

Mother (Saint) Mary Of The Cross

Her Personality, Her Spirit. The Story of Mary MacKillop.

By Monsignor James Hannan, D.D., Ph.D. and others.

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[Mother Mary of the Cross was canonized on October 17th 2010, by Pope Benedict XVI. It is to be noted that much more is known today of Mother Mary's life and holiness as a result of the intense research that went into the presentation of her cause for canonization at Rome]

PART 1.

Mary MacKillop was an Australian. She was born on 15th January, 1842, in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, a few hundred yards from where St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, now stands. Baptized at St. Francis' Church, the record of her baptism is in the archives of the Cathedral.

Her parents were immigrant Highland Scots, Alexander MacKillop and Flora McDonald, who were married at St. Francis' by Victoria's first priest, Father Geoghegan, OFM.

Her Father.

Alexander MacKillop had studied for the priesthood, first in Scotland, later at the Scots College in Rome. He reluctantly abandoned his studies, probably through ill health, and returned to Scotland. At that time and place, the vague combination of disappointment and disgrace which expressed itself in the term "spoiled priest" was a strong factor. Almost certainly because of this, his parents left the Catholic Highlands in 1835 and took Alexander with them to find a new life beyond the rim of the world in Australia.

He was one of the tiny group of Catholics who met for prayer in the home of the French carpenter, Peter Bodecin, in Collins Street West, before the arrival of the Franciscan, Father Geoghegan. He served as one of the trustees for the building of St. Francis Church, and for the establishment and maintenance of the little school alongside. Apparently successful in business at first, he was ruined in the crash of the Rucher affair, for the solvency of which he had been a guarantor — one of the "Twelve Apostles". He lost the home he had built for the family at Darebin, moving from place to place in poverty and desperate embarrassment.

The Family.

Mary was the eldest of the seven children, and bore a great part of the burden of worry. She had little formal schooling: a short time at St. Francis' School, maybe a term at the Academy of Mary Immaculate. Quite patiently, however, she learned much from her father; the treasure he had stored up for a wider field was poured out for his eldest daughter, and Mary MacKillop reached a standard of religious and literary education which would have been available from no colonial school of the period.

The later history of “Sandy” MacKillop is wrapped in mystery. He seems to have been with the family for some time in Portland; but, after Mary’s removal to Penola and to Adelaide, there is no word of him. Did he go searching for gold still wider afield? Did he embark on some other business venture? Did he just wander off, spending the twilight of his life reaching for the Grail he was reaching for in Scotland and Rome and Melbourne? With the sure wisdom of hindsight, it is certain that nothing he had ever dreamed of doing whether as a priest or a Catholic layman, could ever match the glory of the achievement of being the father and the childhood mentor of Mary MacKillop.

The Roaring Fifties.

The discovery of gold at Ballarat in August, 1851, brought a dramatic change to the quiet sleepiness of the settlement of Port Phillip. The proud and the free, the reckless and the greedy, came pouring in to fan out from Melbourne in a feverish rush to the diggings at Ballarat and Bendigo and a hundred other places across the Colony. The “Roaring Forties” of the Californian gold rushes became the “Roaring Fifties” in Australia. In that decade, more gold was produced in Australia than in any other decade of the nineteenth century; and it brought tremendous changes.

Melbourne became a boomtown. Property values soared, as did tradesmen’s wages, as did the price of foodstuffs. Ships swung idly at anchor in Port Phillip Bay, deserted by their crews to join in the mad rush of clerks and shopkeepers, government servants and farmers to the spreading goldfields. Other ships refused to proceed farther than the port of Adelaide, for fear of desertion by their crews, and a thriving business was established in the freighting of their cargoes to Melbourne and the fields at Ballarat and Bendigo — by bullock wagons! All this resulted in a scarcity of commodities which, paralleled by the use of nuggets and gold dust as currency, triggered wild inflations.

“Republic of Victoria.”

It was in this atmosphere that Mary MacKillop grew up. She was a month short of her thirteenth birthday when the unrest of the inrushing population came to a head at Eureka, near Ballarat. For a pathetically proud three days, the star-crossed flag of the “Republic of Victoria” flew over the Stockade, to be dragged in sad defeat at the heels of a trooper’s horse on that December Sunday morning of 1854. Yet, for the last eight years of her life, she was to know that same flag as the honoured symbol of One Nation, One People, One Commonwealth of Australia.

Clerk and Teacher.

She was what must have been a rarity in the mid-nineteenth century, a business girl, for she worked as a clerk with the printing and stationery firm of Sands and McDougall — then Sands and Kenny — receiving the wages of a forewoman. Later, thanks to the education she had received from her father, she was able to fill successfully the post of governess in several places in the Western District and in the Southeast of the Colony of South Australia. Early in the 1860’s, in an attempt to reunite the family, she started a school in Portland in a rented house which had been built by the Hentys. It was a curious kind of enterprise, part private school, part community-supported; and the ever-present shortage of money cramped it from the beginning. It was at this school that Father Tenison Woods came into her life for the second time. She had met him some four years before when she was governess at a station homestead near Penola, which was the headquarters of his widespread parish.

Father Julian Tenison Woods.

Father Tenison Woods was a man of remarkable and creative mind. Not only was he one of Australia's great frontier missionaries, but a distinguished explorer and scientist. Among other works, he pioneered the geological study of Northern Australia. He is one of the truly great founders of Catholic education in Australia. With all his great gifts, his untiring zeal, he had nevertheless an unhappy and strangely difficult personality. His relations with Mary MacKillop were marred by misunderstandings and a curious kind of tyranny on his part. On her part, she never uttered a word against her director of the early years, was always most upset if his part in the founding of the Sisters of St. Joseph would seem to have been forgotten.

A Beginning At Penola.

It was late in 1865 that Father Tenison Woods asked Mary to undertake the teaching of a school which he proposed to open in Penola. Early in 1866, she crossed the border into South Australia with her two sisters and her brother John. In Penola, a disused stable had been rented and, by dint of some hard work by John MacKillop, it was made presentable enough for the beginning of school. It was the Bethlehem of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart. On the Feast of St. Joseph, 1866, Mary MacKillop, the first Sister of St. Joseph, placed herself in the hands of her Divine Master to teach his little ones. Although she did not take formal vows until the Feast of the Assumption, 1867, in Adelaide, Mary MacKillop becoming Mother Mary of the Cross, the 19th of March has always been regarded as the date of the foundation.

Adelaide — and Gethsemane.

The story of the next eight years is one of extraordinary trial, and of tremendous strength on the part of Mother Mary of the Cross. Time and again, she earned in bitter truth the right to the title. Within five years, the tiny community had grown to a body of 120 nuns. Maybe the rapid growth, but probably more so the departure from the semi-cloistered life which was the accepted role of a nun, was the cause of the determined opposition. In South Australia which had been founded only 30 years before with the expressed stipulation that "no Irish or Papists need apply", the enmity of those outside the Church was understandable enough. What was so hard to bear was the opposition within the Church, opposition all along the line of ecclesiastical authority; opposition which, quite patently, its authors were convinced was for the ultimate glory of God. Mother Mary and her daughters in Christ were to learn the bitter wisdom of the warning Christ had given to those who would follow Him: "They will put you out of their synagogues, and think that they are doing honour to God. And it was a struggle conducted by Mother Mary with sublime charity and an unbroken loyalty to the Hierarchy and the clergy.

Unified Direction.

The years of trial were punctuated by journeys to Sydney and to Brisbane. Here the problem was the one of government. Mother Mary wanted, because she so clearly saw the necessity, an Australia-wide congregation, with unified direction, and a common training for all her sisters. The Church in Australia — or, more accurately, the Church in the various Colonies which eventually were to become Australia, was not yet prepared for such unity of government or of purpose. And so, in 1874 Mother Mary of the Cross, 32 years of age, with trouble facing her everywhere she looked, made up her mind to go to Rome.

The Roman Saga.

1874! It is little less than a hundred years ago, but it is difficult today [1973] to imagine just what an extraordinary feat of courage and determination that journey was. Mother Mary travelled in lay dress, her habit packed away in her baggage against the day of arrival in Rome. This she did for the double reason of causing the minimum of upset and to save the cost — a very cogent reason, this — of the travelling expenses of a companion. So much swift history has flowed beneath the bridges of the last century, that it is hard to evoke the mood which she must have found in the Rome of 1874. Less than four years before, the Red-Shirts of Garibaldi — without Garibaldi — had won their puny victory at the Porta Pia, had burst into the City of the Popes to place the House of Savoy on the Quirinal throne, and scatter the Fathers of the First Vatican Council.

On their heels the anti-clericals and the atheists of Europe, the haters of the Papacy and the wild-eyed revolutionaries of the world had swarmed into Rome to celebrate the end of the Catholic Church; to humiliate, in every possible way, the Successor of Saint Peter, both in his person and in his representatives. Within the Church, there was a sense of stunned dismay, a feeling that the unbelievable had happened. What interest could there be in the quarter of a million Catholics in a group of colonies on the far side of the world? Above all, what audience could be found in Papal Rome for revolutionary ideas in Australia, with the reckless results of revolution all around them?

Ears That Would Listen.

And yet, this young woman of 32 years, without benefit of distinguished birth or patronage, with no advantages of wealth or position, was able to find, and swiftly, ears that would listen, hearts that would sympathize, heads that would plan all the way up to the anguished Pio Nono himself [Pope Pius IX]. From Rome to France, to England, the Scotland of her fathers, to Ireland, Mother Mary went serenely on. What surprises is not that she was received coldly in so many places, looked on with suspicion and alarm in so many others. The real surprise is that she won friends, so many steadfast friends, in the most unlikely quarters.

Back to Rome, and to the decision which spelled out eventual success in the long struggle. On her return to Australia, the first General Chapter of the Congregation was held in Adelaide in 1875. There were skirmishes still to be fought, to be lost as well as won; disappointments were to come, setbacks to be endured and by-passed. But the long haul to the top of the hill was over.

Mother Mary's Monument.

Since the foundation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart, there have been more than 3,000 members of the Congregation. Today [1973] they number some 2,500 in 22 Dioceses of Australia, in the four Dioceses of New Zealand, and even in one Diocese in Ireland, so long and so generously the benefactor of the Church in Australia and New Zealand.

Aims and Objectives.

The first two paragraphs of the Constitutions of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart read:

“The primary end of the Institute is the sanctification of its members by the practice of the three simple vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, and by the exact observance of this Rule.”

“The secondary end of the Institute is the instruction of poor children. However, by way of exception and at the request or with the consent of the Ordinary, other works which may be required by necessity can be added to the work of education.”

The evaluation of the primary end, the measure of its success, is beyond our calculation. The secondary end, however, the success of the work of the Sisters, is laid out like a magnificent mosaic for all to see. During Mother Mary's active leadership of over 40 years, she founded 160 Josephite houses, including 12 homes for orphans and homeless and 117 schools with 12,000 children. At her death, the family she had founded in Christ numbered 1,000 Sisters; a record probably unequalled in the history of religious congregations.

Current Situation.

To bring the record up to date with any kind of accuracy is an impossibility; for the simple reason that the figures are changing almost month by month. There are more than two and a half thousand Sisters, somewhere about 100,000 plus children in their schools; orphanages, maternity hospitals, foundling homes, hostels for working girls and for migrants, motor missions, correspondence courses... wherever the need, especially of those whom Christ Our Lord called His little ones, there will be found today a Sister of Saint Joseph.

Mother Mary and Caroline Chisholm.

It is interesting to speculate on what influence Mrs. Caroline Chisholm had on the vocation of Mary MacKillop. After her return from England in 1854, Mrs. Chisholm spent some three years in Melbourne and was a frequent visitor to the MacKillop home in Darebin, which was a Mass-centre for the Catholics of the district.

Caroline Chisholm holds a place which is unique in Australian social history. A convert to Catholicism, she spent her early married years as the wife of an officer of the East India Company, himself a Catholic of Scottish ancestry. Late in the 1830's they moved to Australia. A woman of strong and fearless character, brilliant practical mind and simple personal piety, she combined a delicate feminine conservatism with a social radicalism that challenged the colonial governments and wealthy interests of the day. She struggled untiringly, both in New South Wales and in England, against almost hopeless odds, for a colonial social policy based on the family and private property. With the help of her husband, she carried through a brilliant work of colonization in the face of tremendous difficulties, opposition from entrenched wealth and religious prejudice.

"Second Moses."

The story of her journeys on the Australian frontier, riding her white horse Captain, leading her armies of immigrants, caught the imagination of England. London Punch called her a "second Moses in bonnet and shawl":

"Who led their expeditions and under whose command Through dangers and through hardships Sought they the Promised Land? A second Moses, surely, it was who did it all. It was. A second Moses in bonnet and in shawl."

Perhaps her greatest and most lasting achievement was the establishment of the dignity of womanhood after the degradation of the convict era. Without rank or wealth, and with very meagre support, she settled some 11,000 women in security and independence; and, from the day she dedicated her "talents to the God that gave them", she steadfastly refused any reward for her work.*

(Footnote: *See "Australia — The Catholic Chapter", by Rev. James G. Murtagh: "The Lady and the Legend.")

A Greatly Honoured Guest.

Caroline Chisholm would have been a greatly honoured guest in the home at Darebin. Her greatest achievements were in the process of development. For the young Mary, then in her early teens, the personality, the burning enthusiasm of the visitor, have made a lasting impression. It is impossible not to come to the conclusion that Caroline Chisholm was an instrument of Divine Providence in the forming of the vocation of the young girl, precisely at the time it must have been stirring in her heart.

There are indications in her life that she had been impressed by the need for the care of the immigrants. In Sydney, she visited the immigrant ships, offered what help she and her Sisters could. Later, at Mackay in Queensland, she taught catechism to the children of the Kanaka workers on the sugar plantations, labourers indentured from the islands of the Pacific. She travelled around in a buggy, collecting the children of immigrants to teach them the truths of their Faith.

The work that the Sisters of St. Joseph are doing today for the migrants, not only for the thousands of migrant children in their city schools, but also in the hostels and holding centres, must be very much in the line of the dreams of their Foundress.

Mother Mary's Death.

The success of her work, the victory over prejudice and misunderstanding, did not bring an end to the suffering of Mother Mary, so well named "of the Cross". The last years of her life were spent in a wheelchair, physically crippled by what would today be diagnosed as a stroke. It is a measure of the striking importance of the work she had begun, the appreciation of it even by secular government, that the New Zealand Railways placed a special train at her disposal on her last visit to the houses in that Dominion.

The end came on 8th August, 1909. Gently Death stole to her bedside as the beloved enemy. An enemy, because death is the ceaseless enemy of every living thing; an enemy, because death would take her away from the day-by-day care of her Sisters. Beloved, because death meant for her the lasting rendezvous with the Christ she had known long since, and loved all the days of her life.

"The Peace Was Always There."

In the Holy Year of 1925, the Superior General of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, Mother Lawrence, with Sister Francis as her companion, came out from Rome to visit the small band of Australian students on vacation at the Villa of the Propaganda Fide at Castel Gandolfo. With maybe a dim sensing that they were touching the gossamer threads of history, the students asked her what was her outstanding memory of Mother Mary of the Cross whom she had known so long and so well. One student of those days remembers well her answer.

"It was," said Mother Lawrence, "her peace... a deep, endless kind of peace that came from far inside. Oh, she was often in pain, often tired; she knew disappointments and worries in plenty. Even in the days of success, every mail brought the small agony of a decision to be made, every visit problems great or small; but the peace was always there. Yes, that is what I remember most: the peace of her; the peace that was always there..."

"Light in the Darkness."

Almost exactly 50 years before, Mother Mary was herself in Rome. As the days and the weeks of waiting lengthened out, she walked in the footsteps of the millions of Christian pilgrims that Rome had known since the days of the apostles Peter and Paul. There was a particular attraction for her,

for these were the places — the churches, the streets, the monuments and the shrines — which had lived so vividly in her imagination since the wide-eyed little Mary MacKillop had listened entranced to her father's stories of his student days in the Scots College on the Via Quattro Fontane. At least once she took the short roadway which winds up to the Capitol from the Forum, to pay a visit to the little chapel which is built over the Mamertine Prison, the grim dungeons of which had been the last address of so many of Rome's more notable enemies. Beneath the chapel is the cell which a thousand and a half years of Christian tradition assigns as the place where Saint Peter wrote his Second Epistle, shortly before his martyrdom. In the gloomy mustiness which even today is the pervading impression of the stark prison, she would have heard the echo of the words of the old man:

“Being assured that the laying away of this my tabernacle is at hand, according as our Lord Jesus Christ also has signified to me.

“And I will endeavour that you frequently have after my decease whereby you may keep a memory of these things.

“For we have not, by following artificial fables, made known to you the power and the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ; but we were eye witnesses of his greatness.

“For he received from God the Father honour and glory: this voice coming down to him from the excellent glory: ‘This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him’. And this we heard brought from heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount. And we have the more firm prophetic word, whereunto you do well to attend, as to a light which shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”

2 Peter, 1:14-19.

He was on Tabor again, with James and John under the morning sun of Galilee, as he had been so often, in vivid and startling memory through almost 40 years. In the Garden of Gethsemane, through prisons and floggings, in poverty and tears and the contempt of the world around him....The darkness fell away, he saw only the shining face of the transfigured Christ; he heard no groans of fellow-prisoners, no rustles of the horde of rats, only the words from Heaven. He felt no leaden weight of impending torture and death in his heart, only the glad surge of “Lord, it is good to be here!” the words that had sprung from his heart “when we were with Him in the holy mount”. That had been his real life through all those 40 years, the bright light which had shone in so many a dark place. For Saint Peter, through the storm of his life and the agony of his death on Vatican Hill, it was a citadel of impregnable peace.

A Touch of the Glory.

And the young Mother Mary understood it so well. For somewhere, sometime, there had been for her a transfiguration of Christ. In Melbourne, in Portland, Penola, Adelaide? God knows. Did it develop gradually in her soul, or was there a dramatic moment, a blinding flash? Once again, only God knows.

But of one thing we may be sure: there was such a transfiguration. Somewhere, sometime, Mary MacKillop was permitted to touch a little of the glory, to know a small part of the wonder that is the glorified Christ. For it is this gift that Christ has in His giving for those He chooses for special service. This was the light which she followed, this was the light “which shone in a dark place”; in

all the dark places of her life. And with the light came peace, that special kind of peace “which passes all understanding”.

A Deep Interior Fortress.

That peace of Christ brings no immunity from suffering, no guarantee against tears and the twisting of the heart, no final victory against the weakness of human nature. Only deep strength it brings with it, the building of a deep interior fortress which no panic may storm, no doubt or opposition may ever really breach. And this peace and its strength Mother Mary needed. She was to know opposition and misunderstanding from those in whom she instinctively had trusted for help and encouragement. She was to know that particular sense of repulsive guilt which only those wrongly accused can ever experience. Poverty was to be a constant companion. It was not the joyful kind of poverty which carries with it the freedom from personal possessions, the total reliance on God's Providence. Poverty for herself would have been so easy to bear, so happy a burden. The poverty she knew was the poverty of all the Sisters under her care, the hoarding of the pennies and the scraps to build the little shacks that were the convents, to keep open the shelters for the orphans and the helpless. Add to all this the long journeys by coach and bullock-wagon and in small ships, the long battles with authority which had to follow such a delicate path: to go forward along the way she knew to be so necessary for the success of the work Christ Our Lord had assigned to her; and, at the same time and so successfully, to preserve the utmost of respect and reverence for the very ones who opposed that progress so vigorously.

Through it all and with it all, deep down her heart was singing, and the refrain of that song were the words of Simon Peter: “Lord, it is good to be here!”

The Day Star Rises.

And even in her lifetime, she was to see “the day star arise”. She lived to see her Sisters busy in the noisy, bustling streets of city suburbs; teaching the children, visiting the homes of the growing industrial jungles of the twentieth century. She saw them spread out through the quiet country towns to the places that nudge the edge of the Never-Never; to Jindabyne and Adaminaby and Nimmitabel and the country where the Man from the Snowy River rode through the pages of Banjo Patterson. The brown line of them was stretched taut across the whole continent from Kalgoorlie and Kelleberrin, Boulder and Southern Cross in the West to Texas and Taroom, Diranbandi and Crow's Nest in Queensland. Sometimes they were housed in places that looked something like convents. More often their homes were tiny cottages, poor outside and in, housing sometimes three, far more frequently just two Sisters. Their acceptance of the vocation that Christ had given them brought no exemptions from the loneliness of isolation, from the sand and the flies and the heat. It brought with it no guarantee of Mass and the Sacraments, no surety that it might not be months on end before they could count on the visit of a priest.

Poor in the material things, maybe sometimes poorer still in the externals of the Faith, the young girls who had come so joyfully from the cities and the towns grew old fast; but their spirit was forever young. Deep in their eyes was the reflection of the light that Mother Mary had known in all the dark places; away down where only God can hear the murmuring of the heart, there was the song: “Lord, it is good for us to be here!”

“Land of the Long White Cloud.”

Across the Tasman, the names Mother Mary wrote on her letters, the addresses she searched for on her visits sang a different song: set to the music of the Maoris "Land of the Long White Cloud". Remuera and Matata were founded in the 19th century; Paeroa, Rotorua, Whangarei in the early years of the 1900's; in the South, Port Chalmers, Waimate and Temuka were flourishing before the turn of the century. The Sisters were settled in Temuka for four years before the Diocese (Christchurch), in which it is situated, was founded. It is as good a yardstick as any to measure the growth of the work that Mother Mary did for her Master to reflect that the foundation at Temuka in New Zealand's South Island took place just 17 years after the beginning in the stable at Penola; only eight years after her return from Rome....

Wherever they went, whatever the work they found waiting to be done, the daughters of Mother Mary carried the same whispered offering to Christ in their hearts; a whisper that was the long echo of the words of Ruth to Naomi: "Wherever You go I shall go. Your people will be my people... wherever You dwell there will I pitch my tent. Where You die, there also shall I die, and there will I be buried... and I pray that nothing in life or in death may ever separate me from You....

Pride and Confidence.

Australians are proud of Mother Mary of the Cross, all Australians. But there is a large segment of them who have a particular pride in her memory. They number not only the thousands of Sisters who live under the Rule she gave them; but the hundreds of thousands of other Australians whose lives have been significantly formed by what the Sisters of St. Joseph meant to them in their early youth.

They are an extraordinary cross-section of Australia's people: Young men and young women and grandparents and great-grandparents; husbands and wives and sons and daughters, the poor and the not-so-poor. Some of them found in the Sisters of the foundling homes and the orphanages loving substitutes for the mothers and fathers they were never to know. Others came to the Sisters as scruffy young ruffians from city slums, or as shy little colts from the spinifex and the saltbush. For thousands of them the first real vision of what they could learn, of the opportunities that life held for them came from the gentle voice, the firm dedication of a nun in a brown habit. Above all, they learned how to make Christ Our Lord part of their lives, to translate Him from the prayers they had learned at the bedside into a meaning for all their years on earth.

A cross-section they are: plumbers and carpenters and bishops and milkmen; professors and dustmen and politicians and doctors and lawyers; publicans and priests and nurses and missionaries and actors and singers... so many vocations, so many ways of serving God. And all of these vocations owe something, little or very much indeed, to the work begun by Mother Mary MacKillop.

They are proud of Mother Mary; proud, and confident, too. Confident that the work which she began will continue, no matter what may be the present difficulties or the fears for the future. Confident, too, that in these lands of the Southern Cross, in which and through the love of which she expressed so eloquently her love of God, her name will always be a blessing, the memory of her in lasting peace.

PART II.

THE SPIRIT OF MOTHER MARY OF THE CROSS.

“God’s Will, the End of Life,” is the title of one of the most beautiful sermons of Cardinal [Blessed John Henry] Newman. As we seek for the dominating virtue of Mother Mary, we find immediately that the beacon of her life was the Will of God, that everything she did or said (and we might justly include everything she purposed, even in thought), was, under the directing force of God’s Will, revealed to Her in life’s happenings and in the ordinances of her lawful superiors. The Divine Master Himself thought it well to emphasize His own complete subservience to His Father’s Will: “Whatever is pleasing to my Father, that I do always.” (St John 8:29.) In proportion as we keep unswervingly to this attitude of mind, to this directing of our wills, so do we approximate to the command: “Be you all perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” (St. Matthew 5:48.)

An old Sister of St Joseph, who shared Mother Mary’s sorrows and trials, writes: “It seems to me that Mother Mary’s life, from the beginning of the Institute until her end, was one long martyrdom. Her endurance, both physical and mental, was very great. She was often treated unjustly, persecuted, and had to endure calumny and humiliations. This coming from those she loved made her feel it the more keenly. One time Mother Mary said: “When I am gone, our Congregation will flourish. I have made the way smooth for those who will come after me. I have had uphill work; but my sweet Jesus knew what was best for me, and I thank him for giving me something to suffer for His sake.”

Firm in Her Resolve.

Thus, early in religious life – when she was barely 24 – Mary set before herself the fulfillment of God’s Will as the only motive that swayed her; and to the end she never faltered in her resolve to be guided ever by God’s Will. Thus, we find that, when she was fighting the battle to keep the schools free from Government help and interference, she wrote: “We know that He (God) will make His will known to His faithful servants who are troubled on your account, and perhaps, scandalized at what they do not understand of our spirit.”

At the time, many of the influential among the clergy objected to her refusing Government help, as Catholic resources were so meager. She was convinced that it was God’s Will that she should refuse Government help, that her teachers might be free to instruct the children in their Faith in a more complete way than the conditions of the Government help allowed.

That she was merely seeking to know God’s will is clear, from her accepting, without demur, the changes made at Rome in the original Constitutions touching on this very question of poverty.

Her circular letters are full of this seeking of the Will of God – indeed, we may safely claim that it is the keynote to all of them. It was usually expressed in this form: “May God’s Holy Spirit direct all: that a pure intention of seeking His Glory in doing His Will may guide all – we must pray most earnestly.”

God’s Will.

Often does the fulfilling of God’s Will demand real heroism of her: “I do indeed feel,” she writes, “such a grateful love of God when He denies me my natural desires – even when they sometimes seem best... I do so long to love God, and be grateful to Him when He denies me anything I expect.” In another letter, we find: “At Mass, Communion prayers, and any duty I am engaged in, I can think of nothing but giving myself with my whole heart to the Will of God... and giving myself thus takes from me the power of even in the smallest thing repining at what He sends to myself or to those I love... I am willing to be in darkness or suspense all my life, and to suffer eternal darkness in

the next, provided I hate not my God there as well as serve Him so coldly here – anything, so long as the Will of God be done in me and in all my creatures... It is only my own faults, my old coldness, that keep me back from Him, and yet, were the choice left to me, and I knew it to be His Will, I could ask Him to let me serve Him thus, as no other suffering could be suffering to me with His Holy Will.”

When the news of the Holy Father’s troubles of 1870 reached Adelaide, Mother Mary exclaimed: “The Will of God is at work there too... God will be glorified.” When in 1871, she met with the outstanding cross of her own life, [Bishop Sheil’s hasty and ill-considered excommunication order,] she could write: “I do not know how to describe the feeling, but I was intensely happy, and felt nearer to God than I had ever felt before. The sensation of the calm, beautiful presence of God I shall never forget.” In 1872, after the death of Bishop Sheil [and his lifting of the excommunication], there were many sad happenings for the Church in South Australia. Mother Mary, in writing to Father Woods, said: “May God’s Holy ends be worked out in all these sad things.” Of herself, she writes later in the same year: “Our good God sees that I must not have comfort, at least, not much, from those I know he loves; so I must go on praying that He may do what he pleases with me, and give me true comfort only in Himself in Heaven, and in His Will on earth.”

An old-Sister quotes from notes of Mother Mary’s spiritual conferences: “We have no will of our own, but must do and follow the path which is traced out for us... so God’s Holy Will, more of the Cross, and a long, weary life and rest only when he will go to Him.” When worried and anxious, in 1877, she wrote: “Let us do the Will of Him we love, and not by one wilful sigh wish for life or death, but as He pleases; so that no shadow of earthly will or self remain in hearts chosen by the God of Love for Himself.”

Trust in God.

“Don’t be troubled about the future of the Institute; I am not. He Whose work it is will take care of it.” How this reflects those beautiful words of Holy Writ: “Cast your care upon the Lord, for He has care of you.” (Ps. 54:23) “Let us all resign ourselves into His hands, and pray that in all things He may guide us to do His Holy Will... When thoughts of this or that come I turn to Him and say: ‘Only what you will, my God. Use me as You will’.”

We have quoted enough from Mother Mary’s writings to show that, in all life’s happenings, she placed herself entirely and exclusively in God’s hands. Sorrows and trials in abundance were her lot; yet she saw in them the shadow of God’s hands, lifted in blessing.

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES – FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY.

The Church looks especially to the theological virtues in the soul of one for whom we may, with every deference to the supreme authority of the Church, claim special holiness. Hence, we proceed to deal with these as revealed in Mother Mary, though they are really essential elements in all virtues and are thus shown throughout every phase of Mother Mary’s life.

Her Great Faith.

Faith involves seeing God’s hand in everything that happens. This was Mother Mary’s invariable habit of mind, arising from her deep conviction that God is over all. Thus she writes from Sydney in 1883, whither she was compelled to go, far from her beloved daughters in Adelaide, under a cloud, which was as heavy and distressing as it was undeserved: “We have much sorrow and are still

suffering but sorrow or trial lovingly submitted to does not prevent our being happy; it rather purifies our happiness, and in doing so draws our hearts nearer to God. That such may be the same with all of us, my dear Sisters, I earnestly pray. I think we can all honestly admit that we wanted some external cross to make us among ourselves what true Sisters of St. Joseph and humble spouses of a suffering and most charitable God should be.”

“You must know, dear ones, how often Charity was thoughtlessly wounded, how often deviations from obedience in little matters were made, how often criticism and murmuring were indulged in. These and similar faults had to be corrected, and our good God has chosen His own way. It is but right that He should let the heaviest part of the Cross fall upon your Mother, who was so little able to be to you what the Mother-General of such an Institute should be. I am glad that it should be so, and oh, my dearly-loved Sisters, listen to me now, and if you do what I ask you, you will indeed be happy, and my sorrow shall not have been in vain.”

Yet, as must be expected, she at times had to make heroic efforts to bear patiently the heavy crosses which, as Mother Mary of the Cross, she was to have all her life. An old Sister said: “Mother sometimes would be in a state of depression (desolation of spirit is frequent with holy souls). I would ask her to tell me what was troubling her. On one of these occasions, she said: ‘Alas, I see that I have not made the best use of the means so lovingly placed at my disposal. Too sadly forgetful of the end of my creation, I have turned God’s gifts against Himself by my impatience under trial, my not recognizing His Will on every occasion, my disturbance of heart when those I loved seemed to turn against me’.”

Her Virtue of Hope.

It is almost needless to make of this a separate heading, as her whole life was saturated with this theological virtue. The many difficulties which she faced courageously throughout her whole life; the insistent references of the solution to them to the God Whose interests alone she had at heart; her prayers to Him, which breathed confidence in His help and guidance: all bespeak the possession of the supernatural habit of hope in a marked degree. “One of the most remarkable features in the character of Mother Mary was her self-control under all circumstances. Despite the trials of government, poverty, debt, persecution, she was always uncomplaining, even-tempered, and approachable. It was so much easier to admire these virtues than to explain them with justice.” So writes one who knew her well. We can surely explain them as being the obvious possessions of one who was grounded solidly in the theological virtues of Faith, and Hope and Charity.

To a Sister who was lacking in courage she writes: “Oh, do have more courage under your little disappointments and trials; they are intended by your Divine Spouse to do your soul much good and lead you closer to Him... I know that out of all our hearts’ troubles He will bring glory to Himself.” And again: “God is all-powerful, and can do all things, but of ourselves we can never be sure of that all which looks good is really so...” “We are in the hands of the Holy See. Let’s all remember this and let none be afraid.” Thus she writes from Rome in 1874, while waiting for the decision on the rule.

Writing to Bishop Reynolds, Cardinal Simeoni, the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, said: “Sister Mary conducted herself in Rome in such a manner as plainly to confirm the high opinion you expressed to us of her virtue.” And as that meant Mother Mary had complete trust in Christ’s Vicar, it again reveals how she had made her own the great virtue of hope in God.

Her Charity.

True charity includes the love of God and the love of one's neighbour. Mother Mary's whole life was inspired, directed and controlled by the love of God. Her prayers, her writings, her advice to others are full of charity. Archbishop Vaughan dwelt especially on the charity of Christ in them, which found a way to meet the wants of the scattered population of the Australian bush, as it did to meet every want of suffering humanity, spiritual or temporal, as that want happened to arise.

An old Sister who knew her well said: "From the first I met Mother Mary, she greatly impressed me, for her manner was most lovable and courteous... No matter how busy she was, she always found time to comfort all who came to her in difficulties and distress. Her love of the poor, especially poor children, was wonderful... When on visitation she found some Sisters badly off, sometimes bearing cold and hunger, the rain pouring into some of the rooms, Mother said: "Sisters, here I find you very good and happy, generously bearing your privations with a spirit of contentment.' But Mother quickly had things made more comfortable for them."

Another tells that Mother Mary's charity was in word and work right throughout her life. "I never knew her to be aware of trouble or distress that she did not make an effort to her relieve. Never did I hear her speak of or refer to the good that she had done for another; she did it solely for God. Mother's spirit was always to give place and preference to other Religious Orders, and this she embodied in her rule.

"When the Dominican Nuns came to Adelaide, she went to the Vicar-General and offered our convent in Franklin Street to them, while she went to reside in a little cottage in Gouger Street. And when the Sisters of Mercy came, Mother took them round our schools and offered any one of them to the new Order. They took the Russell Street School. Also Mother cheerfully gave the convent and school at Gawler to the Sisters of the Good Samaritan."

Another of the companions wrote: "Mother was always very charitable to her Sisters in hours of trial, as well as to outsiders. Sister Ita's mother was dying. Mother sent Sister Ita to look after her and to do whatever was necessary for her... I was sent as a companion, and we stayed a week, as long as we were needed... In the Mother House she was always most attentive to the sick; she would sit with them and help them in every way, besides doing whatever was necessary.

"I knew of some instances where Sisters laid aside their habits, through stress of trial or because of weak virtue and afterwards repented and applied to be received back into the Institute. If they had given no scandal by their defection, Mother Mary would receive them back with the consent of the Ordinary."

This same writer gives other instances like this one. No one can doubt that it was a great charity of Mother Mary to forgive such lapses, and to do all in her power to pour balm upon the wounds of the repentant ones. In this, she surely shows that the love of God and of her neighbour was the directing influence of her life.

HER SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

Mother Mary, who was so definitely the spiritual pupil of Father Woods, could scarcely avoid being a soul whose very life was that of prayer. One had but to glance through her spiritual writings to see that union with God in prayer is the keynote of them, just as the colourful sermons and spiritual exhortations of Father Woods reflect a soul soaked in prayer. That Mother Mary invariably was strengthened for her many staggering trials by God's grace, acquired in prayer, is abundantly evident. When word reached her that her mother had been drowned in the wreck of the Ly-ee-

Moon, she immediately went to the Oratory and remained two hours before the Blessed Sacrament. Father O'Neill writes: "Mother Mary's love of prayer, her spirit of recollection, is praised by those that associated with her. Many have told us of her adoration occasions like the Holy Thursday Exposition as resembling ecstasy; her face seemed to beam with an unearthly light, her soul to have lost all consciousness of earthly surroundings."

It is in the colloquies, running like a golden thread through her book of meditations, that we get a glimpse at the richness of her union with God and her spirit of prayer. Thus, in the "Agony in the Garden", she cried out: "Still, prostrate in spirit, my soul, promising the agonizing Saviour, in this hour of lonely sorrow, that thou wilt try, with His Holy Grace, closely to imitate this holy resignation... My loving Redeemer, yes, I will, with Thy Holy Grace, at last to be true to Thee. I will no more cause Thee to suffer as I have done, and, O my Jesus, I will not sleep on in cruel forgetfulness of Thy deep, deep love for me and for the souls of men. I will now rouse myself, and in Thy Holy Name and that of Thy sweet Mother, try to lead all hearts to arise from the sleep of sin and watch for the love of Thee." This prayer is a consequence of the meditation on the Apostles sleeping when Our Lord was in His agony.

She reaches sublime heights in the meditations on the Crucifixion: "O mother of matchless love, and sweet Queen of Martyrs, look now with pity upon my sorrowing heart... My heart is weary, and the sight of the injuries I have done to my God and to Thee would fill me with despair, but that I know thee to be a Mother, of compassion and pity... Oh, my crucified God, behold me, the guilty cause of Thy most cruel death, oh, behold me now in true contrition of heart at the foot of Thy cross. See beneath thy mantle of compassion and love and tell my Jesus that no more will I cause him to suffer for my sins. I will hate and avoid them. I will mourn with thee, my Mother, over the wrongs they caused my Jesus; I will, indeed, love him now, and will show my love for Him by the undying confidence with which I will cling to thee, the sorrowing Mother of my crucified God."

Clearly, a soul which could express itself so sublimely is a soul, immersed in God, living a life of prayer. She learnt well, from her director, Father Woods, to love Mary with an ardent love: "Mother, sweet Mother, oh, let us not ask in vain. We are thy children; we are in danger, weak, and ready to fall. We hold out our hands to thee. Oh, Mother, sweet Mother, forgiving, gentle Mother, thanks. We are in thine arms. Bless us, keep us there."

Devotion to St Joseph.

She shows all the feeling of her heart in addressing her beloved patron, St Joseph: "God had chosen us to be placed in this Institute under the fostering care of His own dear Foster-Father. Ah, glorious saint, we are indeed favoured, and we have always been favoured. Even when many among us were almost strangers to my name, how little we thought that thou wert, with all a tender father's love, assisting the angels who had the charge of us, and obtaining those graces for us which at last brought us safely into religion. Ah, what storms and dangers hast thou not, by thy constancy of heart, guided us through; and now that thou seest us here together, dost thou think that thy work is finished, and are we to believe that thou hast no more to do with us? Ah, no, most glorious Father; thou art still our father, and thy love for us, thy poor, helpless children, is greater than ever... We, in our turn, have thee as our guide and example in the pursuit of perfection. Thy humble and hidden life must be our model. We have to make ourselves perfect children of so perfect a Father, and we can do this only in imitating thy rare and hidden virtues."

A Friend's Impression.

Father Francis Clune, C.P., told the writer that he learnt to know the spiritual life of Mother Mary well in the early years of this [20th] century. He assured us that, in his opinion, she had reached a high degree of sanctity. Never had he met a soul more solidly grounded in the love of God, or more Christ-like. Nothing seemed ever to disturb her calm. The most appalling happenings in no way shook her absolute conviction that all was for the best, as God ruled everything. Her confidence in prayer was a revelation. He knew her to spend six hours before the Blessed Sacrament after a particularly heavy cross came her way. She emerged from her long vigil before her Sacramental Lord in almost a cheerful frame of mind. She had so schooled herself trust in God's loving care that she marveled that anyone could do otherwise. This gave her a remarkable stability and equability of temperament. Her life was ruled ever by the highest supernatural principles. When paralysed, she sometimes could not help dissolving in tears. Though she could not help it, and this weakness could in no sense be attributed to her conscious loss of control, she yet feared that the Sisters seeing her thus afflicted might be disedified. 'She, the Mother Foundress, should give a better example'."

Father Clune said that we must not omit to record her keen sense of humour. She was a genuine troubadour of the Lord, scattering joy whenever she went. Many is the time she cheered up despondent Sisters. In this, she imitated St. Ignatius Loyola, who once danced Spanish dances to drive away gloom from a despondent religious. This joy in the Lord is what St. Paul demanded: "Rejoice in the Lord always." It is a sure sign that the joyous soul has cast all his care upon the Lord, Who has care of him.

United with God.

The colloquies in meditation came naturally to this holy soul, and this is a sure sign that a soul thus favoured is closely knit to God. One would seek far before finding a prayer richer in theological truth and more indicative of union with God than her meditation on the Three Classes of Men. Passing to the Three Degrees of Humility of the Ignatian Exercises, she shows that she has, with God's grace, reached the sublimest of them – the third degree.

"With this sweet exercise I had already determined to die rather than ever willingly offend God in any known matter, whether mortal or venial. But now I must not stop there. My Jesus wants more, and I have already determined, with the help of His grace; to give Him a perfect service, as perfect as my weakness and misery will allow. Thanks to Thy sweet love, for the grace also I desire, I long to come as near to Thee as I can. I feel ashamed of leading an easy, petted life. Thine was one of humiliation and self-denial. I long to share Thy sufferings, Thy humiliations. And, if it pleases Thee, I long to be despised by all the world for Thy sake. If Thou shouldst so favour me as to bring me nearer to Thee in sorrow and humiliation, I trust that, though nature may be tempted to rebel, Thy grace will prove stronger, and as it is in it that I put my trust, I fearlessly ask Thee again, my Jesus, to do with me what Thou pleasest. And I earnestly entreat my Immaculate Mother and dear Father St Joseph to plead for me that my past infidelities may not now deprive me of the joy and happiness of suffering as Thou, my Jesus, pleasest, through whom, and by what means, and under what circumstances, I care not. I make no conditions, I have no known reserves. If my heart should fail, if loved ones should turn against me, or if I have the pain of causing them sorrow, what matter, my Jesus, so there be no sin, and that we all, though, perhaps, working differently, seek Thee only, Thy Will and Thy good pleasure."

Her Spiritual Life, Revealed in Retreats.

Perhaps we shall more surely grasp Mother Mary's spiritual life from the retreat notes lovingly preserved by one of her early companions, still living in 1936 when they were passed to the archives. Mother always began her meditations or examinations with: "May Jesus and Mary be praised! Let us place ourselves in the presence of our God, of Our God who created us, Our God Who redeemed us, Our God Who sanctified us. Let us bring to this great God all the powers of our minds, our memory, our understanding, our will. Let us humble ourselves before our God, in Whose presence we are not worthy to appear, our Great Creator. We dare not, of ourselves, so much as approach Thee, but, confiding in the merits of our Redeemer, we come to tell Thee that we wish to love Thee, that we wish to please and glorify Thee; we wish to serve Thee faithfully. But in order to do this, we desire to know ourselves, our complete nothingness, our entire dependence on Thee as our first beginning and our last end..."

"O Jesus, Our Divine Model, now our Spouse, one day to be our Most Just Judge, may we never again willingly offend or disappoint Thy Sacred Heart in word, deed, or thought. Divine Spirit of Wisdom and Goodness, deign, I beseech Thee, to enlighten my mind, penetrate its blindness, guard it against the first, the faintest approach to anything sinful, to anything that can lessen its life of grace..."

"O Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Blessed and Undivided Trinity, make me in all things what a child of the Institute and a Servant of the Cross ought to be."

"Mary, my Heavenly Mother, Mother of my Divine Spouse, Jesus, I kneel in spirit at thy feet, and entreat Thee to plead for me, that I may so act as to please thy Divine Son, and to merit His blessing and fresh grace. St Joseph, my loved patron, plead for me too. Sweet patron of the hidden life, obtain for me that I may walk in thy footsteps. Dear Angel, my faithful guide, point out to me my many faults, keep ever at my side."

Resignation to God's Will.

There are revealed the highest aspirations after sanctity in prayers like this: "I resolve, with the help of thy grace, to die any kind of death, or to suffer any kind of pain, either of mind or body, or any other affliction that can befall me, sooner than for one moment commit a deliberate and known sin against God's love, and the claims He has upon my duty and service. Hitherto I have sadly forgotten my great end, and allowed myself to go on in false security. Now I, with the Prodigal, will arise from my sluggishness; I will come back to Thee, my Eternal Father, restored to Thy love and friendship. I will seek, in the merits of my Saviour's Passion, full pardon for the past, and such graces as Thou seest necessary for my fidelity in the future, and together with this fidelity, my advancement in the path Thou hast traced out for me."

"I will not shrink from any cross or trial, but rather follow Him as closely as possible in the daily and hourly discharge of every duty of my state. If, now and then, some little sacrifice to nature is required, Oh then, my God, let me look up to Thee, and let my faint heart take courage. Let me not prove a coward in Thy service. Let me love to be humiliated and persecuted, and this that I may, during the remainder of this short life, remain as near to Thee, my Jesus, in the thickest of the strife, as in Thy Divine Wisdom Thou art pleased to permit."

Help with God's Grace.

Her realization that God's grace would enable her to triumph over human weakness runs like a theme throughout her prayers at time of retreat. In this, she has learnt from St Paul: "I can do all

things in Him who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4:13.) “In my present position I am bound to guard Thy interests faithfully (she was then Mother-General), not only to follow Thee myself, but also to help bring all I can to Thee. Cost weak nature it will, I must be faithful to Thee, my Divine Master; but I must watch Thee well, and regulate my conduct by Thine. Help my weakness, O my Jesus. Help me, my sweet Jesus, with Thy grace, that I may be faithful in the hour of trial. Whatever crosses, trials, or contradictions await me, whatever humiliations or contempt, all are alike when, with the help of Thy grace, they will, I trust, all lead me nearer to Thee.”

Her striving after holiness is shown by such prayers as the following: “I shall not give Thee desires only, my Jesus; neither shall I give myself conditionally to Thee. With all my heart I give myself entirely and without any known reserve unto Thee and thy sweet service.”

“Not only do I wish to save my soul, but, if it be Thy Will, I wish to sanctify it, and this by any means Thou choosest to adopt for me. I have no wish other than to do those things and to follow the path, however rugged, Thou tracest out for me. Be thou my soul’s Physician. Cut, probe, treat me as Thou plearest. Not trusting in my own strength, not in my present resolution, but in Thy grace, do I make this offering. Dear Jesus, Thou hast every right to my perfect service. I deem it an honour above all honours to leave myself in Thy hands. And I confidently trust Thee for grace to be faithful.

Her Obedience to the Pope.

Mother Mary instinctively looked to the Father of Christendom for light and guidance in her work. With her, a descendant of Highlanders, who had suffered for the Faith, and for their loyalty to the Vicar of Christ, the old slogan (“Roma locuta est, causa finita est” (“Rome has spoken, the case is finished”), was paramount.

In 1873, she undertook the long wearisome pilgrimage to the centre of Christendom, humbly to ask Christ’s Vicar for approval or disapproval of her work. She wrote to her mother: “I go in the discharge of a most sacred and important duty, and have much more to give me courage in this than I can tell you. I am not afraid of the difficulties; they rather make my courage rise. I shall be strengthened, too, by the prayers of my dear Sisters, and of many holy priests.”

(She invariably put her trust in prayer – indeed, her whole life was one round of prayer, confident, as she was, that Our Lord’s promise, “Ask and you shall receive”, would be fulfilled.)

From Rome, she wrote: “I had not a friend here when I left Adelaide... I knew that our dear Lord would not let his work want a friend to advance His interests here, but Monsignor Kirby (Rector of the Irish College) is more than I dared expect. Cardinal Barnabo enquired minutely into many things connected with my voyage, spoke of my title ‘of the Cross’ and of its signification, and altogether, warmly encouraged me. He said that he was much pleased with our struggles, that we had struggled for things of which he highly approved... On Sunday, the Feast of Pentecost, I had the happiness of seeing the Holy Father (Pius IX) and of obtaining a warm blessing from him for myself and my dear Sisters... He let me see that the Pope had a father’s heart, and when he laid his loved hand upon my head, I felt more than I will attempt to say.”

Rome’s Decision.

She had to remain in Europe for nearly a year before Rome’s decision was made known to her. There was a serene patience about her waiting which arose from her perfect confidence in the Holy Father’s judgment, which, as she knew, would be the expression of God’s Will. Had she been

moved by any motive less spiritual, she would most assuredly have shown it in her correspondence at the time. There is not the slightest hint of anxiety or impatience. Clearly this complete casting of her care upon God, Who had care of her and her Sisters, contributed to her peace of mind during those long months of waiting. It was not till April 21, 1874, that she received from Cardinal Franchi, Minister of Propaganda, the following letter:

“Reverend Mother, - I forward to your maternity the plan of the new rules to be adopted by your Institute, according to the judgment of the learned Consultor of this Sacred Congregation, to whom was committed the examination of those Rules which you forwarded to me. In truth, the former rules, not having being in accordance with the end which the Sisters of St. Joseph have in view, could not have been approved by the Holy See... In the meantime, I cannot abstain from praising the Sisters of St. Joseph for the good they hope to do in Australia, and for what they have already done in that great Colony.”

What is to be noted for our purpose is this: Mother Mary not only submitted joyfully to the radical changes in the old rule, made by Rome, but hurried to communicate what she called her good news to many Australian friends, whose feelings, as she trusted, would be in complete consonance with her own. Father O'Neill expressed the situation well when he wrote: “Mary had come to Rome to obtain the approval, as far as Rome saw good, of those old Constitutions. She had not been consulted as to the alteration of any of them. She awaited, from the hand of God, whatever Pontifical authority should determine respecting herself and her Institute. Now that an approval, together with serious alterations, had come, she welcomed the whole with abounding joy. She saw the young Institute blessed solemnly by the hand of the Church, and in a manner provisioned for a voyage through the centuries to come upon the waves of the world.”

Further Difficulties.

Fortified by this approval of Rome, Mother Mary was to pursue her troubled way with unswerving confidence. Every new Religious Order must face difficulties. Hers were to be especially severe. Old friends, who had inspired and encouraged her, fell away, because the new rules did not meet with their approval; but they did meet with the approval of the Holy Father, and that was the only approval she appreciated. “Well dear Sisters,” she wrote, “you find many changes; a new rule, in fact, drawn up... We know, and fondly believe, that God inspired the idea of the Institute. He did this as he does also every good and holy thought which comes into our minds. But it does not follow that one’s own peculiar ideas do not become mixed up with what is purely God’s in the way of carrying a thing out. How many instances have we not had among ourselves and those dear to us of such a mistake being made! God is all-powerful and can do all things, but of ourselves we can never be sure that all which looks good is really so. We can never pronounce, with a certainty of being right; but when we submit our difficulty to the Holy See, we may be sure that we are right in following its light in the matter rather than our own, or that of anyone dear to us.”

Loyalty to the Holy Father.

Her love of the Holy Father was shown later, when the troubles in Rome were causing him grief and anxiety. She wrote thus to Monsignor Kirby: “I wish to express to you our very great sorrow at the continued troubles of our Holy Father. The saintly Pontiff is an object of admiration and astonishment even to his enemies. Oh, how I longed to give him some expression of the sorrow and love of this Institute! May I dare ask, kneeling in spirit at his venerated feet, for one more blessing from him for myself and Sisters? We have arranged to have a novena in all our convents and

schools before the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, and this for our Holy Father's intention at that time."

Mother Mary received from Dr Grant, at the close of June, 1877, a letter which gave her great joy: "Now... I have only one thing to say, namely, that your conduct is thoroughly approved at Rome. Cardinal Franchi, who received your letter, has charged me to answer for him, and to say from him that what you are doing is well done, and that you shall have his support and encouragement in carrying out plans as to your Order, they being quite in conformity with what he thinks just and right, and for the best in all the circumstances."
