  
(this title was used throughout  
the report in referring to Mother  
Francis – probably for fear it  
might be lost and fall into the  
hands of strangers . . . i.e., to  
preserve the reputation of  
Mother Francis) had got away  
this morning."

She had gone to Marshalltown.

330





Congregation of the Humility of Mary

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Congregation of the Humility of Mary

**THE IOWA STORY**  
**ORIGIN OF MOTHERHOUSE**  
**AT LIBERTY, MISSOURI**  
**AND RELOCATION**  
**TO OTTUMWA, IOWA**

Congregation of the Humility of Mary

## THE IOWA STORY

### ORIGIN OF MOTHERHOUSE AT LIBERTY, MISSOURI AND RELOCATION TO OTTUMWA, IOWA

In the summer of 1870, the pastor of Chillicothe, Missouri, learning of the Sisters of Humility community and its work in Villa Maria, Pennsylvania, applied for Sisters to conduct a school in his parish. His appeal was received favorably and Sister Mary of the Angels, with two other Sisters, Sister Mary Sacred Heart and Sister Mary Thomas, were sent. In September they opened the parish school, but having few pupils that year, Bishop John J. Hogan of St. Joseph, Missouri, advised them to move to Easton, Missouri, where there were more children to attend school and more financial aid was assured. Accordingly at the end of the school year, they went to Easton where a more commodious house was provided for them and a small school building of two rooms was procured.

In July, Sisters Mary Vincent and Blessed Sacrament, who had just been professed at Villa Maria, joined the three pioneer Sisters. Postulants could be received and clothed with the religious habit, but they were required to spend the last year of noviceship, preparatory to profession, in the motherhouse of the diocese of Cleveland. Sisters Mary Angeline and Anna Maria were the first two to receive the holy habit, and a few months later two more postulants entered.

Seeing this increase in membership, the Bishop of St. Joseph urged the purchase of property in the west and an establishment of a more permanent nature. At the request of many of the priests and with the consent of Sister Mary of the Angels, Bishop Hogan wrote to Father Begel, Mother Mary Anna and the Bishop of Cleveland to that effect. Several letters were exchanged between Bishop Hogan of St. Joseph, Missouri and Bishop Richard Gilmour of Cleveland, Ohio, relative to the project. During this time Bishop Hogan purchased a large brick building at Liberty, Missouri, which he gave over to the

Sisters. The little community gladly accepted his gift, and in June moved to Liberty, leaving three Sisters to continue the school at Easton. In July the two postulants received the holy habit and were given the names of Sister Mary Francis and Sister Mary Joseph.

The Sisters opened a parish school in Liberty in September, where children gathered in large numbers. They also taught a public school in a catholic village nearby.

The lengthy correspondence coming to a favorable close, at the request of Bishop Hogan, Bishop Gilmour delegated Father Begel and Mother M. Anna to come west that they might thoroughly understand the situation, and authorized them to decide what they thought best. After consultation with Bishop Hogan, Father Begel and Mother M. Anna both thought best that the western group should function independently – which decision both Bishops ratified in August, 1874, and thus a motherhouse was established at Liberty and Sister Mary of the Angels was appointed superior. All matters settled satisfactorily, Father Begel and Mother Anna returned to Villa Maria.

In accordance with the previous agreement that novices should spend the last year of their noviceship in Villa Maria, make vows and return, the same privilege was still accorded any novice who wished to do so. One novice, Sister M. Francis, availed herself of this privilege and went with Father Begel and Mother Anna.

The following July, 1875, the three novices pronounced their holy vows, Bishop Hogan of St. Joseph receiving them – the first under the superiorship of Mother Mary. Sister M. Francis who had gone to Villa Maria, made her vows on August 15 the same year into the hands of founder, Father Begel. She later returned to Liberty.

As it was impossible to secure blue flannel and the Sisters had suggested a change in head dress, Mother Mary adopted the following costume for the community: a black serge pleated habit, white muslin guimpe and bandeau, white underveil starched stiff, with a black top veil, a brass bound crucifix instead of the medal, and chained rosary beads.

School accommodations being very poor, Mother Mary, although her resources were meager, wisely decided to enlarge the building, thereby incurring a small debt. Notwithstanding this new obligation, the Sisters worked with courage among the poor children, teaching and catechizing them. They also taught Christian Doctrine in the surrounding settlements. In the spring of 1877, being unable to meet the interest on their debt then due, they were obliged to solicit financial assistance from outside sources. For this purpose Mother Mary of the Angels herself, taking Sister M. Francis as companion, visited many towns.

Stopping in Ottumwa, Iowa, and going to the parish house, they met Father Kreckel, the parish priest, who received them most kindly, giving the permission to collect in his parish and taking them to the Visitation convent where the Sisters also received them most kindly.

Mother Mary, quite fatigued and not well, at the insistent and solicitous request of the Sisters, remained at the convent some three weeks while Sister M. Francis and a young lady solicited in the city.

During these three weeks, Father Kreckel, learning from Mother Mary about her little community and most anxious to secure Sisters for his boys school, suggested to her to bring her Sisters to Ottumwa and to establish the motherhouse and novitiate there, offering her accommodation for the community, a good school, and, if necessary, parish financial aid.

Mother Mary promised to accept the invitation if all matters could be adjusted favorably. Father Kreckel said he would write to the two Bishops concerned and let her know as soon as possible. Mother Mary and Sister M. Francis returned at once to Liberty to acquaint the Sisters with the proposition.

The beginning of the Sisters of Humility of Mary in Ottumwa, Iowa, was indeed a very humble one. All sources of information concerning their arrival and their first years here establishes two conclusions, namely, that they began their missionary activities here in poverty and endured hardships that would have discouraged less courageous religious persons; that their humility, charity and zeal impressed all those with whom they associated and won for them not only love and admiration, but also financial aid.

Mother Mary, having been assured by Father John Kreckel, that he would obtain permission from Bishop John Hennessy, bishop of Dubuque, for the Sisters to come here to teach in a boys school which he was desirous of establishing, came with three other Sisters in July, 1877, and began preparation for the accommodation of the rest of the congregation.



FIRST MOTHERHOUSE AND THE FIRST HOSPITAL  
OF THE SISTERS OF HUMILITY  
IN OTTUMWA, IOWA

The Sisters of Humility of Mary arrived in Ottumwa, Iowa in July 1877, a month after the establishment of the Morrell packing house. Although Ottumwa was but a small town at the time, (in 1875 it numbered 6,326 residents) it gave evidence of becoming a prosperous city.

The Sisters first lived in two cottages on Fifth Street located between the First Baptist Church and the residence of H.A. Zangs, until the Alexander property, a brick building with a 7 ½ acreage located on North Court Street, was purchased for them by Mrs. Mary Tally, a wealthy woman from New York City. Seventeen days after the purchase of the Alexander property, May 11, 1878, the Sisters became an incorporated institution in the state Iowa.

Mother Mary and the Sisters who were teaching at Carrollton, Missouri, previous to their coming to Ottumwa, had become acquainted with Mrs. Tally. She had come to visit her first cousin, General James Shields, who had retired there after his return from the Civil War. She greatly admired their missionary zeal in the teaching of children in the poor rural parishes in the new diocese of St. Joseph, Missouri, and resolved to assist them financially in this noble work in Iowa as she had been doing in Missouri. She came to visit them a few month after they were living in Ottumwa and bought the property on Court Street which became the first motherhouse of the Sisters in Ottumwa.

The September following their arrival here in July 1877 the Sisters opened a boys grade school in the basement and a room on the first floor of Father Kreckel's residence. A little later on they opened parochial schools in Fairfield and Marshalltown, Iowa

The Sisters took possession of the former Alexander home July 1878, just a year after their arrival in Ottumwa. This was a large two story brick building with a very large attic having dormer windows and divided into four rooms. There still existed a number of vacant rooms for the Sisters after providing rooms for their kind benefactress, Mrs. Tally, and her niece and constant companion, Mary Shields, who also was the niece of General Shields. Only a few Sisters were at home since several were teaching at one of the mission schools.

Mother Mary decided to utilize the vacant parts of the building by undertaking other kinds of social works in addition to teaching, that of the care of orphans and of the sick.

#### CARE OF THE COUNTY'S MENTAL PATIENTS

A remarkable coincidence occurred at the time the Sisters acquired the Alexander property. The county supervisors of Wapello County were notified by the superintendent of the insane asylum at Mt. Pleasant that some of the incurable patients were being returned to their respective counties because of the overcrowded condition existing at this state institution.

The notification was received by the board of supervisors of Wapello County, May 23, 1878, just five days before Mrs. Tally had purchased the Alexander property for the Sisters. The county was totally unprepared to care for these mental patients. The small county home designed for the paupers of the county possessed no available space to care for them. The Sisters had scarcely been installed in their new home when the county board of supervisors begged Mother Mary to care for the three patients who were being returned to the county. Since they claimed that these were easily managed, Mother Mary agreed to care for them in the

unoccupied parts of the convent. Besides, a few Sisters were anxious to do nursing, and they were willing to devote themselves to this charitable work.

When the Tally Hospital was opened in December 1879, the three mental patients were transferred there. Soon five more patients were sent to the Sisters from Mt. Pleasant. As soon as the new county home was ready in September 1882 these patients were taken there for care. The time the Sisters of Humility cared for the county's incurable insane was three years and ten months.

#### CARE OF ORPHANS

When the mental patients were transferred to the Tally Hospital December 1879 another charitable work was undertaken by the Sisters, that of the care of orphans. The citizens of Ottumwa assisted them in this noble work by holding fairs. The first one was held in November 1881; the last one in December, 1890. With the opening of St. Vincent home in Davenport, the orphans were then sent there.

#### TALLY HOSPITAL, FIRST HOSPITAL IN OTTUMWA

The initial step which led to the erection of the first hospital in Ottumwa was the agreement of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary to care for the three mental patients returned to Wapello County by the Insane Asylum at Mt. Pleasant. The city officials learning of this agreement by the Sisters, sent a committee urging Mother Mary to erect a hospital on their grounds and promised that the city would donate to them half the cost. Mrs. Tally, desiring to assist the Sisters in all their social works, donated \$5,000 to begin the hospital at once. For this and later gifts the hospital bore her name.

This first hospital in Ottumwa was closed when the Sisters took possession of the Visitation convent and academy on Fourth Street in 1890. The Sisters, however, never ceased in their charity for the sick. The Ottumwa Courier contained the following in its December 19, 1890 issue:

The Sisters of Humility have been with us for ten or twelve years. During that time how many homes in the hour of their affliction have felt the benign effects of their presence. Race or creed are not considered when duty calls. Contagious diseases have no terror when duty calls them. They only seek to alleviate suffering under what form so ever it may be, absolutely without money or price. . . .

This building is still standing on North Court Street next to the Lincoln School grounds and is now known as the Northcourt apartments.

#### SOME MEMORABLE EVENTS

Events of special interest associated with these two buildings once owned by the Sisters of Humility on North Court worthy of mention are stated below.

In the former Alexander home, the first motherhouse, occurred the deaths of their generous benefactress, Mrs. Mary Tally and her first cousin, General James Shields, in adjoining rooms on the second floor of the building. The General's death occurred quite suddenly June 1, 1879, while visiting his two relatives residing with the Sisters; Mrs. Tally's death took place February 20, 1880, just eight months later. Both were consoled in their dying hour by the Sisters with whom they had formed a warm friendship while they were living at Carrollton, Missouri.

Three events worthy of note occurred in the chapel of the Tally Hospital. The funeral of the first Sister of Humility of the western congregation to die was that of Sister Anna Maria Patterson, conducted in this chapel April 7, 1882. Just four months later, August 8, 1882, the first religious profession of the Sisters of Humility to be held in Ottumwa took place. It was a memorable event for two reasons: the celebrant was Bishop McMullen, the first bishop of the newly created diocese of Davenport; the other reason, the six novices professed that day: Sisters Mary Teresa Erbacher, Mary Clare Cody, Mary Euphrasia Kenney, Mary Aloysius Griffin, Mary Peter Oriez and Mary Ligouri Ketterer. They were women of great ability, piety and zeal. Notable among them was Mother Mary Ligouri, the courageous builder of the beautiful building destroyed by fire October 8, 1957. She also was the builder of the present St. Joseph Hospital. The third event to have taken place in this building was the wedding in the chapel of Mary Shields to Honorable J. J. Smith appropriately solemnized September 29, 1885. It was her aunt, Mrs. Tally, who had financed the building where the wedding occurred.

SECOND MOTHERHOUSE  
OF THE SISTERS OF HUMILITY  
FOURTH STREET, OTTUMWA, IOWA  
1890-1912

The Court Hill motherhouse became too small for the growing congregation, so when the Visitation Sisters offered their property on Fourth Street for sale in February, 1890, the Humility Sisters began negotiations for its purchase. The transfer of the property occurred April 23, 1890, and the Sisters of Humility took possession of the vacated building a month later.

The name of the building was changed to St. Joseph convent and academy. The academy for girls and young ladies was opened the following September. The boys were being taught then by the Sisters in the Sacred Heart school.

During their twenty two years of residency on Fourth Street, many young ladies entered the congregation, thus enabling them to open thirteen new mission schools in Iowa. Once again they were obliged to seek more living quarters for the increase in their own membership and for their pupils.

HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

The second motherhouse of the Sisters of Humility in Ottumwa has an interesting history. It was owned by three different religious organizations and served three different purposes. It was a substantial building constructed of hand made brick in a local brickyard. Its existence was nearly 90 years. Following is a summary of its ownership and uses.

1. The building was erected by the Visitation Sisters, a cloistered order, during the Civil war and was known as the Visitation Convent and Academy. The academy was opened in October 1864 for resident and nonresident pupils.

2. It was offered for sale by the Visitation Sisters in February 1890 and purchased by the Sisters of Humility April 23, 1890. The name was changed to St. Joseph Convent and Academy. The academy was opened in September 1890. It was vacated in June 1912 when the new convent and academy on Grandview was ready for use.
3. The building was remodeled and opened at St. Joseph Hospital February 20, 1914, twenty three years after the Tally Hospital on Court Hill was closed.
4. It was sold to St. Mary's parish in 1925 when the new St. Joseph Hospital was opened. It was again remodeled for a grade school and for a central high school of boys. The school was opened in 1926 and known as St. Mary's School. The building was razed during the summer of 1953. The site is now the playground for the new modern school building adjoining it.

### THIRD MOTHERHOUSE IN OTTUMWA 1912-1957

The site of the third motherhouse in Ottumwa is an ideal one possessing a long stretch of level land of high elevation with a wooded portion in the back. It was known as the Andrew farm, then outside the city limits. The purchase of the 126.4 acre farm was made August 26, 1907. It was a most fortunate selection with ample space for the erection of many buildings for the future growth of the congregation. The place is now known as Ottumwa Heights. It is claimed that the forested part of the grounds was once the hunting grounds of Chief Wapello and the Fox Indians. Creditability to this claim was an indian mound located near the present Sisters cemetery, when the Sisters first took possession of the property. Later on ten more acres of forest were purchased giving a total of nearly 140 acres.

Plans were begun early in 1910 for the erection of a three wing, five story building. One wing was to be the convent, another wing for the academy separated by the central wing containing the chapel, auditorium and dining rooms. The cornerstone was laid in 1911, and the building was ready for occupancy September 1912. It was first known as St. Joseph Convent and Academy, thus retaining the same name as the former building in which the Sisters resided on Fourth Street.

In the meantime many improvements were required to be made before their new home could be used. Being outside the city limits, water and electricity had to be extended and the Grandview Avenue leading up to the grounds surfaced. The street came only as far as the country club but it was gradually extended to include the campus drive to the entrance of the building. Thus in time the new institution was provided with all the advantages of modern city life, yet still enjoyed the advantages of rural life.



The Sisters, desiring to provide greater educational advantages for young ladies preparing themselves as teachers, as well as for the young members of their own congregation, opened a ten week accredited normal training school during the summer vacation of 1914. This was discontinued with the opening of the St. Joseph Junior College in 1925. (The name was later changed to Ottumwa Heights College in 1934.)

The years following the location of the motherhouse and academy on their beautiful and spacious grounds and the opening of the junior college brought a great increase of new subjects into the community and also an increase in students. Additional living quarters and educational facilities became imperative. Plans were begun and blue prints of an additional building were prepared in 1956. The plans never materialized, for their beautiful home and all its contents were entirely destroyed by fire October 8, 1957.

Completely new plans were required to be drawn up to replace the former building. The extensive campus grounds afforded ample space for many buildings. Ten separate units of one, two or three stories were erected instead of the five story three wing building like the former one, thus eliminating fire hazards for the future.

During the three years required for the planning and the erection of the buildings the fourth motherhouse, novitiate, chapel and college, the Sisters and out of town students resided in four large buildings which had been erected on the airbase grounds belonging to the city by the federal government as a naval flight training station during World War II. These vacant buildings were generously offered to the Sisters, rent free, by the officials of the city of Ottumwa until their new home on the Ottumwa Heights campus was ready for occupancy.

## FIRST SCHOOLS IN IOWA 1877 – 1890

The Congregation of the Humility of Mary was founded especially for the education of children and youth in towns and country districts. The congregation has faithfully carried out its original purpose. Of all the schools in which the Sisters teach or have taught, approximately 75% are or have been located in small towns or rural districts.

The first school taught by the Sisters in Iowa was opened in the basement of the parochial residence of St. Mary's parish, Ottumwa in September 1877. This brick residence was built soon after the completion of the old limestone church, sometime in the 1860's. It was only a block away from where the Sisters first resided in Ottumwa on Fifth Street.

The school was known as St. Joseph School but often spoken of as "Father Kreckel's boys school." When the new school building was opened in 1882 on the site now occupied by Jay's Funeral Home, the name was changed to Sacred Heart School. The announcement of this special school for boys occurred in every issue of the Ottumwa Daily Courier from September 8, 1877 to October 17, 1877 inclusive.

The first day of school fifteen boys registered. Their teacher was Sister Mary Francis Mangan. More pupils entered later during the first year and Sister Mary Agnes Whalen was appointed to assist her. An increase in attendance of boys the following school year necessitated the opening of the other school room with Sister Thomas Burke and Sister Sacred Heart Gerardin added to the staff.

Sacred Heart school was a three story building consisting of a large basement with the school rooms located on the first floor. The second floor of the building was used as

a hall for entertainment, meetings etc. Later on it was divided into school rooms. Other Sisters who taught there in the early days were Sister Mary Madalene Neville, Sister Mary Cecelia Darling and Sister Mary Gertrude McGowan.

Five mission schools were established while the Sisters were still residing in their first motherhouse on North Court Street. Marshalltown and Fairfield were opened the second year after the Sisters arrived in Ottumwa. Four years later in 1882 Georgetown, a public school, was opened. Ft. Madison was opened in 1885 and Mt. Pleasant the following year. Of these, Fairfield and Mt. Pleasant were closed a few years later.

One of the immediate results of the opening of these schools was the securing of seven new members for the congregation and many more the following decade. With the exception of four Sisters who were employed in the domestic work of the convent all were engaged in the educational work of the congregation. The growth of the congregation was slow but steady. The requests for religious teachers were always more than the number of Sisters available to supply them.

### MARSHALLTOWN

Marshalltown, the oldest of the schools conducted by the Sisters, was opened in 1878. At the time of its establishment, the whole state of Iowa constituted the Dubuque diocese, then under the jurisdiction of Bishop Hennessey. When the Dubuque diocese was divided in 1881, three years after opening the school in Marshalltown, this school remained in the Dubuque diocese since it was located north of the dividing line. The motherhouse of the Sisters, located in Ottumwa, was included in the southern division and the Bishop of Davenport became their ecclesiastical superior.

St. Mary's School opened September 8, 1878, with eighteen pupils the first day with a gradual increase during the

year. Sister Mary Francis Mangan was placed in charge of the school. Others who taught there at that time were Sisters Mary Vincent Lawler, Teresa Erbacher and Bernard Vaughn.

Sister M. Francis Mangan taught there only two years at that time, as she was appointed to take Mother Mary's place as superior general of the congregation in 1880. She was succeeded by Sister M. Vincent Lawler and then by Sister Mary Joseph Galvin when the school at Fairfield was closed. It appears that Sister Mary Joseph Galvin remained in charge of the school until she was recalled home to finish Mother M. Francis's unfinished term as superior in 1890. Mother M. Francis then returned to Marshalltown to take charge of the school, which position she held for many years.

#### FAIRFIELD

Fairfield, located in Jefferson County adjoining Wapello County on the east, where the Sisters conducted a school for a few years after their arrival in Ottumwa, was settled by Catholic emigrants from Ireland, Germany and France after the extension of the Burlington railroad to Fairfield in 1858.

Some of the prominent Irish Catholic families who settled in the Fairfield parish were the Galvins, parents of attorney John Galvin of Council Bluffs; the Herricks, parents of Doctors John and Will Herrick of Ottumwa; The Hogans, Vaughns, Sullivans, etc. A prominent German Catholic family from Germanville, an out mission of Fairfield, were the Ketterers, parents of Mother M Ligouri; and from the French emigrants who established a French colony in southern Jefferson County, also an out mission Fairfield, were the Oriezs, parents of Sister Mary Peter Oriez and Nadys, ancestors of Sister Mary St. Clare Nady.

In 1877, the year the Sisters arrived in Ottumwa, Father P. J. Moran (also spelled Morrin) was appointed pastor of Fairfield and out missions. He considered the number of Catholic families living in and near Fairfield justified the establishment of a school. He requested Mother Mary for Sisters to open a school there to which she consented sending Sisters to open a school there in September 1878. Sister M. Joseph Galvin was in charge of the school.

The school remained open but a few years and probably closed at or before the time when Father Moran (Morrin) was transferred to another parish. There is no record of the time of closure or the reason why it was closed. The lack of students was apparently the cause of its closure. Not many pupils lived in Fairfield, and a number of county district schools were being opened at the time where children attended rather than endure the hardships they would have to undergo in traveling over the muddy country roads to attend the Catholic school in Fairfield.

Although the Sisters' stay at Fairfield was short, it indirectly accomplished much benefit for the congregation. The acquaintance with the Sisters and seeing the good that was accomplished by them influenced a number of young ladies from the Fairfield area to enter the congregation.

Father Moran (Morrin) was followed by Father M.F. Schiffmacher, who during his four years as pastor of Fairfield, became a warm friend and admirer of the Sisters of Humility. He was born, educated and ordained to the priesthood in Alsace-Lorraine, France. He came to America soon after his ordination and became affiliated with the Dubuque Diocese. In 1886, he was sent to Neola. Through his zeal he created a strong Catholic community sufficient to establish a parish school. His choice of Sisters to conduct his school was the Sisters of Humility. He was especially a warm friend of Mother Mary and they often enjoyed conversing in their native

French language. Thus was the manner in which the Sisters of Humility were chosen as teachers at Neola. Many vocations have come to the Sisters from Neola.

### GEORGETOWN

Georgetown, the fourth school to be opened in Iowa by the Sisters of Humility, is located in a rural district in Monroe County. The old state coach road between Council Bluffs and Ft. Madison passed through there. Since it was one of the stopping places of the stage coach, an inn had been built there. The first church erected in this Catholic settlement was a log church built in 1856. It soon became too small as many Irish Catholics moved to be near the church. A larger and more substantial church of brown sandstone was built a mile west of the log church. The cornerstone of this church, which is still standing, was laid August 30, 1860. These sturdy Irish pioneers gave not only their daughters or granddaughters to be educated by the Sisters, but also to become members of the congregation.

How did it happen that the Sisters of Humility undertook the teaching of their first public school in Iowa? They had some experience in conducting one at Nodaway Island, Missouri, which had proved to have been a rather difficult undertaking.

A request for Sisters to teach in this Catholic Irish settlement was first made by Father John Ryan to Bishop McMullen, who then advised Mother M. Francis, then superior general, to send Sisters to open the public school there since all the residents of the district were Catholic. The Sisters were sent to teach the district school the following September 1882.

Sister Mary Angeline Wogan, later elected as the fourth general superior of the congregation, was selected to conduct

the rural district school located on the old stage coach road, now U.S. Highway 34 and on the site opposite the deserted stage coach inn which served as a convent for the Sisters.

Sister Mary Angeline took the county teacher's examination and obtained her teacher certificate which qualified her to teach in the public schools in Iowa. Sister Mary Ignatius Healy was sent as the housekeeper and Sister Mary Bernard Vaughn to give religious instruction to the children, probably in the old inn. She also may have given music lessons.

### THE HAUNTED HOUSE

The convent where the Sisters lived was none other than the old stage coach inn. It was claimed that a murder was committed in the inn during the pioneer days. The house was said to be haunted. Strange noises were heard during the night. In fact, the Sisters claimed they were often disturbed by the noises.

The pastor, John Ryan, left Georgetown and was followed by Father Moynihan whom, it seems was rather jealous of the affection the people had for the Sisters. Besides he desired the convent – the old inn – for the parochial residence. He had been making his home in a room located in the store of the place. The following year he requested Mother M. Francis not to send the Sisters back the next year – 1883.

A few years after the Sisters had left, Father Moynihan decided to build a rectory. When the building was completed, the former old stage coach inn where the strange noises and happenings had occurred, was razed by the parishioners. Rats of every description rushed from the old building. The men, seeing the fleeing rats, exclaimed, "There go the ghosts."

Thirty years elapsed before the Sisters returned to teach here. During that time the farmers sent their daughters to be educated by the Sisters after they opened St. Joseph Academy of Fourth Street in 1890. In the meantime, there had been several attempts by some of the parishioners to have the school reopened with the Sisters in charge. All of these attempts were futile until 1913 when Father P. J. Murphy was appointed as pastor by Bishop James Davis in February 1912 with instructions to open a school as soon as possible.

Father Murphy met considerable opposition in carrying out the Bishop's order by many of the parishioners. The cause of this opposition was apparently due to two reasons: the failure of the first attempt in 1882; and secondly, the plan of Father Murphy would place an unsupportable financial burden on the parishioners. Bishop Davis and Father Murphy thought otherwise.

Before Father Murphy could complete his building program, he became ill and was forced to resign as pastor in the spring of 1913, and Father Hartigen was appointed to take his place with instructions to complete the work begun by Father Murphy. Before Father Hartigen's arrival three ladies of the parish, Mrs. Mary Heffron, Mrs. Mary Brothers and Mrs. Mary Rebeck, came to Ottumwa to add their plea for Sisters. It proved to have been an opportune occasion for Bishop Davis was there to dedicate the new convent and academy at Ottumwa Heights, July 17, 1913. Mother Mary Ligouri advised them to take their plea to the Bishop, resulting in his recommendation for her to send two Sisters there to reopen the school in September.

The convent begun by Father Murphy was practically completed so Mother Mary Ligouri sent Sister Mary Loretto Doyle to teach in the district school located there until the new parochial school was completed and Sister Mary Philomine Dietmeier to assist her. The one room school building was too



small to accommodate all the Catholic children of the parish so it was decided that Sister Mary Loretto would teach the children that lived in the district and the Catholic children who lived outside the district would be taught in a double room in the convent by Sister Mary Philomine.

As soon as Father Murphy returned to Georgetown, he hastened the completion of the school. When the school was ready for occupancy the old district school building was abandoned and all the children were taught in the new school building. Four more Sisters were added to the faculty and the first steps toward the organization of a Catholic high school were made, and the high school opened September 1915.

The educational progress of the school was chiefly due to the capable management of Sister Mary Loretto Doyle who was one of the most successful school administrators during this period of the educational undertakings of the congregation.

#### FORT MADISON

Fort Madison, Iowa, located in Lee County, is the site for the fifth school to be opened by the Sisters of Humility.

It was Father John George Alleman, a Dominican friar, born in Alsace-Lorraine, France whose special field of labor was destined to be Lee County, Iowa. He established missions in seven different places in Lee County and became the first resident priest there. He selected Fort Madison as his central mission.

Father Alleman's success in laying permanent foundations for Catholic parishes in Lee County was not only due to his deep religious spirit and zeal for souls but also due to the tact and affable manner in his dealings with all regardless of race or religious belief as was manifested in his

dealings with the Mormons who had settled on the Illinois side of the Mississippi river opposite of Fort Madison.

A Catholic school had really existed there in various stages of development since the organization of St. Joseph parish in 1840. Father Alleman personally undertook the religious education of the children using a part of the little brick church as a classroom.

Soon after the erection of the little brick church Catholics came to Fort Madison and established their homes there, thus increasing the pastoral duties of Father Alleman. Although he was forced to relinquish the personal conduct of the school, he arranged for its continuation and engaged Steven Schulte as teacher in 1846. Four years later he was succeeded by Valentine Buechel who conducted the school for nine years until he was elected state senator of Iowa in 1859.

Beginning with the year 1860, the school was placed in charge of members of religious orders. Father Alexander Hattenberger who followed Father Alleman, built a small frame structure to answer the double purpose as convent and school and invited the Notre Dame Sisters to take charge of the school which they conducted for 14 years. They were replaced by the Dominican Sisters in 1874.

In 1884 Father Louis DeCailly, nephew of Bishop Loras, was appointed as Father Hattenberger's successor at St. Joseph parish. Evidently he had previously become acquainted with the Sisters of Humility for he requested them to take charge of the school, which they did in 1885. The frame building of 1860 which had served as a convent and a school was moved across the street and replaced by a larger brick building in 1876 by Father Ignatz Griesser. It also served as a convent and school. Such was the arrangement when the Sisters of Humility took charge of the school and where they lived for the next 40 years until a new school building was

erected by Father F. H. Knebel in 1926. The old parochial residence was enlarged and remodeled as a convent.

Sister Mary Ligouri Ketterer and Sister Mary Madalen Neville and perhaps a third sister were sent to Ft. Madison in 1885 to teach. It is not certain whether Sister Mary Agnes Whalen was there for the opening of the school, but she taught there during the first years of the school. She taught the more advanced class of girls for a few years. She was followed by Sister Mary Ursula Flynn. The older boys at that time were taught by a man in the old church building across the street from the convent.

It was Father DeCailly's ambition to establish a school for the older boys of the city, but failing to receive the cooperation of the priests from the other parishes, he was forced to abandon it. Beginning in September 1894 boys and girls were taught together by a Sister.

Since the majority of the parishioners of St. Joseph were either born in Germany or of German descent, the reading and writing of the German language were taught in the grades to pupils who desired to study the language. However, all class instruction was conducted in English. Sister Mary Ligouri Ketterer, Sister Mary Teresa Erbacher and Sister Mary Josephine Zeiher conducted German classes during the time they taught there.

The teaching of music, both vocal and instrumental, has been emphasized in St. Joseph parish and school almost from the beginning of the parish. As early as 1863 an adult choir existed. A children's choir was trained by the Sisters. Soon after the time our Sisters took charge of the school, a sister was sent to teach music, vocal, and instrumental. The first music teacher was Sister Mary Cecelia Darling who was followed by Sister Mary Dolores Norman.

## MOUNT PLEASANT

Mount Pleasant parochial school was the last mission school to be opened before the Sisters took possession of the former Visitation Convent and Academy on Fourth Street. It was probably opened in 1886. the pastor at the time was Father J. J. Bassler, a very eccentric priest, who in spite of his peculiar manners, was anxious to establish a school there for the education of the children in the parish. He was encouraged to realize his desire by an substantial gift from one of his parishioners, Mr. O'Neill, which was sufficient to provide funds for the building of a convent and school. When the Sisters first went to Mt. Pleasant they taught in the basement of the church since the proposed new convent-school building had not yet been started. The building was not ready until September 1891.

Sister Mary Clementine McGuire, a former pupil of the school, described the building as a two story building with two classrooms, a kitchen and dining room on the first floor and living quarters, a community room and parlor on the second floor.

Once again Sister Mary Angeline was sent to open a new mission school, assisted by Sister Mary Teresa Erbacher and Sister Mary De Chantal O'Riley. Sister Mary Angeline taught the upper grades. Sister Mary Teresa taught the lower grades and Sister Mary De Chantal did the cooking and made vestments, altar linens and did embroidery.

The majority of their pupils lived in town, with a few within walking distance, came from the country. Some of the latter boarded in town. The attendance was small and was considerably reduced during the last year the Sisters were there when the scraper works where a number of men were employed, was moved to Aurora, Illinois. Since the Sisters salary was obtained principally from the tuition of their pupils,

it became less with the withdrawal of the children of these industrial workers.

In fact, the Sisters would have been unable to remain there as long as they did had it not been for the generosity of some of the families, notably the McGuires. In the autumn a wagon was sent out to the farmers who made contributions of vegetables and fruit. Those in town brought provisions during the year. The existing conditions did not justify the continuation of the school there, and the Sisters were withdrawn in June 1903.

The Sisters stationed there at the time of the closure were: Sister Mary Ursula Flynn, Sister Margaret Mary Norman and Sister Mary Bernadette McNally. Sister Mary Ursula, who previous to her entrance in the convent, had taught in public schools in Iowa, was sent that autumn to teach in the public school at Parnell that opened September 1903.

## RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE CONGREGATION 1912 – 1914

The years 1912, 1913 and 1914 might be regarded as an adjustment and reorganization phase in the history of the congregation, the preparation to vacate the 48 year old building on Fourth Street in which the Sisters had resided for 22 years and the establishing of themselves in their beautiful new home on Grandview. Many changes were necessary to meet the needs of their new environment.

One of the most important changes was that of assisting at daily Mass in their own chapel instead of the parish church and of its being offered by their own chaplain instead of the parish priest. Soon after the Sisters occupied their new motherhouse, Bishop James Davis of Davenport appointed Father Thomas Smyth, then pastor of Cosgrove, as their chaplain.

It was a fortunate appointment for the Sisters as he not only became their first chaplain, but one of their most generous benefactors. It was he who had invited them to open the school at Cosgrove in 1903. On his arrival at St. Joseph Academy October 4, 1912, what little means he had toward the end, he gave to the Humility Sisters whose spirit and work he much admired.

When Father Smyth arrived, the chapel was not completed. What was the high school girls lounge on the second floor was fitted up as a temporary chapel. The Sisters private rooms were also located on this floor, i.e., the right wing of the building, as the left wing, designed to be the convent, was not completed until May 1917. Mother Ligouri's office was then the first of the three bedrooms facing the rear of the building, also on the second floor.

Two persons were intimately associated with the beginning of what we now refer to as Ottumwa Heights, then

St. Joseph Academy and Convent, or simply as Villa Marie – Mother Mary Ligouri, the builder, and Father Thomas Smyth, the first chaplain.

The student boarders at that time were not many and could be accommodated on the third floor of the building. The grounds at that time were referred to as Villa Marie and the building as St. Joseph Academy.

These three years, including the first six months of 1912, while the Sisters were still residing on Fourth Street in the old convent, witnessed a gradual increase in the membership of the congregation. Twenty seven postulants were given the religious habit.

Owing to several events that occurred, the year 1912 is a memorable one in the history of the congregation: the changing of the location of the motherhouse to its spacious grounds, providing privacy for the Sisters, securing of a chaplain of their own, the reception of the largest class of postulants since the establishment of the western motherhouse in 1874.

At the beginning of the year 1912, ten postulants were given the religious habit January 2 in the chapel of the old convent on Fourth Street, and eight novices made their first profession. These were the last religious ceremonies to be held in the old chapel where all the religious ceremonies had been conducted since 1901.

A remarkable coincidence to note is that among these two groups whose ceremonies occurred that day was that they contained a future general superior and her assistant, Sister Mary Magdalen Wilmes and Sister Mary Nicholas Scheetz. The ten postulants received have an unusual record. The death of Sister Mary Martha O'Brien, the first Sister of that group to die, did not occur until February 19, 1957, forty five years later.

A local paper announced the double ceremony the day before:

EIGHTEEN YOUNG WOMEN TO BE RECEIVED  
AND PROFESSED AT ST. JOSEPH CONVENT

. . . The ceremony is in the direct charge of Very Rev. Hoppmann rector of St. Mary's parish, who will celebrate the high mass and officiate at the reception and profession of the young women. Father William Devine of the Redemptorist order of Davenport, who has been conducting a spiritual retreat for the young women who are to be received and professed, will assist and will deliver the sermon. Because of the size of the chapel, a limited number have been invited to the services. When the Sisters occupy their new academy, a larger chapel will be one of the features of the new building. . . .

An excerpt from the sermon delivered by Father Devine the next day contains these encouraging words:

Your reward in heaven, he said, will be exceeding great because God has so promised to those who renounce father, mother, brother, sister, home, all that is dear to them, that they will be rewarded one hundredfold. And then he told the young Sisters to look to heaven and be courageous, the reward is eternal and the sufferings are short.

The last religious ceremony to occur on Fourth Street before the Sisters moved out to their new motherhouse was held in old St. Mary's church August 17, 1912, because the old convent chapel was too small to accommodate the relatives of



the new Sisters and the missionary Sisters who were home for their summer vacation.

It also was a double ceremony. Sisters Mary Eugene Schwartz, Mary Regis Jamison, Mary Borromeo Barry, niece of Mother Mary Ligouri, were professed. Sisters Mary Raymond Egan, Mary William Seelman and Mary Ignatius McCabe were given the religious habit. Only one more religious ceremony occurred in 1912, the profession of Sister Mary Lawrence Delaney on December 12. She had the honor of being the first Sister whose religious ceremony was held in the new Sacred Heart Chapel at Villa Marie.

Only two religious ceremonies took place in the new Sacred Heart Chapel in 1913, the reception of Sister Mary Fidelis Doyle, sister of Sister Mary Adrian Doyle, March 19, 1913. Hers was the first reception to be held there. On September 1, 1913, Sister Mary Perpetua Muldoon pronounced her first vows.

The following year twelve postulants were given the habit, six on August 20, 1914 and six more on December 30. Also thirteen novices pronounced their first vows – the ten postulants received January 2, 1912 and three received in old St. Mary's Church that same year.

This same period witnessed an expansion of the religious and social works of the congregation – the opening of a large grade school in Des Moines and the reopening of another hospital in Ottumwa.

In September 1912 occurred the opening of the first mission in the capitol city of Iowa. The selection of the place to expand their religious and educational activities proved to be a very fortunate one. The Sisters became better known and the quality of their work led to their being selected to open several mission houses there and the securing of many worth members of their congregation.

The choice of Sister teachers for this school, St. Anthony's in south Des Moines, now one of the largest grade schools conducted by the Sisters of Humility, was rather a singular one. In July 1910, two Sisters were appointed by Mother Mary Ligouri to solicit funds for the new motherhouse in Ottumwa. As is customary, they first visited the parish priest to obtain permission to solicit funds from his parishioners. However, they carried with them, the written permission of Bishop James Davis from Davenport of which Des Moines was then a part.

When the two Sisters, Sister Mary Dominica Devlin and Sister Mary Eulalia Warin, arrived at the parochial residence, it was Father Romanelli, the pastor at the time, who admitted them. Before they had an opportunity to state their errand, he threw up both arms, exclaiming, "Here are the Sisters who will teach in my new school!"

Soon after he applied for Sisters to open his new parochial school when it was ready. Mother Mary Ligouri granted his request two years later. A good omen was provided for the soliciting Sisters. As they journeyed along the streets in south Des Moines collecting funds, like the Pied Piper, they were followed by children eager to talk with them and ask them questions. There seems to exist an affinity between the Italian children and the Sisters. The members of our congregation have remarked about the love the children manifest towards them.

In 1914 occurred another important undertaking by the congregation, the opening of their second hospital in Ottumwa. The Sisters had never abandoned their solicitude for the sick and the poor. During the intervening years between the closing of the Tally Hospital on Court Hill, sometimes referred to as "Little St. Joseph's Hospital," and the opening of the second hospital on Fourth Street, the Sisters continued to visit and nurse the sick in their own homes. It was a custom among

The Sisters of the Humility of Mary contemplate converting the present convent on East Fourth Street into a hospital when the new academy north of the city is ready for occupancy. The Sisters state that numerous requests for another hospital have come to them and that they are planning to establish such an institution as quickly after the new building is completed as possible. The plan of the Sisters has the approval of Bishop Davis of the Davenport Diocese, and arrangements are now being made to secure sufficient nurses to handle all cases that they may receive. The Sisters had originally planned to make the old convent building a home for aged women or helpless girls, but the demands for a Sisters hospital have been so urgent that it has been decided to convert the building into a hospital. . . .

#### BROCKMAN GIVES VIEWS

Ottumwa is greatly in need of another hospital, said Dr. Brockman this morning. Our present fine institution is insufficient to cope with the requirements, and many times there are patients on the waiting list unable to secure a room at the time desired. . . . There is no city the size of Ottumwa that does not have at least two and sometimes three hospitals, says Dr. Brockman. The medical profession of the city greatly favors another hospital and hopes for immediate culmination of the matter. The present institution is always crowded. The convent building is nicely adapted for a hospital, has a good location and no doubt can be remodeled into an excellent institution.

The first important step towards the carrying out of the plan to convert the old convent building did not occur until a year later. A number of committees made up of prominent persons from the community were formed. It was understood from statements made by representatives of the hospital promotion committees that only \$10,000 is asked, which amount is claimed will be ample to cover remodeling expense, and that the equipment at \$5,000 will be provided without an appeal to the public.

The drive for the required sum to be raised by the citizens of Ottumwa was successfully conducted by the promoting committees. Mr. Lee Crisman, who had so successfully managed the construction of the new motherhouse and academy completed in 1912, was chosen as contractor for the remodeling of the old convent into a hospital. Under his capable management much progress was made so that he could announce in the local paper October 29, 1913, that he expects to have the job completed by next month. Numerous alterations were made throughout the building. In fact the old convent was practically rebuilt in the interior. The old high school room was remodeled for a chapel; operating and sterilization rooms were located on the top floor where a small dormitory and part of the old chapel formerly were. New floors were laid, and new electric wiring and plumbing were installed to make the building both safe and sanitary.

The completion of the job took more time than anticipated. Much necessary equipment had to be installed – electric switchboards, call system, machinery for the new elevator, etc. Besides time was required for the Sisters to prepare all the rooms for their various purposes. The new hospital was not ready to be formally opened until February, five months later.

## ST. JOSEPH'S FORMALLY OPENED TO VISITORS

The new St. Joseph Hospital was opened for the first time yesterday and was thronged with visitors the entire day, and according to the register many people from afar were in attendance. The Sisters of Humility, who were in charge of the building, showed every courtesy to the visitors, personally conducting them through the entire building and pointing out and explaining the various things of interest.

On the first floor is found the reception rooms, on the second are the wards and on the third are more wards and the operating room. The operating room was an object of interest to all visitors as the very latest in operating equipment has been installed, and each instrument was thoroughly explained and demonstrated to all.

All furnishings, etc., for the rooms were donated to the Sisters and on the door of each room was to be found a card signifying who the donor was. The rooms are most beautifully furnished and furniture and fixtures are arranged in a most artistic manner.

The hospital will be in charge of the Sisters of Humility of Mary, but is opened to all creeds and denominations, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, and each patient will have the privilege of selecting his or her own physician.

Three days later, Monday, February 23, 1914, the hospital was ready to receive its first patients. Sister Mary Peter Oriez, long remembered for her nursing skill and kindness to the sick, having nursed in the Tally Hospital and the sick in their own homes, was given charge of the hospital.

Katherine Holehouse of Milwaukee was selected as superintendent of nurses, and Rose McNally, a sister of Sister Mary Bernadette, as surgical nurse.

There really were beds enough for only 35 patients as some of the rooms planned for patients were necessary for the use of the Sisters and nurses. As small as the hospital was, they cared for 1,000 patients during the short time it was in operation on Fourth Street. The average stay of patients was 11 days, a longer time than for patients at the present time. A number of sick cared for were charity patients. The last year that the hospital was in operation an estimated sum of \$2,400 was spent on the care of such patients.

Mother Mary Joseph Galvin succeeded Sister Mary Peter as superior of the hospital. She was well known in Ottumwa, having been the first general superior of the congregation when the Sisters opened the St. Joseph academy in 1890 after the withdrawal of the Visitation nuns from Ottumwa. After her term of office expired, she remained there as a member of the teaching staff. She possessed a pleasing personality, was a brilliant conversationalist and gained many a generous friend and benefactor for the congregation.

As superior of the hospital, her first concern was for the sick poor and for the spiritual welfare of the patients especially for those whose death was imminent. She prayed with them and for them. A concrete example of her charity was often told by Mr. John L. Adams, a non-Catholic resident of Ottumwa, which convinced him of the genuine motivating force which actuated the Sisters in their work of charity, the care of the sick and the unfortunate, for the love and imitation of Jesus, their model and exemplar.

He related that a dirty, ragged urchin was accidentally hit by a car at the corner of Fourth and Court Streets near St. Mary's Church. He and another man carried the injured boy

into the hospital just next door. Mother Joseph met them, made no inquiries as to who he was, whether he was a Catholic, if his parents would be able to defray the expenses for his care, etc., but immediately led them to a private room on the entrance floor and had them lay the dirty and bloody lad on a spotless bed, then summoned a doctor and nurse to give him first aid. Then and only then did she inquire the name of the boy so she could notify his parents of their son's accident.

This act of indiscriminating charity so impressed Mr. Adams that both he and his wife became ardent supporters of the Sisters. They furnished a room in the new hospital in 1925, served on the reception committee the day the hospital was opened and willed their home on Vogel Avenue to the Sisters. It was used as a home for nurses until the nurses home on the hospital grounds was built. Later it was sold.

The following editorial was published at the time of Mother Joseph's death by the Ottumwa Courier, August 10, 1933.

#### MOTHER JOSEPH

In the passing of Mother Joseph of the local order of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, death has taken the one member of the group who probably was best known by the general public.

Her unceasing work in behalf of the establishment of St. Joseph Hospital twenty years ago and her constant contact with the everyday life of the world in a supervisory capacity after the first hospital was opened on East Fourth Street, gave her an ever widening acquaintance.

Mother Joseph was recognized by everyone with whom she came in contact for her shrewd

business sense. This was coupled with a beautiful character and dignity to create an uplifting influence that distinguishes all the members of the order which she headed at various times.

Her counsel was often sought after she retired from direct duties of her office. She had spent the greater portion of her life in the sisterhood she had chosen. Mother Joseph lived in this community for many years. It cannot help but be better for her having lived here.

When it was decided to open a hospital on Fourth Street, some of the Sisters were sent away to nurses training schools so as to be qualified to serve on the hospital staff of nurses. Two Sisters best remembered for their work as nurses, both in the old and new St. Joseph Hospitals, were Sister Mary Josephine Zeiher and Sister Mary Perpetua Muldoon.

Sister Mary Josephine was a born nurse. She was one of those Sisters who had previously nursed the sick in their own homes. She was graduated from the nurses training school in Milwaukee, and while there for her training distinguished herself for her exceptional nursing skills. She was soon recognized as one of the outstanding nurses in the state. She served two terms as president of the Iowa-Nebraska Catholic Hospital Association. Much of her time was also spent in research work and in study of methods used by other institutions.

Many a mother and babe owed their lives to her skill in the obstetrical department. She possessed extraordinary skill in the treatment and care of sick babies and young children. More than one doctor in the pediatric department, failing in his efforts in the treatment of a young child would say, "Here, Sister, see what you can do for this child." Her death July 13, 1934, was due to overwork. She was a tireless worker. There existed no



eight hour duty for her. Night and day found her at the bedside of seriously ill patients. Her death was mourned by not only the members of her congregation, but also by many persons who owed their lives to her skill.

An editorial in the Ottumwa Courier at the time of her death expresses the high regard in which she was held by the general public.

#### SISTER MARY JOSEPHINE

Lives of service and humble sacrifice go on day by day in our midst and we give them little thought. Unselfish devotion may pass almost unseen, but always, somewhere someone remembers that life is no more.

Such was the service rendered by Sister Josephine of the local Sisters of Humility community. Only in her case many recall her work for and in connection with the advancement of St. Joseph Hospital. She was in contact with the general public to a greater extent than are many others of the order.

The hospital was her life. She promoted it and saw it develop from a small service to one of the outstanding organizations of its kind in this section. Her value to her cause was recognized afar, too, for she headed a two state conference of hospital workers.

This woman's unstinting service and valuable contributions will live on as an inspiration to those she instructed, a blessing to those whose lives she touched and an eternal monument to humble workers.

Sister Mary Perpetua, the other sister associated with the development of St. Joseph Hospitals in Ottumwa, was a

woman of exceptional ability. Besides being a registered nurse, she was a licensed X-ray technician and a laboratory assistant.

Alert and keen of mind, her death brings a loss to the hospital and to her community. Perhaps the dominating actuating principles animating her work were an uncompromising stand for the right and a strong motivating desire for the highest efficiency in the various hospital departments with which she was familiar. Unselfish and untiring in her efforts, Sister Mary Perpetua's service was invaluable.

Sister Mary Perpetua may also be regarded as a martyr to duty. She contracted diphtheria from a patient she had treated and died a few days later. Her tragic death was rendered more so by the manner in which her funeral services were compelled to be held. While her remains were kept in a hospital morgue, a requiem high mass was conducted in the hospital chapel for the repose of her soul. Her burial service conducted at the Sisters cemetery at Ottumwa Heights was private, but a few were allowed to attend.

Thus in this short period of one year, six months and six days, the three members of the congregation who accomplished the most toward the advancement of the services rendered by St. Joseph Hospital in the first stages of their development, were called away for their eternal reward.

## EPILOGUE

The Sisters settled into their new motherhouse on Grandview. As the years progressed new missions were opened throughout Iowa as well as Montana, Illinois, Minnesota, California, Arizona and foreign countries. The community grew and prospered as many new members were received. However, this continuing story remains to be written.

We do not ask for the next for the next hundred years to be any more trouble-free than the previous century. We ask only for the same gifts of faith, hope and love that enabled earlier Sisters of Humility to move ahead together with simplicity, trust and joy.

### SISTERS WHO CAME TO OTTUMWA IN 1877

Sister Mary of the Angels Maujean

Sister Mary Sacred Heart Gerardin – returned to Pennsylvania,  
May.1879

Sister Mary Vincent Lawler

Sister Anna Maria Patterson

Sister Mary Joseph Galvin

Sister Mary Angeline Wogan

Sister Mary Francis Mangan

Sister Mary Thomas Burke – novice – left in 1879

Anne O'Riley (O'Reilly), postulant – Sister Mary deChantel, d.  
1919

Mary Vaughn, postulant – Sister Mary Bernard – left 1882

Elizabeth C. Lilly, postulant - Sister Mary Catherine – left  
1882

Mary A. Whalen, postulant – Sister Mary Agnes - left 1894

## MOTHERHOUSES IN THE U.S.

Villa Maria, Pennsylvania	1864-
Liberty, Missouri	1873 – 1877
Ottumwa, Iowa North Court	1878 – 1890
Ottumwa, Iowa East Fourth	1890 – 1912
Great Falls, Montana Sacred Heart Convent	1906 – 1947
Ottumwa, Iowa Ottumwa Heights	1912 – 1957
Ottumwa, Iowa Airbase (temporary)	1957 – 1960
Ottumwa, Iowa Ottumwa Heights (new)	1960 – 1982
Davenport, Iowa Humility of Mary Center	1982-

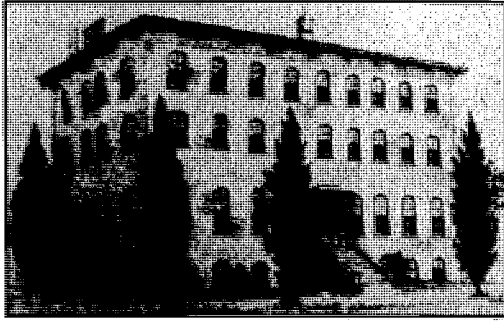


Congregation of the Humility of Mary

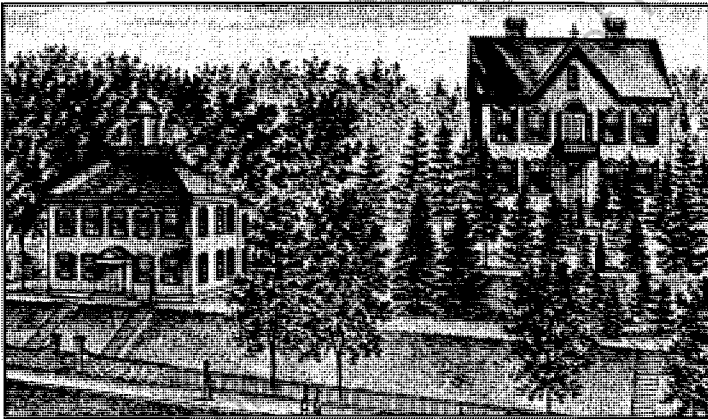
**Congregation of the Humility of Mary**  
**2002**

Congregation of the Humility of Mary

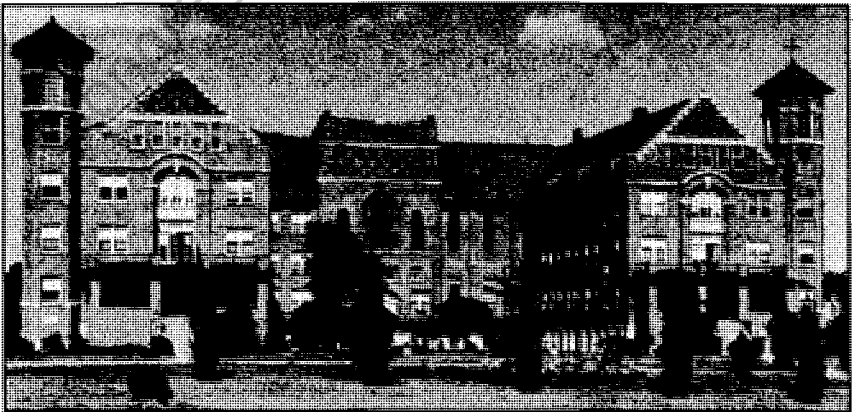
**4th Street**



**North Court**



**Ottumwa Heights**



**Congregation of the Humility of Mary  
2002**