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A History of the Brigidine Sisters in Ireland and Australia 1807–1907

A thesis submitted to Trinity College Dublin in fulfilment for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (History)

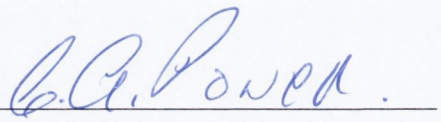
2014

CATHERINE ANN POWER

DECLARATION

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SUMMARY

The Sisters of St Brigid (Brigidines) were founded in Tullow, County Carlow, by Dr Daniel Delany, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin in 1807. These nuns were part of the unusually fast expansion of simple-vowed congregations in nineteenth-century Ireland. This thesis through the use of standard archival and historical research methods has explored the congregation's evolution and development in Ireland and Australasia. It has analysed the Brigidines from their foundation to provide free and fee-paying day and boarding schools and catechetical teaching in Sunday schools to its late achievement of definitive papal approbation in 1907.

Papal approval validated the Brigidines' right as women religious to exercise their authority in relation to internal institute management and their 'evangelical and missionary vision'. The failure to achieve this right left them vulnerable, as research has shown, to the authority, plans and preferences of their diocesan bishops and made them less attractive to potential postulants, a situation recognized as early as 1845. In comparison to similar congregations, the Brigidines' rate of expansion in its first 100 years (the limit of this study) was slow. This thesis has found that there were a number of reasons for this failure to grow more rapidly: the lack of drive and diocesan-limited vision of its founder, the grant of too much financial control to one person, and the procrastination and lack of interest of some bishops in seeking papal approbation.

The study also shows that, unlike the other active female congregations, the institute at its beginning was not founded on members of the Catholic upper-middle class rather its first members were the ordinary women of Tullow and Mountrath, who were coached in the religious practices of convent life by Bishop Delany and Judith Wogan Browne. Given Wogan Browne's privileged family background and education at the Benedictine convent of the Irish Dames of Ypres it is not surprising that Delany chose her to assist him in establishing his religious institute. What is surprising is the extent of the authority and control that he gave to her, both in religious and financial matters. With regards to the latter it was an authority that did not lessen with the passage of time; nor one which the bishops of Kildare and Leighlin challenged. In reference to her religious authority, Wogan Browne's position within the community was an anomalous one, and one which Bishop Doyle did not approve but did nothing about. It was, as historian and Brigidine sister, Dr Mary O'Riordan commented, not only an anomalous one in Brigidine history but in the history of all female congregations. Wogan Browne was very much an integral part of the pioneer community but nevertheless not of it in the sense of consecrated membership.

Brigidine development in Ireland was confined to four convents within the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin: Tullow and Mountrath (both founded by Delany), Abbeyleix (1842) and Goresbridge (1858). There were three attempts to establish the Brigidines outside the diocese in the

1820s: Roscrea, Cashel and Castlecomer. Only Roscrea was successful, however, the community transferred to the French congregation of the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1842.

The Brigidines' first foreign mission was to America (1851–1869). This somewhat 'uncanonical' group led an itinerant life in five different dioceses—Milwaukee, Buffalo, Detroit, St Paul's, Minnesota and Erie. Two disastrous fires in Titusville ended the mission and the sisters were absorbed into other religious communities.

In 1883 the Brigidines commenced their mission to Australasia establishing five convents in New South Wales: Coonamble (1883), Cooma (1887), Cowra (1894), Cundletown (1899) and Randwick, Sydney (1901). In Victoria between 1886 and 1904 they established Echuca and Beechworth (1886), Wangaratta (1887), Ararat (1888), Rochester (1893), Maryborough (1902) and Mentone (1904). Masterton (1898) and Pahiatua (1906) were the first of several Brigidine convents established in New Zealand.

The research for this work necessarily involved a detailed exploration of the life and episcopacy of the founder Bishop Delany. The French educated Delany was part of the institutional renewal and reform of the Irish Catholic church which took place within a Tridentine and neo-Tridentine context as it emerged from the Penal era. The major sources consulted in Ireland were the Brigidine Annals and the Delany correspondence in the dedicated Delany Archives at Carlow College and the Dublin Diocesan Archives. In Australia the research methodology required a gathering and analyses of the relevant data available in the Brigidine archives in Sydney and Melbourne. Diocesan archives holding Brigidine material were visited. The diocesan archives in Sydney, Melbourne, Bathurst and Maitland were researched. The Australian archival material reinforced and gave a further and more complete understanding of the Brigidine material in the Delany archives. Further material was gathered from the Vatican archives and the archives of the University of Notre Dame.

Secondary sources studied included contemporary publications and later books, monographs and articles on the Irish and Australasian Catholic Church covering the period from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The works by Dr Thomas McGrath on Bishop James Doyle and other bishops of Kildare and Leighlin were especially useful.

In nineteenth-century Ireland the Irish female religious congregations developed pari passus with their male contemporaries (such as Delany's foundation the Patricians) and enjoyed unprecedented rates of growth throughout the century. The Brigidines were part of this phenomenon but this study has found that in comparison to similar congregations, the Brigidines' rate of expansion in its first hundred years was, for a number of reasons, not as great as it might otherwise have been.

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I was privileged to be allowed to examine and draw data from the archives of the Brigidine congregation in Ireland and Australia. I would like to thank Brigidine archivists Sisters Mary Dalton (Ireland), Anita Murray and Kathleen Butler (New South Wales), Marie O'Kelly (Victoria) and Mary Teresa Cullen (USA). I am indebted to Sister Anita in Sydney and Provincial Leader Sister Helen Toohey and Sister Margaret Fyfe in Melbourne for spoiling and cosseting me with bed and board.

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The encouragement I received in the pursuit of my studies from An tAthair Caoimhin Ó Neill, President of Carlow College and from an tAthair Conn Ó Maoldomnaigh will never be forgotten. There are also many other friends and colleagues too numerous to mention but to whom I am most grateful for their encouragement.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIr	Anglo-Irish
AMEB	Australian Music Examinations Board
Archiv Hib	*Archivium Hibernicum*: or *Irish Historical Records* (Maynooth, 1912–)
BA	Brigidine Additional Collection
BC	Brigidine Congregation
BDA	Bathurst Diocesan Archives
BGA	Brigidine Generalate Archives
BP	Bishops Papers
BPA	Brigidine Provincial Archives,
CEO	Catholic Education Office (Sydney)
DA	Delany Archives
DDA	Dublin Diocesan Archives
HCM	House Council Meetings
IER	*Irish Ecclesiastical Record*
JL	Bishop James Lynch
MDA	Maitland Diocesan Archives
NAI	National Archives Ireland
NLI	National Library Ireland
NSW	New South Wales
RAM	Royal Academy of Music
RCM	Royal College of Music
SAA	Sydney Archdiocesan Archives
SOCG	*Scritture Originali riferite nei Congressi Generali*
TL	Translated Letters
UCDA	University College Dublin Archives
VIC	Victoria
Wang	Wangaratta

INTRODUCTION

'Intense summer heat reaching 122°F in the shade', 'violent dust clouds like moving walls', droughts and floods of 'seething creeks' were apt descriptors for the hostile environment faced by a group of Sisters of St Brigid (the Brigidines) in their 'apostolic outreach' to the 'squatocracy' and settler children of Coonamble, New South Wales. This mission to the 'end of the world' heralded a new direction for this small, relatively unknown and enclosed religious congregation as it struggled to forge a new identity for itself from diocesan bound congregation to one of centralized government with its own mother general.

Although long considered part of the force for change in Catholic education in Ireland and Australasia during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the 'personable and capable' Brigidines have been largely overlooked by commentators. Yet their struggles, hardship, courage, resourcefulness, tenacity and the contribution they made to the Church and to Catholic education are no less interesting than the other larger Irish female congregations.

Today the 'longing to know our origins', what Thomas Hardy calls 'the family face', is as true of institutions as it is of individuals.[1] However, uncovering the 'family face' of the Brigidine sisters is limited by the fact that, like other congregations, they did not consider their experience sufficiently worthy to record in any detail or, as Lavinia Byrne proposes, 'they kept silent out of a warped desire to avoid vainglory'.[2] While the Brigidines' development in Ireland took place alongside the growth of the national school system (as did that of the Presentation and Mercy sisters) by 1860 there were only four Brigidine convents with a community membership of sixty-seven. In 1873 they numbered only eighty-seven. By comparison, the Mercy sisters numbered 3,000 worldwide and by the beginning of the twentieth century, they numbered 8,000. The census figures for 1901 show that while there were 8,031 nuns in Ireland in 1900 the Brigidines, with 80, were only 1 per cent of the female religious population. Indeed, the Brigidines were so invisible that in 1825 they are not mentioned in the first report of the

[1] Anita Murray quoted in Janice Garaty, *Providence Provides* (Sydney, 2013), p.vi.
[2] Lavinia Byrne, *Woman at the Altar: The Ordination of Women in the Roman Catholic Church* (London, 1994), p.48.

Commission of Education (1825) neither were they visible by 1865 since they were not mentioned in Dominic Murphy's *Sketches of Irish Nunneries.*[3] This lack of recognition is also apparent in the twenty-first century where the Brigidines are not identified in Susan O'Brien's essay on 'Roman Catholic Women's Congregations in Great Britain and Ireland'.[4]

Given the rapid expansion of female religious congregations during the nineteenth century, the question arises as to why their growth was so slow (only 508 sisters in 100 years: 345 in Ireland, 61 in New South Wales and 102 in Victoria). In twenty-four years almost half the number of subjects entered the colonial convents as had entered the Irish convents in 100 years. Although limited by the 'self-effacing' and possible 'laundering' of their annals and the paucity of original Brigidine material, it is the aim of this thesis to advance the current state of knowledge of the Brigidines by examining its evolution in Ireland and its development in Australasia and determine why such a worthy congregation failed to expand at the same rate as similar congregations founded at the same time.

Not only was the congregation largely overlooked by commentators, so too was its founder Daniel Delany, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin (1787–1814). It is a concern of this thesis to throw some light on his life and episcopacy. Overshadowed by a later successor, Bishop James Doyle (1819–34), justifiably so in the eyes of William J. Fitzpatrick an early biographer of Doyle, nevertheless, Delany was an agent for religious change through his establishment of confraternities, two religious congregations (the Brigidine sisters and the Patrician brothers) as well as being co-founder of Carlow College. Indeed, the college is, in some eyes, his only and real achievement. Little is generally known about Delany, perhaps because few events exercised him enough to put pen to paper such that, even in Rome, 'his name was unknown'.[5] More probably, as

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[3] *Commission on Education in Ireland* First Report 370–9415 C20F 1825, p.87 in Máire M. Kealy, *Dominican Education in Ireland, 1820–1930* (Dublin, 2007), p.29; Dominic Murphy, *Sketches of Irish Nunneries* (Cork, 1865).

[4] Susan O'Brien, 'A survey of Research and Writing about Roman Catholic Women's Congregations in Great Britain & Ireland' in Jan De Maeyer, Sofie Leplae & Joachim Schmiedl (eds) *Religious Institutes in Western Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Leuven, Belgium, 2004), 91–116, p. 109.

[5] Bishop Daniel Delany to Edward Hay, Tullow, 25 Sept. 1809, in Dublin Diocesan Archives (DDA, Catholic Board Papers, 390/1/xii/33.

McGrath contends, 'his pastoral horizons at times [as will be seen] did not seem to extend beyond his mensal parishes of Tullow and Mountrath' and to which he limited his Brigidine and Patrician congregations.[6]

The literature on the subject of Irish and Australian female religious congregations, though extensive, has tended to take a general view of these congregations. This thesis, however, aims to give a 'family face' to the hitherto overlooked Brigidines by examining 'the small struggles which never made it onto paper' of an active religious congregation in 'one of the largest and most powerful male-dominated organisations of all time, the Roman Catholic Church'.[7] It was necessary, therefore, to understand the historical context in which the development of the Brigidines took place through the 'long' nineteenth century and situate them in Irish, European, Australian and American history and culture.

Among the many sources of serious scholarship and familiarity with the subject of female religious congregations is Jo Ann Kay McNamara's *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia*. Panoramic in its exploration of the history of nuns as representatives of an ancient and powerful church, her chapter on the 'Culture Wars' which marked the transformation of religious life for women in modem times and that on the 'Feminist Apostolate' which includes the missionary role of the nuns as transnational educators were helpful to this thesis. McNamara's exploration of the nuns' mission as enlarging the vocational spaces belonging to women through the nineteenth century, and her conclusion that the mission laid the foundations for modern feminists to follow, was also instructive.

Rosa MacGinley's *A Dynamic of Hope: Institutes of Women Religious in Australia* also looks at the origins and early development of religious life in Europe. However, it is in its broad but scholarly sweep encompassing the congregations of Ireland and Australia that makes it an invaluable, clear and perceptive reference work. Invaluable too, is Australian based, although Irish born, Tom O'Donoghue's authoritative works on the history of Catholic education. His *Catholic Teaching Brothers* gives valuable insights into the lives of both choir and lay sisters. His articles 'God's

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[6] Thomas McGrath, *Religious renewal and reform in the pastoral ministry of Bishop James Doyle, 1786–1834* (Dublin, 1999), p.35.
[7] Caitriona Clear, *Nuns in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 1987), pp 165 & 166.

Antipodean teaching force: An historical exposition on Catholic teaching religious in Australia' and 'Colonialism, education and social change in the British Empire: the cases of Australia, Papua New Guinea and Ireland' skillfully set out the interdependence and interconnectedness of Britain's, Ireland's and Australia's 'civilizing' education systems of which the Brigidines were very much a part. O'Donoghue also explores the historical reasons for the dominance of religious such as the Brigidines in the teaching force of the Catholic schools in the latter two countries. His research complements Roland Fogarty's much earlier two volume *Catholic Education in Australia 1806–1950,* a balanced documentation of Australian Catholic education in all its facets. Patrick O'Farrell's works *The Catholic Church in Australia: A Short History, 1788–1967* and *The Irish in Australia* are other important contributions to an understanding of Irish migration to Australia and of Australian Catholic history. O'Farrell contends that the hierarchy's decision to opt out of the state's secular education system was not just a symbolic protest:

> but also a test—of will, capacity, resources. Could these lowest of the low, bog Irish, build their own separate system? Indeed they could. If it meant a sacrificial financial drain, it proved they had such resource. If it called for organisational ability, dedicated teachers, tenacity, perseverance, aggressive practical religious faith—yes, they had those things too, all that was needed.[8]

One further contribution to an understanding of Ireland's far-flung diaspora is Daniel Murphy's *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education.* Scholarly, masterly and far ranging, this work in its clear and wholly readable style explores the complexities of Irish emigration and the work of Irish educators worldwide from the sixth century onwards almost to the twenty-first century. Its analysis of the development of Catholic education in North America provided this author with a comprehensive reference source in which to examine and situate the Brigidines' brief period as educators in America.

In her exploration of the lives of nuns as religious activists, Carmen M. Mangion's *Contested Identities: Catholic women religious in nineteenth-century England and Wales* has proved to be enlightening and thought provoking on convent life

[8] Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia* (NSW, 1987), p.111.

as, to a lesser extent, was Barbara Walsh's *Roman Catholic Nuns in England and Wales 1800–1937* in its examination of the contribution of nuns to social and educational development in England and Wales. One of the few authors to engage with the life of lay sisters, Christine Trimingham Jack's *Growing Good Catholic Girls: Education and Convent Life in Australia* is informed by 'poststructuralist theory' in which she explores 'the symbiotic relationship between choir and lay sisters' while her article 'The lay sister in Educational History and Memory', takes a further look at the class divisions maintained within the convent structure.[9] Over 100 years earlier, Arthur Devine in his treatise *Convent Life; or The Duties of sisters dedicated in religion to the Service of God* (1890) would not have seen the dichotomy between choir and lay sister as a matter of any concern.

In her investigation of Scottish Catholicism, S. Karly Kehoe's *Creating a Scottish Church* examines the role played by the animosity between the Scots and the large post-Famine immigrant Irish population and between their Scottish and Irish priests of the Western District in the development of the Roman Catholic church in Scotland.[10] This anti-Irishness also indirectly influenced the development of the Brigidines. Appointed coadjutor to Bishop Grey of the Western district in 1866, Bishop James Lynch's pro-Irish clerical sympathies were such that it caused a permanent breach in the relationship between the two bishops, Following an investigation by Archbishop Manning on behalf of Propaganda Fide, both bishops resigned and Lynch was translated to Kildare and Leighlin to become in Brigidine eyes their 'second founder'.

Specifically in relation to Ireland's nineteenth century experience of the growth of female religious congregations, Anthony Fahey's doctoral thesis 'Female Asceticism in the Catholic Church: A Case-Study of Nuns in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century' (1982), argues that through the education the nuns provided they became new agents of church penetration into the home, the family and the local community. In so doing, he further argues, the nuns played a vital but subordinate role in extending the power of the Catholic church. Caitriona Clear's pioneering and groundbreaking *Nuns in nineteenth-*

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[9] C. Trimingham Jack, *Growing Good Catholic Girls: Education and Convent Life in Australia* (Melbourne, 2003), p.8 quoted in Tom O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers: Their Life in the English-Speaking World* (New York, 2012), p.49.

[10] Scotland was divided into three districts, Eastern, Western and Northern in 1827 by Pope Leo XII.

century Ireland is invaluable in its comprehensive and accessible review of Irish female religious congregations, not as subordinates to the clergy as seen by Fahey, but as professionals in their own right. Mary Peckham Magray's *The Transforming Power of the Nuns: Women, Religion and Cultural Change in Ireland, 1750–1900* also disputes Fahey's argument on the subordinate role of nuns. She ascribes the religious congregations, not the Irish episcopate, as the major transformers not only of the lower classes but also in the embourgeoisment of the Catholic laity. Indeed, Karly Kehoe also recognizes the importance of nuns in transforming their fellow women into models of Christianity, virtuous and pious 'angels' of the home.[11]

While these and other noteworthy works, such as Margaret MacCurtain's erudite studies on women religious and Marie Luddy's on women and women religious and their social activism provide an overview of female religious congregations this thesis, in contrast, explores the minutiae of living as experienced by the Brigidines within the perspective of the general history of education in Ireland. In a somewhat similar manner, Máire M. Kealy's *Dominican Education in Ireland 1820–1930* is specifically an exploration of 'the relatively hidden contribution of the Dominican nuns to Irish education'.[12] Unlike the early nineteenth-century Brigidines, the Dominican nuns had a limited involvement in schools for the poor. Dominican-run boarding schools were city based from the eighteenth century (Galway, Dublin, Drogheda and Waterford although the latter convent did not survive beyond the 1760s) whereas the Brigidines were based in four small rural towns, Tullow, Mountrath, Abbeyleix and Goresbridge. While Morna Sturrock's *Women of Strength Women of Gentleness* (1995) has examined the history of the Brigidines in Victoria and Janice Garaty's recently published (July, 2013) *Providence Provides* has explored Brigidine history in New South Wales it has been the intention of this thesis to uncover the 'family face', of the Brigidine congregation linking its underwhelming growth in Ireland with its more vital expansion in Australasia.

This thesis also necessitated consulting a wide range of secondary sources on the general history of the period, for instance, David Dickson's informative *New Foundations Ireland 1660–1800* on the emergence and consolidation of a new social

[11] S. Karly Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church: Catholicism, gender and ethnicity in nineteenth-century Scotland* (Manchester, 2010), p.12.
[12] Kealy, *Dominican Education* , p.xiii.

elite, the 'Protestant Ascendancy' while Thomas Bartlett's, complementary *The Fall and Rise of the Irish nation: The Catholic Question 1690–1830* appraises the emergence of the Catholic question and the development of a sense of an Irish nation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On the more general history of the Catholic church in Ireland, books consulted included Emmet Larkin's *The Pastoral role of the Roman Catholic Church in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1750–1850* which analyses the challenges faced by the Catholic church in responding to the social impact of an unparalleled population growth in, as Dickson describes it, an increasingly stratified and socially unequal society living in a subsistence economy'.[13] Dáire Keogh's *'The French Disease' The Catholic Church and radicalism in Ireland* looks at other challenges to the Catholic church's authority for instance, that of French radicalism and revolutionary philosophy as well as the impact of the 1798 rebellion. In overcoming these challenges, Keogh argues, the Church went on to create the modern Irish church. Oliver P. Rafferty's, *The Catholic Church and the Protestant State Nineteenth-century Irish realities* is an equally informative contribution to an understanding of both the Catholic church's and the British state's pragmatic policies and relations towards each other from the enactment of the Act of Union through the nineteenth century.

Specifically related to the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin Thomas McGrath's *Religious renewal and reform in the pastoral ministry of Bishop J. Doyle, of Kildare and Leighlin, 1786–1834* and its companion volume *Politics, Interdenominational Relations and Education in the Public Ministry of Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin, 1786–1834* provide a comprehensive and authoritative history of the diocese while Martin Brenan's, *Schools of Kildare and Leighlin 1775–1835* is a most useful reference source on early education and the place of confraternities in that work in the diocese.

To gain an understanding of the fourteen years Daniel Delany spent in Paris as an émigré student and priest the following complementary essays were most informative: Patrick Boyle, 'Some Irish Ecclesiastics in the Seminary of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet, Paris (1735–91)', Liam Swords' 'History of the Irish College Paris, 1578–1800, Calendar of the Papers of the Irish College, Paris' and monograph *soldiers scholars*

[13] The population had risen from 2,000,000 in the late 1740s to close on 5,000,000 in 1798 in David Dickson, 'The State of Ireland before 1798' in Cathal Póirtéir (ed.), *The Great Irish Rebellion of 1798 Thomas Davis Lecture* (Dublin, 1998), p.17.

priests: A short history of the Irish College, Paris, L.W.B. Brockliss & P. Ferté, 'Irish Clerics in France in 17th and 18th centuries a statistical study' and Liam Chambers' two essays, '"*Une Seconde Patrie*": the Irish Colleges, Paris, in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries and 'Irish Foundations and Boursiers in Early Modern Paris, 1682–1793'. The studies show the history of the Irish Colleges as educators enabling the Irish diaspora to find careers in the priesthood, law, the military, medicine or surgery.

Besides consulting a wide range of secondary material in seeking to produce a pioneering account of the Brigidine congregation, this study adopts Clear's argument that such a foundational study should concern itself with 'the whats, the wheres, the whos, and to some extent the whys'.[14] However, historical research and the process of investigation and interpretation cannot but be influenced by the experience of the author—'one's own historic factors' as Paul Ricouer terms it.[15] 'History', as Ricouer states, 'precedes us and our reflections, we belong to history before we belong to ourselves'.[16] The author's history therefore is that of a Roman Catholic moulded by the triumphalist Catholicism of the 1940s and 50s, thus how one reads, how one interprets things is not as a 'self-sufficient cogito' but is always influenced by these historic factors.[17] Such experience, modern feminist theorists argue, is helpful in defining research questions, as a source of data, and to test findings.[18] Nevertheless, as well as being cognizant of one's own assumptions and, as Trimingham Jack puts it, the 'value associated with using one's experience as part of the data gathering process' in this historical research, one has also considered, as Kathleen Weiler suggests, the situated quality of narratives in the gathering of evidence.[19]

Much to the credit of the female religious congregations (the religious brothers were not so responsive) following on the new openness generated by the Second Vatican Council the Brigidine sisters were among the many congregations and orders of religious

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[14] Clear, *Nuns*, p.xviii.
[15] Christine Trimingham-Jack, 'A Dose of Castor Oil': Teachers And Teaching In The Writings Of Ethel Turner And Mary Grant Bruce' in *History of Education Review,* 34:2, (2005), 1–12; Paul Ricoeur, quoted in Richard Kearney, *Modern Movements in European Philosophy* (Manchester, 1986), p.99.
[16] Ricoeur, quoted in Kearney, *Modern Movements in European Philosophy*, p.99.
[17] Ibid., p.92.
[18] Trimingham-Jack, 'A Dose of Castor Oil', 1–12.
[19] Ibid.; K. Weiler, Reflections on writing a history of women teachers' in Weiler & Middleton, *Telling Women's Lives*, p.47 quoted in Trimingham-Jack, 'A Dose of Castor Oil', 1–12.

women who made their private archives more accessible to scholars.[20] However if, as the Brigidine constitutions say, the annals are 'the primary source recording every fact worthy of being transmitted to posterity' the failure of the annalists to mention the early attempts in the 1820s to establish foundations outside the diocese and to make any reference to the human tragedy of the Famine raises questions not only about the annalists themselves and why they didn't write of these events but what other things have been overlooked or glossed over. It is as if none of these events occurred. It could be inferred that the memory of the Famine was too painful to be written about some twenty-five years afterwards yet the evidence from the Tullow receipt book (1840–58) shows conclusively that during the Famine years the nuns and boarders ate well. Nevertheless, while the annals were reticent in what was recorded, this was off-set by the somewhat more revealing weekly house council meeting records. There is also significant reticence in regards to Miss Judith Wogan-Browne in the annals and a paucity of material about her not only in the Delany Archives but also generally.

Disappointedly, as Susan O'Brien points out, most congregational archives have few details about the social origins of their members not even the death notice or necrology written for each sister carries such information.[21] The archives of the Brigidines are no different. Indeed, the lack of material thwarts the development of a comprehensive and detailed prosopography of the communities in Ireland, New South Wales and Victoria. In reality, little is told of the everyday lived experience of the sisters or the cost to health of this lived experience in the annals. O'Donoghue's explanation of the disheartening lack of personal material on the lives of religious brothers is equally applicable to the lived experience of religious sisters. He contends that 'a religious brother [or sister] was explicitly trained not to reflect on his [or her] life, as an individual, and partly because he [or she] was most definitely expected not to document any of the inner, private, and perhaps divergent, thoughts, regarding his [or her] life.[22] One is mostly dependent on the letters of the superiors and of the provincials, bishops and priests to get some idea of difficulties faced by the communities but there is seldom

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[20] O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers,* p.10.
[21] Susan O'Brien, 'Lay-sisters and Good Mothers: Working-Class Women in English Convents, 1840–1910', in W.J. Sheils & D.Woods (eds), *Women in the Church :papers read at the 1989 Summer Meeting and the 1990 Winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*(Oxford, 1990), pp.453-65.
[22] O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers,* p. 12.

a hint of any personal struggles in the letters. O'Donoghue's argument goes some way in explaining the decisions taken in Cowra convent by Mother Aloysius Shanahan, founding superior of Cowra (1894–1921). Because of her 'humility' and 'dread of publicity' not only were records not kept but the foundress of Cowra also destroyed her twenty-one year correspondence with her 'tenderly loved' Mother Provincial, Mother John Synan and her correspondence with Bishops Byrne and Dunne of Bathurst both of whom regarded her as a personal friend.[23] As a consequence, Cowra's annals as such were written in 1934 on the direction of Mother Provincial Claver Cooke and Superior Mother Cecilia Carey based on the memories of Mother Stanislaus Nolan (1870–1969), the last surviving Cowra pioneer.

Not only were Cowra's annals 'backdated' so too were the first fifty years of Coonamble's annals. No reason was given to the author on her visit to Coonamble in 2009 for this redaction by Coonamble born Mother Scholastica Cullen (1910–2004). Cooma's annals for the years 1887 to 1900 are very brief as too are some of the annals of the Victorian and New Zealand houses—the Victorian archives were not catalogued on the author's visit to the Melbourne generalate archives in 2010 and neither had all the material come in from the closed convents. The Sydney generalate archives are catalogued and gratifyingly informative.

An unexpected problem faced by the author was the absence of Brigidine material in the Bathurst diocesan archives when visited in 2009 and 2010. As the 2009 visit was not prearranged, understandably only a light trawl was carried out and a few diocesan inspectors' reports were found.[24] However, the 2010 visit was specially arranged. Given the diocesan inspectors' reports, the absence of archival material is surprising since the Brigidines had a presence in the diocese from the late 1880s to 2009. It is possible that the material may not have been kept or that it is not catalogued. There was also difficulty accessing all the Brigidine material in the Sydney Archdiocesan Archives (not from the Brigidines) while every help was received in the Melbourne Archdiocesan Archives. There is no Brigidine material in the Ballarat and Sandhurst

[23] Memoirs of Cowra, BPA/NSW/Box72/Series114.3.2/Item12.3.

[24] The author was accompanied by Sister Marie Marsh, Brigidine Superior General and by author and historian, Sister Margaret M. Press, RSJ, who was familiar with the archives. Regretably, Sister Margaret was too ill to help in the 2010 search. She died on 12 Dec. 2011, R.I.P.

diocesan archives or any Brigidine correspondence in the Augustinian archives, which would (one would have thought) have shown the sisters' anxiety to have the matter of approbation settled. This was off-set by having the letters of the Augustinian Roman consultors, Priors Glynn, Raleigh and Walsh, who acted on the Brigidines behalf in Rome. The University of Notre Dame's holdings on Sister Angela McKay are an invaluable source material in throwing light on the Brigidine mission in America (1851–69). Equally invaluable are the Vatican archives depository of letters on the appointment of Daniel Delany as bishop of the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. Besides the archival sources, reliance was also placed on internal jubilee histories and monographs by Brigidine sisters in researching the first hundred years of the Brigidine congregation. The research for this thesis was also greatly helped by two outstanding digitized online newspaper archives provided free by Trove, the National Library of Australia's digitized online newspaper archive (1803–1954) and Papers Past, the National Library of New Zealand's digitized online newspaper archive (1839–1945).

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter one explores the life of Bishop Daniel Delany and the history out of which the need to have a female teaching congregation developed. To this end, it considers the effects of the penal times on his early life and his move to France as a 16-year-old to be educated as a priest. It also looks at his concerns as a curate and the poverty he encountered in Mountrath and Tullow and the difficulties in his selection as coadjutor to the elderly Bishop James Keeffe (1752–87). The chapter focuses on the building of Carlow college and examines Delany's correspondence with Archbishop Troy of Dublin (1786–1823) and Bishop Moylan of Cork (1787–1815) which shows that, for an Irish bishop, he had little interest in politics.

Chapter two sets out Bishop Delany's concerns over religious education in his diocese—the inadequate religious instruction given in many hedge schools, the threat from the Charter schools and in particular, Delany's fear of Orde's education plan (1787) to develop Irish education from parish schools to third level. His counter measure the formation and nurturing of separate male and female Confraternities of Christian Doctrine is explored as is his implementation of Tridentine reform designed to take his people away from the old traditional religious practices and 'unofficial beliefs'. Delany's

several attempts to establish religious congregations are charted, as is his 'unstructured' foundation of the Brigidines as a simple-vowed but enclosed congregation. Delany's limited vision for them saw them struggle throughout the nineteenth century and fail to thrive as other newly founded religious congregations did. This chapter examines the relationship and influence of Judith Wogan Browne (1750–1848) in the first forty years of the congregation's existence.

Chapter three discusses the establishment of three convents in the diocese—Abbeyleix and its connection to the de Vesci family, Goresbridge founded through the generosity of Edward Lyons and Paulstown convent (the last nineteenth century Irish foundation) made at the behest of Bishop Lynch CM, coadjutor (1869–96) to facilitate the desire of the 'Paulstown nuns' (a religious community of elderly lay devouts) for a religious congregation to take over their school in Paulstown. It also traces the several attempts to establish the congregation outside the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. In particular it explores the successful establishment of a Brigidine convent in Roscrea from 1823 until 1842 when it was incorporated as part of the French order, the Society of the Sacred Heart. It also looks at the sisters' supervision of orphan Dublin children boarded out in Tullow.

Chapter four focuses on the hardship experienced by two Brigidine sisters, one choir and the other lay, in their several different attempts to establish convents, schools and novitiates in America between 1851 and 1869. The venture was undertaken apparently without the right to wear the Brigidine habit or use the Brigidine rule. Ambiguity surrounds this 'ill-starred' venture and lack of documentary material makes this somewhat 'uncanonical' community all the more tantalizingly mysterious.

In chapter five the difficulties facing Australian Catholic education is briefly examined in the face of the Australian colonies' education acts establishing free, secular, and compulsory education for all—South Australia (1851), Tasmania (1868), Western Australia (1871), Victoria (1872), Queensland (1875) and New South Wales (1880). It explores Brigidine experience in establishing five foundations in New South Wales including the foundation of schools and a novitiate in Sydney, essential for the development of the congregation in that colony. The establishment of Australia as a separate Brigidine province in 1893 is examined, as is the career of Mother John Synan,

the leader of the Coonamble pioneers and first provincial of Australia. It looks briefly at the establishment of the Brigidine mission in New Zealand where there was not only free, secular and public elementary schools since the Education (or Bowen) Act of 1877 but at the time of the foundation a proposal to bring public post-primary education within the reach of country children.

Chapter six discusses the Brigidine congregation's response to the invitations of Bishop Crane of Sandhurst diocese (1874–1901) and Bishop Moore of Ballarat diocese (1884–1904) to counteract, no matter what 'the cost or sacrifice', the colony's 'scheme of godless compulsory education'. The chapter explores the problems created for the sisters by the financial obstacles put in their way by a few parish priests as they developed their foundations in the country towns of Victoria. It also looks at the 'Australization' of the congregation as it received Australian postulants as well as the move to Mentone, Melbourne in 1904, a major development as it gave the novices access to tertiary education at the Loreto training college and Melbourne university—under the 1905 Education Act teachers needed qualifications to be registered under the act.

Chapter seven explores the formation of postulants and novices and the characteristics and personality required in a mistress of novices. It discusses the dower and other costs entailed in postulancy and noviceship. Such expenses excluded all but those from the comfortable backgrounds of the urban commercial and professional classes and from the substantial strong Catholic tenant farmer class. It also looks at the difficulties surrounding the establishment of separate general novitiates for New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand while focusing on the tensions created between the key figures in Ireland and Australia.

Chapter eight examines the problem of a congregation unsure of its canonical status, a status which was only resolved in 1907. The chapter details the difficulties surrounding the amalgamation of the autonomous houses in Ireland and Australia which was a must before approbation could be given. It also looks at the painstaking work of the Augustinian consultors with the Congregation of Propaganda Fide to bring approbation about.

If nuns in general were reticent to speak and write of their experiences, the lay sisters, though full members of the community and sharing in all its spiritual benefits, had no voice at all. Chapter eight explores as far as possible the hidden life and experience of these sisters where every effort was made to keep the distinction between the choir and lay sisters. A distinction symbolized by the wearing of a white apron in public seen by some as a humiliating 'badge of servant-hood'.

CHAPTER 1

1747–1828

BISHOP DANIEL DELANY FOUNDER OF THE SISTERS OF ST BRIGID

The Sisters of St Brigid (Brigidines) were founded in Tullow, Co. Carlow, by Daniel Delany, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin (1787–1814) in 1807. His life and episcopate was particularly influenced by his own and Catholic Ireland's experience of the severe strictures of the penal laws regarded by Delany as 'the cruellest statutes ever framed' in their 'injustice and oppression'.[1] However, Thomas Bartlett suggests that, although the Catholic Church and its clergy were supposedly subject to their harsh constraints, by the late 1750s, at the time of Delany's childhood, they were able 'to flout or ignore them with impunity'.[2] This is in keeping with Dáire Keogh's proposition that 'the penal laws are best understood as an attempt by the Protestant state to curb the growth of "popery"—the dangerous political system which Catholicism represented, not the Catholic religion as such'—a point also recognised by Arthur Young during his tour of Ireland between 1776 and 1779.[3] The unforeseen result was, as Oliver P. Rafferty argues, that the 'Catholic Church in Ireland was probably freer from state interference than any comparable church in Europe'.[4] It was an environment, however, where Catholic bishops did not advertise their address. During Delany's boyhood, for example, Bishop James Keeffe of Kildare and Leighlin (1752–87) felt it was incumbent on him to take precautionary measures and have his Roman correspondence addressed to 'Patrick Keeffe, shopkeeper, Tullow'.[5] As late as 1772, five years before Delany's return from

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[1] Bishop Delany to Archbishop Troy, Tullow 14 Nov. 1788 in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–90), 116/4/64.
[2] Ibid., 12 Feb. 1788; Thomas Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish nation: The Catholic Question, 1690–1830* (Dublin, 1992), p.57.
[3] Dáire Keogh, *Edmund Rice, 1762–1844* (Dublin, 1996), p.12; Arthur Young, *A tour in Ireland, 1776–1779,* 2 vols (London, 1892), ii, p.66.
[4] Oliver P. Rafferty, *The Catholic Church and the Protestant State Nineteenth-century Irish realities* (Dublin, 2008), p.16.
[5] McGrath, *Religious renewal and reform*, p.29.

France, he still signed documents – *datum in loco nostril refugii* (from our place of refuge).[6]

Because the circumstances of the period did not encourage the keeping of records, few primary sources regarding Delany and his family background have survived. It is particularly disappointing that the account of his life in the Brigidine annals is especially adulatory and hagiographic with regard to its founder. As such, it is difficult to find the man behind the story in what James O'Kane terms the 'incense-screen of traditional hagiography'.[7] Mother Margaret Mary Dunne, Superior General (1938–1953) and Martin Brenan both state the Tullow manuscript on the life of Daniel Delany and the foundation of the congregation was written by Mother Mary Anne Lalor of Tullow convent, one of the first sisters. The Mountrath annals have several variations of the story with later material interspersed within the text. An entry for 1819 is followed by a note stating that Bishops Doyle (1819–34), Haly (1838–55) and Walshe (1856–88) had received verbal approval from Rome for the rule. Bishop Lynch (1869–96) is not mentioned. This is followed by an entry for 1822. As Bishop Walsh wrote to Rome in 1858 and 1866 and Bishop Lynch was appointed coadjutor in 1869 and, as well, there is a mention of the 'present St Fintan's church' (completed in 1867) the annals most probably date from the late 1860s although McGrath suggests *c.*1873.[8] The Tullow annals appear to be earlier but as there is no correspondence extant it is difficult to tell who wrote the annals and when they were written.

The Delanys were ranked among the oldest of Queen's County (Laois) families, however, due to the vicissitudes and 'social polarization' of the penal laws at the time of Delany's birth in 1747, his parents Daniel and Elizabeth Delany were tenant farmers on the Coote estate.[9] Although the penal laws were seen by Delany as the 'gloomiest and

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[6] Thomas McGrath, 'Bishops of Kildare and Leighlin, 1715–1819: Pastoral, Political and Educational Contexts' in William Nolan & Thomas McGrath (eds), *Kildare: history and society* (Dublin, 2006), 273-326, p.293.

[7] James O'Kane, review of 'Peter Ackroyd, *The Life of Thomas More*' (London, 1998) in *The Irish Theological Quarterly*, 63:3 (1998), 299.

[8] McGrath, *Religious renewal and reform*, p.34.

[9] David Dickson, *Arctic Ireland* (Belfast, 1997), p.16; On family ancestors see John O'Hanlon & Edward O'Leary, *History of the Queen's County,*2 vols (Kilkenny, 1981), i, p.771; Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary*, 2 vols (London,1837), ii, p.396; Edward O'Leary, *History of the Queen's County,* 2 vols (Dublin, 1914), ii, p.773; William Carrigan, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, iv, (Dublin 1905), p.344; Margaret Gibbons, *Glimpses of Catholic Ireland in the eighteenth*

most unfeeling period of arrant bigotry and avowed intolerance' his parents were part of a substantial Catholic class of tenant farmers, merchants and traders whose wealth behove them, according to Brady and Corish, to 'live quietly and unostentatiously'.[10] He had a younger brother, John, who died in infancy and may possibly have had a sister.[11] The annals, Margaret Gibbons and Senator David Norris, whose mother was a Fitzpatrick, claim that it is possible that Delany's mother, a Fitzpatrick, was a Protestant.[12] It was 'a source of pride' to Senator Norris that his family had inherited Delany's rosary beads. It cannot be stated with certainty that Delany's mother was Protestant, however, the annals insist that she died a confirmed Catholic with her son 'at her bedside where he gave her the last absolution'.[13]

Delany is said to have received his early education at a 'clandestine' hedge school in nearby Briosclaigh. At this time, however, the term hedge schools for pay schools was not, as Cullen states, in 'vogue' as it only first appeared in Arthur Young's *A Tour in Ireland* in 1780.[14] It is possible that Briosclaigh school was a superior pay school, a type of middle-class private classical school offering the equivalent of second level education in which the classics (Greek, Latin and Hebrew) dominated the curriculum.[15] McManus points out that a classical education met the practical needs of students who desired a career in the Church or in the foreign services in Europe.[16] Tradition further claims that it was because of the untimely death of Delany's father at a

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century, restoration of the daughters of St Brigid by Most Rev. Dr Delany (Dublin, 1932), p.51: Daniel O'Byrne, *History of the Queen's County*, (Dublin, 1856), p.122; Mary O'Riordan, 'Bishop Daniel Delany (1747–1814)' in Pádraig G. Lane, William Nolan (eds), *Laois: History and Society* (Dublin, 1999), p.461.

[10] Delany to Troy, Tullow 14 Nov. 1788 in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–90), 116/4/64; John Brady & Patrick J. Corish, 'The Church under the Penal Code' in Patrick J. Corish (ed.), *A history of Irish Catholicism*, iv (Dublin, 1971), 1-88, p.23. See also Maureen Wall, 'The rise of a Catholic middle class in eighteenth century Ireland' in *Irish Historical Studies*, 11 (1958), 91-115, p.103; B.J. Graham and L.J. Proudfoot, *Urban Improvement in Provincial Ireland 1700–1840* (1994), p.36: Emmet Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Catholic Church in Pre-Famine Ireland,1750–1850* (Washington, DC 20064, 2000), p.13.

[11] The Brigidine annals mention Delany's brother dying in infancy but do not give any mention to a sister whereas O'Byrne in *The History of the Queen's County*, p.122 states that John Dunne, father of John Dunne, president of Carlow College was Delany's nephew.

[12] See Gibbons, *Glimpses*, pp 64 & 74; Dr David Norris to author, email 10 Feb. 2012. The confirmation comes through family archives and latterly through DNA testing.

[13] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/506-508.

[14] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324; Carrigan, *The History and Antiquities of Ossory*, ii, p.344; Louis M. Cullen, 'Merriman in a world of schoolmasters' in *Eighteenth-century Ireland*, 26 (2011), 80-94.

[15] McGrath, 'Bishops of Kildare and Leighlin', p.302; Robert E. Ward, *An encyclopaedia of Irish Schools, 1500–1800* (New York, 1995), p.2; Antonia McManus, *The Irish Hedge School and Its Books, 1695–1831* (Dublin, 2004), p.125.

[16] McManus, *The Irish Hedge School*, pp126-7.

young age that his further education and Latin studies were undertaken by his maternal aunts in Mountrath helped both by 'well-disposed' Protestant neighbours and by the parish priest, Denis Lawler, with the annals pointedly stressing that instruction took place in the priest's 'hut on Clonenagh bog' for 'fear of discovery'. Because of the penal laws the 16-year-old Delany, like so many other Irish youths, left Ireland secretly for France to train for the priesthood *c.*1763.

Delany was part of that large scale migration of Irish Catholics to continental Europe which had commenced in the late sixteenth century but by the time of his return to Ireland in 1777 had re-orientated to America and into the British Empire.[17] Co-existing with the Irish migration to the Irish colleges of Europe was that of the diaspora of recusant English Catholics after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, a diaspora that stretched from France and the Low Countries across Italy and the Iberian Peninsula.[18] No other English group, Caroline Hibbard points out, has been tied by an umbilical cord to the continent of Europe for over 200 years as English Catholicism.[19] Both diasporas educated their youth in their respective Irish and English (and Scottish) colleges, seminaries and convents established after the Reformation. Although referring in particular to the English recusants, Glickman's observation that 'an education spent in exile had introduced transnational horizons to successive generations of recusant families, rendering it possible for well-connected English émigrés to enter into the life of the continental *ancient régime*, imbide its ideas and assimilate elements of its public discourse' could just as easily be applied to the Irish émigrés, for instance the Wogan Brownes, clerics and students.[20] Indeed, Daniel Murphy contends, that the Irish colleges affiliation with the great universities of continental Europe (Paris, Nantes, Louvain,

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[17] Liam Chambers, '"*Une Seconde Patrie*": the Irish Colleges, Paris, in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries' in Susanne Lachenicht, Kirsten Heinsohn (eds) *Diaspora Identities: Exile, Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Past and Present* (Frankfurt, 2009), pp 16–17.

[18] Gabriel Glickman, *The English Catholic Community 1688–1745: Politics, Culture and Ideology* (Gt. Britain, 2009), p.9; See also Peter Marshall & Geoffrey Scott, *Catholic Gentry in English Society: The Throckmortons of Coughton ffrom Reformation to Emancipation* (England, 2009) on the trials and tribulations of the Throckmortons, an English recusant family. In 1722 the family was one of the wealthiest Catholic families in England, p.173.

[19] Marshall & Scott, *Catholic Gentry in English Societ*, p.15.

[20] Glickman, *The English Catholic Community,* p.9.

Lille, Salamanca, Madrid, Lisbon, Rome, Prague for example) provided Irish society with an internationally oriented, highly cultured and sophiscated clergy.[21]

Despite the annals' hagiographic claim, that he 'resolved to be a priest to save the souls of his despised and persecuted countrymen' there was no certainty that Delany would persevere and become a priest. Larkin points to a high attrition rate of over 60 per cent (including a mortality rate of about 10 per cent) of lost vocations among young Irish clerics.[22] Their youth was a contributing factor in this leakage as many would not have fully understood what a vocation to the priesthood entailed.[23] Instead many opted for careers in law, the military, medicine or surgery.[24]

Delany did, however, persevere but little is known about his time spent in France indeed, as historian and Brigidine sister Mary O'Riordan points out, 'for fourteen years a mantle of silence enveloped him, until his return in 1777'.[25] The Mountrath annals rather poignantly record that 'we do not know of anything interesting that occurred during Dan's student days'.[26] It is unclear whether Delany first went to the Collège des Lombards in Paris or to the college at St Omer and thereafter to the Collège des Lombards. It appears unlikely that he went to the Jesuit run college at St Omer, then the largest school in exile for English and Welsh Catholic boys, since the school migrated to Bruges in 1762 as a result of the suppression of the Jesuits by the French government.[27] McGrath and Comerfors do not mention his going to St Omer but rather to the Collège des Lombards, which college ensured, Daniel Murphy states, a continuous supply of well educated priests trained in accordance with Tridentine reform.[28] In effect, it was recognized, as Fenning states 'as the major national seminary of the penal times, a sort of Maynooth *ante litteram*'.[29] In conformity with the règlement of 1728, Delany would

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[21] Daniel Murphy, *A History of Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education* (Dublin, 2000), p. 82.
[22] Larkin, *The Pastoral role of the Roman Catholic Church in Pre-Famine Ireland*, p.32.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., pp 30-38; Liam Swords, *Soldiers scholars priests: A short history of the Irish College, Paris* (Dublin, 1985), np.
[25] O'Riordan, 'Bishop Daniel Delany', p.462.
[26] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIR/324.
[27] Maurice Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education:Expulsion, Suppression, Survival and Retoration, 1762–1803* (England, 2013), p.2.
[28] Murphy, *Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, p. 82.
[29] Hugh Fenning, *The Undoing of the Friars of Ireland: A study of the novitiate question in the eighteenth century* (Louvain, 1972), p.39.

have spent at the least six years there while he followed a two year course in philosophy and a four year course in theology but he could have spent longer.[30]

Delany experienced his seminary training at a time when French Enlightenment philosophers (for instance Voltaire, Diderot and d'Alembert) were in sharp confrontation with the Roman Catholic church.[31] It can be assumed that students such as Delany must have been aware of this hostility even when cocooned in a Catholic seminary. In a twenty-four page undated treatise (possibly after his return to Ireland) he attacked the 'incessant trumpeting' of the Deists, and the 'unmeaning jargon' and 'egregious folly' of the 'enlightened milky age'.[32]

Delany was one of seventeen students from the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin who attended the college during the years 1740–89. It is worth quoting Chambers' observations on the Irish colleges:

> [T]he colleges fulfilled a range of functions as student hostels, university colleges, lay boarding schools, monastic establishments and seminaries. [...] Among the students were ordained priests, as well as young students, some of them destined for ordination, others for secular careers [...] many of the Irish colleges were not educational institutions in their own right. Students attended classes and took degrees at a local university or college.[33]

For Delany and his fellow students both academic and living costs were burdensome. Books and the completion of degrees and the submission of theses proved expensive.[34] Living costs included such items as furniture, clothes, hats, shoes and wigs then a routine expense reflecting their popularity in Paris.[35] Another added expense for Delany was that as a consequence of the penal laws (he could face imprisonment or death if he returned) Delany was obliged to remain in Paris during vacations when he probably stayed in the

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[30] L.W.B. Brockliss & P. Ferté, 'Irish Clerics in France in 17th and 18th centuries a statistical study' in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy,* 87 C: 9 (Dublin, 1987), 527-570 at 534.
[31] Hans Küng, trans. Edward Quinn, *Does God Exist?* (Gt. Britain, 1978), p.37.
[32] Delany treatise, an untitled and undated copy book treatise with the opening and closing pages missing, DA/uncatalogued/55; Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb. 1788 in DDA, Troy Papers 1787–90, 116/4/6.
[33] Chambers, 'Irish Colleges', p.17.
[34] Liam Chambers, 'Irish Foundations and Boursiers in Early Modern Paris, 1682–1793' in *Irish Economic and Social History*, 35 (2008), 1–22 at 9.
[35] Ibid., p.10.

college holiday villa in Ivry.[36] The bare minimum needed for fees and living expenses was a pension of 400*l.* a year which was paid by his mother.[37] We do not know if Delany was also the recipient of a *bourse* which would have provided him between 300*l.* and 400*l.* At this period Chambers argues that the availability of Irish *fondations* to provide an increasing number of *bourses* underlines the importance of educational migration for the survival and development of the Irish Catholic community of the eighteenth century.[38] He further adds that the Irish *fondations* offered not only access to education but a route to ecclesiastical, military, medical and other careers.[39]

After seven years' study Delany was ordained deacon with five others at the church of St Nicolas du Chardonnet in 1770.[40] As only one or two registers of ordination survived the destruction in the Revolution of 1830 we can only surmise Delany's date of priestly ordination—probably in 1772 when 24-years-old, the youngest age allowed by canon law for ordination.[41] Delany remained on in France for another five years until 1777, which points to some reluctance to return to the home mission. In this he was no different to many of the other young clerics after ordination.[42] Fluent in French many preferred the sophistication of French society to the remembered hardships and meagre rewards at home.[43] In this 'leakage to the French church' some found careers as parish priests, curates and private chaplains while others preferred the adventure of life as military or naval chaplains in Europe.[44] Bishop Moylan, Delany's 'bosom friend', held a

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[36]On 22 May 1722, Dr Laurence Kelly purchased a house with a large garden in Ivry suitable as a holiday villa for exiled students and professors in Patrick Boyle, 'Glimpses of Irish collegiate life' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Review,* (series 4) 11, 1902, 445; Liam Swords, 136.

[37] Livres =pounds in Liam Swords, 'History of the Irish College Paris, 1578–1800, Calendar of the Papers of the Irish College, Paris' in *Archivium Hibernicum*, 35 (1980), 3-233 at 18; His mother ensured that his pension was always delivered by hand in Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.

[38] Chambers, 'Irish Foundations and Boursiers, p.21.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Patrick Boyle, 'Some Irish Ecclesiastics in the Seminary of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet, Paris (1735–91)' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record (IER)*, 4:11 (1902), 480-491 at 490. Only one or two registers of ordination survived the destruction of the Revolution of 1830. These are kept in the Archives de la Seine Paris.

[41]Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Catholic Church*, p.32.

[42] Brockliss & Ferté, 'Irish Clerics in France' at 546; Boyle, 'Irish Ecclesiastics of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet', 549; Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Catholic Church*, p. 34.

[43]Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Catholic Church*, p. 32; Brockliss & Ferté, 'Irish Clerics in France ', at 546.

[44] Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Catholic Church*, p.34; Cathaldus Giblin, 'Irish Exiles in Catholic Europe' in Patrick J. Corish (ed.), *A History of Irish Catholicism*, 4, 2-3 (Dublin, 1971), iv, p.27.

cure before his return to Ireland.[45] Those with teaching ability found employment in the University of Paris or in the provincial universities and colleges. It is possible that Delany found such employment from Bishop James Doyle's comment that Delany had a distinguished academic career, displaying 'evidence of rare endowments and brilliant talents'.[46] It is also possible to surmise from the Collège des Lombards deposited list (no. 964) in the Royal Irish Academy that he remained on in the University of Paris from 1770.[47] Comerford agrees with this.[48] But another Brigidine chronicle suggests that he became a professor at St Omer by then a preparatory school under the direction of the secular clergy of the English College at Douai.[49].

From its foundation in 1622 until the curial reform of Pius X, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide had responsibility for the Irish Catholic church as a church in a Protestant state.[50] But at the time of Delany's return, Ireland was not governed by vicars or prefects apostolic but had its own hierarchy of bishops (nominated by James III) organised canonically in four provinces.[51] When the Holy See recognised the Hanoverian, George III as the legitimate British sovereign, the bishops were exhorted, as a critical part of Roman policy, to show complete loyalty to the crown and government of Ireland.[52] Actually, Delany's future bishop, Bishop Keeffe, took the Catholic oath of allegiance, or test oath as it became known, with his clergy on 9 December 1775.

In 1777 in light of these developments the 33-year-old Delany felt secure enough to return to the home mission. Though it is stated in the Brigidine annals that he was

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[45] Evelyn Bolster, 'The Moylan Correspondence in Bishop's House Killarney' in *Collectanea Hibernica*, 14 (1971), 82-144 at 82; Patrick Boyle, 'The Irish College in Paris 1578–1901', *IER,* 11 (1902), 193-210 at 207&208; William J. Fitzpatrick, *The Life and Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin*, 2 vols (Dublin, 1861), i, p.126.

[46] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324; McGrath, 'Bishops of Kildare and Leighlin', p.308.

[47] Brockliss & Ferté, 'Irish Clerics in France', at 546.

[48] M. Comerford, *Collections relating to the Dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin*, 3 vols (Dublin, 1883-1886), i, p. 88.

[49] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324; Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education*, p.64.

[50] Sean Cannon, *Irish Episcopal Meetings, 1788-1882 a juridico-historical study* (Rome, 1979), pp 6 & 40; Patrick J. Corish, *The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Dublin, 1981), p.20.

[51] Cannon, *Irish Episcopal Meetings*, p.40.

[52] Dáire Keogh, 'The pattern of the flock': John Thomas Troy, 1786–1823' in James Kelly & Dáire Keogh (eds), *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 2000); David Dickson, *New Foundations Ireland 1660–1800* (Dublin, 2000), p.161; Patrick O'Donoghue, 'The Holy See and Ireland 1780–1803' in *Archiv. Hib.*, 34 (1976-7), 99-108 at100.

warmly welcomed home by his mother and aunts, he proved to be a 'reluctant missionary'. He was formed by his fourteen years in France, which, as Brockliss and Ferté suggest, turned many young Irish clerics 'into Frenchmen'.[53] Indeed, this shows in his letters and fits Bishop Doyle's effusive description of him as cultivated, dignified and polished:

> His powers of conversation were unrivalled; his wit, satire, elegance of diction, and illustrations of the most varied kind, flowed from his lips; he was the delight of all who approached him.[54]

He was, nevertheless, less sympathetically described by one of his curates who may have been the butt of a Delany witty barb. The slight, if not insult, was made all the more cutting as it appeared in Cox's *Irish Magazine* (1813). The anonymous curate stated:

> As nature has not intended the reverend doctor for a deep politician, I beg leave to advise him to move within the narrow circle of his understanding, namely to crack his small jokes on curates and others, who dare not retaliate. The reverend doctor ought to recollect when he was one of the contemptible minority in the year 1807, the reverend doctor was one of the dignitaries who consented to a veto.[55]

Delany's fourteen year sojurn in Paris had marked him to such an extent that the conditions of the people, as well as their practise of religion proved to be such a culture shock to the 'French' sophiscate that within a few weeks he was ready to return to France in an effort, as the annals rather charitably state, to 'save his soul'.[56] He found Mountrath to be, in his own words, a parish of 'persons of a very inferior class, viz., petty manufacturers, little dealers, cottagers, and families of the lowest degree'.[57] Although large and populous, Mountrath consisted of nearly 10,000 acres of bog almost in the centre of the parish as well as 3,000 acres of mountains. With public processions forbidden, there was nothing for Delany to equate to the colour and anticipation of a

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[53] Brockliss & Ferté, 'Irish Clerics in France', p.549.
[54] Comerford, *Collections* i, p.88.
[55] 'A curate' to Cox's *Irish Magazine*, 1813 in O'Riordan, *Delany*, p. 87. The curate accused Delany of procuring 200 votes for Henry Bruen in the Co.Carlow constituency in the General Election of 30 Oct.1812 for the sum of £100 for 'chapel-building'. Votes received: Walter Bagenal (256) Bruen (597) and David La Touche (680). La Touche and Bruen were elected. See W.B. Walker, (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801–1922* (Dublin, 1978).
[56] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[57] Delany to Castlereagh, Dublin, 4 Dec. 1800, in Viscount Castlereagh (ed.), *Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh*, 4 vols (London, 1849), iv, p.142.

French feast day procession with its 'sixty encensers and their sweet smelling burning incense, flower-throwers, cope enwrapped clerics bearing lighted candles, all enlivened with the music of the French National Guard'.[58] Nevertheless, and notwithstanding Mountrath's uninviting conditions, Delany remained on the Irish mission, supposedly in response to his mother's pleas, ministering briefly in Mountrath, until his appointment by Bishop Keeffe as curate to Tullow parish late in 1777.[59]

Described by Newenham as the 'most Protestant parish in the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin' Tullow was, according to Walker, 'small, cramped, untidy, unhealthy', and its population of 4,750 was 'split by rabidly opposing factions'.[60] It boasted, MacSuibhne states, only two industries, milling and brewing, but was connected to Dublin by mail-coach and had comfortable inns.[61] By 1795 eighteen years into Delany's ministry, we can postulate from the number of houses (1,009) and the crafts he listed in his parish census that Tullow was a market and post town of some trading importance.[62] Yet five years later Delany claimed in his letter to Castlereagh that, except for a few in 'middling circumstances', the people were 'wretchedly poor and absolutely of the lowest and meanest condition'.[63] He was confronted by an unparalleled increase in population growth that, as Dickson details, created pastoral and economic difficulties in 'ministering to an increasingly stratified and socially unequal society living in a subsistence economy'.[64] Yet contemporary commentators noted the genuine hospitality and 'vivacity of temper' of the people given free rein particularly in 'the amusements' of Sundays and holidays, which included public dancing, card-playing, and cockfighting.[65] Bell found these occasions to be normally good humoured as long as no whiskey was drunk, but with some whiskey available for as little as 'two shillings a gallon' it is not surprising

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[58] O'Riordan, 'Bishop Delany', p.463.
[59] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[60] Thomas Newenham, *The population of Ireland before the 19th century* (1973), p.301; Peader MacSuibhne, *'98 in Carlow* (Carlow, 1974), p.133; Linus H.Walker, *The Purpose of His Will* (Galway, 1981), p7.
[61] MacSuibhne, *'98 in Carlow*, p.133; Walker, *The Purpose of His Will*, p.7.
[62] David Dickson, 'A Census of the Parish of Tullow in 1795' in *Carloviana,* 2:21 (Dec. 1972), 25-27 at 25.
[63] Castlereagh (ed.), *Memoirs and Correspondence,* iv, p.142
[64] The population had risen from 2,000,000 in the late 1740s to close on 5,000,000 in 1798 in Dickson, 'The State of Ireland before 1798', p.17.
[65] Robert Bell, *Description of the condition and manner as well as the moral and political character, education, etc of the Peasantry of Ireland* (London, 1804), pp17 & 20.

that such gatherings tended to end in violence with faction-fighting a noted part of life.[66] The Brigidine annals alarmingly relate that Delany was so appalled at the amusements, the faction fighting and the non-observance of the Sabbath that he declared that 'there was more sin committed on Sundays than during the entire week'.[67] Others too were of the same opinion. A contemporary, 'Melantius' (Edward Tighe) declared that 'until the lower orders were purged of their pernicious habits (the universal profanation of the Lord's day)' no improvement in all strands of society could be brought about.[68] William Drennan, the Belfast United Irishman, also found Sunday in the Catholic parts of the country to be 'the most sinful day of the week' and begged the question whether anything could reform the habits of the people.[69]

Like some other priests of the period in similar circumstances, Delany was determined to redress the situation in Tullow and improve the moral character of its inhabitants. He did this through the organisation of children's choirs, the introduction of Tridentine practices such as processions and sodalities, the organisation of the confraternities of Christian Doctrine and the Blessed Sacrament to supply teachers for Sunday school catechesis, and the setting up of chapel libraries.[70] It was out of these confraternities and Sunday schools that his two teaching congregations, the Sisters of St Brigid at Tullow (1807) and Mountrath (1809) and the Brothers of St Patrick at Tullow (1808), arose. These foundations will be dealt with in detail in the following chapter.

Bishop Daniel Delany

On 26 February 1782, Richard O'Reilly, Keefe's coadjutor was translated to the troubled diocese of Armagh as coadjutor to Archbishop Blake. The infirm 80-year-old Keeffe, who was led around 'like another Tobias' and 'compelled to use a scribe', proposed

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[66] Ibid.
[67] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[68] Edward Tighe, *Melantius: A Letter addressed to Mr Orde, Upon the Education of the People* (Dublin, 1787), pp 7&10; Corish, *The Catholic Community*, p.112.
[69] Elizabeth Malcolm, 'Temperance and Irish Nationalism' in F.S.L. Lyons & R.A.J. Hawkins (eds), *Ireland Under the Union: Varieties of Tension* (Oxford, 1980), pp 69-114, p.69.
[70] Some of the original chapel library books include Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, 3 vols *History of Egypt* (1731) & 9 books of Judith Wogan Browne in the Delany archives.

Delany, his vicar generl and a canon of the diocesan chapter, to Rome as his coadjutor.[71] Keeffe's petition was supported by Archbishop Carpenter of Dublin, the metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Leinster and by O'Reilly, who both in the typical language of such proposals, declared Delany 'fully worthy and suitable to be appointed co-adjutor'.[72] Their letter of recommendation to Cardinal Salviati, the nuncio at Brussels, was forwarded with his recommendation to Cardinal Antonelli of the Sacred Congregation in June 1782.[73] However, as McGrath points out, any protégé of Bishop Keeffe's was likely to be scrutinised by Rome and was unlikely to be looked upon kindly by his episcopal opponents—Keeffe's earlier espousal of a policy of *rapprochement* with the House of Hanover was contentious but, by the end of his episcopacy some five years after his proposal of Delany, it had proved to be the way forward and was acquiesced in by Rome.[74]

Vatican documentation shows that, indeed, there was opposition to Delany—at episcopal level, within the diocese and in Rome.[75] Rumours were soon circulating that Delany was partisan to Bishop Plunket of Meath who, with Archbishop Butler, were noted for their Gallican sympathies and were, according to Bishop Troy, the heads of the Gallican party in the kingdom.[76] Delany, who was at the Collège des Lombards while Plunket was superior there, may have been suspected of having imbued Gallican sympathies. Dr Valentine Bodkin, Roman agent of Archbishop Butler of Cashel, in his letter to the archbishop, referred to Troy's grudge against Plunket and his opposition to

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[71] McGrath, *Religious renewal and reform*, p.39; Memorial of James Keeffe to Cardinal Salviati nuncio at Brussels, 19 May 1782, 439r-441v, vol. 862, SOCG; The documentation on which the determination was based is in the *Scritture Originali riferite nei Congressi Generali* (SOCG), vol.862 ff.432-453. I am indebted to Sister Maree Marsh, Brigidine Congregational Leader, in securing a copy for me on the 10 & 11 May 2011and to Fr John McEvoy and Eric Derr in translating them for me; Translation of same (translator unknown) in DA/BC/BA/809; Doyle, *Diocesan Book,* DA/BP/JKL/BV/03, p.60

[72] Ibid.; John Carpenter, archbishop of Dublin & Richard O'Reilly, coadjutor bishop of Armagh to Cardinal Salviati, nuncio at Brussels, 19 May 1782, 441r-441v, vol. 862, SOCG. The bishop of Kildare and Leighlin with the bishops of Ossory and Ferns are three of the suffragans of Dublin.

[73] Cardinal Salviati to Cardinal Antonelli, Brussels 21 [4?] Jun. 1782, 441v-442r, vol. 862, SOCG.

[74] McGrath, 'Bishops of Kildare and Leighlin', p.300.

[75] Ibid., p.301.

[76] Memorandum, 434r-435v, vol. 862, SOCG; Archbishop Troy to Cardinal Antonelli, 18 Jun. 1781, in DDA, Carpenter – Troy papers, MS 74, in Eamon O'Flaherty, 'Ecclesiastical politics and the dismantling of the penal laws in Ireland, 1774–82' in *Irish Historical Studies*, 26 (1988–9), 33-50 at 45.

Delany's appointment.[77] Carpenter gave some credence to Troy's suspicions and forwarded them to Antonelli.[78]

However, Archbishop Carpenter in his September letter to the Sacred Congregation was not pleased that Troy without consulting him recommended the elderly Patrick Molloy, dean of Ossory, as coadjutor. He wondered how Troy could have 'forgotten the difficulties Molloy' had created for Troy's predecessor and speculated that Troy, by having Molloy 'promoted', would 'remove a man whom he found troublesome'.[79] He stated that Molloy, (a friend of Keeffe's and acceptable to him as coadjutor) was 'dangerous' and to be avoided for his Gallican tendencies. He believed that for the peace of the church and for the sake of the diocese the younger Delany should be preferred.[80] A month later, in what appears to have been a volte-face, Troy ruined any ambitions Molloy may have had, when he claimed in his letter to Antonelli, that, 'if a Gallican bishop was wanted, then Molloy should be the choice'.[81] By November the Abbé Preston was considered as a compromise by Propanganda but he was unacceptable to Carpenter who reaffirmed his support for Delany.

Despite Carpenter's unstinting recommendation, the process stalled for several months. Surprised to be asked to find another candidate for the coadjutorship, Keeffe's letter of March 1783 provides an explanation as to why this happened. In the process of finding a new candidate he found 'three hostile letters' towards Delany written by Malachy Doran, who 'wanted the episcopate for himself'.[82] It was he who sent the letters 'calumniating' Delany to the nuncio in Paris.[83] Other letters showed his duplicity—promising Delany that he would 'promote him with all his power' while 'he boasted' in another to Patrick Dunne that 'he had placed an insuperable obstacle to prevent Delany's

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[77] M. Tierney, 'A short-title calendar of the papers of Archbishop James Butler II in Archbishop's House, Thurles: part 2, 1787–91', p.94, 89-103.
[78] Carpenter to Antonelli, Dublin, 9 Nov. 1782, 444r-444v, vol. 862, SOCG; Translation DA/BC/BA/809.
[79] Carpenter to Antonelli, Sacred Congregation, Dublin, 20 Sept. 1782, 446r-447r, vol. 862, SOCG; Translation DA/BC/BA/809; Feargus Ó Fearghail, 'The Catholic Church in county Kilkenny 1600-1800' in William Nolan, Kevin Whelan (eds), *Kilkenny: History & Society* (Dublin, 2000), pp 197-250.
[80] Carpenter to Antonelli, Sacred Congregation, Dublin, 20 Sept. 1782, 446r-447r, vol. 862, SOCG; Translation DA/BC/BA/809.
[81] Bishop Troy to Antonelli, Ossory, 19 Oct. 1782, DDA/AB/116/3/102.
[82] Keeffe to Sacred Congregation Propaganda Fide, Tullow, 15 Mar. 1783, 451r-452v, vol. 862, SOCG; Translation DA/BC/BA/809.
[83] Ibid.

nomination'.[84] Doran and his collaborators' campaign of misinformation backfired as other parish priests signed a petition in favour of Delany.

Keeffe reiterated why he was 'impelled' to choose Delany 'the most outstanding of his many outstanding pastors' before any other pastor. He instanced his 'blameless virtuous life', his ten year praiseworthy pastoral ministry' and that his income from 'his extremely poor parish was nearly all spent helping the poor and decorating his chapel while he himself was supported by his relatives'. He pleaded that 'the false allegations be ignored' and that Daniel Delany be appointed as his coadjutor adding that Delany had the support and endorsement of Dublin, Ferns, Ossory, Meath, Cashel and the coadjutor of Armagh.[85]

Delany was appointed coadjutor by Propaganda Fide on 7 April 1783. His brief for the coadjutorship and the see of Dansara *in paritbus infidelium* was dated 13 May 1783.[86] He was consecrated on 30 August 1783 in Tullow parish church by Archbishop Carpenter assisted by Bishop Troy and Bishop Caulfield, the newly consecrated coadjutor of Ferns. Also in attendance were the coadjutor of Armagh, Dr Reilly, and bishops Keeffe and Plunkett 'and a great crowd of clergy and people'.[87] Delany's episcopate was entering the public and political stage at a critical period in Irish history while on a personal level he had to contend with a group of priests who did not want him as bishop.

The diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, one of the most extensive in the country, includes all of Co. Carlow, fifteen parishes in Laois, twelve parishes in Kildare, four parishes in Offaly, the whole or part of four parishes in Wicklow, two parishes in Kilkenny and a small fraction of a parish in Wexford—in total forty-three.[88] The exertion and loneliness of visitations to distant parishes on poor roads was highlighted by Delany when he complained to Archbishop Troy in 1788 of his 'harassed and depressed spirits' after one 'hungry, solitary and joyless November ride of over thirty tedious miles

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[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] *In partibus infidelium* – a term meaning 'in the lands of the unbelievers' – words added to the see conferred on non-residential or titular bishops.
[87] Delany to 'His Eminence', Tullow, 29 Oct. 1783, trans. Fr O'Mahony, DA/BC/AIr/100.15.
[88] McGrath, 'Bishops of Kildare and Leighlin, p.273.

without the smallest refreshment or company to beguile the tedious way'.[89] One serious difficulty faced by a rider on visitations was that of falling off his horse and receiving a fractured skull, as contemporary press accounts show.[90] Many visitations could take up to a month to complete leaving Delany 'little time at home'.[91] A visitation included the duty of confirmation. On 19 October 1796, for example, Delany held the first confirmation ceremony in the new church of the new parish of Bagenalstown, which had replaced the old parish and church of Dunleckney.[92] On 30 June 1803, while confirming 700, he was so impressed with the improvements in the environs of Bagenalstown church that he promised to consecrate the chapel yard.[93] It had been newly planted with trees, railed and gated at the expense of John Murphy, a 'strong farmer', until 'the cash was raised to pay him'.[94] Consecration of chapels and cemeteries, the latter Delany described as 'a novel thing in modern days', were other duties of visitation.[95] There may be some truth in W.H. Fitzpatrick's claim that because of his social commitments Delany often forgot to make 'a long-advertised visitation'.[96] At least on one occasion he 'had totally forgotten' his appointment in the parish of Leighlinbridge when the parish priest had arranged that the dean and professors of Carlow College would dine with him.[97] It was in consequence of a reminder by the dean that he was able to rectify the situation.

By the late 1780s Catholic bishops were able to 'live according to their station'. For instance, Delany enjoyed a jug of whiskey punch with one of his Protestant friends, partook of a 'deluge of bumpers of old claret, port and sherry' at Robert Butler's funeral, attended such society occasions as the Kavanagh and Butler wedding in Borris and recommended to his fellow bishops 'a festive hour in the midst of a barrel of choice

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[89] Delany to Troy, Tullow 14 Nov. 1788 in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–90), 116/4/72.
[90] See press reports in Brady, *Catholics and Catholicism.*
[91] Delany to Edward Hay, Tullow, 8 Oct., 1807, in DDA, Catholic Board Papers, 390/1/xiii/11; Edward Hay was secretary to the Catholic Committee from 1808–19.
[92] Murphy Diary (*c.*1779–1836), MS, property of Mrs Mary Lou Considine, Washington D.C. U.S.A. in Catherine Ann Power, 'The Origins and Development of Bagenalstown, *c.*1680–1920' in Thomas McGrath & William Nolan (eds), *Carlow History and Society* (Dublin, 2008), p.426.
[93] According to the Murphy diary confirmations only took place in Bagenalstown in 1796 and 1803. Bishop Corcoran held no confirmations. The next confirmation was held by Bishop Doyle on 12 Jun.1820.
[94] Ibid. After the death of Daniel Delany, Arthur Murphy, John Murphy's brother, was unanimously elected by the diocesan clergy for the vacant position on 26 Jul. 1814. The pope approved the appointment on 19 Sept. 1814 but Murphy declined the dignity. Michael Corcoran was appointed in his stead on 21 Sept. 1815.
[95] Delany to Hay, Tullow, 25 Sept.1809, in DDA, Catholic Board Papers, 390//1/xii/33.
[96] Fitzpatrick, *The Life of Dr. Doyle,* i, p.126.
[97] Delany to Hay, Tullow, 25 Sept., 1809, in DDA, Catholic Board Papers, 390//1/xii/33.

spirits'.[98] Delany's report to Viscount Castlereagh attributed the rise in income to the diligence of the curates in collecting parish dues.[99] This changed circumstance was a far cry from the early years of Bishop Keefe who often went without the ordinary necessities of life.[100] At his death he left 7*s*. 7*d*., or, as he wrote in his will, 'next to nothing', to be divided between his brothers and sisters or their representatives 'if they think it fit to call for it'.[101] He was buried as he wished among the poor with little show and at little cost. Bishop Doyle recalled that his funeral expenses were paid out of the five pounds saved by Keeffe's servant from money he had intended for the poor.[102] The majority of the poor, Delany's report points out, were little more than paupers.[103] He highlighted the dependence of the clergy on the people 'for their entire support'. Because of this dependence he suggested that the clergy were little more than 'licensed or privileged mendicants, of a more decorous description, and less abject name'. Delany also drew attention to the fact that the value of a parish did not just depend on the affluence of the people but on the ability and personality of the priest to collect dues.[104] In his letter to Castlereagh, besides listing Easter and Christmas dues, marriage fees, and, mortuary fees, he gave particular mention to the practice of receiving 'emoluments' from over a hundred 'stations' held in 'the houses of the upper sort of inhabitants'. Larkin asserts that dues contributed in money and kind made up about a half of the clergy's income and fees the other.[105] This clerical dependence on their flock's generosity played a part in the anti-clerical tendencies of the Rightboy movement of the late 1780s and was one of the key factors in government pressure on the Catholic prelates in its bid to gain the passage of the Union bill and in its policy on Catholic emancipation.

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[98] Delany to Troy, Tullow, undated long letter in DDA, 31/1; Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb. 1788, in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–90), 116/4, no.70.
[99] Castlereagh, (ed.) *Memoirs and Correspondence,* iv, p.154.
[100] McGrath, 'Bishops of Kildare and Leighlin, p. 296.
[101] Both Delany and Henry Staunton were his executors in William Carrigan, 'Catholic Episcopal Wills in the Public Record Office, Dublin, 1683–1812' in *Archiv. Hib.,* 4 (1915), 66-95 at 82–3.
[102] Doyle, *Diocesan Book,* DA/BP/JKL/BV/03, p.61; Peader MacSuibhne, *Carlovia* 1, 2, 3, (Carlow, 1976), p.37.
[103] Castlereagh, (ed.) *Memoirs and Correspondence*, iv, p.154.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Catholic Church*, p.250.

Clerical Influence and State Education

One major consequence of the Rightboy disturbances may have been according to Larkin, that it weakened the considerable influence held by the clergy over their people which did not begin to recover until after the rebellion of 1798.[106] This was remarked upon by the Catholic lawyer Theobald McKenna, who wrote that the priests 'suffered very much in the estimation of the people [...] their credit was shaken to its foundation'.[107] That the clergy lost not only their influence over, but the confidence of, the laity is suggested in Delany's alarm and heated reaction to Chief Secretary Thomas Orde's proposed state educational policy (1787). Orde sought to reconstruct and develop Irish education from parish elementary schools to the third level. The proposals were seen by Delany and the hierarchy as direct interference in Catholic education.[108] Delany was then, with Keeffe, in the process of establishing Carlow College, Ireland's first third-level Catholic college. Writing to Archbishop Troy on Orde's policy, he compared what would happen to his experiences during the 'Rightboy reign' in Carlow when his and Keeffe's authority was challenged.[109] He suggested that the 'poor deluded people' were so 'infatuated' with the Rightboy plan that they showed an 'unnatural spirit' and 'impious defection from duty'. This was particularly seen in 'their highly effective tactic' of not attending their own chapels and instead going to Protestant churches.[110] Such opposition to the bishops is, in Catholic ecclesiology, 'virtually equivalent to opposing God because the bishop, as the pastor of the local church, represents the Lord'.[111] In not attending their chapels the people were in effect cutting themselves off from the church. Delany feared that in the same spirit of opposition the laity would send their children to 'Orde's catechists' and 'out of his hands for religious formation'.[112] He stated that he had written immediately to the presidents of seven of his priests'

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[106] Ibid., p.282.
[107] John A.Murphy, 'Priests and People in Modern Irish History' in *Carlow College Magazine* (May, 1970), 31-42, at 35.
[108] Dáire Keogh, '*The French Disease' The Catholic Church and Radicalism in Ireland 1790–1800* (Dublin, 1993), p.23.
[109] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb., 1788, in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–90), 116/4, no.70.
[110] James S. Donnelly, Jr, 'The Rightboy Movement 1785-8' in *Studia Hibernica,* 17 (1977) at 170.
[111] Brian W. Hughes, 'Newman's Theology of Bishops', *Irish Theological Quarterly* 72:2 (2007), 201-12 at 203.
[112] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb.1788, in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–90), 116/4, no.70; Delany to Troy, Tullow, undated long letter in DDA, Troy Papers File 31/1.

conferences on the matter, explaining that no matter 'how lenient and inoffensive the language of the education bill, it was, in reality, designed for the 'utter extinction of their holy religion'.[113] In his vehement opposition to the proposal he compared Orde to an 'honest British highway man standing before you with a cocked pistol demanding your treasure'—the treasure in this case being their Catholic religion. Orde's scheme, would, he held,

> obtain the self same ends [as the penal laws] but without the effusion of blood by imperceptibly draining the very spring of their future resources and cutting off all hopes of any effectual supply hereafter from the rising generation to recruit their exhausted forces.[114]

Delany believed that Orde had stated in parliament that the bill was inimical to popery and calculated to promote the Protestant cause. Delany did understand the strong desire of the people for basic education and, while acknowledging Troy as the leader of the Irish hierarchy, rather grandiosely urged him to do as one of 'his [Delany's] ancestors the Kings of Ossory' had done:

> to get upon your legs my Lord Archbishop and let us see that you tread with firm step and erect mien [...] on the conspicuous stage where you are placed to act such an illustrious character [...] to look the members of administration and committees [Catholic] whoever they are full in the face and tell them confidently that we can never accept this system.[115]

He impressed upon Troy the need to establish their own schools and through these to provide Catholic catechesis where the 'most scrupulous attention would be given to early religious instruction of children'.[116] He was sure that the bishops and clergy of the province would support Troy in every way. To encourage the archbishop, he stated he had for several months begun the process of instructing six or seven hundred boys and girls, as well as young men and women, in catechism and had already established the

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[113] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb., 1788, in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–90), 116/4, no.64.
[114] Ibid., undated long letter in DDA, Troy Papers, File 31/1.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb. 1788, in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–90), 116/4, no.64.

confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament.[117] Through such means he believed that at least the present generation of children would prove not to be the 'Rightboys of the future'.[118]

Carlow College

While Delany's reputation bears no comparison to Bishop Doyle's, the latter did not have to minister under the shadow of the penal laws, however much they may have been in 'suspended animation'.[119] Delany's capabilities, such as they were, were demonstrated in the role he played in the provision of Ireland's first third level Catholic college. When Gardiner's Act 1782 repealed the penal law against education, both Delany and Keeffe used 'the auspicious moment' to, in Delany's words, 'instantaneously with eager zeal, vigorously set about commencing the foundation' of a college.[120] Both men were prepared to provide domestic education, even if more expensive than a foreign education, and to do so at their own 'private risk and expense'.[121] They intended to have a college that would initially take between 200 and 300 students and to enlarge it later, depending on the 'liberality of subscribers' to the college's funds.[122] That Delany should 'appropriate all of his property' to the project was lauded by the English traveller Charles Topham Bowden.[123] Though many saw the project as a 'perfectly quixotic enterprise', McGrath suggests that such a college would have seemed like a good speculation in that it was situated in the arable lands of the south-east and thus would attract a flow of students who could afford its fees and it would also stem the flow to continental colleges.[124]

Their plans ran into difficulty early on as the bishops could not get a site in Tullow. Instead, Keeffe obtained a lease on 'a very desirable' four acres of land known as Winnets field near the town of Carlow. The lease, dated 30 September 1786, grants

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[117] See chapter two.
[118] Delany to Troy, Tullow, undated long letter in DDA, Troy Papers, File 31/1; Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb. 1788, in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–90), 116/4, no.70.
[119] Keogh, '*The French Disease*', p.5.
[120] Castlereagh, (ed.) *Memoirs and Correspondence,* iv, p.143.
[121] Ibid.
[122] *Leinster Journal,* Nov. 1786 in P.J. Brophy, 'The Birth of Carlow College' in *Carloviana* (1956), 33-36 at 34.
[123] Charles Topham Bowden, *A tour through Ireland* (Dublin, 1791), p.97.
[124] McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform,* p.66.

the lands 'now in the possession of the said James Keeffe from the 25th day of March last past for and during the term, time and space of 999 years'.[125] Keeffe moved from Tullow to a small house in Brown Street to keep a watchful eye on the progress of the building of the college which was close-by. Keeffe must have been sure of getting the lease as work had commenced on the college before the lease was granted. Indeed, the *Freeman's Journal* reported that as at 22 September 1785, a year prior to the perpetuity lease, 'the fourth or attic floor' had been reached and that the 'shell of that great building would be complete in a few weeks'.[126]

The project was funded by the bishops' combined income of approximately one hundred guineas, plus clerical donations and subscriptions from the laity, which ranged from sixpence to more than a guinea, as well as hat collections for brass at every chapel. The bishops, however, were not the only pastors seeking to raise money. According to MacSuibhne, the elderly Dean Gernon, P.P. of Carlow and Killeshin, was collecting money for the restoration of the old church on the Dublin Road, Carlow.[127] Relying on the same sources for subscriptions, the 'two collections did not make for harmony', and as a consequence, Keeffe was obliged to write to Delany to 'salt' Gernon—that is extract the last penny from him.[128]

Following the death of the venerable Bishop Keeffe on 17 September 1787, Delany was left alone with the burden of raising money to complete the building of the college. Writing to Troy he stated that:

> The priests are all perfectly drained by their past, and, indeed, daily subscriptions to the seminary in Carlow, which is still not completely finished and quite unfurnished, very considerably indebted, besides the yearly growing rent they have generously agreed to pay.[129]

Indeed, referring to financial support Bowden called on Troy 'to take off some of the weight off [his] worthy suffragan'.[130] Despite the struggle to finance the college, it

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[125] Brophy, 'The Birth of Carlow College', p.34; Registry of Deeds, Dublin, 385-529-255912, lease 30 Sept. 1786, Rent £34 2s 6d in Peader MacSuibhne, *Carlovia* 1–3, p.53.
[126] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal,* 22 Sept. 1785 in John Brady, *Catholics and Catholicism in the Eighteenth-century Press* (Maynooth, 1965), p.230.
[127] Peader MacSuibhne papers, DA/uncatalogued.
[128] Ibid. After the death of the 80-year-old Gernon on 4 Mar. 1787, Dean Staunton, his successor as parish priest, abandoned the idea and instead took a lease of half an acre from the college and built a chapel on it.
[129] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 14 Nov. 1788 in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–90), 116/4, no.72.
[130] Bowden, *A tour through Ireland*, p.97.

opened to both lay and clerical students on 20 October 1793 when eight lay students presented themselves. The opening was delayed in part by the Protestant bishop of Kildare and Ferns refusal to grant the necessary licence to open it.[131] In 1792, however, an Act of Parliament made such a licence unnecessary and the college was able to open its doors.

Though the college was originally intended only for the education of Catholic boys, the admission of seminarians was a necessity in the aftermath of the French Revolution and the closure of the Irish continental colleges. The closure also meant that among Carlow College's first professors were three French refugees, the Abbés Noget, Chabout and Labruné who must have exerted a strong French cultural influence on the fledgling college.[132] Sir Richard Musgrave viewed the opening of the college with a somewhat jaundiced eye. For him it was a further sign of the growing 'insolence of the lower class of people':

> At a time when a Protestant clergyman in that county could not obtain a sum of money to build a church for three hundred Protestants, whom he had attended for twelve years in a sooty cabin, the priest of Carlow built a college and chapel, which must have cost from £3,000 to £4,000.[133]

But Bowden held the opposite view stating that the college, 'a temple to learning', would act as a barrier in Protestant defence, in that Catholics would receive their education in Ireland and would not be imbibing French revolutionary ideas abroad. For this he stated Delany, 'merited the thanks of both houses of the legislature'.[134]

Securing funds to ensure the college's survival was a daily struggle. In the early years some priests and lay people left bequests to the college, for example Father Walsh's (1799) legacy of £10, and Miss Doyle (1799) five government debentures of £500, Miss M. Dunne (1801) £200, and Delany (1814) £317. 7*s.* 8*d.* Lay students paid twenty-five pounds as against twenty guineas for clerical students. It was the lay fees

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[131] Brophy, 'The Birth of Carlow College', p.34.
[132] Peter Guilday, *Life and Times of John England, First bishop of Charlestown, 1786–1842* (London, 1927), p.63; Martin Brenan, *An ecclesiastical history of Ireland from the period of the English invasion to the year 1829* (Dublin, 1845), p.377.
[133] Steven W. Myers & Delores E. McKnoght (eds), Sir Richard Musgrave, *Memoirs of the Irish Rebellion of 1798* 4th ed., (Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1995), p.634.
[134] Bowden, *A tour through Ireland*, p.97.

which at that time kept the college going.[135] Notwithstanding the financial difficulties, Delany was proud that the enterprise succeeded without 'a royal bounty or parliamentary aid'. It was also the boast of countless generations of Carlow College students against their Maynooth fellow students.

That said, the amount raised by Carlow College fees was markedly reduced with the opening of Maynooth College, which charged no fees. This nearly gave the *coup de grâce* to, as Delany saw it, the now 'utterly forlorn institution', as those who could pay Carlow College's fees opted to take the free places at Maynooth. Delany cites the case of an 'opulent' substantial farmer 'worth fourteen to fifteen thousand pounds sterling', who approached him to name his son to a place in Maynooth. His approach, Delany declared, 'was rejected with indignation'.[136] Such cases led to such a substantial drop in numbers for Carlow college in 1800 that, in his memorial to Castlereagh for aid for 'the tottering house', Delany declared it 'on the very point of inevitable dissolution' and 'in such a rueful predicament and crisis, as to enjoy little more than the name of bare existence'.[137] Although Delany was unsuccessful in his plea for funds and the college finances were a continuing struggle, the college, built in the style of a large country house, found approval in the eyes of the Reverend James Hall when he visited Carlow in 1813. He commented on the

> extensive building with excellent gardens, and a park in which the students walk and amuse themselves. Young men are educated here for the church as well as other professions. Father Fitzgerald teaches them Latin, Greek, Logic and Theology; but the important branches of physical knowledge seem to be of little account. Latin and Logic, with Roman Catholic preceptors, in general seem to be everything.[138]

According to MacSuibhne, a year after Delany's death work commenced on a new wing and on completion in 1817 it housed a hundred lay students.[139] Lay students remained part of the college community until they were transferred to Knockbeg College during the presidency of Patrick Foley, later bishop of Kildare and Leighlin (1896–1926). In

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[135] McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p. 66.
[136] Castlereagh, (ed.) *Memoirs and Correspondence,* iv, p.146.
[137] Ibid., pp142 &155.
[138] MacSuibhne, *Carlovia* 2, p.104.
[139] Ibid., *Carlovia* 1& 2.

1840 almost fifty years from when it first opened to students, the college was accredited by the University of London, one of the first institutions to be so accredited.[140] For over two centuries the college accounted for upwards of 3,300 ordinations but with its closure as a seminary in 2001 the college reclaimed its original function as a Catholic third level lay college.[141]

Delany saw that his 'evangelical duty' was to educate and 'inculcate in *his people the essential obligation of divine love and fraternal charity,* peace and goodwill to all mankind' [Delany's emphasis].[142] Bishop Doyle was generous in his summation of Delany's spiritual relationship with his people, which he described as Delany 'holding in his hands as it were the hearts of his flock to mould them as he pleased or rather as God required of him to do'.[143] In his own character assessment, Delany was convinced that from 'duty as well as instinct' that his work did not lie in the 'field' of politics.[144] Seeing himself as 'short-sighted as a politician' in 1788 he gave 'unlimited power' to Troy to speak in his name on all public decisions.[145] In a letter to Troy in 1792 he stated that '[he] felt an invincible repugnance to meddle without absolute necessity in anything that looked like politics'. He further added that it was only 'strong compelling motives' that would make him take on political issues and then only under 'the guidance of' his archbishop'.[146] Although he found politics repugnant one can only surmise that his handing of 'unlimited authority' to Troy points to some flaw (perhaps lack of confidence or the indolence he admitted to) in his character.

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[140] Brophy, 'The Birth of Carlow College', p.35.

[141] John McEvoy, 'The Carlow Priest from Australasia to the Americas' in Thomas McGrath & William Nolan (eds), *Carlow History and Society* (Dublin, 2008), pp501-503. The college survived by its college fees, donations and bequests.

[142] Delany to Troy, Tullow, Apr. 1810, DDA, Troy Papers, Misc. 390/1/xx/21.

[143] Doyle, *Diocesan Book*, DA/BP/JKL/BV/03, p. 62.

[144] Delany to Troy, Mountrath, undated probably Feb. or Mar. 1792, DDA, Troy Papers 9/9/15.

[145] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 14 Nov. 1788 in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–1790), 116/4/72. This was in reference to the first meeting of the four Metropolitans 10–18 Nov. 1788 which was the first step taken by Troy towards the creation of a national synod of bishops as stated in Keogh, 'The pattern of the flock', p.233. See also Cannon, *Irish Episcopal Meetings* p. 47. Cannon states that they were brought together 'to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and to promote uniformity in carrying out ecclesiastical laws' and that from 1789 onwards the bishops met every three years.

[146] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 14 Nov. 1788 in DDA, Troy Papers (1787–1790), 116/4/72. Walter Blackney or Blakeney of Ballyellen, Co.Carlow represented Carlow, while his son John represented Waterford city at the Catholic Convention though both men were non-signatories to the declaration as stated in C.J.Woods 'The personnel of the Catholic Convention, 1792–3' in *Archiv. Hib.,* 57 (2003), p.39, 26-76.

However, as bishop, he could not confine himself to his evangelical duties alone and had to, no matter how repugnant to his nature, become involved in the many political issues affecting Catholics at that time—the challenge of anti-clericalism in Europe and Ireland and a renewed Catholic Committee seeking relaxation or repeal of the penal laws. There were two parties in the Catholic Committee, the aristocratic, led by Lord Kenmare who favoured 'humble addresses and petitions for relief' and the more assertive radical middle-class members led by John Keogh seeking 'total enfranchisement as a right'.[147] Delany believed Catholic emancipation would lead to a loss of Christian faith already evident to him among many Catholics.[148] Such a belief arose from his experience of the anti-clericalism of the Rightboy movement and the blatant hostility to the Church in the imposition of the Civil Constitution in France. When the sixty-eight aristocratic members seceded from the Committee on the question of the 'republican tendencies' of the other members Delany was expected by Troy to get the signatures of the 'respectable' Catholic gentlemen in his diocese for his and the aristocratic members' address of loyalty of 29 December 1791, an address which left all future Catholic relief to 'the wisdom and discretion of the legislature'.[149] Delany did not get involved as 'the spirit did not move him', possibly because there were only a few 'houses of the upper sort of inhabitants' in the diocese.[150] Indeed, his scathing but amusing attack on the lack of gentlemen of consequence in Carlow reveals his strong class-bias:

> As to the address being signed, [...] by other persons of condition in the Co. Carlow, I really know not of one, besides Mr Blackney, except Mr Byrne of Cornellan, that can lay claim to that title. Very few *gentlemen* indeed have we left to boast, *of condition,* in these parts at present. But we could, if that would do, furnish not a few *graziers in right good condition*, aye, almost as good thanks to our luxuriant soil, as their very bullocks themselves. Many truly *great* men (that is

[147] Vincent J. McNally, *Reform, Revolution and Reaction: Archbishop John Thomas Troy and the Catholic Church in Ireland 1787–1817* (Lanham, Maryland 20706, 1995) p.47; Keogh, *'The French Disease'*, p.50.
[148] Delany to Troy, Mountrath, undated, probably Feb. or Mar. 1792, DDA, Troy Papers 9/9/15.
[149] McNally, *Reform, Revolution and Reaction*, p.49; Keogh, *'The French Disease'*, p.51.
[150] Castlereagh, (ed.) *Memoirs and Correspondence*, iv, p.154.

about the waist) of this description, could be supported to add *weight* to your address [Delany's emphasis].[151]

However the address (unseen by Delany) was signed by proxy for him by Walter Blackney[152] Even with Delany's 'signature', the address garnered only forty-two signatures, including that of Blackney.[153] Delany's signature discredited him in the eyes of the Committee, and in their excoriation they 'complained loudly of him'.[154] He made no apology to them and wished 'to bid them and their affairs once and for all an everlasting adieu'.[155]

In the aftermath of the Relief bill (1792) the Catholic Committee issued a declaration (to which Troy was an unwilling signatory) establishing that Catholic principles were not contrary to the duties of a citizen or 'repugnant to liberty, whether political, civil or religious'.[156] It also rejected papal temporal authority and even claimed that it was a 'sinful' and 'immoral' concept.[157] Delany's opinion concurred with his Protestant minister friend's comment that they 'had published a second Augsburg Confession, another formal protest against papal power'.[158] Although the declaration was well received throughout the country, Delany compared its efficacy in changing 'hardened and malevolent Protestant minds' to that of 'a maidservant denying for the twelfth time that she had taken her mistress's silver spoon'.[159]

When Hobart's Catholic relief bill was passed in 1793 the bishops signed the new oath of loyalty it contained and were prepared, in Delany's analogy, to 'all hang together on ye same string'.[160] For Delany, episcopal collegiality under Troy's leadership was everything.The bill provided a substantial measure of relief including the right to receive

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[151] Delany to Troy, 30 Dec.1791, DDA, Troy Papers, 9/9; Eamon O'Flaherty, 'The Catholic Convention and Anglo-Irish Politics, 1791–3' in *Archiv. Hib.*, 40 (1985), 14-34 at 19.
[152] Delany to Troy, Mountrath, undated probably Feb. or Mar. 1792, DDA, Troy Papers 9/9/15.
[153] O'Flaherty, 'The Catholic Convention and Anglo-Irish Politics' at 19; Keogh, '*The French Disease*', p.52.
[154] Delany to Troy, Mountrath, undated probably Feb. or Mar.1792, DDA, Troy Papers 9/9/15
[155] Ibid.
[156] Keogh, '*The French Disease*' p.56; McNally, *Reform, Revolution and Reaction*, p.51.
[157] McNally, *Reform, Revolution and Reaction*, p.51.
[158] Keogh, '*The French Disease*' p.56; McNally, *Reform, Revolution and Reaction*, p.51; Delany to Troy, Tullow, undated probably Feb. or Mar.1792, in DDA, Troy Papers 9/9/15.
[159] Delany to Troy, Tullow, undated, probably Feb. or Mar.1792, in DDA, Troy Papers 9/9/15.
[160] Thomas Wyse, *Historical sketch of the late Catholic Association*, 2 vols. (London, 1829), i p. 115; Delany to Troy, Mountrath, undated probably Feb. or Mar. 1792, DDA, Troy Papers 9/9/15.

a third-level education, to open colleges affiliated to the University of Dublin, provided they were not exclusively for the education of Catholics.[161] The latter measure ensured that the colleges could not be used as seminaries. For the Catholic Committee, however, the concessions were not enough to satisfy those expecting 'complete emancipation'.[162]

Delany, like the rest of the Catholic Committee, was enthused by the arrival of the new pro-Catholic viceroy, Earl Fitzwilliam, the Lord Lieutenant, on 4 January 1795. He was one of the many signatories to their petitions seeking total repeal of the remaining penal laws.[163] He was also one of a committee that included the Duke of Leinster, Colonel Keatinge and fourteen other prominent Catholics who presented the address of the Kildare Catholics' meeting to Fitzwilliam.[164] He also supported the bishops' submission for a state-funded seminary.[165] However, Catholics hopes were dashed with the sudden recall of Fitzwilliam on 21 February 1795.[166] The result of his departure was the rejection of Grattan's Catholic relief bill which had received its first reading in the Irish house of commons. Instead, in what was seen as a sop to the hierarchy, a college bill establishing the government-funded Royal College at Maynooth was passed on 24 April 1795.[167] Financial support for a national seminary suited government in that impressionable young seminarians would be educated away from the radical ideas of continental Europe. It was also an attempt by the London government to try to build an alliance with the Catholic bishops, which was never really successful.[168] The opening of Maynooth College together with that of Carlow College marked, as

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[161] Keogh, '*The French Disease*' p.71.

[162] Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Edmund Burke*, (Dublin, 1997), p.282; John Quinlan, *The people's history of Catholic emancipation* (London, 1929), p.14.

[163] Keogh, '*The French Disease*' p.78.

[164] *Dublin Evening Post,* 27 Jan. & 17 Feb.1795; *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Feb.1795 in Liam Chambers, *Rebellion in Kildare, 1790–1803* (Dublin, 1998), p.31

[165]The fact that there were no fewer than eighteen bishops present at the Augustinian Priory in John's Lane made this by far the largest meeting of the hierarchy for over a hundred years in Keogh, '*The French Disease*', p.78; Cannon, *Irish Episcopal Meetings*, p.113.

[166] O'Brien, *Edmund Burke*, p.295.

[167] 35 Geo.111, c.21. An Act for the better education of persons professing the popish or Roman Catholic religion, Keogh, '*The French Disease*' pp 83&234; McNally, *Reform, Revolution and Reaction*, p.82;Daire Keogh, 'Christian Citizens: The Catholic Church and Radical Politics 1790–1800', in Liam Swords, *Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter* (Dublin, 1997), p. 15.

[168] Patsy McGarry, 'The Rise and Fall of Roman Catholicism in Ireland' in Louise Fuller, John Littleton and Eamon Maher (eds), *Irish and Catholic: Towards an understanding of identity* (Dublin, 2006), 31-46, p.34.

Keogh observes, 'an end to the penal restrictions on the practice of the Catholic faith'.[169] Still, in the eyes of the radicals of the Catholic Committee, a state-funded Catholic seminary was no substitute for the hoped for emancipation.

Throughout the 1790s the Irish bishops were greatly agitated by the French 'disease' namely that of French radicalism based on a 'revolutionary separatist philosophy'.[170] However, Delany does not appear to have issued a pastoral letter condemning violence and revolution as his name is not among the individual pastorals listed by Keogh, though he did sign the joint letter of the hierarchy of 28 May 1798. Despite the hierarchy's exhortations, there was no holding back the storm clouds of rebellion and in May–June 1798 Delany's diocese of Kildare and Leighlin was 'witness to a great deal of fighting' as 'nasty as any civil war'.[171] County Carlow had been under martial law since 1 November 1797.[172] Except for a very few, the majority of the clergy supported Delany's anti-rebellion stand. Carlow's leading United Irishman, Peter Ivers, stated 'that the priests except for two or three [...] were universally against them'.[173] Delany and his clergy did much to prevent rebel activity in the diocese by getting the people to surrender any arms they held. Local tradition in Tullow holds that Delany received pikes across the altar rails from his parishioners.[174] Although Delany believed he was in danger of death from the 'hotly raging rebellion' he 'was determined to stand or fall by the bishops' declaration of loyalty to the 'king and constitution'.[175] By mid-July 1798 Bishop Caulfield of Ferns reported to Troy that Delany 'was in a miserable way, insulted, emaciated and had to take refuge with Miss Browne'. To add further to his woes the yeomanry stabled their horses in his chapel thereby desecrating it.[176] Brigidine tradition holds that Father John Murphy made his way to Delany the night before his

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[169] Keogh, *The French Disease'*, p.36.
[170] Brian MacDermot (ed.) *The Irish Catholic Petition of 1805, The Diary of Denys Scully* (Dublin, 1992), p.xiii; Keogh, '*The French Disease'*, p.137; Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland: The Union and its Aftermath* (Dublin, 1977), p.3.
[171] Keogh, *The French Disease'*, p.174; Dickson, *New Foundations,* p.212.
[172] Copy of part of the Murphy Diary, in the possession of Catherine Ann Power.
[173] Maura Duggan, 'United Irishmen, Orangemen and the 1798 Rebellion in County Carlow' in Thomas McGrath & William Nolan (eds), *Carlow History and Society* (Dublin, 2000), pp535–586 ;Ivers to Edward Cooke, Aug. 1798, Rebellion Papers, 620/3/32/12 in Maura Duggan, 'The 'Popish Plot' in County Carlow' in Carloviana, 2: 26 (1977/78), 7-10 at 9.
[174] Peadar MacSuibhne, *'98 in Carlow*, p. 137.
[175] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 9 Jun.1798 in DDA, Troy Papers (1797–1799), 116/7 /69.
[176] Bishop Caulfield to Troy, 24 Jul. 1798, in DDA, Troy Papers (1797–1799), 116/4/73.

capture and brutal and violent death and received the comfort of the sacraments from him although this story seems highly unlikely.[177] In the aftermath of the Rebellion when three of his chapels were destroyed possibly by the local yeomanry, Delany tried, by establishing relations with the local military leaders, to lessen their severe policy of reprisals and, as a preventive measure, exhorted his people to be patient and to avoid secret societies.[178]

The Rebellion left the hierarchy in a weakened position to safeguard the Catholic gains made since the 1793 Relief Act. Facing considerable anti-Catholic feeling and accusations of disloyalty they feared losing the financial subsidy provided by the state for Maynooth College. For the government the rebellion brought to the fore the need for a legislative union with Great Britain and the need for some form of state control over the Catholic church by arrangement with the Irish hierarchy. Lord Lieutenant Cornwallis and Chief Secretary Castlereagh had identified, as Bartlett argues, '[t]he pivotal importance of the Catholics' in bringing union about'.[179] Oliver P. Rafferty concurs with this analysis and makes clear that though Catholic support in itself was not enough to pass the Act of Union, Catholic opposition was enough to prevent it.[180] In recognition of this, Cornwallis and Castlereagh spent time and effort 'assuring the clergy [but not publically] that a union would speedily be followed by further Catholic relief'.[181] In the light of these assurances Delany and nine of his fellow trustee bishops of Maynooth, including the four archbishops, responded favourably to Pitt's proposal of 'an independent provision' for the Irish clergy at their Maynooth meeting held between the 17 and 19 January 1799.[182] In return, their lordships were prepared to allow the king a negative veto over appointments to Irish Catholic bishoprics but only with many qualifications and the sanction of the Holy See.[183] Nothing came of the bishops' secret resolution at Maynooth as, four days later on 23 January 1799, the first attempt at union

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[177] See Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.189.
[178] McGrath, 'Bishops of Kildare and Leighlin', p.314; O'Riordan, 'Bishop Daniel Delany', p.478.
[179] Thomas Bartlett, 'The Origins and Progress of the Catholic Question in Ireland, 1690–1800' in T.P. Power & Kevin Whelan (eds), *Endurance and Emergence Catholics in Ireland in the eighteenth century* (Dublin, 1990), p.17.
[180] Rafferty, *The Catholic Church and the Protestant State*, p.39.
[181] Bartlett, 'The Origins and Progress of the Catholic Question ', p.17.
[182]W.E. H. Lecky, *A History of Ireland in the eighteenth century*, 5 vols (London, 1913), v, p.249.
[183] Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish nation*, p.251; Evelyn Bolster, *A History of the Diocese of Cork: From the Penal Era to the Famine* (Cork, 1989), p.169.

failed but, as Gerard O'Brien points out, the pension scheme plainly remained in existence as a bargaining counter for future occasions.[184]

On 2 July 1800 the Act of Union received the royal assent, the Irish parliament closed on 2 August and union came into being 1 January 1801.[185] But union did not bring with it the hoped for Catholic emancipation. Perhaps, as Oliver P. Rafferty argues, 'the greatest mistake in the failure of the political establishment truly to reconcile Irish Catholics to the Union and the empire was the resistance to Catholic emancipation in the first decades of the Union's existence'.[186] Putting pen to paper in February 1807 Delaney declared that he was 'utterly dead to all hope of success in the attainments of our pursuits'.[187] It is within this atmosphere of unresolved 'Catholic toleration' that the British government's attempt in 1808 to intervene in the election of Irish Catholic bishops raised a storm of protest. From a government's point of view, as Geoghegan cogently argues, 'religious securities' like a veto in the appointment of bishops were a basic necessity and safeguard before emancipation could even be contemplated.[188]

In July 1807 Delany was host to a meeting of bishops in Tullow among whom was Bishop Milner, vicar apostolic of the Midlands district of England, who was promoting acceptance of a royal veto in the appointment of Catholic bishops (English and Irish) in return for a state pension.[189] It was nearly nine months from the date of that meeting that the public became aware of the veto question when Grattan, Greville and Ponsonby presented the Catholic petition for emancipation to parliament and, on the authority of Milner, offered the veto while Ponsonby put on record the bishops' earlier secret 1799 Maynooth negotiations.[190] Because of the public outcry the bishops at their general meeting in Dublin (14–16 September 1808) rejected the proposal as

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[184] Gerard O'Brien, 'The Beginning of the Veto Controversy in Ireland' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 38:1 (Jan. 1987), 80-94 at 87.

[185] Patrick M. Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union, A Study in High Politics 1798–1801* (Dublin, 2001), pp 116-117.

[186] Oliver P. Rafferty, 'The Catholic Church, Ireland and the British empire, 1800–1921' in *Historical Research*, 84 (May, 2011), 288–309. doi: 10.1111/j.1468–2281.2010.00556.x.

[187] Delany to Hay, 6 Feb. 1807, Tullow, in DDA , Catholic Board Papers, 390/1/xiii/3.

[188] Patrick M. Geoghegan, *King Dan: The Rise of Daniel O'Connell, 1775–1829* (Dublin, 2008), p.108; On earlier allegiance to the crown see Gerard O'Brien, (ed.), Tom Dunne (assoc. ed.), *Catholic Ireland in the Eighteenth Century, Collected essays of Maureen Wall,* (Dublin, 1989), p.109

[189] Delany to Hay, 8 Oct. 1807, Tullow, DDA, Catholic Board Papers, 390/1/xiii/11.

[190] Cathaldus Giblin, 'Papers of Richard Joachim Hayes, O.F.M., part 4, May-Dec. 1816' in *Collectanea Hibernica*, no.25, 1983, 86-177 at 140; Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish nation* p.293; Bolster, *Diocese of Cork*, p.80; O'Brien, 'The Beginning of the Veto Controversy in Ireland', 81.

'inexpedient'. In Delany's eyes the veto was now 'a baleful mischief' through which they bartered their faith for 'that worthless geegaw emancipation'.[191] Delany's disparagement of emancipation was not remarkable given that the bishops' priority was not emancipation but the well-being and concerns of the Catholic church.[192] The veto question simmered on until resolved in 1828 (domestic nomination and the exclusion of a royal veto) and, while it caused much dissension among Catholics, it played a significant role in the development of the nineteenth-century relationship between the Irish Catholic church, the British state and the Irish Catholic community.[193] Gradually Catholic episcopal power increased to such an extent from the 1850s onwards, as Donal H. Akenson contends, 'that what cabinet members were to England, the Irish Roman Catholic bishops were to Ireland'.[194] Delany would have been astonished to find that a century later another bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, Patrick Foley (1895–1926), was selected by the government as a National Commissioner of Education (1904–1922).

Conclusion

As has been discussed Delany's main concerns were not the political matters on the national stage. Rather, his responsibility was to the spiritual and religious life of his diocese. Towards this responsibility, except between 1798 and 1805, he held annual public Corpus Christi processions (the popular piety of 'gazing at the Host') when upwards of ten thousand would attend during the octave.[195] At grave cost to his health, he carried the Blessed Sacrament in procession for the feast of Corpus Christi in 1814.[196] From that day he declined rapidly and died on 9 July with Troy, his spiritual director, at his bedside. He was buried in his new church in Tullow. To continue financial aid to the Brigidines and to avoid sequestration, under the advice of his solicitor E.H. Gibbons he

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[191] Delany to Hay, 8 Oct. 1807, Tullow, in DDA, Catholic Board Papers, 390/1/xiii/11.
[192] Rafferty, *The Catholic Church and the Protestant State*, p.15.
[193] C.D.A. Leighton, 'Gallicanism and the veto controversy: church, state and Catholic community in early nineteenth-century Ireland' in R.V. Comerford, Mary Cullen, Jacqueline R. Hill & Colm Lennon, *Religion, Conflict and Coexistence in Ireland* (Dublin, 1990), p.135; Donal Kerr, 'Dublin's forgotten Archbishop Daniel Murray, 1768–1852' in James Kelly & Dáire Keogh, (eds), *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 2000), p.254.
[194] Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970), p.2.
[195] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 25 Jun. 1810, DDA, Troy Papers, Green File 1809–11, 29/12/25; Corish, *The Catholic Community*, p.7.
[196] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.

had vested most of his £9,000 in debentures to named religious sisters but in each case Judith Wogan Browne's name preceded that of the sisters. Her involvement (as is discussed in the next chapter) as a trustee of Brigidine finances till her death in 1848 was to have major consequences for the development of the Brigidine congregation, which he established in Tullow in 1807 to provide an education for both poor and well-off children. In 1808 he founded the Patrician brothers for the education of boys. Although ill, he made the decision in May 1814 to admit Peter Kenny S.J. to his diocese to found Clongowes Woods College as 'an off-shoot of Stonyhurst College'.[197] The Jesuits were restored in England in 1803 by Pope Pius VII ahead of a worldwide restoration of the Jesuits in 1814. Morrisey sees Delany's giving of faculties to the Jesuits to act publicly as priests and to preach and hear confession as a generous act.[198] Some twenty years later, however, the link between the two colleges was seen by Archdeacon Broughton, the chief representative of the Anglican church in Australia, as part of a large, secret, latter-day popish plot to 'catholicize the British empire'. [199] Broughton's fears probably arose from the passage of the 1829 Catholic Emancipation bill.[200]

In a period where, as Wyse claims, 'the scar and brand' of the penal laws still remained, and Catholic relief in the late eighteenth century had been given, as Keogh remarks, not as a right but as an indulgence, this pious, and essentially non-political prelate's legacy is his co-foundation of Carlow College, the foundation of two religious congregations, the Brigidine sisters (1807) and the Patrician brothers (1809), the overseeing of the construction of twelve churches and the admittance of the Jesuits to his diocese.[201]

It must be admitted, however, that his handing over of 'unlimited authority' to Archbishop Troy to act on his behalf so early in his episcopate raises questions, as mentioned above, about his character (possibly the indolence and vacillation that he

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[197] Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education*, p.4.
[198] Thomas Morrisey, *As one sent Peter Kenny 1779–1861* (Dublin, 1996), p.114.
[199] William Grant Broughton, *The Present Position and Duties of the Church of England: A Sermon preached in Canterbury Cathedral on Thursday, September the 17th. 1835, being the one hundred and twenty-third anniversary of the King's School Feast Society* (Canterbury, 1835), p.26 quoted in Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education*, p.4.
[200] Whitehead, *English Jesuit Education*, p.189. The Catholic Emancipation bill (1829) contained a clause that specifally forbade the existence of the Society of Jesus within the kingdom—a prohibition never subsequently tested in the courts,
[201] Wyse, *Historical sketch of the late Catholic Association*, p.56; Keogh, *The French Disease'*, p.25.

admitted to) that probably affected his role as bishop. Indeed, his sentiments and actions accord with McGrath's conclusion that Delany was by nature more suited to the role of collegiate professor than to the rigours of the mission.[202]

While we do not know exactly when Delany determined to establish the Brigidine sisters we can sketch out the events that led up to it and the conditions that impelled him to take such a step, the financial arrangements he made for their survival under the trusteeship of Judith Wogan Browne and his limited vision for the congregation. These events are discussed in the next chapter.

[202] McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform,* p.34.

CHAPTER 2

1777–1848

DELANY AND EDUCATION

Daniel Delany's return to Ireland *c.* 1777 coincided with the Relief Acts of 1778 and 1782. Although these statutes had no effect on the 'poorest or next to poorest' of his diocese, the Relief Act of 1782 did remove almost all constraints on public worship and on clerical activity which had delayed the Irish Catholic church's development along Tridentine lines.[1] With this mitigation of their circumstances Delany and his fellow bishops set about 're-establishing order and discipline' in Catholic practice through, as McGrath posits, the 'development of Irish Catholicism within a fully Tridentine and neo-Tridentine framework'.[2] Whether one sees these changes as revival, reform or renewal, as the Catholic church emerged from penal persecution it managed, in Emmet Larkin's remarkable phrase, 'to build itself into the very vitals of the nation'.[3] These changes may have been the impetus behind Delany's decision to go beyond confraternities to establish two religious teaching congregations to maintain not only the essential catechesis and secular education of the people or, in the annals hagiographical claim, for 'the sanctification of the congregation members and of the people of his parishes'.[4]

Delany was bound by the decrees of the Council of Trent (1545–63) to take special care of the education of youth since it is a principle of the Catholic church that it has the exclusive right to teach religion to Catholic children.[5] In accordance with this principle, religion should be an essential part of education; it should penetrate all facets of education and should not be simply an adjunct to instruction in other subjects.[6] In

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[1] Cormac Begadon, 'The renewal of Catholic religious culture in eighteenth-century Dublin' in John Bergin, Eoin Magennis, Lesa Ní Mhunghaile, Patrick Walsh (eds), *New Perspectives on the Penal Laws* (Dublin, 2011), pp 227-247, p.243.

[2] McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.217.

[3] Cited in Niall Coll, 'Catechesis: Bridge from Rite of Passage to Sacrament' in Niall Coll & Paschal Scallon (eds), *A Church with a Future: Challenges to Irish Catholicism Today* (Dublin, 2005), pp125-136, p.129.

[4] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/910.

[5] Wilfrid Ryan, Philippe Perrier, Michael Maher, Andrew Murphy, William Turner, & James Burns, 'Schools' in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 13 (www.newadvent.org/cathen/13554b.htm) (2 Dec. 2011).

[6] Edward Pace, 'Education', in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 4 (New York, 1909), (www.newadvent.org/cathen/05295b.htm) (2 Dec. 2011); John Coolahan, *Irish Education, history and structure* (Dublin 2007), p.5.

Ireland this decree was hindered by the penal laws' 'unlimited proscription' of Catholic education.[7]

We know from Delany's letters that he was acutely aware of the deficiencies and weaknesses of the illegal hedge schools in giving the necessary 'scrupulous attention' to teaching children 'the rudiments of religious instruction'.[8] Although the children generally knew the catechism, they answered 'like parrots' from rote memory and did not understand what they said.[9] His concern particularly reached out to the children of the 'wretchedly poor' whose poverty prevented them from attending school and left them, as Delany saw it, ignorant of the 'saving knowledge of true religion'.[10] Their poverty, as Delany feared, also left them open to the proselytism of the Charter schools especially established in 1733 by the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland to be the means of indoctrination 'of the Irish natives', particularly the children of the very poor and from 1750, to further this intent, the schools could take in 5 to 7-year-old children found begging (there were then seven charter schools or 'little nurseries of religion' in the diocese).[11] These children could not be removed unless the parents could prove they were admitted against their will.[12] The Charter schools had limited effect in converting Catholic children to the Protestant faith. Yet, until their closure in the early nineteenth century, they continued to be perceived as a serious threat to the Catholic faith partly because some parents remained well disposed to the prospect of the free education and the maintenance of their children.[13] It was an imperative for Delany not only to find means to educate the children but also to take on board the needs of the adult population, in particular the lower class, whose 'religious culture was a blend of the orthodox and the folkloric' (harmless beliefs in fairies, ghosts, and other malign influences and the efficacy of, for example, holy water, holy pictures)

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[7] Ryan et al, 'Schools' in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 13; Lecky, *History of Ireland*, v, p.148.
[8] Delany to Troy, 12 Feb. 1788, Tullow, DDA, Troy papers 1787–90, 116/4/64.
[9] Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland* (Gt. Britain, 1997) p.118; Corish, *The Catholic Community*, p.109.
[10] Delany to Troy, 12 Feb. 1788, Tullow, DDA, Troy papers 1787–90, 116/4/64.
[11] Kenneth Milne, *Irish Charter schools, 1730–1830* (Dublin, 1997) pp 26, 55 & 347; P.J. Dowling, *A History of Irish Education,* (Cork, 1971), p.52; Dowling, *Hedge Schools*, p.28; Norman Atkinson, *Irish Education: a history of educational institutions* (Dublin, 1969), p.23.
[12] Atkinson, *Irish Education*, p.25.
[13] James Kelly, 'The Context and Course of Thomas Orde's Plan of Education of 1787', *The Irish Journal of Education*, 20:1 (1986), 3-25 at 5.

but whose religious practice fell significantly short of the obligatory minimum prescribed by the Catholic church's Tridentine reform—the paschal duty of the reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist at least once annually at Easter.[14]

The inadequacy of both the Brigidine annals and the diocesan records makes difficult any analysis of Delany's plan to bring the people to a stricter observance of Catholic rites. However, Delany saw the challenge of catechesis as an 'arduous task' almost beyond his 'capabilities' arising, as he himself stated, out of his own 'vacillating' temperament—probably a true description.[15] He had to take on board that 'remarkable mood' of anti-clericalism towards the stance that the bishops had taken during the Rightboys' 'militant agrarianism'.[16] However, despite the tensions in the relationship between priest and laity, most people saw themselves and the priests as travellers in common on life's journey—'sinn go léir ag trial ar Dia na glóire'.[17] Although it was this bond that Delany focused on, priestly catechesis was compromised by a shortage of priests—eleven parishes were short of curates and three of his parish priests were old and incapable of ministry.[18] From the annals' account he appears to have concentrated most, if not all, of his attention on his mensal parishes of Tullow and Mountrath.

From his return to Ireland in 1777 Delany gave three days each week and Sundays to religious instruction in the church.[19] His Tullow Sunday school was the earliest in the diocese if not in the whole country.[20] In 1783 he used his French experience of confraternities to found the confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament as a means of spiritual formation for its members, each of whom had to receive the Eucharist once a month.[21] Delany chose members from the confraternity to form a catechetical

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[14] S.J. Connolly, *Divided Kingdom: Ireland, 1630–1800* (Oxford, 2008), p.265; McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.152; Dáire Keogh, *Edmund Rice and the first Christian Brothers* (Dublin, 2008), p.34; Desmond J. Keenan, *The Catholic Church in nineteenth-century Ireland: A Sociological Study* (Dublin, 1983), p.22.

[15] Delany to 'His Eminence', Tullow, 29 Oct. 1783, trans. Fr O'Mahony, DA/BC/AIr/100.13.

[16] O'Flaherty, 'Ecclesiastical politics', p. 49; Delany to Troy, 12 Feb. 1788, Tullow, DDA, Troy papers 1787–90, 116/4/64; Tom Inglis, *Moral Monopoly: The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 1998), p.118; Murphy, 'Priests and People', at 32.

[17] Murphy, 'Priests and People' at 35.

[18] In all he had a total of eighty-five priests ministering to a population of 185,050 which gave a ratio of one priest to every 2,176 Catholics in Castlereagh, (ed.) *Memoirs and Correspondence,* iv, pp 149-51.

[19] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.

[20] Martin Brenan, *Schools of Kildare and Leighlin 1775-1835* (Dublin, 1935), p.25; Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb. 1788, DDA, Troy Papers 1787–90, 116/4/64; McGrath, *Pastoral Ministry*, p.30.

[21] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324; McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.128.

society and trained them in catechetical instruction. He was ahead of his time in recognising that his female members had 'ten times the zeal of men'.[22] Delany next established the confraternity of the Christian Doctrine in Tullow in 1788, which specialised in the giving of religious instruction.[23] McGrath identifies the introduction of this confraternity into Ireland by Archbishop Butler as a 'highly significant achievement in the context of the catechesis of the great mass of Irish Catholics particularly in the early nineteenth century before the national school system became completely denominational and the emphasis on catechetical instruction shifted largely to it' in the 1830s.[24]

By 1790 the Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine was well established and from a record in 'the general roll of the unmarried mistresses' Delany appears to have expected a lot from and placed a heavy burden on the shoulders of these voluntary, unpaid, but able women assistants. For example, they were to teach 'all unmarried females of every class, women of mature age as well as those of tender years'. Nevertheless, the *esprit de corps* Delany established within the confraternity was due to the leadership and supervision he gave to it.[25]

The criterion for acceptance as a Sunday school instructor was very high. Only those who were 'remarkable in the parish for exemplary conduct, and were considered in other respects competent, were appointed to teach in the chapel'; the other confraternity members were allowed to teach only in their own families or in private.[26] Delany could boast that he had eighty teachers to give instruction.

As 'a prerequisite of effective catechesis', Delany required his catechists to teach the 'illiterate or wholly unlearned' the use of letters to enable them to read the catechism, prayer books or other pious productions to encourage their spiritual growth. As McGrath points out, the church in Ireland 'did not regard a child as adequately catechised until he

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[22] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 14 Nov. 1788, DDA, Troy papers, no.72; James Cleary, 'Confraternities and how to work them' in *IER*, 29-30; (1927), 573-591 at 581.
[23] Brenan, *Schools*, p.25; Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb. 1788, DDA, Troy Papers 1787–90, 116/4/64; McGrath, *Pastoral Ministry*, p.30; O'Riordan, 'Bishop Daniel Delany', p.471. Canonical erection was secured in 1788 for the confraternity's association with the church-wide Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.
[24] McGrath, 'Bishops of Kildare and Leighlin', p.310.
[25] Delany MS, Holy Innocents 1790, DA/supplement to the Brig archives, no.52
[26] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.

could read and bring an informed conscience to bear on the essentials of the faith'.[27] Cheap devotional literature was readily available for this purpose. Brock and Tulasciewitcz, who have categorized the nature of education provided by the Catholic church, describe the type of education provided by Delany 'as education for the good of the soul' and define it as 'schooling exclusively designed to assist salvation with articles of faith and rules of conduct, although from the very outset associated with basic literacy and numeracy'.[28]

Once the children knew their prayers and catechism they were put into small classes and prepared for First Communion. Delany presented prayer books to the children on the day of their First Communion and provided money in his will for the practice to be continued. All who were confirmed were admitted to 'reading schools' with access to the circulating library of spiritual books developed by Delany—for example, Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints.* Besides the spiritual benefits gained in the schools, the major benefit for those too poor to attend the hedge schools was that they had access to 'an elementary education and literacy in the English language'. This 'useful' skill, Logan states, was economically beneficial to those who possessed it, while Cullen also maintains that it opened up prospects in apprenticeships, less often clerkships [...] and a command of English opened up the prospect of employment as a teacher.[29]

Delany was very modern in his approach to Catholic action, reaching out to those who could not attend the schools on Sundays. He established week-day evening classes of instruction as well as promoting home visitations to those who were housebound and for those who did not possess the clothes that would permit them to appear in town for school. But Delany expected the catechists to be 'circumspect and discreet' in their approach to the unfortunate.[30] Delany claimed to his archbishop that between 600 and 700 boys and girls, young men and women, were taught by eighty confraternity members who 'had positively changed [...] the whole face of [his] parish'.[31] By the time Delany

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[27] McGrath, 'Bishops of Kildare and Leighlin', p.311.
[28] W. Tulasciewitcz & C. Brock (eds), *Christianity and Educational Provision in International Perspective* (London, 1989), p.3 quoted in O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers,* p.16.
[29] John Logan,'Sufficient for their Needs: Literacy and Elementary Schooling in the Nineteenth Century' in David Dickson and Mary Daly (eds). *The Origins of Popular Literacy in Ireland: Language Change and Educational Development, 1700 –1920*, 113–38, p.119; Cullen, 'Merriman' at 85.
[30] Delany, MS, Holy Innocents 1790.
[31] Delany to Troy, undated, DDA Troy papers, file 31/A.

was ready to found his 'Institute of St Brigid' he had a well trained cohort of catechists deeply versed in the ways of spiritual life gained through their membership of both confraternities.

Orde's 'malevolent plan'

It could be argued that the consolidation of the work of his confraternities by 1790 was given an added impetus with the announcement of Chief Secretary Thomas Orde's proposed education plan, presented to the Irish parliament on 12 April 1787.[32] Under part of the plan the Charter school teachers were required to be Protestant—they had not always been so.[33] Orde intended that provision would be made for the free instruction of girls as well as boys, thereby extending the provision of primary school education. Children were to enter the schools at four years of age, to remain there for five years and to be taught the three Rs, with religious instruction on Sundays.[34]

According to Colm McElroy, Orde felt that 'if state schools could be made efficient and available, possibly some Catholic children might be enticed away from the hedge schools'—there had been, as Cullen asserts, an 'astonishing growth in education from the 1760s in response to the demand for literacy in English'. As early as 1769 in their petition to parliament, the Charter school society was cognizant of and alarmed at the rise in hedge school numbers.[35] It was the enticement in Orde's 'malevolent plan' (as seen by Delany) that provided him with proof of the need to have a *corps* of trained catechists to combat the government's educational developments, which developments, he 'heartily and decidedly reprobated, condemned and anathematized [...] without hesitation or reserve'.[36] In his anxiety (shared by other bishops such as Caulfield and Egan) Delany believed that despite the administration's 'more accommodating language', its 'soft accents more in unison with the refined texture of modern ears', that their 'sentiments and dispositions' had not 'undergone the smallest change', but were

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[32] *Finn's Leinster Journal,* 8-12 Apr. 1787.
[33] James Lanigan (later Catholic Bishop of Ossory), a friend of Delany's, attended a Charter school as a child and worked there as an usher quoted in David Murphy, 'Bishop James Lanigan', *DIB,* vol.5, p.306.
[34] Kelly, 'Orde's Plan of Education', at 13.
[35] Colm McElroy, 'Thomas Orde and Educational Innovation, 1786/87', *Irish Educational Studies,* 15 (1996), 152-163 at 155; Cullen. 'Merriman', at 84.
[36] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb. 1788, DDA, Troy Papers 1787–90, 116/4/64.

'still innately of the same noxious quality and in the same pernicious mould' as before.[37] Delany was right to be wary. Whereas under the plan the 'benefits of education were to be equally available to all children without regard to religious denomination', Orde believed that 'children who were maintained and educated at state expense should be brought up in the established religion'.[38] Although Orde's plan was 'to create a national plan of education ranging from primary to university levels', Delany held that it was an attempt 'to cajole the bishops into thoughtless acquiescence to a project from which, once they were committed, they could not withdraw with good grace'.[39] Rather, Delany urged on Troy the immediate establishment of similar free schools to those proposed by Orde and to implement them without 'vice-regal or parliamentary aid in every parish throughout the kingdom'.[40] But, in the face of the impossibility of such a Catholic scheme, Delany's promise to 'vehemently guard with redoubled caution' against Orde's proposals must surely have resonated throughout his diocese and supplied the impetus for the development of catechesis beyond Tullow's Sunday school.

By the early 1790s there is evidence that other parish priests followed Delany's lead and established confraternities for catechesis in the parishes of Carlow, Leighlinbridge, Mountmellick, Rathvilly and Rosenallis.[41] In that hedge schools excluded those unable to pay the fees and not all schools gave religious instruction, the confraternities continued to act as an 'interim solution to the problem of Catholic endeavours'.[42] In this regard, Bishop Doyle later recognised and acknowledged Delany's 'unceasing labours' through the confraternities in 'promoting orthodoxy and the devotions associated with the Council of Trent'.[43] But confraternities were not enough for Delany. Because of the impossibility of having an immediate country-wide system of Catholic education, Delany was prepared to move beyond the confraternities (even though he had ensured that they were well established and a proven success) and to try

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[37] Ibid. Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb. 1788, DDA, Troy Papers 1787–90, 116/4/64.
[38] Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment*, p.66; McElroy, 'Thomas Orde', 155.
[39] Susan M. Parkes, *A guide to sources for the history of Irish education, 1780–1922* (Dublin, 2010), p.26: Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb. 1788, DDA, Troy Papers 1787–90, 116/4/64.
[40] Delany to Troy, Tullow, 12 Feb. 1788, DDA, Troy Papers 1787–90, 116/4/64.
[41] McGrath, *Pastoral Ministry*, p.30. See reports on education from the parishes of Carlow, Paulstown (then in Leighlinbridge parish), Mountmellick, Rathvilly, Rosenallis, 1824 (MSS in DA)
[42] Keogh, *Edmund Rice and the first Christian Brothers*, p.27.
[43] Doyle Diocesan Book, DA/JKL/BV/03; Keogh, *Edmund Rice and the first Christian Brothers*, p.28.

something new in the battle for Catholic religious education. The seeds of doubt on their sustainability had entered his mind and he sought the more permanent solution of a religious congregation.

It is difficult to determine when Delany proposed to establish a congregation of Presentation sisters in the diocese to give permanence to his catechetical work. The annals state (but do not give a date) that Delany was in the position to endow two houses where the poor would be taught 'gratis'. Delany is said to have visited the South Presentation convent in Cork city, however, his request for a foundation of Presentation sisters was declined.[44] The major difficulty was Delany's desire to have not only free schools but also pay and boarding schools which conflicted with the Presentation congregation's essential apostolate, that it was exclusively for the poor.[45]

Mountrath and the 'First Brigidine'

Undaunted by this set-back Delany continued to seek to form the 'nucleus of a religious community'. In 1792, rather than establish a confraternity of Christian Doctrine in his mensal parish of Mountrath, Delany sent 'six pious female catechists' from the Tullow confraternity to establish Sunday school teaching in the town.[46] He provided them with accommodation in a rented house. Possibly the six young women wished to dedicate their lives in a more permanent way to promote the cause of religious instruction. It is from Delany's lengthy description (over six closely written pages) of the venture to Archbishop Troy that one can surmise, as do McGrath and Gibbons, that the catechists had made private vows of celibacy.[47]

In sending this community of six catechists to Mountrath, Delany was attempting to follow the French tradition of *filles seculières* who were simple-vowed, undertook non-cloistered teaching or work in nursing institutes and received some little recompense for their work.[48] Since the French revolution religious life had, Karla Kehoe states, 'been reinviorgated, and women, like never before, flocked to the convents and proceeded to

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[44] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508; Con Costello, *In Quest Of An Heir: The Life and Times of John Butler, Catholic Bishop of Cork, Protestant Baron of Dunboyne* (Cork, 1978), p.44.
[45] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[46] Ibid.
[47] McGrath, 'Pastoral Ministry', p.31; Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.158.
[48] Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia* (London, 1996), p.487.

stretch and redefine its boundaries'.[49] The *filles seculières* were, for the most part, under the direction of the local bishop as the six catechists most definitely were.[50] O'Riordan has recognised in the move of the catechists to Mountrath the 'first of a few attempts to found the Brigidine congregation'.[51]

The catechists remained there for only nine months and we can only speculate on the reasons for their departure. It may have been due to the unexpected death of Mary Dawson, the only teacher named, their leader and 'intended central support of the community'. Homesickness for family and friends may also have been an issue, or it may have been due to sectarian hostility for which Protestant Mountrath was noted.

However, although the experiment in catechetical instruction lasted for only a few months, it was seen by Delany as a success. This is obvious from the excessively fulsome praise of the results achieved by the six in his letter to Archbishop Troy. For instance, in reference to the 'reformation' in religious practice they produced among the people of Mountrath and its environs, he stated that it was believed that '*the sisters were endowed with a soul saving supernatural power* [Delany's emphasis].[52]

One can only wonder at Delany's overly emotional and highly charged response to the death of Mary Dawson. Although he acknowledged that her visions (her 'extraordinary heavenly communications and supernatural delights') could be a delusion, such was his conviction of their veracity that he brought her body back to Tullow and had it interred in the chapel, 'her favourite dwelling place'—a privilege normally reserved for the clergy.[53]

Although O'Riordan claims (most likely true) that Delany recognized in Mary Dawson 'his own criterion of sanctity based on the degree of one's attachment to Christ in the tabernacle', she is, nevertheless, not mentioned in the annals.[54] It is not possible to date when a copy of Delany's letter to Troy mentioning Mary Dawson's 'most pure and immaculate life' first came into Brigidine hands. It is feasible to surmise that the sisters first read it in Comerford's *Collections* (1883–86) and it is from then that the construct

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[49] Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church*, p.10.
[50] M.R. MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope: Institutes of Women Religious in Australia* (Sydney, 1996), p.43.
[51] M. O'Riordan, 'Life of Dr Delany: Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin' bound type-set script, written *c.* 1972, p.36.
[52] Delany to Troy, Mountrath, undated, probably early Mar. 1792, DDA, Troy Papers 9/9/15.
[53] Ibid.
[54] O'Riordan, *Delany*, pp 172-3.

of Mary Dawson's 'edifying and saintly life' became the exemplar of Brigidine spirituality while at the same time becoming in the eyes of some, as suggested by O'Riordan and Sturrock, 'the first Brigidine'. It is possible but seems unlikely that as the sister of Eleanor Dawson, one of the first pioneers, that some memory of Mary's holiness passed down through the generations.[55]

Clonegal (1799–1861)

Undeterred, Delany made an attempt at a religious foundation in the small village of Clonegal just five miles from Tullow in 1799, a year after the rebellion. We know that Clonegal's Spanish-educated parish priest, James Purcell (1758–1810) asked Delany for female catechists, and that he sent a group of six devout women who had his permission to be set up 'in community'.[56] Purcell, who was described by Delany as his 'honest friend' and 'reverend champion', was an able canonist and was often consulted by Delany.[57] MacSuibhne notes that Purcell was accustomed to give catechetical instruction on Sundays and afterwards question his people at the stations during the week regarding the instruction of the preceding Sunday.[58]

The community was under Purcell's patronage until his death in 1810 aged 92. Three years previously on 1 February 1807, according to popular account he is said to have opened a community house for them on the High Street.[59] This date coincides with Delany's foundation of the Brigidines in Tullow yet there is no recognition of the Clonegal community in the Brigidine annals. We know, however, from Bishop James Doyle's correspondence that he recognised them as Brigidine nuns.[60] In the 1930s, one of Gibbon's interviewees maintained they were 'partly kept up' by Purcell's successor, Thomas Cummins P.P. (1810–18), who was well disposed towards them, but that they had difficulty with the next parish priest Martin Doyle (1818–27), who is said not to

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[55] Comerford, *Collections*, iii; Morna Sturrock, 'Daniel Delany and his first sisters' Master of Theology, Melbourne College of Divinity, 1992, p.20; O'Riordan, 'Delany' p.40; The only copy of the Delany-Troy letter in the Brigidine catalogue is BC/Air/695 and appears to be a twentieth century copy, Bernie Deasy, archivist to me 30 Jan. 2014.

[56] Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.165; McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.33.

[57] On James Purcell see Delany to Troy, Tullow, 14 Nov. 1788, DDA, Troy papers, no. 72.

[58] Peadar MacSuibhne, *Parish of Clonegal* (Carlow, 1975), p.81.

[59] Willie White, *Nationalist*, 2007.

[60] James Doyle to Martin Doyle, 10 Nov.1814, DA/BP/JKL/01/1814/01; 26 Jun. 1816, DA/BP/JKL/01/1816/05; 3 Jun.1817, DA/BP/JKL/01/1817/02.

have liked them.[61] The sentiments expressed in Bishop Doyle's letters to his first cousin, Martin Doyle suggest that it was not always so. The breach, if it was a breach, may have arisen over Martin Doyle's concerns relating to the community superior, probably at this period Teresa Anne Synott, otherwise known as 'Mother Synott'.[62]

Doyle's disquiet related to the manifestation of the sisters' consciences, which seemed to be the 'same as a sacramental confession to the priest' in that it included confession of 'secret temptations', 'secret guilt' and the 'ceremony of kneeling for penance'.[63] In 1814, five months after Delany's death, he wrote of his concerns to James Doyle, of Carlow College as to whether he should 'sanction the practice'.[64] The latter was disturbed by the practice and declared that 'the sham confession and imposition of penance' made his 'mind revolt particularly when he considered how liable it was to abuse in the hands of a woman who could be under the influence of passion, ignorant and proud, inquisitive, or perhaps irreligious'. James Doyle advised him not to sanction the practice and suggested that Dr Murphy, who was acting bishop, would prohibit the practice or prescribe new regulations to control it.[65] Two years later the 'manifestation of conscience' in the community was still a matter of concern to Martin Doyle and, in response, James Doyle stated the superior was not 'skilled' enough in 'spirituals' to 'direct her community in perfection and that Bishop Corcoran (1815–19), Delany's successor, would not allow it.[66] He advised that she should take 'cognizance only of the external faults in chapter' because he believed that in 'the nuns' simplicity' they were 'too rude for the refinements in spirituals'.[67]

From Martin Doyle's 'returns' to the commissioners of Irish Education in 1824 we learn that two of the community (37-year-old Teresa Anne Synott and 33-year-old Bridget Kenny) had at their own expense and with the sanction of the then parish priest

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[61] Gibbons, *Glimpses*, pp 163-4. Gibbons interviewed the eighty-year-old Mrs Comerford, who read to 'Mother Synott' while her mother attended Synott's school; O'Riordan, 'Delany', p.40; McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.33.
[62] J. Doyle to M. Doyle, Carlow College, 10 Nov. 1814, DA/BP/JKL/01/1814/01; 26 Jun. 1816, DA/BP/JKL/01/1816/05.
[63] J. Doyle to M. Doyle, Carlow College, 10 Nov. 1814, DA/BP/JKL/01/1814/01.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 26 Jun. 1816, DA/BP/JKL/01/1816/05.
[67] Ibid.

Thomas Cummins opened a school in the village in April 1814.[68] It was a fifteen foot by ten foot stone, clay and thatch schoolroom that had a 'wretched appearance with weeping walls and one small window'. The community's annual income, which was paid by the parents, was about £3. 13*s.* 9*d.*[69] Despite these difficulties the children in Synott and Kenny's school learned to read in six months.

As there is no further mention of the nuns in the Doyle correspondence after 1822 it is reasonable to argue, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that relations between the community and their parish priest had further declined. Popular opinion has held that it was Bishop Doyle, at the persuasion of his cousin, who disbanded them in 1824.[70] In the school returns Martin Doyle described Synott and Kenny as 'moral and religious women'. Whether he meant that they were religious in the sense of being nuns or that they were good devout lay women is unclear. In Bishop Doyle's eyes, although he saw them as nuns, he did refer to them as a 'congregation which was not approved of by the Holy See', and from which, he clearly stated, 'each of its members could depart *ad libitum*'.[71] Perhaps, as McGrath suggests, Bishop Doyle refused to recognise these devout women as religious unless they followed regular observances which, from the earlier difficulties over the manifestation of conscience, they clearly were not.[72] 'Mother Synott' is said to have held obstinately to the 'trappings' of conventual life till her death in 1861.[73] In accordance with James Purcell's wish the nuns were buried near his tomb.

The story of this little mission, however, begs the question whether Delany intended to amalgamate the two communities of Tullow and Clonegal and what prevented it happening? Did parish politics come into play? Did Delany's own failing health cause him to ignore the Clonegal community? Surely it could not have been lack of interest on his part to abandon these pious 'sisters' who, from the beginning, he had so earnestly directed and nurtured in their spiritual life. In McGrath's opinion they were representative of a significant vein of exceptional Catholic piety—lay devouts. In their twenty-five years of existence the community made such an impression that as late as the

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[68] Tom McGrath, *Politics, Interdenominational Relations and Education in the Public Ministry of Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin, 1786–1834* (Dublin, 1999), p.174.
[69] Doyle's answers, DA/BP/JKL/10/ECI/14; Brenan, *Schools*, pp 450–52.
[70] McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.31; Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.164.
[71] J. Doyle to M. Doyle, Carlow College, 10 Nov. 1814, DA/BP/JKL/01/1814/01.
[72] McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.31.
[73] Ibid.; Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.164.

1930s, according to Gibbon's interviewee, the 'nuns', were known everywhere as the 'Community of St Brigid'.[74] Two hundred years later, the Clonegal community was finally recognised as part of the Brigidine tradition at their bi-centenary celebrations held in Tullow in 2007.

Foundation of the Irish Brigidines

Delany remained firmly convinced that the establishment of a religious order was the only way he could supply his parishes with a 'constant and lasting succession of teachers'. It was the difficulty in maintaining a sufficient supply of competent teachers that had proved to be such a vexed question for him. While he understood the wastage due to marriage, family commitments or death, he deplored those he 'had assiduously trained' who left for no apparent reason when he was 'away from the diocese'.[75] But he was also alert to the fact that among the catechists were many who probably wished to consecrate their lives to the religious state but who, from the lack of a dowry or in the words of the annalist 'for want of means', could not do so.[76] Described as a man of 'great compassion', Delany determined not to allow a lack of dowries stand in the way of women drawn to the religious life. This is one of the reasons why he was so desirous of having fee-paying day and boarding schools. According to the annals the fees from these, along with what he would provide from his own personal wealth, would sustain them in their work and daily living. This appears to have proved impractical as within a short period, his successor Bishop Doyle made it compulsory that postulants should have a dowry on entrance to the convent.

The continuing cost of Carlow College and the poverty of his people hindered Delany's efforts to establish a religious congregation, as did the wait while he sought new leases to build urgently needed new churches in Tullow and Mountrath. He wanted the sisters to be close to the chapels to teach Sunday schools and his preference was to have the mother house in Tullow 'under his own eye'.[77]

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[74] McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.32; Gibbons, *Glimpses,* pp 163-4.
[75] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

Delany, following Nano Nagle's example, took the unprecedented step for an Irish bishop of founding a simple-vowed congregation.[78] Unprecedented because, until this time, only solemn vowed orders such as the Poor Clares, Carmelites and Dominicans existed in Ireland—there had never been penal legislation against nuns. Although 'quite a novelty' in Ireland Delany, in setting up his institute, was following the practice in France where simple-vowed institutes without enclosure had, for the most part, gained acceptance.[79] However, Delany's belief that it was necessary to have enclosure as an essential part of his new institution was almost certainly related in part to Bishop Moylan's experience with the Presentation sisters, as well as the continuing questioning of the status of simple-vowed congregations. Contrary to the wishes of their founder, Nano Nagle and of Bishop Moylan, the Presentation sisters desired enclosure in the belief that it would give them 'a secure and permanent identity'. The sisters believed that as a simple vowed institute without enclosure (necessary to give the nuns the freedom of movement which their mission demanded) they were not attracting Catholic middle class postulants who were going instead to the Ursulines sisters with enclosure who were also established by Nagle in Cork in 1771.[80] Enclosure was granted by Rome in 1805.[81] Delany's option for enclosure meant that the sisters would combine, as he wanted, the lives of Martha and Mary of Bethany in the exercise alike of an active and a contemplative life.[82]

Unlike Nano Nagle's prophetic inspiration to give nuns the freedom of movement to carry out their mission, Delany, in ensuring the sisters observed enclosure, was probably trying to associate his institute with the higher status of the older contemplative orders and in so doing make it attractive to new 'respectable' and better-off postulants and their parents, many of whom would come to see the religious life 'as

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[78] Corish, *The Catholic Community*, p.79.

[79] In a simple-vowed institution such as his, the women were called sisters and the institution was called a congregation whereas those taking solemn vows and leading an enclosed contemplative life of prayer were called nuns and the religious institute was called an order. See Carmen M. Mangion, *Contested identities: Catholic women religious in nineteenth-century England and Wales* (Manchester, 2008), p.3.

[80] Donal Flanagan, 'Lost Voices' in Denis Carroll, (ed.), *Religion in Ireland: Past, Present and Future* (Dublin, 1999), pp127-139, p.135; MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p.54.

[81] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p.54.

[82] Delany to Denys Scully, Tullow, 1 May 1814, NLI, Scully Papers, MS 27,506 (8). Enclosure is defined as: 'all that space in or around the convent in which free access is allowed to the nuns and prohibited to all seculars in Arthur Devine, *Convent Life: or the Duties of Sisters dedicated in religion to the Service of God* (Dublin, 1890), p.75.

an opportunity for their spirituality to fuse with philanthropic "works of mercy"'.[83] Delany does not appear to have had any doubts that the observance of enclosure would be an obstacle to his institute's work of teaching and instruction in the parish chapel.[84] However, for the Brigidine sisters, enclosure was one of the ambiguities and impediments that would frustrate their congregational development and identity. For one sister it was a 'crippling obligation'.[85]

It is unusual that for such a major undertaking as the founding of a religious institute, as Delany referred to it, there is no record of his writing to Troy (or anyone else) for advice, as was his wont. Further, in the absence of relevant records, it is reasonable to infer that, with Delany's aversion to writing to Rome, he did not seek instruction from Propaganda Fide on setting up his institute. But, as shown with the Presentation sisters, the balance of favour between the enclosed female orders and the open and active religious congregations had not yet moved in favour of the latter.[86] It could be, as MacGinley maintains, that the Brigidine institute, a simple-vowed, active but enclosed institute was 'caught in between'—between the older climate of canonical recognition and the newer forms evolving throughout the nineteenth century.[87] It was not until 1900 when Leo XIII issued *Conditae a Christo* that simple-vowed women religious were recognized as canonically 'religious'.[88]

Delany's criterion for the selection of his first sisters (on whom the success or failure of his new venture depended) was that they should have the following four major attributes: 'an ardent desire of attaining perfection', be 'seriously disposed to voluntarily undertake the practise of an austere self-denying penitential life', have the ability to 'study constantly to die to themselves and the world by the mortification of their passions, humours and corrupt inclinations' and that they should 'persevere in this until they should build a lasting love of God on the ruins of self-love'.[89] Delany believed he had found those qualities in catechists Eleanor Tallon (age and place of birth unknown),

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[83] Mangion, *Contested identities,* p.59.
[84] Devine, *Convent Life*, p.82.
[85] Mary O'Riordan, *Pathfinders:The Tullow Story*, i, (n.p., n.d.), p.11.
[86] Fahey, Anthony, 'Female Asceticism in the Catholic Church: A Case-Study of Nuns in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century', PhD thesis, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1982, p.3.
[87] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p.60.
[88] Ibid., pp59 & 60; Mangion, *Contested identities*, p.51.
[89] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.

Eleanor Dawson (29), sister of Mary, from Tullow, Catherine Doyle (29) from Ardattan, Bridget Brien (30) from Tullow, Judith Whelan (37) from Clonmore and Margaret Kinsella (48) also from Tullow.[90] All had taken perpetual vows of chastity renouncing the 'satisfaction of their sexual appetites' many years before.[91] For these future religious, their commitment to virginity was, as Jo Ann Kay McNamara demonstrates, part of a tradition dating from the early church where virginity 'wiped out gender differences' and gave women religious the 'independence and the authority to pursue a lofty spiritual calling' and in their case to perform the active apostolate of teaching.[92]

For their time and class the six were extraordinary women in voluntarily choosing to dedicate themselves to a religious life that they neither had experience of or an acquaintance with, unlike the women of Catholic aristocracy and gentry families who had a tradition of entering the cloistered convent life on the continent. It must also have been difficult for the families to accept the unusual circumstance of the women freely choosing to live the life of a religious sister, which meant for them social and financial loss—the productive capacity of their daughters, as potential child-bearers, as wage-earners and as family care-givers.[93]

In becoming religious, the six were the precursors for so many Irish women throughout the nineteenth century who saw that the religious life offered a model of womanhood that, as Carmen M. Mangion states, was in some circles highly regarded and provided an opportunity for single Catholic women to find spiritual and professional satisfaction.[94] They and future Brigidines would be instrumental in instilling a devotion and loyalty to the institutional church as, through their schools and their adult catechesis the new moral and civil code of the church was brought into the home.[95]

The establishment of the sisterhood was a simple but prayerful affair. According to the annals the six came together in Tullow on the evening of 31 January 1807. On the following day, St Brigid's feast day, Delany blessed their house and then celebrated Mass and gave Benediction for the little community. He purposely put them under the

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[90] Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.206; O'Riordan, *Pathfinders:The Tullow Story*, p.3.
[91] Ibid. Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508; Clear, *Nuns*, p.153.
[92] McNamara, *Sisters in Arm*, pp 3-6; Mangion, *Contested identities,* p.11.
[93] Mangion, *Contested identities*, p.77.
[94] Ibid., p.54.
[95] Inglis, *Moral Monopoly*, pp178-9.

protection of St Brigid and named them after her on the grounds that 'St Brigid had been raised up and employed by God to people the kingdom with religious virgins and that she herself had formed an infinite number to Christian perfection'.[96] He saw his community as a restoration of St Brigid's ancient order of nuns. And, as if to show the affiliation of the new institute with the old, he planted a sapling from the oak tree in Kildare in the convent garden which is today 'a tree of many branches typical of the sturdy growth of the institute at home and abroad'.[97] For over 200 years the Brigidines have celebrated her feast day with great joy with many young postulants entering the novitiate on that day. They have found inspiration in the inheritance of Brigid's wisdom and discernment and today's Brigidines see Brigid of Kildare as a patroness of those who have a care for the earth, for justice and equality, for peace and reconciliation.[98] Likewise the seemingly opposing virtues of Daniel Delany's episcopal motto *Fortiter et Suaviter* (translated as Strength and Gentleness) are in fact complementary notions of moral courage (*fortiter*) and consideration of others (*suaviter*).[99] The motto was embraced by the Brigidines and is the underpinning of the Brigidine ethos.[100]

Within a month of the foundation he realised that his appointed superior, Eleanor Tallon and Sister Margaret Kinsella were not exhibiting the degree of religious asceticism he expected of them and were, in fact, somewhat less than 'real religious' (they were not sufficiently inured to the pleas of their friends to return home) and were dismissed by him. Although Tallon never returned, hers possibly being one of the shortest reigns of a superior, Kinsella returned seven months later bringing three other aspirants from Queen's County with her, only one of whom, Mary Fitzpatrick, stayed to become in religion Sister Joseph, mistress of novices and one of the 'pillars of the institute'. Kinsella, or Sister Francis de Sales as she became, persevered in the community becoming its first official mother-assistant and died on 8 November 1835 aged 76 years. Eleanor Dawson (Sister Catherine) replaced Eleanor Tallon as superior and the community 'lived very retired lives practising great austerities'.

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[96] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[97] Catherine O'Shea, *It Groweth Green Again* (Randwick, Sydney, 1983), n.p.
[98] Brigidine Sisters (http://www.brigidine.org.au/about-us/index.cfm?loadref=13) (7 Jul. 2013).
[99] Brigidine College, St Ives (http://www.brigidine.nsw.edu.au/about/Pages/Spirituality.aspx) (20 Jun.2013).
[100] Brigidine College, Randwick (http://www.bcrandwick.catholic.edu.au/parents/parent-handbook/) (20 Jun. 2013).

Delany clothed the sisters in a uniform consisting of a simple black dress with a white handkerchief cap and a band'.[101] Delany also gave each sister a silver heart designed by himself, which they wore inside their habit—he himself wore a gold heart.[102] It was a symbol of his great love for the Sacred Heart. While Delany determined that they worship in the parish chapel where they would lead by good example he also stressed that they avoid all personal intimacy with their fellow parishioners—they were to observe 'custody of the eye' as well as 'custody of the word'. He also ensured that the sisters could attend daily Mass by appointing Father Clancy their chaplain. He also provided for future chaplains by leaving a stipend of £50 a year for them in his will.

Delany proudly claimed to Bishop Moylan in late 1808 that the community consisted of ten sisters and he had three or four postulants 'earnestly petitioning' to be admitted. That year saw the entry of Catherine Neil (Sister M. Agnes) from Tullow and three others, the sisters Kate and Brigid Delany (Sisters Magdalen and Gertrude) and Sara Crosby (Sister M. Augustine) all from Clonenagh (Mountrath). These women, in following the example given by the first pioneer sisters, were the forerunners for other women of the nineteenth century who exercised the option 'of marrying into a life of full-time service to the church'.[103]

Lack of adequate accommodation soon proved to be a major handicap to further receptions. The convent was, according to Delany, 'inadequate even for those stowed within'.[104] Delany laid the foundation stone for a 'forty-foot long' extension to the convent on 22 July 1809 and on the same day he also laid the foundation stone for a temple to serve as a station for Benediction during Corpus Christi processions.[105] Within twenty-two months of the congregation's foundation Delany had the convent grounds in Tullow surrounded by a ten to twelve foot high wall. The enclosure wall served the purpose of indicating to the world the nun's withdrawal from it.[106] Enclosure was possibly one reason why the Brigidines remained 'geographically contained' within the

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[101] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[102] The silver heart was worn inside the habit up to the General Chapter of 1920 when it was decided that it should be worn externally to distinguish the Brigidines from the Presentation sisters, whose habit Bishop Doyle gave to them in 1828.
[103] Myrtle Hill, *Women in Ireland, A century of change* (Belfast, 2003), p.32.
[104] Bolster, 'Moylan Correspondence', p.140.
[105] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[106] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p.9.

diocese for almost a century. Tullow convent with its high walls was just one of the many high-walled stone convent buildings which, MacCurtain points out, became such a feature of Irish towns and cities.[107]

Establishment of Mountrath Convent

The year 1809 saw Delany extending his institute to Mountrath. Delany chose Sisters Francis Kinsella (superior), Joseph Fitzpatrick (mistress of novices), Clare Doyle (mother assistant) and Mary Croke or Croak for the difficult mission.[108] The annals' description of their historic eight hour journey of some forty miles to their new convent home in Coote Street has become 'a sacred part of the Brigidine story'.[109] In simple words it details that on the 18 April in the middle of a fall of snow:

> Mr Fitzpatrick of Deerpark, ... brought to Tullow his cart filled with straw and a feather bed covered with a good quilted quilt; he brought up to Mountrath the three [four] nuns for the foundation ... The bishop was there to meet them and Mrs Keenan had dinner prepared and good fires while the people had generously furnished the convent.[110]

Delany remained on in the parish for three weeks offering encouragement to the sisters.[111] Ill-health meant that Mary Croke left the little community in 1810 without taking vows.

Delany also made arrangements for the new community's spiritual life. He ensured that they would have daily Mass and 'almost daily reception of Communion', which he considered essential in a new foundation. To do so he paid a yearly stipend of £20 to a priest of a neighbouring parish until such time as a second curate could be

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[107] Margaret MacCurtain, 'Catholic Sisterhoods in 20th-Century Ireland' in *Religious Life Review*, 39, 200 (2000), 19-31. See also Margaret MacCurtain, 'Godly burdens: Catholic Sisterhoods in 20th-Century Ireland' in A. Bradley & M.G. Valiulis, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland* (Amherst, 1997), 245–256.

[108] Two pages found pasted into the visitation book of Mountrath convent DA/BC/AIr/363. The pages appear to be earlier than the Mountrath annals and name four foundresses rather than the three in the annals. The fourth foundation member was Sr Mary (Ellen) Croak or Croke. The spelling Croak is used for some people in the Mountrath area on the Tithe Applotment website.

[109] O'Riordan, *Pathfinders:The Mountrath Story*, ii, (n.p., 1997), p.2.

[110] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324. The two pages give the 17 Apr. 1809 as the foundation date, DA/BC/AIr/363.

[111] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.

appointed to Mountrath.[112] As with Tullow convent he provided for future chaplains in his will. In 1811, on probably his last visit to Mountrath before ill-health overtook him, Brigidine hagiographic tradition holds that when he placed the host in the monstrance for the first time for Benediction in their new oratory he turned and addressed the sisters with the words 'I have brought to you the most Blessed Sacrament, the great God of heaven and earth is now in your midst, let me see who will remove him'.[113]

Delany did not just attend to the new community's immediate spiritual needs but continued his support, particularly after the onset of ill-health, through 'an affectionate correspondence' with Sister Joseph Fitzpatrick, the superior 'whom he loved with a truly paternal tenderness'.[114] Through his correspondence with the superior and the other office holders he laboured unremittingly to train them and through them the other members of the community in the path of spiritual perfection.[115] In addition to this training he insisted from the beginning that there be frequent correspondence between both Tullow and Mountrath convents. He believed that through this 'friendly correspondence' a loving link would be maintained, which would edify and promote 'union and charity' between the houses. The importance of dialogue between the houses was demonstrated by the reproof of Mother Joseph Fitzpatrick of Mountrath by the younger Mother Catherine McAuliffe, superior of Tullow on the lack of correspondence from the former. Bishop Haly (1837–55) was not pleased with the lack of communication (he had been inadvertently informed of this by Mother Catherine) and requested that it should be more frequent. Without frequent communication the houses would become isolated entities which would be against Delany's wishes.

The sisters had such success in attracting children to the chapel school that Delany had a new school built and opened by October at the back of the chapel so as not to break the sisters' enclosure. In June 1810 Delany sent three more sisters from Tullow to help with the increasing numbers in the school—Sisters Magadalen and Gertrude Delany and Augustine Crosby. Delany instructed the community to charge the 'children of the rich according to the branches they were learning', and to charge the poor the

[112] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/326.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

same rate as that charged in the neighbouring schools.[116] He also looked to the educational needs of the orphans and the children whose parents were too poor to pay the fees. He gave £20 a year and envisaged this money paying the fees of fifteen to twenty children. This would, in his eyes, prevent any discrimination as the sisters could claim they were paid by all the children.[117] However, although the original reason for having a separate pay school as envisioned by Delany was as a means of financial support for the sisters, over the years the distinction between 'pay school' and 'poor school' lent itself to much snobbery and distinction.

These first Brigidines were, with the Presentation sisters, the precursors of the rapid expansion of simple-vowed congregations in the nineteenth century, which became the driving force that built 'an unparalleled network of educational and care-giving institutions', not only in Ireland but also in Europe, America and Australasia.[118] The Brigidines remained the only congregation founded by an Irish bishop until the Sisters of St John of God were founded in the diocese of Ferns by Bishop Thomas Furlong in 1871. This new way of leading religious life, as Mangion argues, shifted the gendered identity of women religious and slowly redefined the understanding of femininity and religious life.[119]

Delany's Rule for the Brigidine Institute

When she entered the convent each sister made a general confession and received a penance from Delany to fast every quarter tense (ember days or Laethanta na gCeithre Tráth), and to say on the same day the seven penitential psalms, the three litanies of the saints, of the holy name of Jesus and of Our Lady, concluding with the acts of faith, hope and charity.[120] This penance was for life and Delany directed that it should be carried out by all the sisters on the same day. This, the sisters continued to do until they were

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[116] Ibid. Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/326.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Mangion, *Contested identities*, p.12; McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, p.574.
[119] Mangion, *Contested identities*, p.21.
[120] The Wed., Fri. and Sat. following Ash Wednesday, the Wed., Fri. and Sat. afterPentocost Sunday, the Wed., Fri. and Sat. after Sept. 14 – the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Wed., Fri. and Sat. following Dec. 13 – feast of Saint Lucy (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quarter_tense) (18 Aug. 2013).

relieved of the obligation in 1831 by Bishop Doyle. Only the sisters who had received the penance from Delany were obligated to continue with it.

In the matter of rules and constitutions, Delany gave his fledgling community only provisional instructions (that of the Rule of St Augustine) together with an English copy of the Constitution and Directory composed for the Sisters of the Visitation by their founder St Francis de Sales—the saint was the model for his own 'private and episcopal labours'.[121] Significantly, Delany advised his community 'to imbibe its spirit' and, after study, to select what parts would be suitable to the institute, and that he would 'direct them on their selection as time went on'.[122] For the period it is remarkable that he would allow the sisters the latitude of selection and freedom to give their own views. However, the annals do not document the sisters' contribution.

Delany's own letter of spiritual guidance (written in 1814, the year of his death) concentrated on the minutiae of daily living and was far 'from approximating to a written rule and constitutions'. Delany's understanding of human nature and his concern for the sisters account for his 'diffusely prolix' (his own description) rule of directed asceticism for the first sisters. His asceticism would have grown out of, and been marked by, his French experience of 'the pessimistic anthropology of the Jansenists'. It was a French Catholicism described by Kilroy as being, 'weighed down, first by an image of God which was severe, threatening and demanding, and then by the conviction that human nature was profoundly sinful, that human beings were unable to do any good act'.[123] But Delany's asceticism, while marked by this harsh Jansenistic view of human nature, was also imbued with his other experience of French Catholicism—that of devotion to the Sacred Heart in which the 'accent was on the nothingness of the human being overwhelmed by the divinity and glory of the Heart of Jesus'.[124]

O'Riordan claims that Delany's rule was mild in comparison to the rigidity of other founders. His time-tables and prescriptions left no time at all unaccounted for, from answering the morning call of 5.00 a.m. as if it 'were the last trumpet summing them to appear before the Lord' to retiring to bed at 9.45 p.m. where they were to see sleep as

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[121] Margaret Mary Dunne, *Watching for the Dawn*, (Enniscorthy, 1955), p.21.
[122] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[123] Phil Kilroy, *Madeline Sophie Barat, 1779–1865* (Cork, 2000), p.2.
[124] Ibid. p.12.

reflecting 'a striking image of death' in which their 'sheets were their winding shrouds' and the 'bed they were about to step into as their grave'. However, at the same time, they were to fix on the 'ardent love of God' [...] until they fell asleep [...] and in spirit 'rested on the bosom of their celestial spouse'.[125]

Delany encouraged the observation of 'inviolable silence' as a means of listening to God. As a man experienced in spirituality he knew that, with practice, recollection brought 'the mind into the state of quiet and concentration needed for more advanced level of prayer. The spirit was [thus] trained to progress from self-preoccupation to thoughts of God'.[126] Silence was a huge part of their lives as it was to be for all generations of sisters.

They were bound by rule to eat the same food as any violation of this would 'lead to a subversion of discipline'. They were forbidden to 'complain, murmur against or disprove' of their food even if it was 'coarse or unsavoury to nice palates' or if the portions were less than ample. At dinner, listening to a reading from a pious book was encouraged as nourishment for body and soul. Here again, complete silence was to be observed and signs were to be used to address those that waited at table. When dinner was over the sisters were to process to the chapel and when prayers were finished they were to go as a body to the enclosed garden for recreation.

Delany gave a lengthy discourse on recreation to pre-empt and discourage any development of 'particular' or 'private or intimate friendships'. The sisters were 'peremptorily forbidden' to separate 'from the rest'—those who 'paired off together' [...] made themselves 'objects of suspicion'. He warned that 'partialities of this kind were never to be tolerated in a religious house' because such 'intimacies' were [...] 'the very bane of religious life'. They were so for a number of reasons: they could be seen as hindering a more intimate relationship with God, they could cause discontent in the convent by creating factions and rivalries and they could signify the ending of religious life on an individual and more damagingly at corporate level.[127] For these reasons,

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[125] Rule of Brigidine Congregation, (1 Feb. 1814), DA/BC/BGA/200.01 & 878.
[126] McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, p.513.
[127] Mangion, *Contested identities*, p.167.

particular friendships were heavily policed to maintain communal harmony and commitments.[128]

While he warned of particular friendships, he did not object to the formation of sisterly relationships and in fact encouraged the sisters to mix together in the 'unlimited joyous freedom of becoming exercise, cheerful conversation', and in this way 'promoting mental and physical health through relaxation and exhilarating amusement'. To promote this community spirit he forbade them to pass their time alone at recreation.

Delany warned against the effects of 'sarcastic, scornful and contemptuous language' on the delicate fabric of community life. Described by him as 'a malevolent character' and 'an absolute pest', the person using such 'biting, carping and cutting' language could easily tear a convent community apart because of the impossibility of avoiding contact in strict enclosure. This he depicted melodramatically as the 'hopelessness of escaping the bite of the rattlesnake'.

The sick were to eat apart from the rest of the community and were to be provided with a different diet with the permission of the superior. One reason Delany gave for this separation was that a different diet could be seen as a treat by some, whereas others could be envious and jealous and wish for the same fare for themselves. The house council meeting for February 1870 shows the existence of such feelings where one sister objected that a 'chop' or 'anything else' was allowed to another sister who was 'delicate and had not eaten boiled or baked mutton for years'. That the objection was over-ruled shows that over time some leniency was allowed in certain circumstances.[129]

In laying down a detailed *horarium* Delany was ensuring that the whole day was so filled with occupations, method and regularity that everything from morning to night moved with the accuracy and punctuality of a clock.[130] It led, as Fahey has pointed out, 'not only to a subjection of the natural drives to a systematic patterning, but to a renunciation of the world and a conception of life in that world as spiritually dangerous and inferior. These attitudes set women in the religious life in clear cut self-distinction

[128] McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, p.616.
[129] Tullow House Council Meetings (HCM), DA/BC/AIr/516 (2)
[130] William B. Ullathorne, *Three Lectures on the Conventual Life* (London, 1910), p.85.

from, as the Church saw it, the spiritually weaker world of the average lay-believer, male as well as female'.[131]

In their separation from the secular world the six religious showed that they were no longer willing to fulfil their Catholic spirituality as lay women. Over time, as 'exemplars of the culture of self-denial', they would become, in McNamara's description 'like well-trained troops, expected to compensate for whatever violence they felt was done to their individuality, with *esprit de corps* and a sense of spiritual superiority'.[132] By mid-century Bishop Ullathorne of Birmingham, England could argue that 'the state of the nun is holier than the state of the wife' while in 1886 C.S. Devas saw the religious life as

> a nobler and better state, and the call higher; inasmuch as the lower part of our nature is conquered by the higher, and the [...] Christian works of charity can be fulfilled unhindered [...] there can be among the unmarried closer union with God [...] as their hearts are more undivided, their self-oblation more complete.[133]

Ulster Protestant historian Myrtle Hill looks to Phyllis Mack for an understanding of the self-abnegation and self-oblation of nuns and the religiosity of women from other nineteeth-century Christian backgrounds,[134] Phyllis Mack argues that 'a subjective analysis of religious sensibility reveals the capacity for action resulting from the individual's struggle to 'shape her personal desires and narrow self-interest until they became identical with God's desire, with absolute goodness... the sanctified Christian wants what God wants; she is God's agent in the world'.[135] The struggle for the denial of self can thus be seen as positive, a victory over the selfish impulses of body and mind.[136] However, this can come at a cost.

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[131] Fahey, 'Female Asceticism', p.6

[132] Tom Inglis, 'Origins and Legacies of Irish Prudery: Sexuality and Social Control in Modern Ireland' in Eire-Ireland, 40:3&4, (Fómhar/Geimhreadh/Fall/Winter, 2005), 9-37 at 20; McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, p.616.

[133] Ullathorne, *Conventual Life* p.23 & C.S. Daves, *Studies of Family Life: A Contribution to Social Science* (London, 1886), pp 144-5 in Mangion, *Contested Identities,* p.58

[134] Myrtle Hill, 'Gender, Culture and the "spiritual empire": the Irish Protestant female missionary experience' in *Women's History Review*, 16; 2 (2007), DOI: 10.1080/09612020601048803 Director Myrtle Hill, 203–226.

[135] Phyllis Mack (2003) Religion, Feminism and the Problem of Agency: reflections of eighteenth-century Quakerism, *Signs*, 29(1), pp. 149–78 cited in Hill, 'Gender, Culture and the "spiritual empire', 203–226.

[136] Hill, Gender, Culture and the 'spiritual empire', 203–226.

Asceticism At A Cost

Delany was no stranger to 'mortifying the outward senses and particularly the interior passions'. There is evidence that Delany practised self-flagellation and, as a further penance, wore a hair-shirt.[137] In a letter written to Sister Joseph Fitzpatrick, Delany emphasised Christian asceticism, particularly mortification, as a method to train the soul to 'virtuous and holy living'.[138] He explained that 'the congregation was founded to serve a crucified Jesus, by whose example the sisters ought to crucify their senses, imaginations, passions, inclinations, aversions, caprices and themselves, for the sake and love of their divine master'.[139] We know that many of the sisters emulated Delany in the use of the hair-shirt and discipline as part of their devotional piety.[140]

Some ten years later, Bishop Doyle, obviously concerned for Sister Joseph's health, allowed her a dispensation from the penances, stating that she would gain more by performing the duties of her rule than from her bodily suffering.[141] He went further and declared:

> If you were not superior I should indulge your life perhaps, but my dear child, 'tis not the suffering of the body which purifies the soul so much as the mortification of the will of the passions and propensities of the heart, do all you can to give good example and though you are obliged to use indulgence, let the rule not be relaxed with regard to the community whilst it is entrusted to your superintendence.[142]

This advice was given just three years after the then 30-year-old Doyle promised in his personal 'Rule of Life' to perform certain works of mortification on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, four times in Passion week and on every Friday in the year unless a reasonable impediment should occur.[143]

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[137] Delany's small scourge is among the Patrician brothers memorabilia in the Delany archives. The hair shirt was made from irritating rough cloth made from goat's skin.
[138] Delany to M.Joseph Fitzpatrick, Tullow, 14 Jul. 1810, DA/BC/BGA/100.6.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Author in conversation with Mary Dalton, CSB, 20 Mar 2012; Mary O'Riordan, *Light From Within:The Spirit of Daniel Delany* (Tullow, n.d.), p.49; Margaret Mary Dunne, *Gleanings from the Brigidine Annals* (Carlow, 1945), p.22. Dunne was Superior General of the Brigidines.
[141] Bishop Doyle to M. Joseph Fitzpatrick, Tullow, 2 Jun. 1820, DA/BP/01/JKL/1820/30.
[142] Ibid.
[143] MS in Doyle's hand in DA/BP/JKL/01/1817/08.

Mary Anne Lalor, superioress of Tullow, wrote to Bishop Doyle on the matter of mortification in 1821:

> You gave me leave to try hair cloth for a week. I did, and found it did me no harm. I wore it during Lent leaving a day, sometimes two or three between each week and at the same time I wore a chain of wire, two days out of three. I think it would be no pressure to my health, to go on that way.... I have two instruments of penance less severe: a hair girdle and a chain without points. I feel disposed to ask leave to wear one or two always.[144]

It is obvious from her concluding sentence that the practice of mortification was well established and was carried out with regards to his spiritual direction. She declared that 'the practice of giving penance for faults went on very agreeably without the least opposition and made us more exact and fervent'.[145] A later Goresbridge annalist stated that the sisters' increase of love for God brought with it 'an insatiable longing, an ardent desire to make reparation for sin, and an ever increasing love of suffering'.[146] Throughout his episcopate Bishop Lynch was always concerned as to the health of the sisters, advising them against extremes of asceticism with regard to fasting and abstinence.

Although Bishop Ullathorne points out that such 'exercises of self-humiliation and practices of self-denial are amongst the most genuine acts of freedom, and amongst the most efficacious means for reaching greater freedom of the soul' it was, as McNamara highlights, this very 'conflation of traditional spirituality with the demands of the active life which killed many zealous women'.[147] While we do not know how severe the practice of discipline was in the community, we know from the annals that they 'practised great austerities, mortifications and penances', and from the letters of Mary Anne Lalor and Joseph Fitzpatrick that they felt drawn to perform much more corporal penances.[148] It is impossible to say how many of the early deaths were hastened by or could be associated with the over-eager use of the discipline. Nevertheless, of the first death in the community that took place on 22 December 1808 the Tullow annals

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[144] Sister Mary Anne Lalor to Bishop Doyle, Tullow, 12 Jul. 1821, DA/BP/JKL/01/1821/37.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Goresbridge annals, 19 Aug. 1873 in DA/BC/AIr/232 (2).
[147] Ullathorne, *Conventual Life*, p.69; McNamara, *Sisters in Arms,* p.618.
[148] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508; Lalor to Doyle, 12 Jul. 1821, DA/BP/JKL/01/1821/37; Doyle to Joseph Fitzpatrick, Carlow, 23 Oct. 1820, DA/BP/JKL/01/1820/04.

state that Sister Teresa [Brigid Brien] 'was gifted with a true spirit of mortification and prayer and was so desirous of conforming to all things laid down by the Rule that she would not dispense herself from any part of it, even when she was scarcely able to walk'.[149] Again we can only guess as to what extent did Sister Brigid (Judith) Whelan's life of self-sacrifice, of 'strictly observed rule and spirit of penance', affected her 'long and painful illness', until her death in 1810. Of one later novice's 'attraction to mortification' it was stated that, despite this being 'kept within bounds by her superior', her health, which before her reception had been good, 'became delicate'.[150] The health of sisters in other congregations such as the Presentation and Loreto sisters was also seriously affected by the use of the discipline.[151] McNamara claims that in the case of the Loreto sisters, until the rule was modified in 1824, nearly half of the sisters died before they were thirty years old.[152]

Even though Delany held that mortification and self-denial was significant in the control over self in their spiritual formation, he was conscious that the matter of the sisters' health was no less significant. The food gradually began to improve. This can be traced in the changes made to the dietary obligation on the simple matter of tea drinking, which Delany had forbidden in his first rule. By 1813, in recognition of their demanding work load which included, besides the daily school schedule, teaching three times on Sundays, he permitted them to take tea at breakfast on Sundays and holy days.[153] This was a significant concession in that tea was expensive and could be seen as a little luxury. He also consented to the sick having tea occasionally, which showed he was prepared to over-rule his own imposed obligations in his concern that ill-health would not interfere with the sisters' apostolate. In 1824, again because of the sisters' increased work load in the schools, Bishop Doyle extended the relaxation on tea drinking permitting them to take tea in the mornings and sanctioning a more liberal menu.[154] Five years later concern for the health of the 'delicate' sisters among them saw further relaxation of the rule with tea allowed in the evening. In 1850 the Mountrath convent

[149] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[150] Goresbridge annals, 19 Aug. 1873 in DA/BC/AIr/232 (2).
[151] McNamara, *Sisters in Arms,* p.618. The Irish branch of the Loreto sisters (IBVM) was founded in Dublin by Francis Ball in 1822.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[154] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.

was in such poor financial circumstances that Mother Peter Stein, on the evening of her election as superior, could not give the community a cup of tea. Although the annals state that shopkeeper John Donohue sent her a present of a pound of tea, she herself states that he gave her a pound of tea on credit.[155]

Twenty years later the 'cup of tea' was still a matter of concern. It was raised at the Tullow house council meeting of 26 February 1870, when the question of having a second cup of tea and more than one small portion of meat came before the meeting.[156] These had been discontinued in the fifteen or sixteen years 'reign of Sister Elizabeth Coughlan in the kitchen'. This appears to show a remarkable degree of power for a lay sister.[157] It was, however, unanimously decided that the sisters should get as much tea as they cared for and that the dinner portions should also be increased.[158]

In 1811 Delany brought in some minor changes to the Rule when he introduced the office of the Blessed Virgin to be said in English and changed the convent *horarium* so the school timetable could be adapted to suit the parents' needs.[159] Delany was said to have believed that it could take up to twenty years to mature a rule.[160] But whether 'matters were sufficiently forward' enough, his worsening health made him extremely anxious for the future of his institution and, although there is no corroborating documentary evidence in the Vatican archives, the annals suggest that Delany applied for canonical approbation but that in 1813 he observed that in the event of his not living to see the approval, he trusted that God would provide someone to renew the application.[161]

The sisters had to wait until Bishop Doyle's episcopacy to have their situation regulated. In 1828 he gave them a rule and constitutions which, for the most part, was that of the Presentation Rule and Constitution. In his *Relatio Status* of 1829 Doyle reported that the 'congregation of the nuns of St Bridget was flourishing and that [he] reduced their rules to better order, and gave them a more religious appearance'.[162] In

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[155] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324: recollections of M.B. Hogan in John Delany to Swayne, Rathvilly, 24 Jan. 1918, DA/BC/AIr/309.
[156] Tullow HCM, DA/BC/AIr/516.
[157] A widow, Elizabeth Coughlan entered the convent in 1851 and was professed as a lay sister in1854.
[158] Tullow HCM, DA/BC/AIr/516.
[159] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[160] Linus K. Walker, *A Spirit of Kindness* (Tullow, n.d.), p.9, DA/DD/33.
[161] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[162] Copy of Bishop Doyle's *Relatio Status* (1829) supplied by Dr Thomas McGrath to Sr Mary O'Riordan in DA/BC/AIr/Mary O'Riordan papers (uncatalogued).

giving them a 'more religious appearance', he prescribed that they wear the Presentation habit rather than the simple dress prescribed by Delany. He also affirmed in his *Relatio Status* that they 'educated the poor and also the children of the middle classes'. He died before he obtained papal approbation for the congregation, as would his successor Bishop Nolan (1834–38).[163]

Perpetual Adoration

Within twenty-two months of founding his Brigidine institute, the enclosed 'contemplative life still retained a higher spiritual value' for Delany and this preference in 1808 threatened the young institute's survival.[164] Unknown to the sisters, sometime before 30 December 1808, Delany received a letter from Moylan suggesting that he should consider the foundation by a princess of a contemplative convent in his diocese. Moylan had received a request from a royal personage and thought Tullow a suitable place for the transfer or establishment of a new community of contemplatives in Ireland. The princess was thought by O'Riordan to be Princess Louise, daughter of Louis XV of France and a Carmelite nun at St Denis in Paris but the dates do not agree.[165] Delany was ecstatic at the prospect ('a golden dream') and 'prodigiously relished the project of the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament' to which he had a '*powerful attraction*' [Delany's emphasis]. He had always wanted a Filles de Saint Sacrement of his own so much so that, in his own words, he was *'strongly, nay irresistibly impelled to yield up my little convent of St Brigid'* if he could find any way to facilitate the project [Delany's emphasis].[166] What changed his mind was Judith Wogan Browne's remark that he could not facilitate the crowds attending the Corpus Christi processions as they would violate the solemn enclosure of the new religious order. He would not give up the processions which he believed to be indispensable for the spiritual life of the people yet, he still wondered, as late as February 1814 whether his religious community of St Brigid deserved that 'dignified appellation'.

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[163] Bishop James Walshe, Memorandum of the Congregation of St Brigid, undated, DA/BP/JW/11/1857/16.
[164] Fahey, 'Female Asceticism', pp 3&163.
[165] This letter is not extant but Delany's reply of 30 Dec. 1808 is in Bolster, 'Moylan Correspondence', pp 136-140. Princess Louise died in 1787.
[166] Bolster, 'Moylan Correspondence', p.140.

Judith Wogan Browne

It was against a background of increasing government interest in education and the religious tension due to Protestant evangelicalism's 'Second Reformation' that Delany worked to build and strengthen his new institute of St Brigid. He saw the need to attract better educated women into the institute and, in 1812, urged this policy on his two communities.[167] Such entrants would attract to his proposed boarding schools both the children of the 'respectable' class and of 'the small but vibrant class of substantial Catholic tenant farmers'—among whom the 'position of Catholic training was by no means satisfactory'.[168] That same year with the entrance of the Misses Donohue (Sisters Jane and Elizabeth) into the novitiate Delany made arrangements to take in one boarder as a beginning. However, due to the onset of his illness the arrangements fell through. That the infant institute continued to attract educated women is evident from the fact that within twenty years of their foundation the sisters confidently advertised courses which they taught in Italian (at two guineas a year), French, English, the sciences and all the 'accomplishments' necessary for 'the manners and life-style' of a 'young lady' of the Catholic middle class.[169] As the first Irish congregation to open both select and boarding schools, the Brigidines provided, O'Riordan maintains, 'a broader educational background which would enable their girls to take their place in society as cultured, poised, and essentially feminine women'.[170] O'Riordan's contention is in line with Karly Kehoe's argument that the middle class women who entered religious life 'were confirming the bourgeois commitment to the moral improvement of society'.[171]

In Delany's vision a nun was to be 'all evangelical meekness, sweetness, gentleness, charming condescension, forbearance and charity'.[172] He advised the sisters to moderate their speech and to 'avoid [...] the behaviour [...] of low life among the uneducated' and those 'unacquainted with the manners of decent polished society'. They

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[167] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[168] Ibid.; O'Riordan, *Pathfinders: The Tullow Story,* p.26; Inglis, *Moral Monopoly*, p.183; Timothy Corcoran, S.J., *The Clongowes Record, 1814–1932* (Dublin, 1932), p.71.
[169] *Irish Catholic Directory,* (1838), p.445.
[170] O'Riordan, Talks given at the Brigidine convent, Gillmoss, Liverpool 23–4 Mar. 1974, (Naas, 1975).
[171] Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church*, p.10.
[172] Unpublished Rule of Brigidine Congregation, (1 Feb. 1814), DA/BC/BGA/200.01 & 878.

were to aspire to polished society 'however humble their origin or deficiency'.[173] This particularly mattered because they were now religious and, according to Delany, were expected 'to be gentlewomen and possess some tincture of the habits and attainments of the upper orders'.[174] It was in the attainment of these accomplishments that Judith Wogan Browne (1750–1848) was so important for the development of the institute and, after Delany, her significance is central.

Tantalizingly we do not know when she came to Tullow with her lady's maid, Anne Doyle (who would later be received as a lay sister in Tullow in 1841), or when and where she met Delany.[175] We know from a letter written by Bishop Caulfield that she was in Tullow in 1798 and had given Delany shelter in the rebellion. She could have met him through her brother, Thomas' involvement with the Catholic Committee with which Delany was also associated. It is also possible as O'Riordan surmises that it was her brother's decision to marry the English Protestant heiress Sarah Pearson on 1 December 1785 that drew Judith Wogan Browne to Tullow to 'place herself under the spiritual direction of Delany'.[176] Thomas' apostasy drew the stinging comment from Christopher Kelly Dillon that 'young Browne of Castlebrowne has read his recantation, and by doing so has bartered his religion for a wife'.[177] Yet Wakefield would write in 1812 that 'Wogan Browne (he never used his Christian name) although a convert, is still considered a Catholic'.[178] That same year he took his own life at Castlebrowne.[179]

His death from suicide, not only a secular crime but in Catholic eyes a mortal sin, must have devastated both his profoundly religious sister Judith and the ill Bishop Delany for both of whom his 'perversion' to Protestantism and his suicide meant awful

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[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508. Judith Browne paid £50 in part payment for her.
[176] Mary O'Riordan, *Pathfinders:Judith Wogan Browne* (n.p., 2001), p.1; The *Clongowian* (1954), p. 67; Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.27.
[177] Christopher Kelly Dillon to Michael Bellew, Dublin, 24 Nov. 1785, Private Collection no.569, NLI quoted in Karen J. Harvey, 'The family experience: the Bellews of Mount Bellew' in Power & Whelan (eds), *Endurance and Emergence*, 171-198, p.194.
[178] Chambers, *Rebellion in Kildare,* p. 23; Des O'Leary, 'Wogan Browne' in Seamus Cullen and Hermann Geisel (eds), *Fugitive Warfare 1798 in North Kildare* (Kildare, 1998), pp78-85, p.78; Corcoran, *The Clongowes Record*, p.49.
[179] Peter Costello, *Clongowes Wood, A History of Clongowes Wood College, 1814–1989* (Dublin, 1989), p.248; O'Leary, 'Wogan Browne', p.84; Lord Cloncurry, *Personal Recollections of the life and times... of Valentine, Lord Cloncurry* (1849), pp 178-9 (http://books.google.ie/books/about/Personal_n) (10 Nov. 2012).

eternal damnation. Yet, there is no mention of him or his death in the Brigidine archives as one would expect on the death of the brother of one who could be considered a co-foundress of the congregation.

Born almost certainly on the continent, Judith Clementina Wogan Browne of Castlebrowne near Clane in Co. Kildare was the eldest daughter of Colonel Micheal Browne (chevalier of the Order of France at the Court of Louis XV) and his wife Catherine Wogan, who was his cousin. She was educated with her younger sister Elizabeth Mary at the Benedictine convent at Ypres.[180] Two of her aunts were choir sisters, Sister Austin Browne and Sister Xaveria Browne, the latter providing a living family link to the sisters in the convent.[181] With her experience of the monastic life (the boarders followed the hours and sang the Latin chant) it is reasonable to infer that she was influential in Delany's decision to have enclosure for his institute and she was crucial in shaping the 'pious practices and customs of the convents' that comprised the rigours of enclosure. She was, in effect, the community's first novice mistress. As such, O'Riordan describes her position as a lay person within the early community as 'a unique anomaly'.[182]

She was also ideally placed to flesh out Delany's notion of a religious institute peopled with 'gentlewomen of refinement'. It was not an easy task for the 57-year-old mentor to develop in these simple but mature women the manners, etiquette and religious practice of French convent society. Likewise it was difficult for the pioneers to overcome the tension caused by the social distinction between their lives and one who had strong links to the exiled court of James III. O'Riordan's suggestion that the 'six [sisters] were practically illiterate' is debatable.[183] While we know little of their family background, that to be chosen by Delany as teachers for his confraternities it is reasonable to infer that the sisters had attended hedge school and were from what he classed 'the few in middling circumstances'.[184] It was a period when many saw 'female education as an agent in securing a good marriage rather than a means to financial

[180] 'Ireland's Devotion to the Sacred Heart', iii; Sr Rosario Alien, Devotion to the Sacred Heart in the Irish Benedictine Abbey at Ypres (http://www.presentationsistersunion.org/_uploads/rsfil/01165.pdf) (3 Sept. 2013).
[181] Who were the nuns? (www.history.qmul.ac.uk/wwtn/publication) (27 Feb. 2012).
[182] O'Riordan, *Judith Wogan Browne,* p. 15.
[183] O'Riordan, *Delany*, p. 160.
[184] Castlereagh (ed.), *Memoirs and Correspondence,* iv, p.142

independence'.[185] For the sisters to be able to read such spiritual literature as Rodriquez' *The practise of Christian Perfection* (a gift from Delany) as well as follow his instructions as catechetical teachers they must have had more than elementary literacy or the 'modicum of education' suggested by O'Riordan.[186] There is, however, a letter from Delany pointing out deficiencies in Sister Clare Doyle's spelling. He wrote: 'Clare's letter to Catherine was *very good in everything* but *the spelling which was most miserably and shamefully bad in almost every word.* Tell her so' [Delany's emphasis].[187] What is more plausible is that they did not have any knowledge of the obligations of enclosure or of the social graces, and this lack of knowledge may have given rise to the anecdote of 'Miss Browne's' complaint to the bishop that 'she could teach them nothing' that they 'could not learn'.[188] However, on Delany's advice she persevered and also taught them music and French.[189]

While Delany regarded such accomplishments as important and necessary it is interesting that in one case he did not see literacy as the most crucial constituent for a new member, but rather the ability to give oneself totally and unconditionally to God. The applicant, was the 'pious Elizabeth McMahon of Clonenagh', the daughter of his mother's 'faithful servant'. The Mountrath annals state:

> The nuns told the bishop Elizabeth could neither read nor write that she could be of no use to them [as a teacher]. 'Well', said the bishop, 'she can love God and sing the paters'.[190]

She was the first lay postulant to enter Mountrath in 1810. Known in religion as Sister Martha, she had a long religious life of fifty-two years and was later affiliated as a choir sister.[191]

From the annals, Delany's will and other accounts we know that Judith Wogan Browne never took vows. Nevertheless, as a non-religious Delany gave her an influential

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[185] Deirdre Rafferty, 'Industry, Piety and Servitude: Schooling for the Female Poor, 1700–1900' in Deirdre Rafferty and Susan M. Parkes *Female Education in Ireland, 1700-1900:Minerva or Madonna* (Dublin, 2007), pp 5-32, p.14.
[186] These books are part of the library of books from the Tullow convent in the Delany Archives.
[187] Delany to Mother Francis, Tullow, 1810, DA/BC/AIr/700.
[188] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[189] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[190] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324; see Rosemarie Joyce, 'The Patrimony of the Congregation of the Sisters of St Brigid', p.13, Masters seminar, DCA 6311, Faculty of Canon Law, St Paul's University, Ottawa, 1992, DA/BC/AIr/130.
[191] O'Riordan, *Pathfinders: Mountrath* (1997), ii, p.14.

voice in the management of the institute—a position she retained until her death in 1848. Delany gave her control of the finances of both Tullow and Mountrath convents, much to their inconvenience. This was a continuing source of concern for the sisters and often the bishops had to intervene on their behalf.

Her influence touched not only on the temporal but the spiritual. Delany appointed her to take his place and preside over all community meetings and at the weekly Sunday Chapter of Faults during his absences from Tullow. In the latter case she was taking on herself the authority of the superior, Catherine Dawson, at the moment when the sisters 'vulnerability was at its greatest' as they publicly manifested their consciences.[192] In taking on the superior's spiritual authority Judith Wogan Browne raised the matter of internal harmony and obedience within the fledgling community, namely whether Dawson was, as she should have been, regarded as the executive or legitimate interpreter of the rule.[193] The annals do not record if 'Miss Browne' continued the practice after Delany's death, however, just four months after his demise we know that James Doyle, then in Carlow College, rather tellingly stated that he thought that 'Miss Browne should be satisfied with managing the temporalities of the late doctor without aspiring to inherit his spiritual jurisdiction'.[194]

She lived in Dublin from 1828 where she continued to administer the finances of the convent.[195] In 1840, because of her increasing infirmities and old age, Bishop Haly acceded to her request to take 'lodging in the convent' in Tullow where she paid a rent of £10 per annum for her room. The community had to take care of the 90-year-old as well as give up their refectory to her and were 'greatly inconvenienced by it' to such an extent that with the bishop's permission they built a new refectory, kitchen and more cells.[196] Her death on 6 June 1848 drew the terse comment in the Tullow annals that 'Miss Browne after a life well spent died at the advanced age of 98'.[197] The Mountrath annals

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[192] Ibid., *Pathfinders:Judith Wogan Browne* (Mar. 2001), p.5.
[193] Mary Peckham Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns: Women, Religion, and Cultural Change in Ireland, 1750–1900* (New York, 1998), p.58.
[194] James Doyle to Martin Doyle, Carlow College, 10 Nov. 1814, DA/BP/01/JKL/1814/01.
[195] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508; *The CarlowMorning Post*, 12 May 1828, advertisement for the sale of her house 'fit for immediate reception of a family'.
[196] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[197] Ibid.

mark the occasion with the brief observation in the margins: 'Miss Browne died'.[198] Nonetheless, in a lengthy description of her death to Mountrath convent, Mother Catherine McAuliffe constantly refers to her as 'our dear Miss Browne'.[199] Her funeral was attended by Bishop Haly and about twenty or more priests. At her own request she was buried in the convent graveyard rather than the family mausoleum at Mainham, Co. Kildare.

National and Boarding Schools

As their reputation as educationalists developed, the early convent accounts show that non-resident fee-paying pupils came from Dublin, Wexford, Kildare and Kilkenny.[200] To rectify the unsatisfactory situation of their 'respectable' pupils lodging in the town, in 1824 the nuns applied to Bishop Doyle for permission to set up a boarding school. Such was Judith Wogan Browne's financial control that although Bishop Doyle approved of the sisters admitting boarders, it was only on condition that they gain 'Miss Browne's consent'. This was not forthcoming as 'she did not want the responsibility during her lifetime'.[201]

Against the background of the evolving government inquiries into education (fourteen reports between 1806 and 1812), the withdrawal of Catholic support for the Kildare Place Society, and the Catholic hierarchy's representations to parliament on education in 1824, the 1824 parochial school returns of Kildare and Leighlin present a revealing account of the education provided in the two Brigidine schools of Tullow and Mountrath. We find that Mountrath's 35-year-old Mary Fitzpatrick (Sister Joseph) was considered a 'most excellent character' and she, with her assistants, 'three enlightened females', taught reading, writing, arithmetic and plain and ornamental needlework.[202] Their annual income at only six pounds was derived from mostly 'part paupers' with most of the children being 'taught gratis'. As against many of the pay schools of mud-walled cabins in the parish, the children were educated in a 'commodious school'. The school was a forty-foot by fourteen-foot lime and stone slated house, said to have cost

[198] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[199] M.Catherine McAuliffe to M. Joseph Fitzpatrick, Tullow, 14 Jun. 1848, DA/BC/AIr/310.
[200] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Brenan, *Schools*, p.494.

about £250 to build. The average attendance in the summer of 1823 was a hundred while in 1824 it dropped to eighty-five. Winter saw only half that number attending at forty. The statistics show that more girls than boys were attending school in the summers of 1823 and 1824. Just eighty boys attended the monastery school in summer. A higher proportion of boys attended school during winter, sixty as against the girls forty. In both schools it took twelve months to teach the children to read. Books used in the convent school included *Think Well On't*, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, *Letters of Madame de Maitenon, Scott's Lessons*, 100 charts purchased by the children's parents and Father Cornelius Dowling.[203] Only the first book listed was common to the girls' and boys' schools. The two schools were under the patronage of the parish priest and curate and, with the women and men of the confraternities, the sisters instructed some 1,800 children in Christian doctrine in the Sunday schools.[204] However, in Archbishop Murray's list of convent schools in his archdiocese (1825) Mountrath is not listed as a Brigidine convent school but as a confraternity free school with 85 girls.[205]

The school in Tullow, described as Tullow Nunnery School (Free and Pay School), was a much bigger establishment altogether consisting of ten females headed by Sister Mary Ann Lalor with an annual income of twenty pounds a year.[206] In the summer of 1823, 240 girls attended school but in the following year the numbers had dropped to 200. This number included seven children of the Established Church. Winter saw only eighty pupils attending. The subjects taught were similar to those of Mountrath with the addition of spelling. The returns give the rates charged for the different subjects: spelling, reading and writing 3*s.* 3*d.*, sewing etc 5*s.* 5*d.*, arithmetic, 5*s* 5*d.* With regard to arithmetic, Logan points to the sex distinction that was apparent in its teaching throughout the diocese. He states that of the 262 male teachers in the diocese all but five taught some form of arithmetic whereas of the seventy-nine female teachers, thirty-six did not teach it. As a result, almost a half of girl pupils who attended a school operated

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[203] Ibid., p. 495.
[204] Ibid., p.501.
[205] *Commission on Education in Ireland* First Report 370–9415 C20F 1825, p.87 in Kealy, *Dominican Education*, p.29.
[206] Ibid., p.602.

by a woman did not have arithmetic available to them.[207] The books in use were: Murray's, Carpenter's and Usher's Spelling Books, Murray's Grammar, Sharman's and Goldsmith's Geography, Blair's Grammar, Goldsmith's *History of England, Life of Christ, Virtuous Scholar, Rudiments of Reading and Spelling, Juvenile Sketches, Widow Riley, Historical Catechism, Aesop's Fables, Butler's Catechism, Gobinet's Instructions, Gough's Arithmetic,* dictionaries, and a copy of the *Testament* by a Protestant.[208] Unlike their contemporary hedge schoolmasters, the nuns appear not to have taught Irish history (its study was frowned upon by the government and considered by Edgeworth not to be a suitable subject for the Irish), however, from the texts listed it is apparent that they taught some English and French history.[209]

As with Mountrath, although Tullow school was under the patronage of the bishop who visited once a year the school is not recognized as a Brigidine school on the 'Archbishop's list'. The religious order is given as 'not stated' with 200 girls attending free. The ten sisters aided by some forty women of the confraternity held Sunday schools in the chapel where they instructed nearly 200 girls in the catechism and about 256 women in the principles of their religion.[210] Similarly, the Patrician brothers and the men's confraternity taught 244 boys their catechism and instructed 322 men in the duties of religion. Here, as in Mountrath, segregation of the sexes was an integral part of the schooling process. Nearly four hours were given to religious instruction every Sunday and holy day. With over a hundred religious books, Tullow chapel's circulating library was an added boon to religious education.[211]

Seven years after the *'Returns'* and following on Catholic Emancipation, Edward Stanley, Chief Secretary for Ireland (later Lord Stanley and earl of Derby) outlined his scheme for educational reform to parliament on 9 September 1831.[212] In his letter of 31 October 1831 to the duke of Leinster, Stanley sent him his more detailed plan for 'a

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[207] John Logan, 'The Dimensions of Gender in Nineteenth-Century Schooling', in Margaret Kelleher and James H. Murphy (eds), *Gender Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: Public and Private Spheres* (Dublin, 1997), pp 36–49, p.43.
[208] Ibid., p.603.
[209] Parliamentary papers 1812–14 vol. 3rd report, App. No. 10, p.109, Letter to the committe of the board of education 8 Nov. 1808 cited in McManus, *The Irish Hedge School*, p.124.
[210] Ibid., p.611.
[211] Ibid., p.612.
[212] Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment,* p.109; Fitzpatrick, *Dr Doyle,* ii, p.258 in Ignatius Murphy, 'Primary Education' in P.J.Corish, (ed.) *A History of Irish Catholicism* (Dublin, 1971), p.5.

combined literary, and a separate religious education [...] system of national education for the poorer classes'—Stanley had incorporated some of Bishop Doyle's suggestions into his scheme.[213] Stanley's hope for the new system was that the 'peculiar tenets of any description of Christian pupils' would not be interfered with while he saw its main object as one of 'uniting in one system the children of different creeds'.[214] This was 'the first state-sponsored system of elementary education in Great Britain and Ireland', a system not achieved in England until 1870 or in France until 1881.[215] Oliver P. Rafferty argues that although Stanley's system was not entirely to the Catholic church's satisfaction it relieved it of the enormous burden of elementary educational provision.[216] Further, as Logan points out, the national school system became part of the pastoral apparatus of the Church becoming its principal conduit for the catechesis of young girls and boys.[217] Thus the national school system provided advantages for both the Catholic church and the state. For the former, according to O'Donoghue, an increased influence over the faithful (part of its wider strategy in many parts of continental Europe) and, for the latter, the recognition that it would promote social stability among the lower classes.[218]

Its establishment as the Board of National Education in 1831 was, as Coolahan remarks, 'a landmark in the history of Irish education'.[219] With Doyle's qualified but favourable and realistic attitude to the new national education system in the 'distracted circumstances of the country' the Brigidine schools in Tullow and Mountrath were almost immediately connected with the Board of National Education.[220] Agreement had been reached between the Board of National Education and Stanley that schools of religious orders of monks and nuns could be assisted by the board.[221] In joining the

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[213] Copy of a Letter from the Chief Secretary for Ireland, to His Grace the Duke of Leinster, on the formation of a Board of Commissioners for Education in Ireland in *Rules and Regulations of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, 1914–15*, DA/BP/Box 23/PF/ED/83; Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment,* p.109; Murphy, 'Primary Education, p.5.
[214] Stanley to the duke of Leinster.
[215] John Coolahan, 'The Daring First Decade of the Board of National Education, 1831–1841' in *The Irish Journal of Education,* xvii;1 (1983) 35-54 at 36 &37; Deirdre Rafferty & Catherine Nowlan-Roebuck, 'Convent Schools and National Education in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: Negotiating a Place within a Non-denominational System' in *History of Education*, 36;3 (May, 2007) 353-365 at 353.
[216] Rafferty, 'The Catholic Church, Ireland and the British empire, 288–309.
[217] Logan, 'The Dimensions of Gender in Nineteenth-Century Schooling', p.44.
[218] O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers,* pp19 &23.
[219] Coolahan, 'Board of Education', at 35.
[220] Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment,* p.109; Murphy, 'Primary Education', p.5.
[221] Coolahan, 'Board of National Education', at 41.

national school system, the Brigidines accepted, as did the Presentation sisters, the need to combine literary and religious instruction with industrial training (such as needlework, a compulsory subject for older girls) since their charges would have to find paid employment as soon as they were able, most probably as domestic servants and seamstresses before later becoming wives and mothers. The Brigidine convents offered employment to some of their former pupils as laundresses or seamstresses for the boarders.[222]

All national schools whether they were lay or religiously run used, as Logan points out, 'a carefully designed set of readers' which 'promoted the notion of separate though complementary spheres'.[223] However, within the notion of separate spheres, a separate and subordinate female sphere was assumed as illustrated in the readers used within the schools.[224] Although national schooling was increasingly accessible for females the paradox of nineteenth-century school reform, Logan argues, is that:

> despite the apparent promise that it would weaken barriers deriving from class, religion or race, it became instead an instrument that promoted a knowledge of the immutability of those forces. In the case of gender formation it provided equality of access, but to a curriculum that emphasized and reinforced a gender difference.[225]

In 1832, Tullow school applied for and received a grant of £20 for desks and £25 a year for teachers.[226] Three years later there were 454 girls on the school roll (no.682) in Tullow and Sisters Francis Nicholson, Joseph Roche, and Magdalen Doyle were paid £25 for the year. In 1836 the school received a favourable report from the inspector, free stock was also granted but the request for an increase in salary was refused.[227] The sisters were paid on a capitation basis (much less than a lay female teacher's salary) as they, like the other congregations of nuns, refused to enter the board's teacher classification system.[228] First class female teachers received £15, £12 second class

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[222] Jane McDermid, *The Schooling of Girls in Britain and Ireland, 1800–1900* (New York, 2012), pp 40-3; Mountrath HCM, 30 Apr. 1870, DA/BC/AIr/337; Logan, 'The Dimensions of Gender in Nineteenth-Century Schooling, p.46

[223] Logan, 'The Dimensions of Gender in Nineteenth-Century Schooling', p.45

[224] Ibid.

[225] Ibid., p.49.

[226] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.

[227] Register of Abstracts, Tullow National School, no.26, ED/2/1, NAI.

[228] Rafferty & Nowlan-Roebuck, 'Convent Schools and National Education', at 361.

received £12 and third class received £10. Even these salaries were only 75 per cent of that paid to males, which was in line, as Logan shows, with the 'generally prevailing difference between male and female incomes'.[229] Because of their lack of classification, as Deirdre Rafferty remarks, no matter how much inspectors praised their work, the sisters were a cheap source of labour both for the Catholic church and for the state.[230] Later Tullow school returns and convent advertisements show that three to four hundred children were given education 'gratuitously'. On 3 October 1850, a report was made to the Board that the children were reciting the Angelus and the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity at mid-day and not between two and three o'clock as laid down in the rules. The school manager was informed of this breach and on 10 October 1850 he stated that in future the rules would be 'strictly attended to'.[231]

Mountrath convent school or Coote Street Female School, as it was known, was taken into connection with the Board on 14 February 1833. The school had ninety-one pupils on its roll (no. 902) and it was granted a salary of £8, in two half-yearly instalments of £4.[232] The earliest extant Mountrath convent receipt book shows that in 1837 Mountrath school received £38 from the Board more than the £23. 4*s.* 0*d.* received from their day (select) school pupils.[233] Part of the Board's payment went towards some building work at the national school. Up to 1849 when the receipt book ended, the national school was receiving on average £24 a year from the National Education Board. Earlier in 1843 Mother Joseph Fitzpatrick refused Father Nolan's request to vest the school unreservedly in the National Education Board.[234] The annals do not give any explanation for Nolan's request.

For Mountrath and other Brigidine convent national schools being non-vested meant years of hardship and financial strain maintaining and extending their school buildings or building new schools as under the rules of the National Board, convent schools could not receive grants for such work. Over the years there is constant reference

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[229] Coolahan, 'Board of Education', 47; Logan, 'The Dimensions of Gender in Nineteenth-Century Schooling, p.48.
[230] Rafferty & Nowlan-Roebuck, 'Convent Schools and National Education', at 361.
[231] Ibid. Register of Abstracts, Tullow National School, no.26, ED/2/1, NAI.
[232] Register of Abstracts, Coote St Female School, no.30, ED/2/38, NAI; Mountrath Receipt and Expenditure Book (1823–49), DA/BC/AIr/403.
[233] Mountrath Receipt and Expenditure Book (1823-49), DA/BC/AIr/403.
[234] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/326.

in the different houses 'to heavy debts still unpaid', 'difficulty meeting expenses', 'many bills to pay', 'money badly wanting', 'temporal affairs in low state'. Only on rare occasions was there reference to a 'house out of debt'.

There are no figures for the number of children attending school in either Tullow or Mountrath or any mention of the Famine in the annals. The receipts of Mountrath national school show, however, that they received £24 per annum from 1844 to 1849 (in 1845 it was £21) pointing to a fairly constant attendance of pupils in the national school.[235] The receipts for the day (benefit) school do not show any obvious falling off in numbers either. Although it is more difficult to judge from the boarding school figures, as pupils came and went pretty much as they pleased, neither was there any obvious falling off in numbers.[236] The Tullow receipt book's food bills show that there was no shortage of food—beef, mutton veal, bacon, herrings, fish, cheese, butter, bread, cakes, wine, porter, spirits, lemons, oranges, saffron, rice, bacon, turkey, goose, confectionary, meal and flour. Potatoes were back on the diet in July 1847. Alms were not listed as expenditure before 1845 but in that year they amounted to £3. 13*s*. 5*d*. In 1846 the alms jumped to £5. 5*s* .4*d*. with an extra donation of £5 to a Mr Murray for the poor. In 1847 the alms had fallen to £3. 7*s*. 10½*d*. and further still in 1848 to £2. 10*s*. 9*d*. The receipt book shows daily begging but no mention of the distress of the people.[237]

The matter of opening a boarding school which had lain in abeyance since 1824 was reopened in 1836 when Mother Mary Anne Lalor of Tullow convent asked Bishop Edward Nolan for permission to open one. Although the bishop feared that a boarding school would break their enclosure, on the assurance from Mother Mary Anne that it was the intention of their founder to receive boarders, he gave permission on the following grounds: it was the will of Bishop Delany, he (Nolan) considered it would be a great advantage to society and because the yearly income of the convents was considerably reduced from their investment interest. On 28 March 1837 they received their first boarder, 'a young lady', who was lodging in the town.[238]

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[235] Mountrath Receipts and Expenditure (1823–49), DA/BC/AIr/403.
[236] Fees:1844—£235. 16*s*; 1845—£330.8*s*.; 1846 no figures; 1847—£395.15*s* 4*d*.; 1848, no figures; 1849—£380. 7*s*.
[237] Tullow account book (1840–58), DA/BC/AIr/542.
[238] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.

From the Mountrath annals, however, we find that the bishop believed that Mother Mary Anne had taken precipitate action in opening her boarding school. Faced with this *fait accompli* Nolan responded to the 'entreaties of the Mountrath nuns' and allowed them to open their own boarding school in 1837 but was adamant that they continue their poor school and Sunday catechesis.[239] The rightness of Mother Mary Anne's decision, however precipitate, was amply demonstrated in that Tullow had twenty-two boarders by the end of the year.[240] The nuns' timing was also providential as Bishop Nolan died from typhus fever on 14 October 1837. Mother Mary Anne's action, although she was 'subject to male governance', was an early Brigidine example, though not the only one, of what Magray describes as the 'manipulation of episcopal authority in order to achieve a clearly identified community objective'.[241]

There is no record of the 87-year-old Judith Wogan Browne's reaction to the opening of the boarding schools. Her position within Brigidine history remains 'an anomalous one, as it does in the history of female religious congregations' giving rise, as late as November 1900, to a query from Bishop Patrick Foley as to whether she was a member of the community or a lay confidante.[242] Such was 'Miss Browne's control and personality (one had to be 'as firm as a rock' and 'very determined with Miss Browne') that she was always governed by her own interpretation of Delany's written instructions and, as executrix of his will, considered herself bound to realise his intentions as much as it was in her power to do so.[243]

Patrician Brothers

Delany founded the first community of Patrician brothers in Tullow in 1808. James (Patrick) McMahon (Brother John Baptist), Maurice Cummins (Brother John Evangelist), Richard Fitzpatrick (Brother Bernard) and Ambrose Dawson (Brother Joseph) were the first brothers.[244] They were quickly joined by three others, Patrick

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[239] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[240] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[241] Magray, *The Transforming Power of Nuns*, p.110.
[242] Foley to M. Baptist O'Neill, Carlow, 20 Nov. 1900, DA/BC/AIr/308.
[243] Father P. Malone to Bishop Edward Nolan, Mountrath, 25 Nov 1834, in DA/EN/1834/05; Copy of Judith Browne MS 16 Jun. 1830, lent to Peadar MacSuibhne by Bishop Doherty of Dromore, 26 Apr. 1962 in DA/P2/366, papers of Fr Peadar MacSuibhne.
[244] Walker, *A Spirit of Kindness*, p.7.

Woods (Brother Francis), Patrick Kelly (Brother Serenus) and Thomas Phelan (Brother Dominic). The converted near-ruinous old chapel in Mill Street, Tullow was their crowded and uncomfortable makeshift monastery. Knowing actual poverty, all but two (the teacher and the cook) found work in a local factory making combs until this went into bankruptcy in 1810. Although they sought casual labour their heavy commitment to catechetical instruction left them little time to pursue such work and, possibly too proud, to accept eleemosynary aid for their support.[245]

Although life for the brothers was harsh they refused to accept Delany's decision to dissolve the community and continued to struggle on. In the face of their perseverance it is difficult to understand why the brothers benefited so little from Delany's will. Perhaps he had no confidence in the survival of the community. It could also be argued that, with the establishment of Carlow College, Delany did not feel the same urgency with regard to the education of 'respectable' boys as he did for the education and social training of young girls to be future Catholic wives and mothers. The poorer boys could still receive catechetical instruction through the confraternity. Perhaps Bishop Foley's (1895–1926) rather apt comment in 1900 explains it all: 'It was plain that [Delany] was chiefly interested in the nuns'.[246] Another commentator observed in 1915 that Delany had so arranged matters that the *ipsae dixerunt* (the word) of the nuns was to be at all times final as far as the monks (brothers) were concerned.[247]

Bishop Delany's Will

Like Nano Nagle, Edmund Rice and Catherine McAuley, Delany used his personal fortune of some £9,000 to provide for his religious congregations. This money is said to have come from his mother and two aunts—Miss Fitzpatrick (d. March 1803) and Mrs Corcoran (d. June 1803).[248] Delany had to ensure that his fortune was placed 'beyond the reach of such evils as the penal laws on popish donations' (the law of charitable bequests) and of sequestration. Since Delany was prepared to divest himself of his

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[245] *The Life of Brother Paul O'Connor*, author unknown (Dublin, 1887), p.18.
[246] Bishop Foley to Br Alphonsus Delany, Carlow, 17 Nov. 1900, DA/MRH/73/Box IDC/14.
[247] 'What they said', Fr John Delany to Fr Brophy, Rathvilly, 23 Nov 1915, DA/BC/AIr/309.
[248] A scrap of paper undated paper addressed to My Lord and signed N. Treacy, gives the dates of the two deaths as 11 Mar. 1803 and 16 Jun. 1803. The writer was confident of the month and year but not of the days, DA/BC/AIr/310.

property while still living, the advice of his solicitor E.H. Gibbons was that he should select three or more persons and deposit his debentures in the bank in their names as their common property collectively, without any partition. In this way none of the named individuals could have any legal claim to any dividend or portion of the interest without the joint agreement of the rest. Moreover, Delany was advised that when one of the named individuals died their part of the property devolved, *ipso facto*, to the survivors who would not fail for their own sakes to fill up the vacancy by the nomination of another proper partner. Delany acted immediately and vested his money in the following names: Daniel Delany, Judith Wogan Browne, Eleanor Dawson, Catherine Neale, Mary Fitzgerald and Anne Lalor.[249] His will dated 7 December 1811 gives no hint that he left his money to Catholic institutions while Judith Wogan Browne was named as executrix.

In a lengthy and detailed letter of 1 May 1814 just two months before his death, Delany sought reassurance from Denys Scully, a leading Catholic barrister on the efficacy and prudence of his dispositions: for the partial endowment *in perpetuum* of two female and two male religious communities, a fund for the support of an additional clergyman in each town, an annual sum for the relief, *exclusively*, of the poor distressed *Catholic* inhabitants of both places (Delany's emphasis), a fund for the annual distribution of books to those who received catechetical instruction, funds for the rent and upkeep of the parochial chapels as well as for money to keep a perpetually burning sanctuary lamp before the tabernacle in the chapels. While he could rely on those he had named to carry out his instructions, he 'would not', he stated, 'trust any of their relatives for sixpence'.[250] In the absence of documentary evidence of Scully's reply we can only infer that Gibbons' advice met with Scully's approval.

The earliest account books show that from the beginning, Tullow and Mountrath convents would have found it difficult to survive without the income accruing from the interest on Delany's investments. In 1819, Mountrath's account book shows that the

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[249] Daniel Delany, DA/BP001/DD/12iii: 1. Dr Delany, Judith Browne, Eleanor Dawson, Catherine Neale— £2,000, 2. Dr Delany, Judith Browne, Mary Fitzgerald, Anne Lalor—£2,000, 3. Mary Fitzpatrick, Anne Lalor—£1,000, 4. Eleanor Dawson, Mary Fitzpatrick—£1,000, 5. Eleanor Dawson, Mary Fitzpatrick, Anne Lalor—£1,000. These monies were to cover his 'pious intentions' as stated to Scully.
[250] Delany to Denys Scully, Tullow, 1 May 1814, NLI, Scully Papers, MS 27,506 (8).

half-yearly interest from Delany's investments was £50.[251] Although this appears a significant amount, it was whittled down to £22. 10*s*. 0*d*. when Delany's other 'pious intentions' were paid out of the £50.[252] The nuns supplemented their income by sewing, 'mangling', washing the altar linen and making altar breads. Mangling was a source of income until 1828. Sewing as a source of income disappeared in 1835 while the making of altar breads and the care of the altar linen remained an income source for a long time.

The income from the investments fluctuated little. After the bequests were paid, both Tullow and Mountrath convents shared the remainder of the Delany interest with their off-shoot establishments—Tullow with Goresbridge from 1858 and Mountrath with Abbeyleix from 1842. The Delany investments belonging to Tullow convent in the early twentieth century were valued at £3,800.[253] In 1914, the Delany investments belonging to Mountrath convent came to £2,850.[254] Even with the grants from the National school and Intermediate board commissioners, dowries and occasional bequests, convent finances were nearly always in a precarious position.

Conclusion

As has been discussed, Delany's apostolate from the time he returned to Ireland was twofold, to break the people away from the old religious culture and to bring them with him in the restructuring of religious practice in line with Tridentine reform through an education programme of catechesis suitable to the needs of his flock. While this was first carried out by the catechists of the Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament and Christian Doctrine (established by him) it was given over to the more effective Sisters of St Brigid and the Brothers of St Patrick, the two religious institutes founded by Delany. Delany's failure to gain papal approval for the institute of the Sisters of St Brigid left the Brigidines without an approved formal rule and constitution and the sisters had to wait until Bishop Doyle gave them a rule and constitution in 1828 which was not, as will be seen, without its consequences for their patrimony. Although the Brigidine institute

[251] Mountrath receipts &expenditure 1823–49, DA/BC/AIr/403. Parts of the accounts for 1819 &1820 are also given.
[252] Chaplaincy, Patrician brothers, First Communion books, the poor, rent of parish chapel and oil for the sanctuary lamp.
[253] Tullow Charitable Bequests, DA/BC/AIr/639.
[254] Daniel Delany's money Sept.1914–33, DA/BC/AIr/444.

received temporary approval from Rome on 31 March 1845 under Bishop Haly, its further development was dependent on the interest of succeeding bishops of the diocese. (See Appendix 1) The importance of the approbation of the Church for a religious institute is, according to Devine that: 'it gives security and stability to the institute and to its members in as much as it signifies to them that in that state they have all the means of sanctity and religious perfection'.[255] For the second half of the nineteenth century this dependence rested on Bishops James Walshe and particularly on his coadjutor James Lynch who, on his appointment in 1869, was given the responsibility of the Brigidines as well as all the other convents of the diocese.

James Lynch was translated from the Western District, Scotland, after an investigation by Archbishop Manning on behalf of Propaganda Fide into the racial tensions and 'mutual prejudices' between the Irish and Scottish clergy of the Western District of Scotland which led to the irretrievable breakdown in the relationship between Bishop Gray, Vicar Apostolic of the Western District and his coadjutor James Lynch (appointed 31 August 1866 through Archbishop Cullen's influence and consecrated bishop 4 November 1866).[256] Both bishops resigned in 1869. Archbishop Cullen was also influential in Lynch's translation to the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin.[257] As a Vincentian priest and former rector of the Irish College, Paris (1858–66), 62-year-old Lynch brought his experience as a religious to bear on his supervision of the Brigidines. On his first visitation to the four convents he regulated and standardized the religious and spiritual practices in each house. His influence on the Brigidines was such that he was regarded as the second founder of institute. Coincidentally 1807, the year the Brigidines were founded, was also the year of Lynch's birth. Brigidine expansion in Ireland is discussed in the next chapter.

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[255] Devine, *Convent Life*, p.84.
[256] Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church*, p.103.
[257] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

*c.*1816–1909

IRISH EXPANSION AND ITS LIMITS

While the annals give no information on the early development and work of the schools in the trying period of the 'Second Reformation' or the impact of the evangelical proselytizing elementary schools at work in either town (we know there was one school in Tullow connected to the Kildare Place Society) we can assume that under Delany's direction they competed successfully for pupils with the many other Catholic and Protestant private run schools in both towns. We know that four years after Delany's death, the superior of Tullow convent went to the Presentation convent in Carlow to learn the Lancastrian monitorial method of teaching, which 'improved their schools very much'.[1] We also know that in 1820 Bishop Doyle would not allow illegitimate children or children of parents of 'bad repute' to be admitted to the schools in 'order to preserve the schools' character'.[2] Although he felt this to be very severe on the children he believed that it might act as a 'corrective' on parents. For the children's sake, he proposed that time be set apart outside school hours to give them religious instruction as they were 'excluded through no fault of their own'.[3]

By the 1820s the Brigidines were sufficiently well known by the parish priests to be considered as comparable to the Presentation sisters when a religious congregation was needed to provide education to the poor and 'respectable classes' of their parishes. The first of the three attempts to establish the institute outside the diocese was made in 1823 when a Brigidine foundation was established in Roscrea in the diocese of Killaloe at the invitation of Father James O'Shaughnessy, its parish priest (1810–38).[4] Ignatius Murphy in his book *The Diocese of Killaloe* and A. McAndrew in her article the 'History of the National School, Roscrea' both confirm that Father O'Shaughnessy went to the

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[1] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[2] Bishop Doyle to Sister Joseph Fitzpatrick, Tullow, 2 Jun. 1820, DA/BP/JKL/01/30.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ignatius Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe 1800–1850* (Dublin, 1992), p.149; A. McAndrew, 'History of the National School, Roscrea', DA/BC/AIr/306.

Brigidine convent in Mountrath to persuade the sisters to establish a convent school in his parish to combat the proselytizing influence of the six Protestant schools in his parish—in all, there were ninety-four Catholic children attending Protestant schools including an Erasmus Smith school, which had twenty-eight Catholic children and the 'notorious' Charter school in Dunkerrin parish.[5]

While the Mountrath annals make no mention of its establishment, there is a rather curious reference in the annals to the dismissal in 1823 of two nuns, Sisters Gertrude (Kate) and Magadalen (Brigid) Delany who 'were sent out of the convent for insubordination by Doctor Doyle'. The profession book also bears similar notation beside their names viz. 'dismissed by Doctor Doyle for insubordination'.[6] These notations are unusual given that the two blood sisters from Ballyfin were experienced nuns having entered in Tullow in 1808. They transferred to Mountrath convent in 1810 where they were among the first group of nuns to make their perpetual vows in 1822 to Bishop Doyle. A manuscript found in 1997 among the papers of Father Edmund Dobson of Saffron Walden parish, England sheds some light on the reason for their 'dismissal'. The manuscript states that Sisters Gertrude and Magadalen Delany established a Brigidine congregation in Roscrea in 1823.[7] Father Dobson had lived in the Cistercian monastery in Roscrea.

A recent discovery by the author appears to show that the sisters were not guilty of insubordination, as suggested in the later annals, but rather had Bishop Doyle's permission for the foundation in Roscrea. The accounts book for 1823 contains a reference to 'Magdalen and Gertrude leaving the house' accompanied by what appears to be a list of articles needed to furnish a new foundation.[8] Included in the list are: two beds, two pairs of blankets, two quilts, three pairs of sheets, twenty-nine yards of stuff, three yards of flannel, four gowns, four cloaks, a lock and key.[9] The total outlay by the Mountrath convent was £16. 3*s*. 4*d*. Up to 24 February 1824 'Gertrude and Magdalen' were given further support amounting to £7. 19*s*. 5*d*. If it is accepted that these expenses

[5] McAndrew, 'Roscrea' in DA/BC/AIr/306.
[6] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/326.
[7] MS, The coming of the Brigidines to Roscrea, DA/BC/BGA/810.01; O'Riordan, *Pathfinders:The Mountrath Story* (1997), ii, p.11.
[8] Mountrath Receipts and Expenditure 1823–49, DA/BC/AIr/403.
[9] Ibid. Also included on the list were: 9 petticoats, 14 handkerchiefs, 4 towels, 1 pair shoes, 12 caps, 2 boxes, 7 pairs of stockings, 6 shifts, 4 flannel waistcoats, a cloak for Sr Magdalen.

and items were for the Roscrea foundation, then it is reasonable to conclude that they had Bishop Doyle's permission for the venture given that he 'examined and approved' and signed the account book on his visitation shortly afterwards.[10] Furthermore, it is hardly credible that Bishop O'Shaughnessy of Killaloe would accept into his diocese two nuns dismissed by such a noted bishop as Doyle to set up a foundation from a house from which they had been dismissed. Moreover, the sisters used Doyle's 1828 rule and constitutions. Bishop Patrick Kennedy (1836–51) wrote in the back of the rule book his own rule for the duties of the lay sisters—there was none in Doyle's.

The Delanys' Brigidine convent in Roscrea was the first convent in the Killaloe diocese since the Reformation and their arrival meant the beginning of a new era of an active apostolate in the diocese.[11] No particulars of the foundation survive except that Father O'Shaughnessy gave them a house where they held school.[12] Whether he continued to fund the foundation is unknown, but in a short time increasing numbers necessitated another move.[13] The sisters moved a third time to larger premises where they began to keep boarders as well as continuing their work among the poor children. The success of their work and the need for more postulants was recognized by Father Bannon who sought aspirants in Dublin.[14] One such was Anne Marie MacMahon (1791–1866) who, because of her devotion to the Sacred Heart, wished to become a nun of the Visitation order.[15] There was no house of the order in Ireland and, on being told by Father Bannon that Bishop Delany had made devotion to the Sacred Heart an important feature of Brigidine life, the 36-year-old agreed to join the community in Roscrea.

She entered Roscrea convent in 1826 three years after its establishment. Within six years this remarkable woman, in religion Mother Teresa, became superior and in 1832 was responsible for the move of thirty boarders and a hundred day pupils to the impressive Air Hill House with its beautiful grounds within five minutes walk of the town.[16] Against all expectations, its owner, a Protestant named Smith who had got into financial difficulties, sold the property to Mother Teresa and, significantly, she renamed

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[10] Mountrath Receipts and Expenditure 1823–49, DA/BC/AIr/403.
[11] Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe*, p.149.
[12] McAndrew, 'Roscrea' in DA/BC/AIr/306; Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe*, p.149.
[13] McAndrew, 'Roscrea' in DA/BC/AIr/306.
[14] Ibid.
[15] 'Roscrea Connection' in *Convergence Brigidine Newsletter* (Dec. 1980), DA/BC/AIr/364.
[16] McAndrew, 'Roscrea' in DA/BC/AIr/306.

it Mount St Joseph acknowledging the historical link to Mountrath.[17] Murphy states that the Roscrea community was well established at this juncture and had a plentiful supply of vocations.

A report of a Brigidine reception ceremony in the *Clare Journal* dated 6 August 1838 shows that the community attracted well educated, middle class girls, which Delany had desired. Two novices made their profession while three young women, one of them a niece of Bishop Kennedy, were received into the order. The reception ceremony, held in the parish chapel, was considered such a noteworthy event that it was reported on in detail:

> a procession of young ladies bearing wax tapers [...] and dressed in beautiful garbs of virgin white [...] followed by the lovely young lady about to be received, decorated in all the splendour which taste and fashion could desire. [...] To those who have never witnessed the sublime and soul-stirring rites of the Roman Catholic church this would have been of intense interest.[18]

By 1842 the paper noted 'the increasing and marked successes' of the Brigidine convent in Roscrea.

In 1840 the *Catholic Directory* carried a detailed advertisement for the Roscrea Brigidine boarding school.[19] It cost £18 per annum for girls under 12-years of age and £20 per annum for those over 12-years. Its syllabus was the same as Tullow convent's though Tullow did not make any allowance for those under twelve. The work of the Roscrea sisters with the poor drew this comment from the *Limerick Reporter* of 18 February 1842: 'It is impossible to estimate the benefits conferred on the poor children of this district by the benevolent and untiring exertions of the ladies of this community'.[20] At this time there were eight professed sisters, seven novices, and one lay sister in the community.[21]

However, the sudden death in 1841 of Carlow native Agnes Hughes, a gifted French mistress, was a devastating loss to the community.[22] Her death, which made the

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[17] Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe*, pp149–50.
[18] Ibid., p.150.
[19] *Irish Catholic Directory,* pp 364 & 444; Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe*, p.149.
[20] Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe*, p.150.
[21] Ibid.
[22] McAndrew, 'Roscrea' in DA/BC/AIr/306; Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe*, p.151; Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.375.

need to find a replacement French teacher an imperative, had unforeseen consequences for the convent. At Mother Joseph's request the parish priest of Roscrea wrote to his friend Doctor O'Halloran, Rector of the Irish College, Paris, seeking a French girl who would come to Roscrea as an au pair to teach French in the school.[23] O'Halloran who regularly said Mass at the convent of the Sacred Heart, Rue de Varennes, consulted Mother Charlotte Goold (1804–49), French-born but of Irish parentage, on the matter.[24] This meeting was the prelude to momentous change for the Roscrea Brigidines. It coincided with the desire of the founder of the Society of the Sacred Heart, Madeleine Sophie Barat, to establish foundations in England and Ireland.[25] The practical reasons for the foundations were twofold. Firstly, they would provide English-speaking members for the society who, in time would help the foundations in America and Australia—she had to refuse a request from Archbishop Polding for a community for Sydney because of the lack of English speakers. Secondly, Ireland was seen as a way into Protestant England which was both a challenge and mission for Barat.[26] She wrote on 19 February 1842:

> Of the two locations offered the [English] one would be the more acceptable than that in Ireland as far as pupils are concerned. As for postulants, we would attract many more in Ireland! Also, it would be a true work of Providence to catch both. So may the little mother [Eugénie de Gramont] give good instructions to Mother Croft, whom she is sending there, so that these two fish fall into the nets of the Sacred Heart.[27]

It wasn't just England's enemies who saw Ireland as the backdoor of England. Goold who knew of Barat's intention is said to have proposed a Brigidine affiliation to O'Halloran who submitted the proposal to a surprised Mother Teresa and her community.[28] On 7 March 1842 Mother Teresa wrote to Eugénie de Gramont, the provincial of the Sacred Heart order in Paris on the favourable reception of the affiliation:

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[23] 'Roscrea Connection', DA/BC/AIr/364.
[24] Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe*, p.151; Kilroy, *Madeline Sophie Barat*, p.386; 'Roscrea Connection', DA/BC/AIr/364.
[25] Kilroy, *Madeline Sophie Barat*, p.343.
[26] Ibid.; MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope,* p.206.
[27] Madeline Sophie Barat to Aimée d'Avenas, Rome, 19 Feb. 1842 in Kilroy, *Madeline Sophie Barat,* p.343.
[28] McAndrew, 'Roscrea' in DA/BC/AIr/306.

> Although I am fully confident that there is nothing in the rules of your order which would render it unsuitable to [...] our community, yet I am desirous of having a copy of those rules, [...] in order that each sister [...] may have a close knowledge of the duties and obligations of the order previously to her entering it. With regard to the pecuniary circumstances of our convent, we are not rich, but we are however independent and our prospects are most favourable. I am confident that our affiliation to the order of the Sacred Heart, [...] would be of great advantage to our establishment....[29]

Bishop Kennedy, who had formed a favourable impression of the community while in Paris, wrote that the project had his 'entire and hearty approbation'.[30] On 14 May 1842, two French representatives, Charlotte Goold and Elisa Croft arrived in Roscrea and outlined the details of the proposed amalgamation.[31] After two days the representatives left to give the community time to consider the amalgamation. In response to Goold's appraisal of conditions in Roscrea, Barat wrote that 'the details you give me are not very satisfactory still, if Jesus wills that the society begin in a Bethlehem, may the will of Jesus be done'.[32]

Not all in Roscrea were in favour of the change. The parish priest Dr Blake, some of the nuns and some parents of the boarding school children were opposed to the amalgamation.[33] However, seeing the change as the will of God, Dr Blake gave his consent as did the parents who were reassured that the boarding school would continue. With ample resources of its own, the Sacred Heart congregation could afford the large capital outlay for the continued upkeep of the boarding school while 'following the highly approved educational system of the mother house in Paris'.[34]

On 23 June 1842 Elisa Croft returned to Roscrea to initiate the changes necessary for the transfer and by August all the arrangements were completed.[35] She was appointed superior of the first Sacred Heart foundation in Ireland. Mother Teresa gave over her authority to her new superior and became a novice again at 52-years of age all the while

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[29] Ibid.; Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe,* p.151; Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.375; 'Roscrea Connection', DA/BC/AIr/364.
[30] Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe*, p.151.
[31] Kilroy, *Madeline Sophie Barat,* p.343; Tom Prior, 'Early Years' in Tom Prior & George Cunningham (eds), *Convent of the Sacred Heart Roscrea, 1842–1992* (Roscrea, 1992), p.24.
[32] Roscrea Connection', DA/BC/AIr/364.
[33] McAndrew, 'Roscrea' in DA/BC/AIr/306.
[34] Clear, *Nuns*, p.43; *ICD* (1856).
[35] Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe*, p.151.

assisting Croft in every way and helping her former charges to adapt to the new rules and customs.[36] On 21 November 1842 twelve Brigidines and two others received the habit of the Society of the Sacred Heart thus ending a successful nineteen year Brigidine presence in Roscrea.[37] The *Irish Catholic Directory* (1843) noted that St Brigid's convent, Mount St Joseph, Roscrea, was 'now a branch of the Sacré Coeur, Paris'.[38]

This most unusual transfer was probably made easier as the Roscrea house was independent of Mountrath and under the jurisdiction of Bishop Kennedy as the Brigidine institute had not as yet received papal approbation. There is no record of the Delany sisters in the archives of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Murphy suggests that by 1832 with the convent well established that they returned to Mountrath while McAndrew suggests that when the Mountrath sisters were recalled, Teresa MacMahon was made superior. However, the two did not return to Mountrath as is evidenced in the annals and it seems reasonable to suggest that they were among a number of the Brigidine sisters buried in the parish graveyard, the wooden crosses marking their graves having disappeared before they were reinterred in the Sacred Heart convent graveyard.[39].

On the evidence it seems reasonable to argue that the meaning of 'dismissal' as a sending away or a release to go on mission was overlooked in the later annals in favour of 'dismissal' in the sense of to expel, especially for misconduct, hence the inclusion of the word 'insubordination'. The success of the two Delany sisters in establishing a Brigidine convent, parish and boarding schools in the very heart of a Protestant locality deserves better recognition.

Cashel (1827–29)

Following on the successful foundation in Roscrea, a Brigidine foundation was made in Cashel in 1827. Knowledge of this foundation comes not from the annals but from a

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[36] Roscrea Connection', DA/BC/AIr/364.

[37] McAndrew, 'Roscrea'. Copy of Register of Sacred Heart Convent naming the former Brigidine community entrants: Anne-Marie MacMahon (Sr Teresa), Maria Egan (Sr Angela), Sarah Stuart (Sr Catherine), Ellen Gillespie (Sr Brigid), Charlotte Ryan (Sr Mary Joseph), Sarah Deane (Sr Bernard), Elisa Egan (Sr Nativite), Mary Maher (Sr Gabrielle) Ellen Deane (Sr Baptist), Marianne Cunningham (Sr Gertrude), Margaret Henbry (Sr Philomena) Ann Mary Daly (Sr Euphrasia), Eliza Duggan, Mary Walsh. Ellen Gillespie and Margaret Henbry went to Berrymead; Sarah Deane and Eliza Duggan went to Roehampton.

[38] *ICD* (1843), p.305; *ICD* (1845), p.258.

[39] Prior, 'Early Years', p.33.

History of the Parish of Cashel penned by a priest from the Diocese of Cashel and Emly.[40] His writings are corroborated by the brief reference to the Brigidine foundation in Skehan's *Cashel and Emly Heritage*.[41] Which Brigidine convent was involved in the foundation is unknown. John Ryan, parish priest of Cashel (1823–30) petitioned Archbishop Laffan in 1825 or 1826 for a religious community to help educate the poor girls of the parish. Ryan built a fine three-storey building for the sisters, which today forms the centre section of the Presentation convent building. He also secured the services of three women to assist them. The Brigidine sisters took up residence in 1827 but struggled for two years to establish their convent. The accounts suggest that the community withdrew 'overwhelmed by the poverty of the people, who were unable to provide them with the necessary financial support to survive'. This seems to imply that neither Ryan nor their mother house were able or willing (Miss Browne?) to provide the necessary financial support. With the departure of the Brigidine sisters, Ryan turned to the Presentation sisters in Thurles for help.[42] They arrived in Cashel on the day of his death and were successful in maintaining the schools. It appears that the longer established Presentation sisters were financially more secure than the younger Brigidine congregation as they were also turned to for help to replace the Brigidines in the schools in Castlecomer.

Castlecomer (?–1829)

Here again the Brigidine annals make no reference to this foundation but it is probable that they were invited to Castlecomer by Edward Walsh, parish priest from 1822 till his resignation on 4 May 1829. He was replaced by Nicholas Shearman, a rigid and severe moralist and prior to this appointment, president of the Catholic college, Burrell's Hall.[43] The documentary evidence for the foundation is in Shearman's letter to Bishop Doyle

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[40] Rita Minehan, *From the Acorn to the Oak: Celebrating the Brigidine Story* (Dublin, 2009) p.24.
[41] Walter G. Skehan, *Cashel and Emily Heritage* (Cashel & Emly, 1993), p.88.
[42] Skehan, *Cashel*, p.88.
[43] Carrigan, *History,* i, p.262 & ii, p.167. Walsh went to America where he became a vicar general but later returned to Kilkenny and died there on 17 Jun. 1840. Burrell's Hall was opened as a Catholic college by Bishop Troy on 13 Jan. 1783. It was an old mansion facing James Green on the spot where St Mary's Cathedral now stands. It takes its name from the family of Burrell, one of the adventurers who settled in Kilkenny in the seventeenth century in *Transactions of Ossory Archaeological Society*, *1880*-83, ii (Kilkenny, 1883), pp 171-4.

dated 13 June 1829 'regarding the religious women of [Doyle's] diocese'. Its references to the educational abilities and characters of the three unnamed Brigidine sisters are worth noting in the light of the evidence of Doctor Campion, a former pupil of Shearman, who stated of his methods of teaching that 'he established a moral code of training so firmly [...] that the least divergence from it was punished with the most unexampled severity'.[44] It also shows the difficulties in establishing a new house. Shearman wrote:

> If much good has been done by their labours for the poor children, much evil likewise and horrible scandal have followed from divisions in their house, and disorders that are not, thank God, frequently found in ordinary dwellings—I was forced, with regret, to dismiss one of them. Her conduct was more unholy than you can imagine. A single virtue of the religious state she has not. Two others remain—but they are entirely unequal to the management of the two schools. The establishment will necessarily fall, unless something can be done to support it. I think the introduction of three or four Presentation sisters affords the only chance of preserving it.[45]

Shearman applied to and received a 'promise from the ladies of the convent in Kilkenny' of some nuns 'with the full means of support, which they brought in when they entered religion' which he believed to be an advantage in Castlecomer. It was also his opinion that the 'profits from the benefit school' would, with help from the 'spirited' townspeople, soon build a 'suitable house'. His major difficulty, however, was what 'to do with the two Brigittines':

> Were they qualified for the schools I should endeavour to retain them, only one is educated the other is badly able to read and does not write at all, if I be truly informed. If your lordship would assist me in this point, and call home this latter I shall be evermore grateful – the other I will keep, employ her in the school, and finally assist her to be professed with the Presentation nuns as a lay sister.[46]

As a rigorous disciplinarian and involved in education for fourteen years, Shearman may have expected too much of the three women to teach 200, possibly more children, in the

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[44] *Ossory Archaeological Society*, p.174.
[45] Shearman to Doyle, Kilkenny, 13 Jun. 1829 in DA/BP/04/JKL/1829/42. In reply to my queries of 5 May 2012, John Kirwan, consultant archivist St Kieran's College, Kilkenny stated there was no correspondence extant from Bishop Doyle to Shearman on this subject.
[46] Ibid.

two schools.[47] His letter also raises questions as to the religious status of the sisters as, from 1822, Bishop Doyle allowed the sisters of Tullow and Mountrath convents to take perpetual vows. Was the foundation then made before 1822 when the sisters only took annual vows which would probably account for Shearman's hopes to have the 'educated' Brigidine sister professed as a Presentation lay sister? From Shearman's inferences, it appears that the Brigidines were not bringing in dowers on entry into the institute (this was made compulsory by Doyle shortly after his succession to the see). It also seems that if Shearman's depiction of the sisters is a true representation of their characters and abilities, at this stage in the institute's evolvement they were not attracting the more educated class desired by Delany. As against this view, the Roscrea foundation attracted many middle-class girls as postulants. The tenor of the letter seems to be that he did not hold the Brigidines in good standing as against the 'ladies of Kilkenny convent'. Was this because the founding sisters were not of the middle-class? Or it may be that clerical politics came into play.

Interestingly, the Patrician brothers sent a filiation to Castlecomer *c.*1828:[48] Within a year and shortly after the arrival of Shearman the brothers had retired from this mission, due to 'troubles in the parish'. It is reasonable to infer that the resignation of Edward Walsh, the arrival of Shearman, the dismissal of the Brigidines and the retirement of the Patricians all within a couple of months of each other may be linked. Patrician brother, Linus Walker, suggests that the Brigidines and Patricians may have been the innocent victims in the politics surrounding the appointment of Carlow college professor of philosophy, William Kinsella as bishop of Ossory on 15 May 1829.[49] A Carlow man, Kinsella's appointment is said to have been made at 'the instance' of Bishop Doyle. The see was vacant for two years after the death of Bishop Marum in 1827. An earlier 'heated' election for his successor was annulled by Rome and Myles Murphy of Wexford was appointed bishop, but he refused the dignity.[50] Whatever the

[47] Register of Abstracts, Castlecomer School, ED/2/22, NAI.
[48] Linus Walker to author, 8 May 2012.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Carrigan, *History*, i, p.223.

reason for the sisters' dismissal, on 29 June 1829, Kilkenny convent fulfilled Shearman's request by sending a filiation of Presentation sisters to Castlecomer.[51]

The Abbey—Abbeyleix Foundation (1842)

It was nearly twenty years after the failure of the Castlecomer foundation and seven years after Bishop Nolan refused a request for a Brigidine benefit school in Bagenalstown before another Brigidine foundation was made in Abbeyleix. The Brigidines were invited to the de Vesci's Planned Estate Town of Abbeyleix, in 1842 by its parish priest Thomas Nolan (*c.*1794–1886), a former administrator of Tullow parish who was impressed by the work of the Brigidine sisters there. Nolan believed that the need for the Brigidine apostolate in Abbeyleix was equal to that of Tullow, if not more so, in a town where the prevailing influence, if not in numbers, was Protestant.[52] There was a Poor Law Union School already established and in connection with the National Board of Education.[53] Bishop Haly chose 42-year-old Mother Bernard Redmond with over twenty years experience as a religious and the younger Mother Clare Johnston with ten years experience. They were joined later by Sister Philip Whyte. On 21 June 1842 Nolan's own 'modest three storey residence' became their convent. On 4 November 1845, Nolan's niece, Johanna, was the first postulant to enter the convent. She took the religious name Francis de Sales and spent sixty-five years as a religious.[54] She would, throughout these years, provide a link between the convent and the de Vesci family who provided much needed help for the 'needy ones'.[55]

By September 1842 the two-roomed school was ready for occupation—the upper floor acting as a benefit school and the poor school (immediately placed in connection with the National Board of Education) on the ground floor.[56] In October 1844 the school received its first boarder, Miss Lynch, of Loughshinney, Co. Dublin.[57] By 1852, the nuns were sufficiently well established to advertise the boarding school for the first time. In

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[51] Presentation sisters (www.castlecomer.ie/convent.php) (23 Nov. 2012).
[52] 'Abbeyleix ... and Its Convent' p.53, DA/BC/AIr/190.
[53] Register of Abstracts, NAI.
[54] Abbeyleix annals, DA/ BC/AIr/18.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Register of Abstracts, NAI.
[57] Abbeyleix annals, DA/ BC/AIr/18.

1857 they had thirty-three benefit pupils and forty boarders.[58] Further extensions were added in 1860 when it was decided by Nolan that the walls of the convent would support another storey. Sunday catechetical instruction continued unbroken until 1894 when the need was no longer there. A new national school was built in 1890.

In 1877 while Abbeyleix and the Brigidine convents paid 'particular attention to religious instruction, deportment and manners' and 'all the accomplishments necessary to complete the education of a young lady' the government's attention was, by contrast, focussed on the thorny question of funding intermediate education based on examinations for boys and girls, a clear move away from the accomplishments of painting, drawing, music, singing and dancing to a more 'utilitarian one as a gateway to job opportunities'.[59] The Act to Promote Intermediate Education in Ireland received royal assent in August 1878. Despite much opposition, including that of Cardinal Cullen, the act was amended so that it applied to girls as well as boys. While the act brought about great changes in the girls' school curriculum it did not provide for grants to equip, furnish or build schools. Despite its imperfections the provisions laid down in the act were, Coolahan argues, of great long-term significance and, except for minor changes, they reflected state policy and support towards intermediate education until the partition of the country and the establishment of two states in Ireland.[60] A seven member Board of Commissioners of Intermediate Education was established representing the Church of Ireland, the Catholic church and the Presbyterian church.[61]

As in elementary education, the schools were paid by examination results. Abbeyleix boarding school was the first of the Brigidine schools to take the decision of 'getting up a class for the Intermediate education'. Tullow boarding school possibly entered into Intermediate education on 6 September 1884 when Intermediate books were purchased for the boarders however, it did not take part in the Intermediate examination until 1900.[62] While four Abbeyleix pupils took the examination in Kilkenny in 1881

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[58] Bishop James Walshe, Memorandum of the Congregation of St Brigid , undated, DA/BP/JW/11/1857/16.
[59] Anne V. O'Connor, 'Influences Affecting Girls' Secondary Education in Ireland, 1860-1910' in *Archiv Hib* xli, (1986), 83-98 at 83.
[60] John Coolahan, 'The origins of the Payment by Results Policy in Education and the Experience of it in the National and Intermediate Schools of Ireland' (Master in Education, TCD, 1975), p.248.
[61] Ibid., p.243; Kealy, *Dominican Education*, p.63.
[62] Tullow HCM, DA/BC/AIr/516(2).

there is no record on how the pupils got on.[63] The Intermediate is not mentioned again until 1899 when it was 'thought advisable to go further this year to the Intermediate examinations'. The Intermediate Board Schools Rolls for 1898 show that thirty-six names were entered.[64] In 1902 the boarding school was inspected by the Intermediate Board and the classes were examined orally with the written reports forwarded to the school manager. The school continued with the South Kensington Science and Art Department examinations as did the other Brigidine schools. In 1909, sixteen pupils sat the Intermediate examination. Logan contends that the need to prepare for entry to third level education and the emergence and expansion of occupations such as nursing, teaching and retailing ensured that more and more women would prepare themselves by staying on in school long after the completion of elementary schooling.[65]

In 1876 Father Nolan decided that there was a need for an elementary school at Ballyroan some three miles from Abbeyleix at the far side of his parish.[66] With the consent of Bishop Lynch a branch house of Abbeyleix convent was founded in 1877. The effects of the nuns' religious instruction was immediate, with thirty-five girls from Ballyroan school being presented for Confirmation in Abbeyleix on 18 October 1879 and thirty-six more the following year as too were the effects of the payments-by-results scheme when the children who had the required number of attendances at school for the results payment examination held by School Inspector O'Hara were given a party.[67] This scheme was introduced in 1872 following on the recommendation of the Powis Commission of Inquiry of 1870 as an aid to teacher remuneration including teaching nuns.[68]

The payment by results scheme was opposed by the Presbyterian church general assembly who made a direct attack on the teaching nuns stating that: 'to change this system would be to put the untrained and unclassed teacher, who has indolently declined the necessary study, on a level with the individual of highest quality and class'.[69]

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[63] Abbeyleix HCM.
[64] Intermediate Education Board School Rolls (1898), ED/CIE/2/8, NAI; Abbeyleix HCM.
[65] Logan, 'The Dimensions of Gender in Nineteenth-Century Schooling, p.42.
[66] Ballyroan annals, DA/BC/AIr/773.
[67] Abbeyleix HCM (1879–87), DA/BC/AIr/187.
[68] Coolahan, 'Payments by Results', p.1.
[69] Statement included in Memorandum of Patrick Keenan, printed in *Freeman's Journal*, 9 May 1867 in Coolahan, 'Payments by Results', p.60.

However, as Coolahan argues, concern for the remuneration of nun teachers was in mind in the planning of a payment by results system. Patrick Keenan, who had much to do with the introduction of the system, explained that the National Board Commissioners had 'to hit upon some plans by which the nuns, without forcing them with examinations and classification could be placed on terms equally with the lay teachers. Payment by results was our plan'.[70] It meant, as O'Buachalla explains, that a payment additional to the basic salary of each teacher was payable in respect of each pupil who performed satisfactorily in the annual inspection and who achieved a minimum annual attendance.[71] In 1883, Ballyroan convent school spent the whole of Holy Week in examination for the results payment and received payment of £13. 6*s*. 6*d*.

Until his death on 8 May 1886 Father Nolan was a generous benefactor to the Abbeyleix sisters in building and extending the schools and convent as well as contributing money from his own private income for that purpose. He was also instrumental in buying and negotiating loans to pay for land and property for them. For example, the purchase of a field in 1848 was needed to extend the nuns enclosure and to provide them with more space for recreation while the out-offices of the Tan Yard adjoining the enclosure were converted into a national school in 1874.[72]

Another generous benefactor was Francis Warren of Abbeyleix. By his will dated 26 July 1846, he left £2,000 to be invested and out of the annual dividends the sum of £20 was to be paid in perpetuity for the support of 'the Abbeyleix convent'. The residue of the annual dividend, approximately £40, was to be divided between the poor of the parishes of Abbeyleix and Ballinakill.[73]

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[70] Coolahan, 'Payments by Results', p.61.

[71] Séamas Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Dublin, 1988), p. 25.

[72] The property included a field adjoining their small garden for £33 and a yearly rent of £1.10*s*.to Lord de Vesci (1848); the farm houses, stables and land at Ballymadoc for £50 and a yearly rent of £15.3*s*.6*d*.to Lord de Vesci (1851); the lands at Glenbrook, Ballyroan from the encumbered estates courts for £3,010 (1857); the 'Tan Yard' adjoining the enclosure for £200 (1873) and Glascock's block of houses facing the convent (1880). The nuns paid a Mr White, a Protestant, £33 for his interest in the field, Abbeyleix annals DA/BC/AIr/18; Rents to de Vesci estate DA/BC/AIr/63; Agreement of James Glascock to sell his interest in the houses to the nuns, DA/BC/AIr/85-92.

[73] Correspondence re Francis Warren will. Trustees: Bishop Haly (later Bishop Walshe) & William Mooney, DA/KL/LD/3; Abbeyleix annals.

The de Vesci Connection

Although the 3rd Viscount de Vesci provided a feast and entertainment for a large number of the children of the poor school on the occasion of his daughter's wedding in November 1874 it was not until the 4 November 1879 that a de Vesci paid a social visit to the Abbeyleix convent. The party comprised the newly married 4th Viscount de Vesci, who had succeeded to the estate on the death of his father in 1875, accompanied by his wife Lady Evelyn, daughter of the 11th Earl of Wemyss. The visit was made partly in response to the nuns' plea on 24 September 1879 to be supplied with water from the town's new fountain (a plea to which Lord de Vesci responded willingly) and on 4 January 1880 the water supply was connected to the convent. Ten years later he supplied them with piped water from Ballymaddock spring at no cost other than a nominal charge of two shillings a year to keep the pipes in repair. As a result of this generosity, the choir chapel and cells were heated with hot water pipes and in 1894 the boarding school also had central heating installed.

The November 1879 visit was the beginning of closer contact (more than that of a tenant and landlord relationship) between the convent and the de Vesci family. On 14 January 1880, Lady de Vesci, her only child, Mary Gertrude, and 'some other distinguished visitors' attended the boarding school children's 'theatricals'. The following year Lady de Vesci gave £5 to the bazaar to raise funds for the new buildings while the nuns lent a 'pump' to his lordship.[74] Lady de Vesci's interest in the affairs of the schools was further shown when she invited the children of the national school to a tea party on 7 June 1882 and again when she and Lady Spencer visited the schools in early March 1884. On the convent's golden jubilee in 1892, Lady de Vesci sent a cheque for £50 to purchase a marble altar for the choir chapel. Widowed in 1903 the estate passed to Lord de Vesci's nephew Ivo, the 5th Viscount de Vesci (1881–1958). One can see the regard in which she held the convent sisters from a letter she wrote to Mother de Sales before she moved to Surrey. It was her wish not to inconvenience the sisters in any way—the time of the visit was to suit the convent:

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[74] Abbeyleix HCM. Other contributors to the bazaar were Lord Portarlington, £5 and the duke of Norfolk, £2.

> Perhaps you think it strange that I have not seen you sooner. It is simply because I dread the thought of saying good-bye to you, our dearest friends, and I have not been at all well; [...] and just because one of the saddest things is saying goodbye to you [...] I have delayed and delayed; [...] it shall not be goodbye [...] because I know that neither Miss de Vesci nor Mary nor I could ever say good-bye to Abbeyleix or to you.... So it will be just a loving visit tomorrow, not goodbye.[75]

Influenced by his aunt Evelyn and her concern for the people of the town and surrounding countryside, the 5th Viscount de Vesci established a successful carpet factory in Abbeyleix which won many international competitions and supplied carpets to the White Star Line ships including the 'Olympic' and 'Titanic', as well as carpet for the coronation of George V in 1911.[76]

In April 1933 the Dowager Lady de Vesci was received into the Catholic church—her daughter Mary, wife of Aubrey Herbert MP was received into the church some years before. The Abbeyleix nuns offered up Mass and their general Communion, the *Te Deum* and rosary in thanksgiving that their much loved benefactress had become Catholic. She died on 19 June 1939 at her home in Surrey. Her daughter arranged that the parish priest, Father Breen, celebrate Mass for her soul on 21 June 1939 in Abbeyleix parish church where the choir sang the Requiem Mass before 'a vast congregation including the Viscount and Viscountess de Vesci, both Protestant'. Her remains were brought back to Ireland and were buried in the old abbey on the demesne. The Abbeyleix nuns arranged for a novena of masses for the repose of her soul.

Goresbridge Foundation 1858

By 1858 there 'were 44,161 girls enrolled in 112 convent schools affiliated to the Board as national schools', however, if it was not for the generosity of Edward Lyons of Fenniscourt, Co. Carlow, a Brigidine foundation would not have been established in Goresbridge, Co. Kilkenny.[77] Lyons was approached by Father Patrick Turner for funds

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[75] Evelyn de Vesci to Mother de Sales, Abbeyleix, 20 Apr. 1906 quoted in O'Riordan, *Pathfinders, The Abbeyleix Story*, iii, p.22.

[76] Malcomson, de Vesci Papers, NLI.

[77] Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy*, p.23. Edward Lyons was born in 1772 and died in 1869. In his will he left the following bequests: £6,000 to the foreign missionary establishment in connection with St Patrick's College, Carlow; £1,800 for founding and endowing poor schools at Goresbridge; £1,000 to the

to establish a religious community in Goresbridge to give religious instruction to the children and adults.[78] Lyons approached his niece, Mother Angela Maher, a Presentation sister in Bagenalstown, on the subject, however, these sisters were unable to provide him with a community since Goresbridge was considered too close to make another foundation.[79] As Mother Angela's sister, Mother Gertrude, was in Tullow convent, she contacted her on her uncle's behalf. As it was Mother Catherine McAuliffe's 'ardent wish' that 'all should enjoy the blessings of a Christian education' she is said to have 'joyfully and cordially acquiesced in Lyon's proposal'. On 27 April 1858, with Bishop Walshe's permission she, with the two pioneer sisters Sisters Gertrude Maher (Superior) and de Pazzi Singleton, undertook the difficult task of establishing a new foundation. Turner gave over his own large but dilapidated house to be their temporary home until a convent was built. In the words of the annalist, the 'greater portion of the house was uninhabitable'. By July Bishop Walshe was pleased with what they had accomplished since their arrival and he concurred in their plans for the future—to build a chapel, cells, classrooms, and apartments for boarders. A stumbling block to their plans was the lack of finance. Turner approached their benefactors Edward Lyons and James Maher, Mother Gertrude Maher's father, for help. Both men contributed £100 in order that building could start immediately. Lyons also settled £100 per annum on the establishment in perpetuity and promised that the building would not remain unfinished for want of funds. The Tullow community agreed to give a half-yearly payment of £12. 4*s.* 6*d.* as a support to the new community. This was part of Tullow convent's interest from the Delany bequest.

Within two months of their arrival, Mother Catherine McAuliffe (aware of the need to provide a separate education for the children of the better off farmers and of the well-to-do parents in the locality) transferred Mother Agnes O'Mara from Tullow to Goresbridge. On 21 June 1858 seven days after her arrival she opened a benefit school. The school was well supported from the beginning with an average attendance of forty.

Presentation Convent, Bagenalstown; £1,000 to such educational purposes as his trustees might select and £100 p.a. to the Catholic bishop of Kildare for the time being for masses for his soul in Peadar MacSuibhne Papers/DA/uncatalogued.

[78] Unless otherwise stated the facts are taken from the Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).

[79] In conversation with Sister Kathleen Ryan, superior of Presentation convent, Bagenalstown, 7 Feb. 2013.

Professed just two years, Sister Agnes proved to be one of the most efficient teachers in the Goresbridge schools for over fifty years. Just three years previously she, with the other novices and sisters, were given a six months course of French language classes from a specially engaged French governess so that 'they might learn the correct pronunciation of it, and to speak it with facility'.[80] As well as her teaching skills, Mother Agnes' charity to the poor and suffering was said to be proverbial as was her influence in reaching out to all who needed help.[81]

There is no further mention of the day school in the Goresbridge archives until 12 July 1890 when it is noted that the superior in Tullow had written to Mother Vincent Murray in Goresbridge suggesting that the day school be placed under the National Board, probably due to falling day pupil numbers as many parents preferred to have their children attend as boarders even if they lived locally.[82] It also coincided with a reorganization of scarce teaching personnel—sisters had left the communities for the Australian mission. Falling pupil numbers were also affecting Mountrath and it was decided that closing the day schools would allow them to concentrate on the national and boarding schools. The loss of the day school fees, however, added to the financial burden in both convents.[83]

The sisters moved from Turner's house to their partly completed new accommodation in October 1860. By August 1862 the rest of the building was ready for occupation but not by boarders as planned, rather it was given over as temporary shelter for the mother abbess, Mother St Clare (the Hon. Mrs Law) and her community of the Sisters of the Third Order of Penance of St Francis. They were invited to Ireland by the Ram family of Ramsfort, Gorey, Co. Wexford, to establish a foundation there but when the family got into financial difficulties the nuns, who were dependent on them for their support, were evicted from their convent.[84] They spent from August 1862 to August 1863 in Goresbridge before finally making a home in Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim. This was

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[80] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/507. The governess was engaged for six months in June 1855 at a salary of £20. Classes for the novices and sisters were held five evenings a week until Christmas.
[81] She died on 1 Mar 1925 having spent seventy-one years in religious life, Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).
[82] Tullow HCM, DA/BC/Air/518.
[83] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[84] Helena Concannon, 'The first Irish convent of perpetual adoration' in DA/BC/O'Riordan papers, not catalogued.

the first convent in Ireland dedicated to the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.[85] Through the generosity of the Goresbridge sisters, Delany's long held wish was fulfilled.

The departure of the Franciscan nuns meant that the sisters could accept boarders and on 7 February 1864 the sisters received one, Bridie Keeffe. Within three years a three storey extension was added, the new building made possible again through the generosity of Edward Lyons, their 'worthy and munificent benefactor'. Lyons did not live to see the completion of the new extension. Regarded by the Brigidines as 'the founder of the house' he was buried in the centre of the cemetery among 'his own dear children' as he had wished.

On his convent visitation in 1870 Bishop Lynch ruled that the boarders or 'inmates', as he called them, were to have a separate existence from the children of the national school. His decision that 'the poor children, monitors included, should be kept apart in all their classes from the young ladies boarding at the convent' enforced the social class system that was well established in the convent schools at this period. He believed experience showed that 'both parties suffered from a mixture'.[86]

Despite their enclosure the sisters cared for the 'corporal wants' of the many poor children 'sadly in need of their assistance'. They were 'happily' able to do so through the generosity of the farmers in the neighbourhood who provided the convent with liberal supplies of butter, eggs, milk, fruit and vegetables. The Goresbridge annals state that Mother Gertrude Maher was 'so charitable to the poor that Father Turner had to limit her daily alms'. Bishop Walshe was also generous to the poor of Goresbridge providing £106. 10*s.* *2d.* between 1877 and 1880 for their care.[87] Ten years later the convent received a legacy of £300 from an unknown benefactor to feed and clothe the poor children attending the national school.[88]

In 1860 the sisters ended the connection with the National Education Board (the school was connected since 1835) the only Brigidine convent national school ever to do

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[85] Ibid.
[86] Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).
[87] Ibid.
[88] The money was received on 3 Aug. 1890 in Tullow HCM, DA/BC/Air/518.

so.[89] On his annual inspection the Board inspector observed that the children blessed themselves when the clock struck the hour. As Mother Gertrude Maher 'conscientiously refused' to comply with his order to give up the custom he reported the fact to the Board stating that Goresbridge was one of only two cases in the hundreds of schools he inspected to give trouble.[90] In not complying with the order Mother Gertrude took the opposite stance to Tullow school ten years earlier when the school manager complied with the Board's rules.[91] There is the sad admission in the annals that without this grant 'life was much more difficult'. The separation from the Board lasted until 1863 as the convent accounts for that year show the school in receipt of a national grant of £12. 10*s*.

One visitor to all the schools was Viscountess Clifden of Gowran Castle. How sacrosanct the nuns held their time of retreat can be seen in their polite rebuff to the viscountess on her first visit to the convent in August 1867. The superior explained that the nuns were on retreat and, on hearing this, the viscountess apologized and asked if she could call again. This was willingly acceded to and in September she called with her two children. They were entertained by the children of the day school who performed Cardinal Wiseman's two act drama *The Hidden Gem* and by the children of the poor school who pleased her with the conversations composed by the nuns and the presentation of an address. It appears she was 'quite affected by the compliment paid to her' and 'seemed both pleased and surprised at the intelligence and talent displayed by the children'. On her return to England she wrote to the reverend mother enclosing £10 for the benefit of the children of the poor school many of whom, the annals state, were destitute.

The structure of the national school building remained unchanged until 1891 when changes were made at the behest of the kindergarten organizer (kindergarten organizers were introduced into the national schools that year) who was concerned about lack of space in the school due to the increase in pupil numbers.[92] With these changes, the old national school served the pupils of Goresbridge adequately until 1904 when

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[89] Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).
[90] Reports of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, House of Commons Papers, 1859, Session 1(254), p.200, NLI.
[91] Register of Abstracts, Tullow National School, no.26, ED/2/1, NAI.
[92] Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).

school manager Father R. O'Brien stated that a new national school was 'an urgent necessity'.

The convent finances were always precarious. For example in 1900 the convent was at the loss of £186 19*s*. 3*d*. in boarders' fees as well as carrying a significant debt of £500. The convent only just had sufficient funds to meet everyday expenses such that by the end of the year its coffers were practically empty. The convent was in such a 'financially weak' state in 1884 that the bequest of £572. 5*s*.10*d*. from 'Captain McCartan' of Brooklyn, New York, was very welcome.[93] His two daughters Mina (Mary) and Gretta (Margaret) were pupils of the boarding school. The convent's financial affairs were also a matter of concern for Bishop Patrick Foley on his visitation in March 1898. The convent was at the loss of monies owing from the Neigham estate for some considerable time.[94] The bishop promised to do everything in his power to redress the situation which it would appear he did as by October 1898 the convent received a cheque for £128. 5*s*. 7*d*., the arrears from the Neigham estate.[95] The annals note that the bishop must have 'worked might and main' to receive the arrears as well as the promise of an annual sum of £70 or £80. The convent was helped out on many occasions by 'good friends' when in dire financial straits. For example, Catherine Bray generously cancelled their debt of £200 for meat.[96] In March 1893 she lent them £5 and in August of the same year gave them a donation of over £10. In April 1896 they received £12 as a gift from her.

Paulstown Foundation and the First 'Sisterhood'

The Paulstown foundation is unusual in that it was made at the behest of Bishop Lynch who wished to facilitate the desire of three elderly Paulstown 'nuns', the last surviving members of a religious community. The community was founded in the 1830s by Rose Bolger of Acore and Margaret (Peggy) Carroll of Castlehill who, with Kitty Bolger, Rose's sister, and Mary Shanahan, a 'saintly widow' from Kilmacow, devoted their lives to the spiritual needs of the people and the religious education of the girls of Paulstown.

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Goresbridge HCM, DA/BC/AIr/243.
[96] Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).

Their parish priest, Father J. Maher gave them permission to build a house on church property near to the chapel.[97] From the beginning the house was known as the 'Paulstown Convent' and they themselves became known as 'The Sisterhood'. Mary Shanahan brought £100 to the community, which she used to enlarge and improve the 'convent'. Because of her 'holiness and ability' she was designated 'reverend mother'. They supported themselves through their little shop and dress-making. Unlike the Clonegal community, they had the esteem and support of Bishop Doyle who gave them a rule of life, visited them occasionally and gave them the privilege of having the Blessed Sacrament in their little upstairs oratory.[98] Although they did not take formal vows they lived an austere religious life.

They were joined by the eighteen-year-old Catherine O'Neill (who did her teacher training with the Presentation sisters in Carlow and with the Central Training Establishment, Marlborough Street) and who replaced Miss Lally, as the principal of Paulstown school. She taught there for over thirty years until the community became part of the Brigidine congregation in 1875.[99] The other 'nuns' did not continue 'literacy teaching' but continued their apostolate in other ways. According to the annals nothing could be done in the village without Catherine O'Neill's advice.

Of the four surviving members of the Paulstown community—Mary Shanahan had died some years previously—only three opted to become Brigidines and take the habit.[100] Kitty Bolger did not wish to take formal vows and had her dower returned to her. This was her share of the money, said to be between £2,000 and £3,000, accumulated as savings by the community.[101] The rest of the money went to the Brigidine community.

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[97] Paulstown Education and Historical Society, *Paulstown Schools: Past and Present* (Paulstown, Kilkenny, 2007), p. 29.

[98] Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2); *Paulstown Schools: Past and Present*, p. 29.

[99] The school was in connection with the National Board of Education from 1 Jul. 1839 and a new school was built in 1844. Catherine received a salary of £2 as principal, in Register of Abstracts, Paulstown Female School, no.51, ED/2/22, NAI.

[100] In her will dated 11 Feb. 1866 Mary Shanahan left her portion of the community savings to the other community members but to be used for charitable purposes. Similarly Catherine Bolger (26 Feb. 1875), Margaret Carroll (11 Mar 1875), Rose Bolger (11 Mar. 1875) and Catherine O'Neill whose will was identical to that of Rose Bolger all left their money for 'the founding of a convent in Paulstown for the instruction of female children', DA/BC/AIr/520.018.

[101] She built and lived in a little cottage opposite the convent and remained on friendly terms with the nuns (her old sisters) and their successors. She outlived her former companions.

On 28 September 1876 the 69-year-old Rose Bolger was professed as Sister Brigid, 70-year-old Peggy Carroll as Sister Augustine and 65-year-old Catherine O'Neill as Sister Joseph. Bishop Lynch received their profession of vows in Paulstown oratory in the presence of their parish priest P.J. Mulhall. To mark the occasion Bishop Lynch directed that Mother Gertrude Kelly, superior of Goresbridge convent accompanied by Mother Joseph Hannon, be there together with Mothers Vincent Murray and Catherine Farrell.[102]

Paulstown school was recognized as a Brigidine convent national school by the National Education Board from 15 November 1875.[103] Other than the interchange of personnel between the Goresbridge and Paulstown convents little changed until 17 April 1892 when, with the withdrawal (said to be temporary) of the sisters from the convent and school, the school was given over to Annie Jones, by the parish priest, P.J. Mulhall.[104] The closure caused great upset in the parish. One priest, Eddie Maher, remembered the 'people being very indignant at the departure of the nuns', while another, Eddie Brennan considered the closure 'an injustice' to the people of Paulstown since the 'foundresses had given all they possessed' so that the girls of the locality would have a religious education and have the advantage of being taught by nuns.[105]

There is no reason given in the Goresbridge annals for the closure just the terse but rather cryptic comment that 'there is a kind of mystery attached to the breaking up of Paulstown, however God's providence rules all things'.[106] The answer probably lies in the loss of sisters from the different communities to the mission in Victoria which left

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[102] Both Sisters Augustine and Brigid were considered semi-invalids at the time of their reception into the Brigidines with the former dying two years after her profession on 7 Aug. 1878 while the latter died on 12 Jan. 1881 almost six years after her profession. They were buried in Paulstown graveyard. Sister Joseph (Catherine O'Neill) continued to teach in Paulstown, in what was now a Brigidine convent national school drawing a National Board salary, until her retirement on 3 Mar. 1880. The Teachers' Pensions Act which was passed in 1879 meant that she received a quarterly pension of £11. 15*s*. Despite being retired, as an act of kindness to 'the dear old saint', the superiors allowed Sister Joseph to 'have seeming charge' of second class for a further seven years until she became incapacitated in 1886.

[103] *Paulstown Schools: Past and Present*, p.30.

[104] The temporary closure lasted until 1 Jul. 1931 when the nuns formally took charge of the school on the retirement of Mrs Coady (Annie Jones).

[105] Coady to Evangelist Kelly in Paulstown annals, DA/BC/AIr/520.018 (1); O'Riordan, *Pathfinders: The Paulstown Story*, v, p.13.

[106] Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).

the congregation unable to supply the teachers needed to keep Goresbridge boarding school open.[107]

What happened to the Paulstown foundation is important in that it showed that the exigencies of the congregation (the education of the boarders) came before that of a national school and the needs of the people of Paulstown. It seemed to be, as Bishop Nolan warned could happen in 1837, a move away from their commitment to the poor.

The Tullow Orphan School

Although acknowledged in the *Irish Catholic Directory* as being 'remarkable' for their work in the Tullow Orphan School, there is little else known about this aspect of the Brigidines' work even at local diocesan level. Shortly after Delany's death the Tullow nuns followed his advice 'to fill their hearts with the tenderest charity and affection for poor children' and extended their apostolate of education in accordance with his vision when *c.*1816 they agreed to take care of orphan and destitute Dublin children boarded out in Tullow.[108] St Bridget's Female Orphan Society, Tullow School, was under the patronage of Daniel O'Connell.[109]

The children were sent to Tullow by the philanthropist, Mrs Anna Maria O'Brien, founder of the House of Refuge (1809), and were boarded out with paid 'nurses' who also received a clothing allowance for the children.[110] The nurses were often the wives of small farmers as, in placing the children, 'a preference, *ceteris paribus,* was always given to the owners of milch cows'.[111] According to the Tullow convent annals many of the nurses were 'objectionable characters' as, rather than send the children to the convent school as required, they kept the children on the farms where they were subjected to many 'injustices'.[112] As a result, Mrs O'Brien requested that the nuns take charge of the orphans. The nuns acceded to her request on condition that they could choose the nurses and remove the children if they were found to be neglected or

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[107] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508; Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).
[108] Favourite sayings of Daniel Delany, DA/BC/AIr/709.
[109] *Catholic Directory, 1938,* p. 319.
[110] Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge, 1995), p.694; Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/507.
[111] Joseph Robins, *The Lost Children: A Study of Charity Children in Ireland 1700-1900* (Dublin, 1980, 87), p.120.
[112] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/507.

not sent to school regularly. Accordingly, instead of paying the nurses directly, Mrs O'Brien remitted the money to the nuns who paid the nurses for her. The annals noted that:

> This was a most fortunate engagement for the dear little ones as it insured to them much happiness, for the nurses understanding that the sisters had received full power to remove the children from them began to be quite on the alert to treat them in the way they judged most likely to give satisfaction to their zealous benefactors.[113]

In 1840, four nurses, Mrs Lyng, Mrs Nolan, Mrs Keary and Mrs Byrne, received sums ranging from £5 to £2.10*s*.0*d*.[114] However, while the monies received for the care of the orphans made a difference to the quality of life of the recipient families, in 1847 John Nolan sought an increase on the £3 he was getting for keeping James Moore (who was quite free of any bold habits) because of the extremely high cost of provisions in the neighbourhood.[115]

Mother Mary Aikenhead and her Irish Sisters of Charity continued the practice of sending girls to Tullow when charge of the House of Refuge was transferred to them on the 29 January 1819. The Tullow sisters' high standard of care (their 'kind and zealous attention to the orphans') made the boarding out scheme such a success that it attracted the attention of other charitable societies in Dublin including North William Street, St Francis, St John the Baptist, Summer Hill, and Metropolitan Orphan societies.[116]

At the direction of Bishop Doyle in 1827 the 'public charity' girls were educated in the poor school notwithstanding, as the annals state, 'their being required to pay a trifling sum for their education, which those of the immediate neighbourhood were not expected to do'.[117] The schools' fees provided the nuns with a small income. Tullow later received girls from the Poor Clare Female Orphan School (San Damiano), Harold's Cross and from the George's Hill convent of the Irish Sisters of Charity.[118]

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[113] Ibid.
[114] Mother J.Roche to Dr Hamilton, Tullow, 29 May 1840, DDA/Hamilton Papers/Nuns/1840/36/3/132.
[115] Ibid., 21 Aug 1847, DDA/ Hamilton Papers/Nuns/1847/37/1/82.
[116] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508; *Selection of Reports of House of Commons into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland* p.65
[117] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[118] Ibid; Sisters of St Clare (www.sistersofstclare.org/history.htm) (20 Aug. 2012); Our Lady of the Rosary, Harold's Cross parish (www.hxpatish.ie/history) (20 Aug.2012).

On the death of Mrs O'Brien in 1847 the nuns received a bequest of £200 'for the support, schooling and clothing of such numbers of children as could afford to be kept for that sum'—eight children were admitted 'to receive the benefit of the charity'.[119] On 7 May 1848 a charity sermon was preached in aid of St Brigid's orphanage in Dublin. The following December they received a bequest of £10 from a Mr G. Keogh of Kilkenny and with this money they provided eighty-six girls of the poor school with frocks.[120]

With the absence of convent archival material on the orphan school from this date it can be inferred from the *Irish Catholic Directory* that up to the early 1860s at least the nuns were caring for thirty-four orphans annually. According to the Tullow Brigidine annals the Brigidines yielded the use of their logo of 'St Brigid and children' to the Dublin venture of Margaret Aylward when, in 1857, she founded her Society of St Brigid to counteract the proselytism of the Protestant orphanages.[121] In establishing her 'family rearing' system for the care of the destitute children Margaret Aylward followed the Brigidine system of boarding out or family fosterage and she sent children to Tullow under their care.[122] The Brigidine sisters sent her contributions for the support of the orphanage for many years and on the transfer of the orphanage to her Congregation of the Holy Faith they continued to do so, however, this was not always possible. For example in November 1872 the Mountrath community could not afford to send any money to the Holy Faith sisters due to the extensive poverty in the Mountrath area—'so many of our own poor wanting relief'.[123]

A reference in Tullow account book dated 3 June 1876 shows the Tullow sisters were still keeping the 'Dublin girls'.[124] From another account notebook we learn that from 1873 to at least 1885 the convent was receiving orphans from the Sisters of Charity orphanages at Mount St Anne's, Milltown, and St Mary's Lakeland, Sandymount, as well as from the Poor Clare Female Orphan School, Harold's Cross.[125] There is no

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[119] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid. Jacinta Prunty, *Margeret Aylward, 1810–1889: Lady of charity Sister of faith* (Dublin, 1999), p.122.
[122] Minahan, *From the Acorn to the Oak*, p.21;Tullow & Abbeyleix annals,
[123] Mountrath HCM 1869-83, DA/BC/AIr/337; Tullow & Abbeyleix annals,
[124] Tullow accounts, DA/BC/AIr/192.
[125] Account book of children's expenses 1873–86 BC/additional collection/227.

reference to orphans in the annals or account books after this date. In their care of the orphans, in their ability to adapt and recognize the needs of the people, the Brigidines showed that they saw their mission of education in very broad parameters.[126]

Conclusion

Despite their wide apostolate to the education of the poor and middle classes, to adult catechesis in their parish chapels as well as to the religious and secular instruction of Dublin orphan children the Brigidines were not able to develop country-wide as did other congregations. By the time the Brigidines made only their third foundation in Abbeyleix in 1842 the Presentation order had already established thirty-two convents and accounted for 55 per cent of all convents in the country. The 13-year-old Sisters of Mercy had thirteen convents. Both these orders had definitive papal approbation of their rule and constitutions whereas the Brigidines did not. The Presentation sisters received initial approval in 1791 from Pope Pius VI and definitive approbation in 1805. The Mercy sisters had definitive approbation from 1840. At this period the ambiguity surrounding their canonical status was probably a factor in dissuading new candidates joining the congregation possibly leaving it with insufficient members to establish new foundations. This was Bishop Haly's opinion and spurred him on to seek papal approval. While approval was received in 1845, it was a commendation only and not the desired definitive approbation which would have given the institute 'security and stability'.[127] The ambiguity surrounding their canonical status may also have deterred parish priests in other dioceses issuing them with invitations to open schools in their parishes. Further, being under diocesan control, meant that the Brigidinies were dependent on the bishop and therefore could not act under their own volition even if they wished to.

Through their work in their national schools the Brigidine sisters played, as did other Irish congregations of nuns, according to McDermid, 'a very significant role in the growth of elementary education [...] strengthening the Church's popular base, as well as inculcating an ideal of womanhood in keeping with the general Victorian understanding

[126] Joyce, 'The Patrimony of the Sisters of St Brigid', p.29.
[127] Bishop Haly to Archbishop Cullen, Tullow, 3 Aug. 1852, DDA/Bishops' papers/325/1/I/84. See chapter eight on papal approbation.

of separate spheres'.[128] To uphold this 'Victorian domestic imagery' the nuns gave special consideration in their national, day and boarding schools to 'imparting both the ideology of domesticity and housekeeping skills to the girls'.[129] For example, in 1869 there were weekly lessons in housekeeping in Abbeyleix schools and in 1886 the boarders were to have lessons on practical cookery in the kitchen while in the early 1900s sisters from the four convents attended courses on cookery and laundry to qualify them to teach it.[130]

In looking to the needs of middle class girls, however, out of a total of sixty-two convent boarding schools founded in the nineteenth century, only six were Irish and of the six, four were Brigidine—Tullow, Mountrath, Abbeyleix and Goresbridge. This meant, as O'Connor points out, that girl's secondary education in Ireland was dominated by religious orders whose educational views and traditions lay outside Ireland.[131] The Brigidine boarding schools most probably followed this pattern through Judith Wogan Browne's influence (her Benedictine education) where the boarding school, permeated with a religious atmosphere, 'formed the central core of their education system'. It represented, as O'Connor argues, a 'withdrawal from the world, with the influence of the sisters being paramount over home background and environment'.[132] This undertaking was helped by the fact that the pupils were cut off from their families for most of the year—many pupils did not return home for their holiday breaks but remained in the convent for an extra charge.[133] The Brigidines' 1850 constitutions exhorted the sisters to give constant attention to the formation of good habits in the 'young ladies' of their boarding schools. The sisters were to see themselves not as their pupils' superiors but as their 'true mothers in Christ' and were to gain the affections and confidence of their pupils. In showing 'maternal affection and care' they could 'reprove and check' when necessary and be a 'guide to those who were obstinate and rude' and bring them 'to an

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[128] McDermid, *The Schooling of Girls*, p.43.

[129] Graham Dawson 'The Imperial Adventure Hero and British Masculinity: the Imagining of Sir Henry Havelock' in Timothy P. Foley, Lionel Pilkington, Sean Ryder, Elizabeth Tilley, (eds) *Gender And Colonialism* (Galway, 1995), pp 46-59.

[130] Abbeyleix HCM, DA/BC/AIr/27.

[131] O'Connor, 'Girl's Secondary Education ' at 86. The other two boarding schools were Mercy Convent, Ennis & Holy Faith, Glasnevin.

[132] Ibid., 87.

[133] Brigidine Convent Centenary Record, (Tullow, 1937), p.2.

affable demeanour becoming their sex'.[134] This emphasis on discipline, manners, refinement and character formation ensured that their charges fitted the manners and life style of the growing Irish Catholic middle class of the nineteenth century.[135] But this emphasis on the education of the boarders meant that the pupils of their day or benefit schools, though not specified in the Brigidine constitutions, were kept separate from the boarders.

The day or benefit school pupils (never referred to as 'young ladies' in the constitutions) were probably the children of the less-well-to-do shopkeepers or farmers who may not have been able to pay the boarding school fees. However, a certain lack of visibility in the matter of the Brigidine benefit schools can be inferred from the *Irish Catholic Directory* (1840) when the writer seemingly did not know that the Brigidine sisters had been running benefit schools in Tullow and Mountrath for the 'respectable classes' for upwards of thirty years. He declared that the Presentation sisters' example of opening a benefit school in 1838 in Bagenalstown should be followed by other convents in other places 'wherever useful and practical'.[136] In fact, it was Bishop Nolan in 1835 who decided against the Bagenalstown people and their parish priest Michael Prendergast, who 'were anxious' to have the Brigidines, in favour of the Presentation sisters.[137]

After Abbeyleix convent's initial venture into the Intermediate examination system in 1881, the subsequent non-entry into the system of the four Brigidine convents until the turn of the century Abbeyleix (1898), Tullow (1900), Mountrath (1901) and Goresbridge (1902) could have been as a consequence of their not having enough suitably qualified teachers because of Brigidine expansion to Australia and New Zealand. Another possible reason was that Bishop Lynch, like many other bishops, believed the new Intermediate system was unsuitable, in that girls competed with boys in the examinations. According to the evidence of the Commission of Inquiry (1898-99) many parents objected to their daughters having to undergo strain, anxiety and cramming

[134] Brigidine Constitutions, 1850, DA/BC/BGA/210.02
[135] O'Connor, 'Girls' Secondary Education', 91.
[136] ICD, 1840, p.286.
[137] Mother Catherine McAuliffe to Mother Joseph Fitzpatrick, Tullow, 15 Oct. 1844, DA/BC/AIr/310.

which became associated with the examinations.[138] A further likely reason could be that since Brigidine pupils were from comfortable middle-classes there was as yet no felt need for girls to seek a career outside of home and marriage. That this appears to be the case arises from the lack of evidence on vocational training for their pupils in the Brigidine archives notwithstanding the fact, as Albisetti asserts, that 'within a 20-year period from the late 1850s to the late 1870s, most European countries created programmes in response to what appeared as a new social problem: unwed daughters of the middle classes in need of jobs'.[139] Although Albisetti points out that the demographic realities of 'surplus' or 'redundant' women remain vague, or even dubious, 'a general perception that their numbers were rising substantially and that their fate demanded attention existed across Europe'.[140]

For whatever reason, the Brigidine schools were not alone in delaying becoming part of the Intermediate examination system as part of vocational training. Other convent schools including four Ursuline, four Faithful Companions of Jesus, four Sacred Heart schools, two La Sainte Union des Sacrés Coeurs and two Sacred Heart of Mary schools all opted out during the 1880s.[141] The Society of the Sacred Heart's Mount Anville school did not enter for the Intermediate examinations until 1931.[142] However, from his appointment as bishop in 1896, Bishop Foley, an educationalist and a national commissioner of education, gave the Brigidine sisters every encouragement to enter the Intermediate examination system.

In opening their boarding and day schools the Brigidine sisters facilitated not only the great desire for 'respectability' among the parents who sent their children to their boarding schools but also to the 'embourgeoisement' of the wider Catholic communities of Tullow, Mountrath, Abbeyleix and Goresbridge. Brigidine and other convent boarding schools gave, as O'Connor posits, a certain status to their pupils which ensured the survival of their traditions until the mid-twentieth century. It is possible to

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[138] Coolahan, 'Payment by Results', p.265.
[139] James C. Albisetti, 'Philantrophy for the middle-class: vocational education for girls and young women in mid-Victorian Europe' in *History of Education,* 41:3 (May, 2012), 287–301, DOI: 10.1080/0046760X.2011.620011 James C. Albisetti, pp. 287–301.
[140] Ibid.
[141] O'Connor, 'Girls' Secondary Education', 91.
[142]Kealy, *Dominican Education*, p.75.

see the separation of the children into fee paying boarders, select schools and non-fee paying pupils as part of, as Mary Peckham Magray argues, the 'formation of a new class-based Catholic social system in which certain groups of Catholics would eventually form a new ruling elite'.[143] The conventual movement of which the Brigidine sisters were a part was intimately involved in the dynamic of nineteenth-century Catholic class formation.[144]

Except for the few unsuccessful attempts to establish in other towns (excluding Roscrea), the Brigidines remained geographically contained in their own diocese. The archival material does not point to any particular cause for this although several possible reasons suggest themselves: the early disappointments put off any later attempts to move beyond the diocese, the control of convent finances by Judith Wogan Browne until her death in 1848, lack of papal approbation as Bishop Haly suspected (they only received initial approbation during his episcopacy), distance from large centres of population where they would be known and could attract many more young postulants and benefactors, the belief of some sisters that Delany had stipulated that they be close to the parish chapel, which in many cases was not always possible in other towns or that Delany, as a man, was not as inspiring or charismatic a founder as Nano Nagle or Catherine McAuley who actually lived the life that their sisters would follow.

That we know so little of the establishment of the Brigidine foundations in Cashel, Castlecomer and Roscrea, frustratingly illustrates Lavinia Byrne's contention that nuns then did not take the occasion and their experience sufficiently seriously to bother to write it down in any detail or, 'worse', as previously stated, 'they kept silent out of a warped desire to avoid vainglory'.[145] This is especially true in the one other attempt to establish a Brigidine foundation outside the diocese before the successful mission to Australia in 1883. The lack of documentary material surrounding the 'ill-starred' American venture makes this somewhat 'slightly uncanonical' community all

[143] Magray, *The transforming power of the nuns,* p.41.
[144] Ibid. p.45.
[145] Byrne, *Woman at the Altar*, p.48.

the more tantalizingly mysterious.[146] The history of this venture is discussed in the next chapter. [147]

[146] The phrase 'uncanonical' was used to describe their position by Sister Mary Teresa Cullen, in *The United States Brigidine Story: an Eighteen-Year Odyssey 1851–869*, p.22, e-mail of article received 2012; Mary Teresa Cullen, *The Early American Brigidine Story*, DA/BC/BGA/820.2.
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CHAPTER 4

1851–69

THE BRIGIDINE AMERICAN FOUNDATIONS

A mission to America would not have been that unusual at this period. In 1846 the local Patrician brothers went on mission (although unsuccessful) to Baltimore.[1] The Mercy sisters had gone three years before and by 1854 were established in Pittsburg, New York and San Francisco. These and other religious were invited to America to look to the needs of the Irish immigrants who left after the Famine and who were, in the opinion of many Famine historians, even poorer than those who went before this period.[2]

Under the direction of Bishop John Carroll (1790–1815), first bishop of the American Catholic Church, parish elementary schools were established.[3] By the end of his episcopacy in 1815 although the educational provision for Catholics was somewhat haphazard it had increased considerably in the east coast states.[4] Fourteen years later the system of elementary schooling was formalized when the decree of the First Provincial Council of Baltimore (1829) required every parish to provide a school for the children of the area.[5] In line with the increase in Catholic schools there was also an increase in public schools established by the local political authorities. There was, however a growing demand for a common public school system that was free, tax supported, state controlled and non-sectarian.[6] Although, as Daniel Murphy points out, the case for a common public school system seemed eminently plausible, both Murphy and O'Donoghue state that the problem was that the ideology underpinning the system was essentially Protestant—the curriculum prescribed was deeply influenced by Protestant traditions and therefore inappropriate for Catholic children.[7] The passage of the Maclay

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[1] *The Brothers of St Patrick* (http://patricianbrothers.com.au/history/history.html) (26 Mar.2013).
[2] Murphy, *Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, p.209.
[3] O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers*, p.21.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Murphy, *Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, p.200; O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers*, p.21.
[6] Murphy, *Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education,* p.213.
[7] Ibid., p.214; O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers*, p.21.

Bill by the New York legislature in 1842 proscribed all religious instruction from public schools and disallowed any state money to denominational schools.[8] This legislative decision was adopted by other states and became official policy. It meant that the American clergy had to establish a separate Catholic school system 'to accommodate the spiritual and cultural needs of the minority Catholic population', an example later followed by the Australian bishops.[9] This then was the educational situation that awaited the Brigidine mission of 1851. The year after their arrival the First Council of Baltimore (1852) called for Catholic schools for Catholic children.

According to a brief reference in the Mountrath annals two professed sisters Angela McKay, a choir sister for twenty-two years and regarded as 'well educated' by the National Education Board's inspectors and Mary Anne Foran, a lay-sister for fourteen years left the convent to make a foundation in Kenosha, Wisconsin in 1851.[10] It is intimated that this was at the behest of Angela McKay's brother who was believed to be a priest. However, this is not corroborated by Maureen Funk in *Kenosha's Irish Experience 1839–1890* who states that Father Michael McFaul, pastor of St Mark's parish, Kenosha funded the two nuns to come to America.[11] Peter Leo Johnson in 'The American Odyssey of the Irish Brigidines' also names McFaul as the 'promoter and helper of their migration'.[12] In the period 1851–61 McFaul was one of the many priests in Wisconsin who received Irish immigrants sponsored by philanthropist Vere Foster.[13]

On his visit to America in 1850 Vere Foster (1819–1900) saw the demand for labour in America and Canada.[14] Being acutely aware of the difficult conditions in Ireland he 'considered that it was as natural and desirable for young people to emigrate

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[8] Murphy, *Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education*, p.217.
[9] Ibid., p.206.
[10] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324; Register of Abstracts, ED/2/1, no.30, Mountrath, NAI.
[11] Maureen Funk, *Kenosha's Irish Experience 1839–1890*, (www.freepages.genealogy.rootweb.ancestry.com/.../maureen_funk.htm) (accessed 29 Jun. 2012).
[12] Peter Leo Johnson, 'The American Odyssey of the Irish Brigidines', *The Salesianum*, 39:2 (Apr. 1944), 61-67 at 61. McFaul ministered in the diocese of Milwaukee until 1858 when he moved to the milder climate of Missouri. In 1875, he resigned because of ill-health and died in 1910.
[13] Vere Foster leaflet (www.proni.gov.uk/index/exhibitions_talks_and_events/19th_century_emigrat/) (29 Jun. 2012.)
[14] INTO, Bangor Congress Committee, *A Short Biographical Study of Vere Foster First president* (1956), p.7. Vere Foster worked in the UK diplomatic service before giving this up to concentrate on his emigration scheme. He was a distant cousin of John Foster the last Speaker of the Irish Commons and became the first president of the INTO.

as it is for young bees to swarm'.[15] Accordingly, he set up his scheme of assisted passage for those (mainly girls) for whom a good recommendation was forthcoming. That the majority of the immigrants in the 1850s were female was due to the sharply declining opportunities for women to earn a wage. The dearth of opportunities was caused in part by, as O'Sullivan states, 'the continued deindustrialization of the Irish countryside and because economic pressures and demographic change caused major shifts from subsistence to commercial agriculture and from tillage to pasture farming'.[16] As noted above, these post-Famine immigrants were even poorer than the pre-Famine immigrants and many faced 'lives of wretched poverty and criminality and abandoned their faith'.[17] Such immigration created a pressing need for religious to provide a Catholic education for the families of the immigrants.

The sisters' venture was affected by Bishop Haly's unwillingness to consent to a Brigidine establishment outside of the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. This was prudent on his part as, over forty years after their establishment, they had not gained definitive approbation from Rome (something which he was then in the process of trying to gain).[18] With only temporary approval the missioners would be dependent on episcopal jurisdiction, which could in many instances be unpredictable. Despite this, Bishop Haly relented and gave them permission to go to America but, according to the Mountrath annals, only on certain conditions. He is said to have forbidden the Mountrath superior, Mother Peter Stein, to give them the Brigidine habit and rule book to take to America.[19] The absence of archival information suggests that Haly may have placed restrictions on correspondence between the two missioners and Mountrath convent and on financial support to them as they were not going, in his eyes, as Brigidines. The lack of financial support had a detrimental effect on the sisters' living conditions and ultimately their mission since the cost of supporting Catholic schools fell on the parish community which in most cases was mainly Irish immigrants who were 'broken by poverty'.

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[15] INTO, *Vere Foster*, p.7.
[16] Patrick O'Sullivan, (ed.) *Irish Women and Migration,* in Patrick O'Sullivan *The Irish World Wide*, vol.4 (London, 1995), p.42.
[17] Archbishop John Joseph Lynch, *The evils of wholesale and improvident emigration from Ireland* (1864) quoted in Sarah Roddy, 'Spiritual imperialism and the mission of the Irish race: the Catholic Church and emigration from nineteenth-century Ireland' in *Irish Historical Studies,* 38; 152 (2013), 600–619 at 612.
[18] Catherine McAuliffe to Joseph Fitzpatrick, Tullow, 13 Dec. 1844, DA/BC/AIr/310.
[19] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.

Kenosha, situated fifty-five miles north of Chicago and twenty-five miles south of Milwaukee, was the most southern port on Lake Michigan in Wisconsin state, with a population of 6,000 in 1851.[20] The Brigidine sisters arrived at the time of heaviest Irish immigration to the state (1850–60). Their mission was to the city's Irish who formed nearly half of the city's foreign population. There was also a substantial Catholic German immigrant population and a free public school.[21]

In accordance with the decree of the First Provincial Council of Baltimore (1829) Michael McFaul, parish priest of St Mark's parish, and the two Brigidines established the church controlled parochial school named St Mark's Female School.[22] The following notice appeared in the Catholic *Almanac*:

> This religious congregation, named after St Bridget, the holy virgin and abbess of Kildare, and patroness of Ireland, was founded in the town of Tullow by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Delany, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, and especially protected by his successor, Rt. Rev. Dr Doyle. The great aim of this congregation of sisters is the instruction of female children, as expressed in the first chapter of its supplementary rule and constitutions; which place, moreover, the congregation under the immediate jurisdiction and authority of the diocesan bishop. This infant community has been established here but recently. There are two professed sisters and one postulant [Brigid Delany?]. Sister Angela superior.[23]

Other than the last two sentences, this notice is taken word for word from the 1828 rule and constitution written by Bishop Doyle.[24] Given its appearance in the Catholic *Almanac* (which depended on episcopal channels for its information) it can be assumed that either McKay or Foran defied Bishop Haly's restriction on taking the rule to America. It also begs the question whether the notice was placed with the intention to deceive church authorities or whether the note in the later written Mountrath annals is an accurate account of Bishop Haly's directions.[25]

Given their recognition in the Catholic *Almanac*, it appears that the little community had official approval and was under diocesan rule from the time of their

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[20] Funk, *Kenosha.*
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.; Johnson, 'The American Odyssey', at 63.
[23] Catholic *Almanac* (1852), in Johnson, 'The American Odyssey', at 63.
[24] Brigidine Rule and Constitution 1828, DA/BC/AIr/359.
[25] Catholic *Almanac* (1852), in Johnson, 'The American Odyssey', at 64.

arrival in Kenosha. Another report showed that in 1851 the school had 'a good number of female pay scholars, whilst others were taught gratis by the sisters'.[26] In this they were following the Irish Brigidine practice. The sisters clearly impressed a reporter on the *Wahrheitsfreund* who stated that their work in the parish was 'incalculable'.[27] The reporter was not the only person to be impressed: in 1852 the *Almanac* carried the notice that the convent housed three professed sisters and several novices and that the school was ready to receive boarders at moderate terms.[28] Surprisingly, lay sister Mary Anne Foran was listed as the superior, though the following year Angela McKay is again named as superior.

The Swiss born Bishop Henni (1805–81) also recognised the value of their work declaring that they did well in instructing large numbers of the poor children of the parish.[29] He was, however, so concerned about their financial state that on two occasions he wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon, France, pleading for financial assistance. In his letter of 19 January 1852 he pointed to the need for $1,800 for an establishment for the Sisters of St Bridget in Kenosha.[30] Just over a year later, on 28 February 1853, he described their circumstances and the efforts that he had made to give them a permanent base and declared:

> The Sisters of St Bridget, who arrived here so exceedingly poor from Ireland, as I stated in my last year's report, but who do now very well in teaching a large school of poor children. They have as yet scarcely a home of their own, because of want of means which I expected in vain from Europe. Yet, in order to have them located permanently I had again (necessarily) contracted debts of $600.[31]

The bishop stresses the urgency of his need for the money but his appeals appear to have been in vain.

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[26] Ibid., at 63; Johnson to Mother General Alphonsus Brazil, 17 Aug. 1938 in Johnson, 'Documents' *The Salesianium*, 48:4 (Oct. 1953).
[27] *Wahrheitsfreund* 18 Sept.1851 in Johnson, 'The American Odyssey', at 65; *Wahrheitsfreund*, the first German Catholic newspaper in America was founded in Fr John Martin Henni in 1837, *Catholic Encyclopaedia* (www.newadvent.org/cathen/10319a.htm) (14 Jul. 2012).
[28] Catholic *Almanac* (1852), Johnson, 'The American Odyssey', at 63.
[29] Johnson, 'The American Odyssey', at 64.
[30] *Salesianum* 25 (Jul., 1930), 37-42, at 42 received from 'kfrymark@sfs.edu', 26 Jul. 2012.
[31] Ibid., at 37. The letter is dated 28 Feb. 1853.

Although it is certain that the Brigidine group had charge of the parish school, for the first three months of 1853 the Kenosha newspaper carried an advertisement which named the Sisters of Charity as the community who conducted a school on Wisconsin Street near the Catholic Church.[32] The Sisters of Charity never taught in Kenosha. Johnson holds that is possible that this was a mistake on the newspaper's part or an attempt by the Brigidines to give themselves a new title.[33]

Despite their best efforts to put parochial education on a permanent footing and the bishop's efforts to settle them financially, the sisters withdrew from Kenosha in 1855. There are several possible explanations for their withdrawal. While the Catholic *Almanac* carried the notice of their rule from 1851 to 1853 it did not do so in 1854 only listing St Mark's day school as under the care of the Sisters of St Bridget.[34] Had their status as being 'slightly uncanonical', as not having Bishop Haly's permission to be known as Brigidines, been discovered? This would explain to Bishop Henni why the sisters received no funding or moral support from Ireland. It is also possible they found it hard to compete with the already established free public school and that not enough parents had sufficient means to pay even the minimal fees for the parochial school let alone the private day school and boarders' fees.[35] Generally, as Daniel Murphy points out, those who could not afford to pay tuition fees sent their children to the nearest public school.[36] Funk gives their failure to expand beyond one school in the parish as a possible reason for their departure but perhaps the most influential cause of the community's instability was a pastorate that changed hands three times during the period of their stay in Kenosha.[37] Priests seemed to move from parish to parish almost on an annual basis. For example, in 1853 McFaul was in New Orleans, in 1856 in Porter, Rock County, in 1858 in Mobile, Alabama.[38] Such comings and goings among their pastors left parishes unsettled and without any continuity in their parish life. After their

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[32] Johnson, 'The American Odyssey', at 65.
[33] Ibid. at 65.
[34] Ibid. at 64.
[35] Sr Gabriella Eardly, O.S.B. to Mother Josephine, St Benedict's Convent, Erie, Pa., 23 Jun. 1927, DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference.
[36] Murphy, *Irish Emigration and Missionary Education,* p.220.
[37] Funk, *Kenosha's Irish Experience.*
[38] Bishop J.M. Henni to Archbishop Anthony Blanc, Milwaukee, 1 Jun. 1853, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, VI-I-e; Michael McFaul to Archbishop Blanc, Mobile, Alabama, 12 Jan. 1859, Archdiocese of Detroit VI-2-a, University of Notre Dame Archives.

departure, the Brigidines were replaced by the Bavarian School Sisters of Notre Dame who would have been aware of the work of the Brigidines through their chaplain Father Anthony Urbanek who referred to it in a letter to Archbishop Milde of Vienna.[39]

Buffalo Diocese

In the 1850s, according to Father Robert McNamara, Bishop John Timon of Buffalo diocese pleaded for teaching congregations to make foundations in the twelve counties of his diocese.[40] After their withdrawal from Kenosha, Sister Angela and her Brigidines were one of the many congregations who answered his plea. However, their sojourn teaching at St Mary's, Rochester was brief (1855 to 1856) during which time Bishop Timon presided at a Brigidine profession on 1 February 1856.[41] Five months later the little Brigidine group was established in St Bridget's parish, Buffalo, New York.[42] A notice in the *Buffalo Catholic Sentinel* of 12 July 1856 announced a sacred concert on 13 July 1856 for the benefit of the school house and the sisters' dwelling.[43] On 18 October 1856 the same paper reported on a fair at Townsend hall which realised $650 for the school fund for which Sister Angela offered her 'warmest thanks to the ladies and gentlemen for their presence and purses'.[44] The article also implied that she was a very energetic person. It appears from this article the nuns did not observe enclosure. The new school, a large brick building, was almost complete on 25 April 1857.

In February 1857 Bishop Timon officiated at the public reception of two postulants, who had 'undergone preparation for some time and were well instructed in their new obligations'. On 23 May 1857 Johanna and Honora Delahunty received the white veil from Bishop Timon when the 'attendance of the clergy and the significant dress of the sisters and the two ladies [...] attracted the attention of all present'. They were called in religion Sister Mary Joseph and Sister Frances. Nevertheless, with

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[39] *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftun* 25 (1853) (Wein, 1831) in Johnson, 'The American Odyssey', at 64; J. Rainer, 'Milwaukee' (www.newadvent.org/cathen/04758b.htm) (14 Jul. 2012). They were invited to Milwaukee by Bishop Henni in 1855.
[40] Robert McNamara, *The diocese of Rochester* p.64, DA/BC/BGA/820.2.
[41] Diary of Bishop John Timon (1856) in McNamara, *The diocese of Rochester* p.64.
[42] Mary Gerald Pierce, RSM, *Unto All — His Mercy: the First Hundred Years of the Sisters of Mercy in the Diocese of Buffalo 1858–1958* (Buffalo, N.Y., n.d.), p.21, DA/BC/BGA/820.1.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

everything apparently going well, within nine months they were on the move again this time to Medina. A brief reference in the bishop's diary of 9 February 1858 states 'send M. Farrell with Brigidines to Medina'. It is possible Bishop Timon moved them to make room for the more established Mercy sisters with whom he had been in negotiations for many years to come to his diocese. By February the Mercy sisters had replaced the Brigidines but the four Mercy sisters found no household furnishings when they arrived. Sister Mary Gerald Pierce writes that 'Whatever comforts the Brigidines had possessed they took with them' adding somewhat tetchily, 'no doubt they purchased them'.[45]

Isaac S. Signor states that in the winter of 1858 Sisters Angela McKay and Bridget Delany of the Brigidine order, accompanied by a young woman Miss Magin, came to teach school in St Mary's parish, Medina, Orleans County, New York.[46] There is no mention of Foran until 1868 when she rejoins the community in Titusville. The nuns were under the supervision of the pastor Father Nicholas Byrnes (1855–59), 'a dignified and warm-hearted priest' but had been invited to Medina by his predecessor Father Martin O'Connor.[47] Before they arrived, a bazaar was held which raised 'a considerable sum' to provide them with a home.[48]

In Bishop Timon's diary there are brief references to three visits he paid to them in Medina.[49] On the first occasion he had to reprimand them as when he visited the school at 9.30 a.m. on 7 February 1858 he found no teachers in the school—they were all at Mass. He gave them 'rules which all promised to observe'. On 23 March 1858 he promised to 'incorporate' their property and the last reference to them is that 'he spoke with Sister Angela at Medina'.[50] On 23 April 1860 and still in Medina, 'Mother Angela' wrote to Bishop Peter Paul Lefèvere of Detroit seeking a place and school in his

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[45] Ibid.
[46] Isaac S.Signor, *Landmarks of Orleans County, New York,* (n.d,), pp39-115 (www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/isaac) (30 Jun. 2012); James A. Hogan, *The Story of a Hundred Years, St Mary's Parish* (New York, 1940), p.35 quoted in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey*, p.22; See also *The Medina Register* 14 Jul. 1904.
[47] Signor, *Landmarks of Orleans County,* pp39-115; Hogan, *St Mary's Parish*, p. 117 in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p.22.
[48] Hogan, *St Mary's Parish*, p. 117 in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 23.
[49] Timon's diary (1858) in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p.24.
[50] Ibid.

diocese.[51] This was possibly in response to an appeal from Father Francis Xavier Pourret that they come to Grand Rapids to the 'mission school of fifty-six scholars'.[52] Mother Angela explained to Lefèvere that having a school was part of their rule and that Father Thomas Brady was acting as their superior in Medina. Brady succeeded Byrnes as pastor of Medina on 8 June 1859.[53] Regarded as a 'careful and conservative' prelate, Lefèvere had no doubts about receiving the Sisters of St Bridget into his diocese.[54] That it was Mother Angela who sought the change is confirmed in a letter of Brady to Lefèvere, which also confirmed that Bishop Timon was in favour of the move and agreeable to his accompanying them to Grand Rapids.[55] By 25 July 1860 Father Martin Marco was writing that 'finally the *Sisters of St. Bridget* (from Medina, New York) are outside the rectory. They are staying with *William Godfroi* hoping to take over towards the end of next month, the care of a beautiful school' [Marco's emphasis].[56]

Grand Rapids

When Thomas Brady transferred to St Andrew's parish, Grand Rapids he took according to Sister Gabriella Eardly's recollection, McKay, Delany and the two white novices with him.[57] Mother Angela was given charge of the parish school, an ordinary house with an upper and lower floor which, run by Kate Barry and Kate King, had taken in boys and girls.[58]

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[51] Mother Angela McKey to Bishop Peter Paul Lefèvere, Medina, Buffalo, 23 Apr. 1860, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, III-2-j, University of Notre Dame Archives. In her letters she signs herself McKey and not McKay.

[52] Francis Xavier Pourret to Bishop Lefèvere, Grand Rapids, 21 Jan. 1860, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, III-2-j, University of Notre Dame Archives.

[53] Hogan, *St Mary's Parish*, p. 117 in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 25.

[54] *Catholic Encyclopaedia.*

[55] Thomas Brady to Bishop Lefèvere, Medina, 16 May 1860, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, III-2-j, University of Notre Dame Archives; Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey*, p. 34.

[56] Martin Marco to Bishop Lefèvere, Grand Rapids, 25 Jul. 1860, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, III-2-j, University of Notre Dame Archives.

[57] Hogan, *St Mary's Parish*, p. 117 in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 25; Sr Gabriella Eardly, O.S.B. to Mother Josephine, St Benedict's Convent, Erie, Pa., 23 Jun. 1927, DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference; Gibbons *Glimpses* p.360; Signor, *Landmarks of Orleans County,* pp.39-115.; McKey to Lefèvere, Medina, N.Y., 23 Apr. 1860.

[58] John W. McGee, *The Catholic Church in the Grand River Valley* (1950), p.164. Copy of relevant pages sent to me by Sr Janet Staab, OSB, archivist, Benedictine Sisters, Mount St Benedict Archives, Erie, Pennsylvania 16511, USA.

Within a short time the relationship between Mother Angela and Brady grew difficult. Before their arrival there was great 'disunion' in the Irish part of St Andrew's parish and Brady added to it.[59] In particular he seems to have stirred up a certain group of townspeople against Mother Angela such that by February 1861 she wrote to the bishop seeking his protection as Brady was insisting that he was their superior and not the bishop.[60] The bishop willingly gave his assistance stating that as a religious community they had his spiritual and temporal protection and that she was free to write to him in the fullest confidence of any difficulties that might arise.[61] She took up this offer writing frequently of the difficulties she was having with Brady. In one letter she declares that 'she dare not mention what trouble he invents for her'.[62] He also did not try, as he should have done, to find a home for them in Grand Rapids.[63] In fact, on 7 May 1861, Brady wrote to Bishop Thomas Langdon Grace, O.P. of St Paul's, Minnesota that he was 'forced to locate' the sisters to Grand Rapids and that he was now in a position with the Bishop Grace's 'approbation' to establish a convent of St Bridget in Bishop Grace's diocese—he had previously told Mother Angela to seek a place in some other diocese.[64]

Mother Angela appears to have outmanoeuvred Brady as there is archival evidence to show that the Brigidine sisters established a convent in Bishop Grace's diocese. This was in response to Father Michael Prendergast's invitation to teach in his newly opened school in St Thomas' parish, Winona, diocese of St Paul, Minnesota.[65] According to Bishop Grace's diocesan report (1861) there were three sisters of St Bridget in the diocese. The school was described as 'flourishing' under their direction yet for some unknown reason they left the parish in 1864, the same year as Father Prendergast. Whether these unnamed sisters followed the priest to his new parish or rejoined the Grand Rapid sisters is unknown.

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[59] Father Martin Marco to Lefèvere, Grand Rapids, 4 Jul. 1860.
[60] McKey to Lefèvere, 7 Feb. 1861 & 18 Feb.1861.
[61] Lefèvere to McKey, 18 Feb. 1861; Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 35.
[62] McKey to Lefèvere, 16 Mar. 1861.
[63] Ibid. 18 Feb. 1861.
[64] Thomas Brady to Bishop Grace, Grand Rapids, 7 May 1861, Diocese of St Paul's Archives in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 27: McKey to Lefèvere, 7 Feb. 1861.
[65] *Official Catholic Directory*, 1861, p.182; *History of Winona and Olmsted Counties* (Chicago, 1883), p. 477 (http://archive.org/stream/historyofwinonaoOOcl) (8 Jan. 2012); Bishop Grace in his diocesan report (1861) states that there were three sisters of St Bridget in the diocese.

In Grand Rapids Brady's inappropriate involvement with and influence on the postulants and novices caused matters to deteriorate further. Throughout the months of April and May 1861 Mother Angela complained of his behaviour and that he insisted (without having the bishop's authorization) on giving the habit to two candidates. This was against her wishes and Brady threatened to suspend her from her duties.[66] Such was the bad feeling stirred up by Brady among the people against the bishop (he had previously 'scolded' Brady on his conduct) that she advised the bishop for his own sake not to come for the reception ceremony and to allow Brady to clothe the candidates.[67]

That Brady was allowed 'to put a dress on the two young girls' seemed to exacerbate the situation as the newly clothed candidates recognised only Brady as their superior. They also did not observe the Brigidine rule—'they had to read them but it was evidently a task and made no impression but that of contempt'.[68] Brady displayed such public confidence in them that it adversely affected Mother Angela. Her 'twenty years as a religious in Ireland' appeared to count for nought with the public and thus affected their financial state.[69] Although the bishop had set the salary to be paid to Mother Angela, the trustees of the church (some of Brady's friends) only gave her $35 promising as soon as they had the remaining $40 they would give it to her.[70] Out of this she had to pay two months outstanding rent. From this letter and the many other letters in the Notre Dame archives it is apparent that the trustees of the parish committees who controlled the finances had a lot of influence and often made life difficult for their priests let alone the nuns. This is in line with Daniel Murphy's observation that the trustees traditionally dominated parish committees and exercised a disproportionate influence in the parishes. Parish trustee structures had been put in place by Bishop Carroll. Murphy points out that the system (although not without its critics) became the normative type of parish structure throughout the country, particularly suiting the dispersed communities of Catholics that existed in the frontier regions.[71]

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[66] McKey to Lefèvere, 1 Apr. 1861.
[67] Ibid. & 4 Apr.1861.
[68] Ibid., 24 Apr. 1861.
[69] Ibid., 1 Apr. 1861.
[70] Ibid., 20 May 1861.
[71] Murphy, *Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education,* p.192.

Brady continued to insinuate that Bishop Lefèvere would withdraw his protection from Mother Angela.[72] By the end of May, she was so disturbed and 'distressed in mind' by the situation with the novices that she sought legal advice. She declared to the bishop that 'this kind of way to prepare subjects for a religious institute is what I never even heard of before'.[73] The novices, who had spent all their time in Brady's house showing up only for teaching duties but 'barely returning home to sleep', were now staying overnight with him.[74] They were even dressing as seculars and people were commenting.[75] To make matters worse Brady's 'abettors' were threatening and demanding money from Mother Angela, 'the old mother' as she was described, for the support of the two novices.[76] Brady was especially vociferous in demanding it. At the same time, Brady also held on to $200 due to Mother Angela and the sisters for teaching in the school.[77] Her lawyer, Peter Koch, described the affair as 'scandalous' and advised Mother Angela to do nothing without the bishop's permission, that she was not to be scared and that he would provide her with the fullest protection. With regard to the novices, he stated that as they had broken the rules of the congregation by their misconduct the law offered them no protection.[78]

As a consequence of Koch's letter Lefèvere took immediate action and placed several further prohibitions on Brady which, if not observed, carried the 'pain of suspension'.[79] He had believed that Brady had heeded his previous warnings:

> But Oh! Think what our astonishment was, how our confidence in your moral rectitude must have been shaken and our worst suspicions [called], when, on the 12th inst. coming to Grand Rapids we learned that you had been with several young girls and thus [began] and remained with them for sexual trysts.[80]

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[72] McKey to Lefèvere, 20 May 1861.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Peter G. Koch to Bishop Lefèvere, Grand Rapids, 20 Jun. 1861, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, III-2-j, University of Notre Dame Archives; Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p.39.
[75] McKey to Lefèvere, 10 Jul. 1861.
[76] Koch to Lefèvere, Grand Rapids, 20 Jun. 1861; Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 39.
[77] Lefèvere to Brady, Detroit, 25 Jun. 1861 in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 42.
[78] Koch to Lefèvere, 20 Jun. 1861; Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 39.
[79] Lefèvere to Brady, 25 Jun. 1861 in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 41.
[80] Koch to Lefèvere, Grand Rapids, 20 Jun. 1861; Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 39.

Lefèvere withdrew Brady's faculties to hear the confessions of the sisters, prohibited him from allowing the white veiled novices to teach in the school and prohibited the white veiled novices or any unmarried female to be on his premises after sundown. He was also ordered to pay the novices $50 each so that they could return to their parents as both claimed that it was at Brady's insistence that they came to Grand Rapids. They were returned home almost immediately.[81] However, the harassment continued until at least late November with Brady still keeping the school monies from Mother Angela and sending men to demand the charity money raised by picnics and such like from her.[82] In late 1861 or early 1862, Brady joined the 15th Michigan or 'Mulligan Regiment' of the Union army as chaplain during the Civil War and died after falling ill from exposure on his way home from the war.[83]

The Brady affair left a bitter legacy as many of the people turned against the sisters. We know from Mother Angela's letters to the bishop that, despite having a new pastor, Father Joseph Kindeken, her troubles continued unabated. She feared that many of Brady's friends were advising Kindeken against the little community and that one of them, 'a Peter Granger, was quite sanguine with him about striving to injure' her.[84] Her isolation is obvious from her declaration to the bishop asking him to write to her as soon as convenient as he was 'her only comfort on earth, now thanks be to our Lord'.[85]

Grand Rapid Schools

A constant theme throughout Mother Angela's correspondence (1861–66) was the delay in paying their salary for teaching in the 'free' parish school. The school, established by Father Van Erp in 1858, was not entirely free as Van Erp charged a small tuition fee.[86] Despite the bishop setting their salary at $200 per annum its payment always lagged often up to six months behind, creating many difficulties for them—paying for rent and

[81] McKey to Lefèvere, 10 Jul. 1861.
[82] Ibid., 5 Nov. 1861 & 11 Nov. 1861; Koch to Monsignor d'Eveque, Grand Rapids, 17 Sept. 1961 in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 43.
[83] McKey to Lefèvere, 13 Nov. 1861; Thomas Brady (www.findagrave.com) (30 Jun. 2012).
[84] McKey to Lefèvere, 19 Jul. 1862.
[85] Ibid.; Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun. 1927 in DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference.
[86] McGee, *The Catholic Church in the Grand River Valley*, p.165.

other necessities.[87] Mother Angela also appears to have had difficulty in having enough teachers as the Lancastrian system of specially selected pupil monitors teaching the other pupils was not acceptable to the students—'they want to attend to themselves'.[88] Furthermore, the school did not have many pupils although in the 1860s it 'was almost as likely for a white girl as a white boy to attend school even in the farming regions of the country'.[89] It was hoped that once they were settled and the school had an enclosure where the children could play that pupil numbers would increase.[90] Although the Lancastrian system was not acceptable to Mother Angela's pupils, Lancastrian schools run by charitable bodies were 'strongly supported by the political authorities' in many states during the early decades of the 1800s.[91]

In April 1861 Mother Angela received a request from Catherine Higgins from Buffalo to be 'received on trial' and she hoped with Lefèvere's permission to take her on as she was 'suited to teaching in the free school'.[92] Whether the bishop gave permission to receive the candidate is not known. The following August the 'expected two good girls' declined to come to teach as there was no 'certain' house or convent.[93] In November Mother Angela, with the bishop's approval, was obliged to hire a Miss Ryan to help with the free school at a salary of $65 a month, which she could ill-afford.[94] Despite employing a new teacher, three months later she complained that the school had not brought her one cent during that time.[95] Five years later the Second Baltimore Conference (1866) stated that, as far as possible, all teachers in parish schools should be religious, with the lay teacher hired only as a last resort.[96]

On 13 March 1862 Mother Angela wrote to the bishop that a well educated young girl from Buffalo wished to join them.[97] She would come but only if her director,

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[87] McKey to Lefèvere, 19 Jul. 1862; Lefèvere to Brady, 25 Jun. 1861 in Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p. 42.
[88] McKey to Lefèvere, 24 Apr. 1861.
[89] Dorthy W. Hartman, Women's Roles in the Late 19th Century (http://www.connerprairie.org/learn-and-do/indiana-history/america-1860-1900/lives-of-women.aspx) (21 Aug. 2013).
[90] McKey to Lefèvere, Mar. 1861
[91] Murphy, *Irish Emigration and Missionary Education,* p.213.
[92] McKey to Lefèvere. 24 Apr. 1861.
[93] Ibid. 21 Aug. 1861.
[94] Ibid. & 13 Nov.1861.
[95] Ibid. 24 Feb.1862.
[96] O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers,* p.22.
[97] McKey to Lefèvere, 24 Feb. 1862.

Father Luis Lux, O.M.I. could be assured that they were established in the diocese and Lefèvere was their superior. In a letter of 1 September 1862, Mother Angela stated that 'the young candidate was doing well and was ready to receive the holy habit at any time that Lefèvere was free to give it'. It is unclear, however, whether she is referring to the Buffalo candidate or to the 20-year old Ellen Eardly of Grand Rapids who joined the community in April 1862 taking Mary Agnes as her name in religion.[98]

Ellen Eardly was, in all probability, the first religious vocation from the Grand Rapids region.[99] Sister Agnes (b.1842) and her younger sister Mary (b.1846), who later joined Mother Angela, were from a County Wicklow family who immigrated to America in the 1850s.[100] There is a story that has come down by tradition in the convent of Mercy, Erie, that one of the Eardly sisters had serious eye trouble before leaving Ireland. Her mother brought her to the Mercy foundress, Mother Catherine McAuley, who blessed her with a ring and she was cured of the eye ailment.[101]

With the entrance of Eardly, Mother Angela opened a select school for girls, the fulfilment of the parish's earlier hopes for their foundation in Grand Rapids. But here again community tension surfaced. On 19 July 1862 Mother Angela reported that disagreements over both the select and the parish schools had arisen between herself and Father Joseph Kindekens.[102] Kindekens took control of the parish school on 12 May 1862 and abolished the tuition charge.[103] As a consequence of Kindekens' action only six or seven children of French parents attended the select school while the other Catholic parents who were able to pay the select school fees sent their children to the now free parish school.[104] Despite such an unhappy start, Mother Angela and Sister Agnes had two boarders attending the school in September 1862 and were expecting one or two more.[105] They carried on the select school until 1866 when they were obliged to

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[98] Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun. 1927 in DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference.
[99] McGee, *The Catholic Church in the Grand River Valley*, p.166.
[100] The file records of the Benedictine sisters show that Ellen & Mary Eardly's surname is given as Early. Their father was Patrick Early and their mother's maiden name was Margaret Leigh.
[101] Sr Eustace, RSM to Mary Teresa Cullen, CSB, 30 Aug. 1978 in Teresa Cullen, *The Early American Brigidine Story*, DA/BC/BGA/820.2.
[102] McKey to Lefèvere, 19 Jul. 1862.
[103] McGee, *The Catholic Church in the Grand River Valley*, p.165.
[104] Ibid.
[105] McKey to Lefèvere, 1 Sept. 1862.

leave Grand Rapids.[106] Mother Angela's difficulties over non-payment of parish school fees continued after the departure of Father Joseph Kendekens who was replaced briefly by his brother Peter in 1865. When he left in July 1865 she was owed $100.[107]

Not only did Mother Angela and her sisters carry on the Brigidine tradition of teaching the catechism on Sundays but they also carried on their tradition of caring for orphans.[108] On 24 February 1862 they took into care 'a 6-year-old half-orphaned girl' whose mother was willing to pay $3 a month and to clothe her.[109] By 1866 nearly $600 was raised to purchase a home for the orphans in the nuns' care. However, this money was a source of friction between Mother Angela and the committee members who raised it. The new pastor, Father Bernard Wermers (who replaced Father Peter Kendekens in mid-1865) sought guidance from the bishop on 23 February 1866 as to how to act between Mother Angela and John Godfrey, both of whom had control of the finances.[110] Wermers criticized Mother Angela for taking into her control the money raised for the orphans. He protested that she acted against the rules for the administration of temporal affairs in giving a receipt in her own name for the money and stated that she intended using the money, with further assistance from the congregation, to acquire a property and house for herself.[111] Mother Angela's independence (she was not the passive woman of Victorian culture that Wermers may have expected) probably irked Wermers.[112]

Wermers, who took a special interest in the free and select schools, which had only two teachers for 170-180 children, complained to Lefèvere of the competency of the teachers. He declared that more competent teachers and comfortable schoolhouses would quickly raise the number of children from 170 to 300.[113] It is probable that Wermers' letter helped change the bishop's attitude to Mother Angela and her community.

It is apparent from Mother Angela's reply of 24 September 1865 to the bishop's

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[106] Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun. 1927 in DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference.
[107] Peter Kendekens to Lefèvere, Grand Rapids, 30 Jul. 1865, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, III-2-k, University of Notre Dame Archives.
[108] McKey to Lefèvere, 24 Apr. 1861 & 29 May 1861.
[109] Ibid. 24 Feb. 1862.
[110] Wermers to Lefèvere, Grand Rapids, 23 Feb. 1866, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, III-2-k, University of Notre Dame Archives. Peter Kendekens replaced his brother for a brief period.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Hartman, Women's Roles in the Late 19th Century.
[113] Wermer to Lefèvere, 23 Feb. 1866.

letter of the 9 September that he questioned the quality of the education that she supplied. In her defence she declared that she never 'pretended to teach' anything other than 'a good solid English education' in her schools.[114] She was at a loss to understand his change of attitude, his disappointment in her and his proposed withdrawal of protection. It was her belief that she had never knowingly disappointed the bishop or the people of Grand Rapids. She had always attended to her religious duties and she begged him to 'retract his hard saying', which was completely at variance with the way he always treated her. She asked only for a fair chance for the novitiate and if he found her deficient in any way she would no longer have a 'claim on his permission'.[115]

Whether the bishop put a short stay on his decision to withdraw his protection is unclear. In February 1866 Mother Angela sought permission to accept qualified candidates with teaching ability and on 1 March 1866 Sister Agnes Eardly sought permission to be professed by Lefèvere having being received as a candidate some four years previously.[116] Lefèvere, however, refused to profess Eardly and advised her to enter another order.[117] He also, according to Eardly, advised Mother Angela to return to her convent in Ireland and refused her permission to accept candidates for the congregation. The bishop's direction must have been influenced by Warmers' February letter.

On 25 April 1866 Mother Angela wrote to Lefèvere seeking his permission to apply to another bishop for 'his patronage and protection'.[118] A final response from the bishop dated 3 May 1866 brought an end to the Brigidines' stay at Grand Rapids.[119] Possibly Lefèvere had another congregation of sisters in mind to replace them as, on 6 August 1866, new sisters (three teachers and a housekeeper) commenced the schooling of 116 children in St Andrew's parish.[120] From this it is reasonable to infer that the Irish

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[114] McKey to Lefèvere, 29 Aug. 1865.
[115] Ibid., 24 Sept. 1865.
[116] Ibid., 26 Feb. 1866; Early to Lefèvere, 1 Mar.1866, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, III-2-k, University of Notre Dame Archives; Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey,* p.47.
[117] Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun. 1927 in DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference; Thomas Meehan, 'Detroit' in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* (www.newadvent.org/cathen/04758b.htm) (30 Jun. 2012).
[118] McKey to Lefèvere, 25 Apr.1866, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, III-2-k, University of Notre Dame Archives.
[119] Cullen, *Eighteen-Year Odyssey*, p. 47.
[120] Father Henry Beerhorst to Bishop Lefèvere, Grand Rapids, 16 Aug. 1866, Archdiocese of Detroit Collection, III-2-k, University of Notre Dame Archives.

system of education the Brigidines were providing and the viability of the congregation of St Bridget (they had not managed to secure a property of their own to establish a convent on a permanent footing) as well as Mother Angela's disagreements with the different priests of the parish were the more probable reasons for their departure and not, as Father John McGee suggests, their non-recognition by the order in Ireland.[121] However, in acknowledgement of their work he states that:

> none of the standard histories of Grand Rapids so much as mentions the period of the Brigidine sisters. [...] The work the sisters did is important from the standpoint of its being the first beginnings of Catholic education in the city and, indeed, in this section of the state. Here in Grand Rapids they left a mark which the years have almost erased, but their courage and heroism ought never to be left to oblivion.[122]

Titusville

Undaunted by events Mother Angela pleaded her case to be allowed a foundation with Bishop Josue Young of the diocese of Erie. Young, 'a convert to Catholicism and of an old Puritan New England family' appointed Mother Angela to Titusville, Pennsylvania and was eager to see the order flourish.[123] The diocese and its people were benefiting from the discovery of oil in Oil Creek on 29 August 1859. Four sisters arrived in Titusville on 4 May 1866 to a five-room dwelling with a schoolroom large enough to hold sixty children.[124] According to Eardly, the bishop gave instructions for additions to be made to the school. The *Titusville Herald* of 6 July 1866 throws light on the community involvement in moving the former Catholic church building from Nellstown (where the land was sold for oil purposes) to Titusville that made the extension to the school house possible.

> Thirty-five volunteer teams were procured, and free passes being issued by Colonel Keese for transportation over the Titusville and Pithole plank road, Fr Mignault and his company proceeded

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[121] McGee, *The Catholic Church in the Grand River Valley*, p.165.
[122] Ibid.
[123] James Dunn, 'Erie' in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* (www.newadvent.org/cathen/05518b.htm) (30 Jun. 2012).
[124] Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun. 1927, DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference. According to Eardly, Bishop Young visited one of the Brigidine convents when he visited Europe, however, there is no archival record of the visit; *Titusville Herald*, 6 Jul. 1866, DA/BC/BGA/820.2.

> to Nellstown took down the church and brought it on wheels to Titusville. The procession on its return extended half a mile along the road and excited much curiosity among spectators who inquired if Pithole was being moved to Titusville.[125]

The old church became a wing of the convent and the whole extension cost less than $300 as most of the labour was provided free.[126] Bishop Young took the occasion of his consecration of the two new church bells to profess two sisters and receive another.

Misfortune struck the sisters when 'their good friend' Bishop Young died suddenly on 6 September 1866. It was nearly two years before his successor, the Irish born Tobias Mullen, was consecrated bishop of Erie on 2 August 1868.[127] In the meantime, the sisters established a motherhouse, started an academy and taught in the parish school of St Titus.[128] Within a short time they were teaching about three hundred children and depended for their survival on what they received for music lessons and on the fees from fifteen or eighteen boarders.[129] On 4 July 1866 Sister Agnes Eardly made her final profession while her sister received the white veil and the name Mary Joseph.[130] Six girls joined the convent in the beginning of 1867. Four received the white veil after a six months trial and the other two returned to their homes.

Adversity struck the community once again with the sudden death of 75-year-old Mother Angela on 18 January 1867.[131] The Titusville *Evening Journal* reported her death as being from heart disease. It led with a ten line poem in her honour and, in the following brief summary of her obituary, noted that the 'dear departed nun' was a 'model of piety whose conversation was always a great source of edification'.[132] Her funeral was a solemn requiem High Mass with the church draped in deep mourning. Her funeral procession showed the respect in which she was held:

> Headed by Brown's brass band, immediately followed by the hearse and the sisters of the convent, then the day-school children, the Catholic Literacy Society, the ladies of the Sodality and Rosary, miscellaneous persons, sleighs, etc. The entire procession was over half a mile in

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[125] *Titusville Herald*, 6 Jul. 1866.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Dunn, 'Erie', accessed 30 Jun. 2012.
[128] *Titusville Herald,* 3 Jul. 1991, p.3.
[129] Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun.1927, DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Titusville *Evening Herald,* DA/BC/AIr/832.

> length. It was the largest funeral procession that has taken place in this city, numbering over 1,000 persons.[133]

The *Catholic* of Pittsburg also reported on her death noting that she was in the thirty-ninth year of her profession.[134]

Eardly and the other sisters continued to teach and the Catholic *Almanac* shows Eardly as superior while Sister Mary Joseph was principal of the academy. They continued to accept new entrants to the convent two of whom, Miss Fanny M. Cleary, in religion, Sister Mary Rose, and Miss Louisa Bunning, in religion, Sister Mary Aloysius received the white veil of novice in July 1868 from Father Joseph Edouard Napoleon Mignault, pastor of Titusville.[135] On this occasion he was assisted by his brother Father A. Mignault and Father J. Dunn. One other report noted that Father Mignault always conducted the ceremonies in the parish church with great solemnity and to the edification of the people who attended.[136]

On 24 July 1868 the *Catholic* gave a glowing report of the activities of the convent community:

> The community is in a flourishing condition, and has an excellent academy connected with the mother house. The exhibition of the pupils of this female seminary, given on the 12th inst., in the largest hall of this city, was one of the most brilliant affairs of the kind ever witnessed, and would do honour to the most renowned academies in the country. The tragedy of Esther was beautifully rendered by the young ladies in full costume, and elicited the most flattering praises from press and audience.

Bishop Mullen made a visitation of the convent on 26 September 1868 and found everything to his satisfaction.[137] For the years 1867 and 1868 the attendance in St Titus's school was 250.[138]

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[133] Ibid.
[134] Copy of notice in *The Catholic*, Pittsburgh, 23 (19 Jan. 1867), p.405. The Mercy annals record that Sr Angela and eight Mercy sisters were reinterred in the new St Catherine's cemetery between 5 and 8 Dec. 1900, in Cullen, *The Early American Brigidine Story*, DA/BC/BGA/820.2.
[135] Copy of notice in *The Catholic*, Titusville, 25 (24 Jul. 1868), p.189.
[136] Copy of report in *A century of progress: Diocese of Erie: 1853-1953* supplement to the *Lake Shore Visitor* (4 Dec.1953)
[137] Copy of notice in *The Catholic*, Titusville, 25 (26 Sept.1868), p.4-5.
[138] Catholic *Almanac* (1868–69), Johnson, 'The American Odyssey', p.66.

A month after the bishop's visit a great change took place within the community with the arrival of Sister Mary Anne Foran in October.[139] It appears that the Eardly sisters were removed from their posts of responsibility as the Catholic *Almanac* named Sister Mary Anne Foran as superior and Sister Mary Francis as principal.[140] There is no evidence as to who made the changes (possibly Mignault) and when or if Foran was ever professed a choir sister. According to Eardly, Foran applied to Mignault for permission to join the community.[141] It is possible that he could have known Foran as he ministered in the diocese of Milwaukee when they were in Kenosha.[142] It is difficult to understand why Mignault gave his consent to her coming and even more so that he appointed her superior within a few weeks of her arrival—she was professed as a lay sister, had apparently abandoned Mother Angela McKay and had no contact with the community for many years. The decision must have created discord within the community.

Misfortune struck the convent once more when, on 14 January 1869, all their buildings were burned to the ground. Amazingly nearly all the furnishing was saved.[143] The thermometer on that fateful night marked 30 degrees below zero.[144] On the 16 January 1869 Mignault wrote of the disaster:

> My poor St Bridget's Mother House, Novitiate, and schools are in ruins. The building was 145 feet in length, and had been considerably improved last Fall, and the last cent paid on it the day before the sad calamity. This sad catastrophe throws the whole community, orphans, etc into the street.[145]

Seventeen orphans, besides other boarders and nuns, were made homeless.[146] The *Catholic* reported that:

> One short hour sufficed to reduce to ashes the result of years of solicitude, of privations, and of constant labours. In the midst of the rigors of winter, his [Fr Mignault] poor devoted sisters are

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[139] Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun. 1927, DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference.
[140] Catholic *Almanac* (1868–69), Johnson, 'The American Odyssey', p.66.
[141] Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun. 1927, DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference.
[142] Francis Newton Thorpe, *History of Crawford County, Pennsylvania* (n.d.), (www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/franc) (30 Jun. 2012).
[143] Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun. 1927; DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary; *Titusville Herald,* 3 Jul. 1991, p.3 & 26 Feb.1993, p.64.
[144] Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun. 1927; DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference.
[145] Copy of report in *The Catholic*, Titusville, 25 (23 Jan. 1869), p.380.
[146] Sisters of St Joseph Order Community Date Book 14 Jan. 1869 sent to me by Sr Janet Staab, OSB, archivist.

> deprived of shelter, their young and delicate novices are forced from their loved asylum, and the hundreds of children the objects on which these holy ladies lavished their time and strength, and minds, and heart's affection, are without a school in which to learn the science of God as well as merely human knowledge.[147]

His immediate appeal to the people of Titusville for help amounted to $2,500 despite the fact that over four years the people had paid over $70,000 in government taxes. However, this sum would only go a little way towards rebuilding the convent, novitiate, orphanage and schools and he appealed through the newspaper to a wider public for funds to prevent the disbandment of the 'much needed establishment, the only one in the oil regions'.[148]

From that night the sisters lived in a temporary shelter (a shed by the roadside) until 18 April 1869 when disaster struck again and this time all they possessed was burnt. It was suggested that this was most probably the work of an incendiary.[149] According to Daniel Murphy, virulent anti-Catholic prejudice and abuse was a continuing problem in Pennsylvania.[150] The attack was possibly from a remnant of the Know-Nothing Party or the American Protection Society or similar group. Within two days Mignault removed the sisters from the parish and brought the professed to Erie where they were lodged with the Sisters of St Joseph and he took the three novices to Mother Elizabeth Bruyère, foundress of the Grey Nuns in Ottawa, Canada. Writing to Mignault in September 1869, Mother Elizabeth hoped that the three 'would persevere' in their vocation.[151] The sisters remained with the Sisters of St Joseph until Bishop Mullen returned from the 10th Provincial Council of Baltimore (1869). Although the Sisters of St Joseph had given the sisters lodgings they were not able, according to their rule, to receive them into their community.[152] At the suggestion of Bishop Mullen, the two Eardly sisters entered the Benedictine convent in Erie. They made their novitiate again and in a change of religious names became Sister Gabriella Eardly, O.S.B. (the correspondent) and her sister became Sister Gregoria Eardly, O.S.B. Over a forty-one-

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[147] Copy of report in *The Catholic*, Titusville, 25 (23 Jan. 1869), p.380.
[148] Ibid., p.389.
[149] Sisters of St Joseph Order Community Date Book 18 Apr. 1869.
[150] Murphy, *Irish Emigrant and Missionary Education,* p.210.
[151] Sister Jeanne d'Arc Lortie , SCC to Sr M. Lawrence Franklin, Sisters of Mercy, Erie, 14 Nov.1974 in Cullen, *The Early American Brigidine Story*, DA/BC/BGA/820.2.
[152] Sisters of St Joseph Order Community Date Book 20 Jun. 1869.

year period they made an important educational contribution to the Benedictines in Erie.[153] The other professed sisters went to Rochester and to the Sisters of Charity in Troy, N.Y.[154] After the disaster the parish was left with no one to administer the school. In 1870 Bishop Mullen invited the Sisters of Mercy to start a foundation, which they did with seven sisters and were quickly teaching 400 pupils. In 1871 they opened St Joseph's Academy, a private school for girls.[155]

Sister Gabriella does not place the blame for the demise of the Brigidines on Bishop Mullen but squarely on Mary Anne Foran and Father Mignault. McGee states that Mignault and Foran discussed the matter and that it was they who decided that the community should disband and the sisters seek life in other convents.[156] It is possible that a combination of lack of finance and Mignault's own debilitating health made him take such a serious step.[157] Shortly after this event he retired and toured Europe including Ireland. There is no record in the annals that he visited Mountrath or any of the other convents but there is a record that on the 10 May 1869 the sisters of Tullow convent sent £20 to Father Mignault for the Titusville convent—£10 of this was from Sister Aloysius O'Kelly who would have known both McKay and Foran.[158] Frustratingly, there is no record as to who informed the Tullow nuns of the situation in Titusville. Possibly Mignault had solicited help from them after the first fire. Sister Gabriella does not make any reference to this money in her letter of June 1927.

Nothing further is known of the life of Sister Mary Ann Foran. She is said to have left the convent of the Sisters of St Joseph with Sister Brigid Delany to visit friends in Rochester, N.Y.[159] Neither sisters returned to the convent in Erie but Brigid Delany

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[153] The Benedictine Sisters records recognize both sisters as Brigidine sisters located in Titusville before their disbandment. The records show that the sisters entered on 20 Jun.1869 and pronounced their perpetual vows before Bishop Tobias Mullen & Mother Scholastica Burkhardt, Prioress of the Erie Benedictine Sisters on 15 Aug. 1873. Sr Gabriella celebrated her diamond jubilee in 1933 and d. 26 Dec 1934. She taught elementary and secondary school for 41 years. Sr Gregoria also taught elementary and secondary school for 41 years and d. 21 Feb. 1916.

[154] Sisters of St Joseph Order Community Date Book 20 Jun. 1869; 'Do you know that' leaflet, DA/BC/BGA/Congregational research.

[155] *Titusville Herald,* 26 Feb.1993, p.64.

[156] McGee, *The Catholic Church in the Grand River Valley*, p.167.

[157] Thorpe, *History of Crawford County,* accessed 30 Jun. 2012.

[158] Tullow Receipts & Expenditure Book (Jan.1858-70) in DA/BC/AIr/543.

[159] Eardly to Mother Josephine, 23 Jun. 1927, DA/BC/AIr/406 temporary reference.

returned to Titusville where she lived with charitable friends for a few months.[160] She then accepted a home given her by her niece, the superior of the Daughters of Charity, Troy, New York. Eardly states that Brigid Delany was by then old and enfeebled by a fall on ice coming out of church yet, *c.*1873, she journeyed back to Ireland to reach Tullow convent where, late on a stormy night, according to Gibbons, she was given shelter in the convent but Bishop Lynch would not allow her to stay.[161] This was possibly because she was not, in his eyes, a regular member of the Brigidine institute. Instead, again according to Gibbons, she was given refuge in the South Presentation Convent, Cork.[162] The Presentation convent annals, however, have no record of her coming or of her death—yet she is buried in their cemetery.[163] Her headstone recognizes her as being of the rule of St Brigid and professed for thirty years.[164] What appears to be the death certificate of Sister Brigid shows that she died on 12 August 1883 from 'senile decay' of one week's duration in the alms asylum attached to the convent.[165] The witness to her death was another inmate, the illiterate Mary Keller. It is possible, as there is no record of her in the convent annals, that Sister Brigid could have either worked or lived out her last years in the alms asylum run by the Presentation sisters.

Conclusion

This mission brings to light the hardship experienced by a religious community apparently deemed uncanonical by its mother house and thus left without home support and finance. It also shows how utterly dependent a community was when under episcopal jurisdiction and the detrimental influence a parish priest can have on a community. In addition it appears that the community did not observe enclosure. However, it also shows the indomitable pioneering spirit, courage and fortitude of Mother Angela McKay and her sisters that led to the successful establishment of a

[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.; Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.363.
[162] Gibbons, *Glimpses*, p.363.
[163] Marie Therese King, archivist of the Presentation sisters to author, 12 Sept 2012.
[164] Photos of headstone sent to me by Marie Therese King, 5 Sept 2012. The headstone, however, is not her own as her name is engraved on the reverse side of that belonging to Sister Veronica Morrissey of the Presentation sisters. This was not unusual as the convent graveyard is small and many graves hold two corpses.
[165] Copy of death certificate for Mary Delany, ref. GRO/186918, Civil Registration Service, Roscommon, 24 Sept. 2012. There is no other Mary Delany listed as dying in 1883 in Cork.

Brigidine convent and schools which flourished from 1866 until 1869 until two disastrous fires (possibly arson) brought an end to the community. Their spirit would be emulated some fourteen years later by other Brigidine sisters on the Australian mission. Coincidently 1883, the year of the first foundation was the same year that Sister Brigid Delany died. Unlike the American mission, the mission to Australia had the full consent of the bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, the support of the home congregation and was at the invitation of the Australian bishops.

CHAPTER 5

1883–1909

NEW SOUTH WALES—CALL AND RESPONSE

From the collapse of the eventually successful but 'uncanonical' Brigidine mission in 1869, we know that over the next twelve years Tullow convent received requests for foundations from the following: Father Fitzpatrick for a foundation in California (December 1870); Father McAlory, D.D. for a foundation in Albury, New South Wales (November 1874) and Bishop Moran of Dunedin for a foundation in New Zealand (August 1881).[1] The requests for Brigidine sisters to make foundations can be seen as part of the great nineteenth-century Irish missionary movement of 'pastoral evangelization' chiefly, as Hill points out, from the 1840s reflecting the need to serve the post-famine Irish emigrant communities of the British Empire and the Americas.[2] It was a pastoral evangelization 'moulded', according to Barr, 'by a Hiberno-Roman fusion of devotional and administrative practice'.[3] Oliver P. Rafferty contends that simply because of the size of its diaspora, Ireland played a very significant part in the creation of a vast 'spiritual empire', which was a counterpart to Britain's 'empire of the flesh' or as Akenson puts it 'what the British thought of as their colonial empire, was simultaneously the spiritual empire of the Irish Catholic church'.[4] However, as Hill demonstrates, 'the spiritual empire was no less a contested, multilayered construct than its secular counterpart' for both Catholic and Protestant missionaries.[5] In her critique of the construct of an Irish spiritual empire Roddy concludes from Cullen's return to Ireland in 1850 that he recognized that lay emigration, as well as the continued appointment of

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[1] Tullow HCM, DA/BC/AIr/516(2).
[2] Myrtle Hill, 'Gender, Culture and the "spiritual empire": the Irish Protestant female missionary experience' in *Women's History Review*, 16; 2 (2007), DOI: 10.1080/09612020601048803 Director Myrtle Hill, 203–226.
[3] Colin Barr, 'Imperium in Imperio': Irish Episcopal Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century' in *English Historical Review,* 502 (2008), 611–650.
[4] Rafferty, 'The Catholic Church, Ireland and the British empire', 288–309; Donald Harman Akenson, *Half the World from Home: perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860–1950* (Wellington, N.Z., 1990), p.160.
[5] Hill, 'Gender, Culture and the 'spiritual empire', 203–226.

Irishmen to overseas dioceses, might contribute to a genuinely world-wide spiritual empire.[6] He laid the foundation for this spiritual empire in part through his promotion of the parish mission and through the expansion of Catholic schools that 'galvanized the faith of children who were likely future emigrants'.[7] In producing the desired orthodoxy at home and abroad Cullen was, in Roddy's opinion, 'the key, dynamic figure in the promotion of the spiritual empire as an idea and also crucially in the contribution of real substance to it at all levels'.[8]

In Australia, conversely, the general mood from the mid 1850s onwards was one of liberal and secular opinion.[9] In this climate the move towards secular education was inexorable and all colonies introduced legislation to make school compulsory, to end financial aid to church schools, and to exclude religious education from the curriculum.[10]. The legislation was seen by the Australian hierarchy as an invasion of Catholic rights, as 'downright persecution' which took away the Catholic church's authority over its schools and was a challenge to its tradition and accepted practice.[11] 'Any system', as Patrick O'Farrell declares, 'which excluded Catholic teaching, practices and atmosphere, was not acceptable to Catholics'.[12]

However, the Catholic response to New South Wales' secularization of education was beset by the problems created by the personal and national animosities and prejudice of John Bede Polding towards his Irish clergy.[13] An English Benedictine, he was the first bishop (1834) and archbishop of Sydney (1837–77). He feared, as Cunningham states, that 'Irish control of the Church in the colony would be politically and socially disruptive'.[14] Polding's fears of an Irish takeover were not unfounded as 'the heavily Irish character of the Roman Catholic church in the United States, United Kingdom and much of the former British empire' was, Barr contends, 'the result of a carefully planned

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[6] Roddy, 'Spiritual imperialism and the mission of the Irish race', at 618.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., at 618–19.
[9] Fogarty, FMS, *Catholic Education in Australia, 1860–1950,* 2 vols (Melbourne, 1959), i, p.472.
[10] Ibid.; John Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle: Sydney Catholic Schools, 1820–1995* (Sydney, 1996), p.20.
[11] Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia,* i, pp 1 & 196.
[12] Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church in Australia: A Short History, 1788–1967* (London, 1969), p.112.
[13] Anne Cunningham, *The Rome Connection, Australia, Ireland and the Empire 1865–1885* (Darlinghurst, NSW, 2002), p.12.
[14] Ibid., p.15.

campaign to install Irish bishops in the several national hierarchies'[15]. Further, the campaign was directed by Paul Cullen, in his successive roles as rector of the Irish College, Rome, Archbishop of Armagh and from 1852 Archbishop of Dublin.[16] According to Oliver P. Rafferty, Cullen in the decade between 1850 and 1860 had virtually renewed the entire Irish hierarchy in his own image.[17] For instance, Polding's Irish suffragan bishops who arrived in the middle 1860s—Bishop James Murray of Maitland (1865), Bishop Matthew Quinn of Bathurst (1865), Bishop Daniel Murphy of Hobart (1866), Bishop Timothy O'Mahoney of Armidale (1869), and Bishop William Lanigan of Goulburn (1866)—all were Cullen nominees, either directly or at one remove.[18] Such was Polding's fear of the loss of Benedictine control over the Sydney archdiocese to the Irish clergy (it had been Benedictine almost from the establishment of the colony) that when it appeared that Murray would be appointed his coadjutor he did all in his power to prevent it happening.[19] Murray was then spearheading a new dynamic in the Australian church, that of imposing on Australia an imitation of Irish religious culture.[20] The objective was, in Murray's words, 'to make the people as good as they were at home' on the simple proposition that to cultivate an Irish atmosphere was to cultivate true religion.[21]

Polding was not alone in not viewing the Irish and Irish religious culture in a positive light. In the eyes of the hierarchy, recusants and converts of Scotland (another mission country) the Irish, as noted earlier, were seen as racially and culturally inferior and Irish religious culture was, as Kehoe points out, considered less sophisticated than what Scottish church authorities desired for their followers'.[22] Furthermore, unlike Polding, who failed in his attempt to prevent the takeover by the Irish and their religious culture, Scottish Catholics 'invested tremendous energy in minimizing the degree to which Irish Catholics were able to influence Scottish Catholic culture and identity'.[23]

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[15] Barr, 'Imperium in Imperio', 611–650.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Rafferty, 'The Catholic Church, Ireland and the British empire', 288–309.
[18] Ibid. The Irish bishops had studied under Cullen at the Irish College in Rome and were either his relatives or friends. James Murray had acted as Cullen's secretary in Rome.
[19] Cunningham, *The Rome Connection*, pp. 15 & 21.
[20] O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, p.111. Maitland was erected a diocese on 25 Jun. 1847.
[21] Ibid., p.141.
[22] Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church*, pp 92 & 177.
[23] Ibid., p.93.

Polding did have one important victory over his Irish clerical colleagues (despite their significant influence with the Vatican) when, in 1873, he 'somewhat improbably' secured Roger Vaughan, another English Benedictine as his coadjutor with the right of succession rather than Murray. Barr contends that Archbishop Vaughan (1877–83) was 'at pains to gain the confidence of his Irish suffragans, however, according to Cunningham, hierarchical relations remained fraught.[24] When Bishop Patrick Moran, ('a man much trusted by the British government') was appointed as archbishop in 1884, 'English Benedictine oversight of the see and, indeed, in Australia generally ended'.[25]

Despite the 'corrosive climate of mistrust' between the Benedictine archbishops and their Irish suffragans, all had to contend with the colony's establishment by Henry Parkes in 1880 of free, secular and compulsory education which ended aid to denominational education in 1882. For Vaughan secular education was anathema.[26] The Irish bishops had already, under Cullen's leadership, condemned and repudiated the previously accepted Irish multi-denominational or mixed system of national primary education in which religion was tacked on to a programme of secular instruction.[27] Moreover, as Akenson argues, this fundamental position of the Irish bishops was assimilated into the Syllabus of Errors promulgated by Pius IX in 1864 in which fully state-controlled and purely secular schools were formally condemned and was in effect 'the Papacy's writing large a viewpoint that was being most radically advanced in Ireland'.[28]

However, setting up a separate Catholic system of education to combat the 'godless' schools with their 'corrupting secularist education' which were 'calculated to debase the standard of human excellence' (Joint Pastoral Letter 1879) was an expensive process and for it to succeed education costs had to be kept to the minimum.[29] For instance, according to Daniel Murphy, up to the withdrawal of state aid, teachers in

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[24] O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church in Australia*, see chapters vi &vii on this relationship; Barr, 'Imperium in Imperio', 611-650.

[25] Rafferty, 'The Catholic Church, Ireland and the British empire', 288–309.

[26] John N. Molony, 'Carr, Thomas Joseph (1839-1917)' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/carr-thomas-joseph-5511 accessed 3 May 2013.

[27] O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church in Australia*, p.112.

[28] Ibid.; Akenson, *Half the World from Home*, p.167.

[29] Joint Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of New South Wales, in Luttrell, *Worth the Struggle* p.21; Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia,* i, pp.250 & 422.

Catholic schools received on average about £195 per annum of which £142 came from state aid and £53 from school fees. A total of 256 Catholic schools were in receipt of state aid immediately before its withdrawal in each of five colonies: 118 in Victoria, 87 in New South Wales 16 in Queensland, 16 in Tasmania and 19 in Western Australia.[30] For the bishops costs could only be kept down by replacing lay teachers in existing schools with religious congregations and using them to provide teachers for new parish schools. In this regard, as Brigidine Sister Loyola Fraser argues, the 'religious [was] of value only in so far as she [was] of use; and all her faculties, physical moral, spiritual, [had to be] extended, or expended, for the sake of the common good'.[31]

Although all the early requests for sisters for the missions were refused by Bishop Lynch, he did not hesitate to allow the Patrician brothers to go on mission to Chennai, India in 1875 as part of 'the great new wave of missionary work in the evangelization of non-Christians in Asia and Africa'.[32] In his paternal care for the sisters, he was averse to letting the sisters go not only to the diocese of Ossory (he had refused a request for a foundation there in 1877) but particularly to faraway places where he believed the duties of the enclosure of the Brigidine sisters could not be fully carried out if the convent was not adjoining a church.[33] In January 1883, convinced by Bishop Moran of Ossory (Moran was non-resident vicar general of Maitland from 1866 and Murray's agent in Ireland), both Bishops Lynch and Walshe accepted Bishop James Murray's 1882 request for a foundation (he guaranteed that the nuns' enclosure would be observed) for Coonamble, a country town in his diocese of Maitland, New South Wales.[34] With the guarantee from Murray that the nuns enclosure would be observed the 'glorious' mission was undertaken to what was by then, as Barr argues, an 'Australian

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[30] Murphy, *Irish emigrants and missionary education*, p.346

[31] Loyola Fraser, 'A comparison of the spirituality of the followers of Saint Francis de Sales with that of the Brigidine Sisters and tracing the influence of St Francis' writings on our founder Bishop Daniel Delany' (incomplete thesis meant for the archives of the Brigidine congregation, 1984), p.13, DA/BC/BGA/130.2.

[32] *The Brothers of St Patrick* (http://patricianbrothers.com.au/history/history.html) (26 Mar.2013); O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers*, p.19.

[33] Mother Fintan Fennelly to Bishop Murray, Mountrath, 8 Jan. 1883, MDA, E.2.2 and BPA/NSW/Box51/transcriptions.

[34] Bishop Murray appointed Moran vicar general in 1866 quoted in A.E.Cahill, 'Moran, Patrick Francis (1830–1911)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University (http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/moran-patrick-francis-7648/text133752) (25 Aug.2013). See also Anne Cunningham, *The Rome Connection* on the relationship between Murray and Moran.

church firmly in Hiberno-Roman hands.[35] Walsh saw the mission as a 'generous and holy undertaking' on the part of the nuns.[36] In Mother Superior Fintan Fennelly's words their 'good old bishops had at last consented to let them go'.[37] This first Brigidine mission (unlike 'Protestant female missions where the average length of service was 11.7 years') was a life of exile and sacrifice, of prayer and duty dedicated not only to the religious and secular education of Coonamble's 'squatocracy' and settler children but was also extended to the children of other bush towns in New South Wales and Victoria. In contrast to the Irish in America who settled predominately in large cities, the Irish in Australia settled in large numbers in the countryside.[38]

At this period Murray already had two congregations of nuns in his diocese, the Dominican sisters and the Sisters of Mercy. The Dominican sisters, established in the diocese since 1867, had three convents with select boarding for 55 pupils, three superior day schools with 150 pupils and three primary schools for 700 pupils. The Dominicans also ran a deaf and dumb institute in Newcastle. The Sisters of Mercy, established in the diocese since 1875, had ten convents with twenty-eight sisters in community. They had select schools attached to five convents with an attendance of 100 pupils. The sisters also had charge of thirteen primary schools catering for 1,500 pupils and of an orphanage in Singleton. Bishop Murray arranged that the Coonamble bound Brigidines would meet with the other two religious congregations in an especially reserved train carriage at Murrwundi railway station for lunch.[39] The Sisters of St Joseph (Josephite sisters) also entered the diocese the same year as the Brigidines when they founded an institute at Lochinvar. The Patrician brothers, Dominic O'Neill and Fintan O'Neill opened a school in Maitland town on 9 April 1883.[40] Besides this school, between 1883 and 1889 the brothers opened schools in the following dioceses of New South Wales: Goulburn, Bathurst, Sydney and Armidale.

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[35] Colin Barr, 'Imperium in Imperio', 611–650.
[36] Bishop James Walsh to Father Andrew Phelan, Carlow, 2 Sept. 1883, BPA/NSW/Box 14/series 108.5.
[37] Fennelly to Murray, Mountrath, 8 Jan. 1883.
[38] Murphy, *Irish emigrans and missionary education*, p.369.
[39] Copy of the Coonamble annals: the First Fifty Years given to author at the closing of Coonamble convent in 2009.
[40] Janice Tranter, 'The Irish dimension of an Australian Religious Sisterhood: the Sisters of Saint Joseph' in Patrick O'Sullivan, (ed.) *Religion and Identity*, p.243; *The Brothers of St Patrick* (http://patricianbrothers.com.au/history/history.html) (26 Mar.2013).

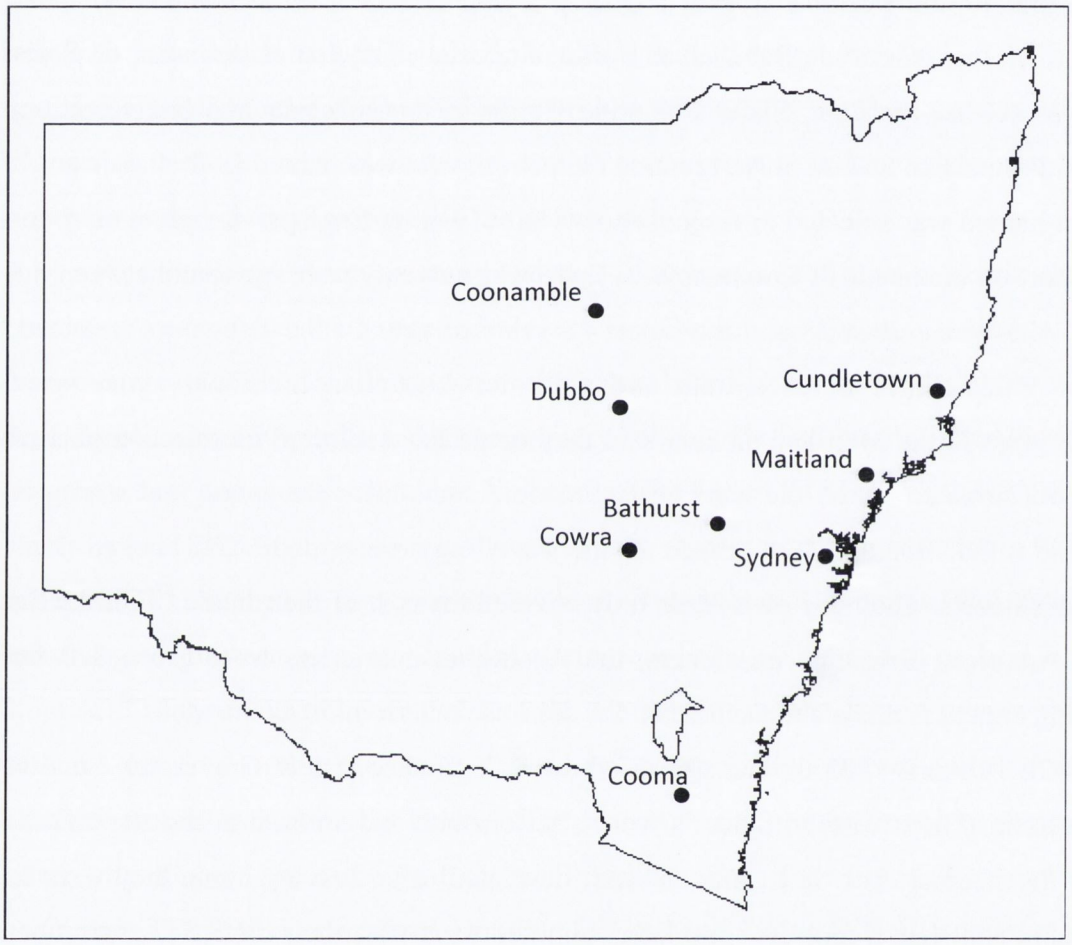
In making the selection for the mission Bishop Lynch and Mother Superior Fintan Fennelly had to take into consideration the wants of the home convent and the nature and place of the work to be done in Australia—twelve choir sisters and three lay sisters (out of thirty-two sisters) volunteered for the mission or, as Father Andrew Phelan, put it 'the posts of honour'. Bishop Lynch selected Mother John Synan as superior, Mothers Gertrude Banahan as bursar, Stanislaus Hayden as sacristan, de Sales Maher as second assistant, Sister Catherine Bergin as housekeeper and late selection, 'splendid' musician and organist, Ignatius Fitzpatrick who was named as first assistant.[41] The last named was selected in response to a visit of Father English who gave an up-to-date report on the needs of Coonamble.[42] There was a twenty year age span between the sisters—the youngest at 28 and the oldest 48 years of age. Of the 'labourers' selected, Andrew Phelan, P.P. of Mountrath and a former Australian missionary who spent thirteen years in the Maitland diocese said they could have selected more accomplished sisters but none so suited the work in Coonamble since all were young and strong in body and mind. Bishop Moran made all the travelling arrangements and booked them first class tickets. The nuns own funds only covered the cost of their outfit.[43] Unlike the earlier American Brigidine missioners, the Australian missioners were given £20 for travelling expenses and a cheque for £50 for their use on arrival in Coonamble.[44]

On 19 April 1883 the nuns boarded the S.S. *Chimborazo* at Gravesend, London for Australia. They were, in Synan's words, 'astonished and amazed at the stupendous size of the steamer' but 'heart-broken' and 'desolated' after leaving home they went to their cabin and 'had a nice cry' and later 'mingled tears with their dinner'. Later in her diary she mentions that 'whenever they were inclined to misery they reminded each other of offering it up for the poor souls in Purgatory' but that 'Mother Gertrude was of the opinion that they had offered so much there couldn't be anyone there'. In her opinion Mother Gertrude 'was a great wag'. [45] Of the six priests on board with them were Fathers John Dunne, vicar general of Goulburn and later bishop of Bathurst, and John McKenna,

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[41] Mountrath annals, 1809–1926, DA/BC/AIr/324; Fennelly to Murray, Mountrath, 8 Jan. & 20 Feb. 1883, MDA, E.2.2 & E.2.5; BPA/NSW/Box51/transcriptions.
[42] Phelan to Murray, Mountrath, 20 Mar. 1883, MDA, E.2.6 & BPA/NSW/Box51/transcriptions.
[43] Fennelly to Murray, Mountrath, 11 Jan. 1883, MDA, E.2.1 & BPA/NSW/Box51/transcriptions.
[44] Coonamble annals.
[45] Diary of Mother John Synan, BPA/NSW/TL

bound for New Zealand. Both men would have an impact on their later lives. After a two month sea voyage and tough land journey by train, coach and wagonette they arrived in Coonamble on 21 June 1883 to be greeted by the gathered townspeople and to the sound of the church bell ringing.[46]



Coonamble, New South Wales

The scorching summer of the plains, with its accompaniment of flies, mosquitoes and other troublesome insects, death adders and other poisonous and dangerous snakes and reptiles, centipedes and red back spiders, floods and droughts all ensured that the mission would be no sinecure.[47] Since the lay teachers would not stay in Coonamble there was no

[46] Coonamble annals.
[47] Ibid.

permanent Catholic school to counteract the influence of the local public school, established since 1869.[48] The children were 'so in want of religious instruction' that parish priest Father E. McGrath informed Bishop Murray in 1882 that he needed 'to change things at once' and asked him for nuns. Murray, from his visit to Tullow convent in 1881, knew that the 'useful character' of the Brigidine system of free schools and fee-paying day and boarding schools would, as he termed it, help end the 'spiritual destitution' of the 'back country' town and Catholic parish (greater in size than Ireland).[49] In such country towns many Catholics did not attend mass or frequent the sacraments and were in danger of becoming 'lost' Catholics.[50] Bishop Murray's plans for Catholic education in Coonamble were no different to the sanctions he had imposed on Catholic parents in the rest of his diocese. He assured Mother John that 'war would commence in earnest the following year when no Confirmation would be given to children or sacraments to parents who sent their children to public schools'.[51] He believed that it would 'take time and a lot of patience to bring the parents to a sense of duty' but declared that 'it was a glorious work' and he was 'sure St Brigid will give [them] all possible help.[52]

Their new convent was not a fine stone building like Mountrath but Father McGrath's five roomed weather-board cottage presbytery which he vacated for them.[53] (See Appendix 2) In 1893 two new Irish postulants were shocked to discover that their new home was 'a wooden hut'.[54] Father Andrew Phelan regretted that the nuns did not have a better convent to start with but, while observing that they went prepared to rough it and were not disappointed, he acknowledged that they had not complained of conditions.[55] The heat in the wooden 'convent' often made the food unpalatable.[56] To make matters worse, water was expensive and had to be filtered then cooled in canvas

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[48] Centenary Committee, *A Hundred Years of Brigidine Sisters in Coonamble* (1983), p.9.
[49] *Freeman's Journal,* 16 Apr. 1883; *Brigidine Sisters in Coonamble,* p.9.
[50] Naomi Turner, *Catholics in Australia: A Social History* 2 vols. (N. Blackburn, Vic. 3130, 1992), i, p.207.
[51] Coonamble Council Book, BPA/NSW/Box 97/Series 114.3.14/8.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Coonamble annals, p.19;
[54] Memoirs of Mother Stanislaus Nolan, found with other Brigidine papers in file cabinet in disused school hall, Cowra convent, on my visit there with Sister Maree Marsh, Congregational Leader, Aug. 2009.
[55] Phelan to Murray, Mountrath, 28 Nov.1883, MDA E.2.7; BPA/NSW/Box 51/transcriptions.
[56] Memoirs of Mother Stanislaus, p.3. The burden of using canvas bags for water was only eased when artesian water was discovered in 1892.

bags before it could be used for drinking. Little wonder that Coonamble was subject to outbreaks of typhoid fever. Except for the addition of two rooms (Bishop Murray helped with the cost) the nuns coped with the primitive and crowded conditions (one kerosene hand lamp and candles) until 1910 when they and the boarders moved into a new convent. It also served, except for a brief period, as the general novitiate for New South Wales until it moved in 1901 to Randwick, Sydney.

Their stoicism and endurance is all the more astounding when one contemplates the utter unsuitability of their northern hemisphere dress. They wore very heavy (at least ten pounds weight) voluminous serge habits with long pleated trains, tall starched forehead bands with long veils, and wide starched guimps.[57] To add to their physical difficulties they wore a serge petticoat beneath their habit. Such was the distress of a sister on one occasion that, 'fearing heat apoplexy' she discarded her veil, domino and guimp in favour of a 'light piece of muslin'.[58] To 'settle her conscience' she 'assured' the mother superior in Ireland that 'if she were here she would do the same'.[59] To add further to their discomfort the nuns had to add monstrous outer sleeves and a heavy serge cloak if they were going on a journey.[60]

From 9 July 1883, when they opened St Patrick's primary school with fifty children (girls and boys), and St Brigid's select or high school with eight or ten pupils, they were in direct competition for pupils with the better funded free public schools.[61] The primary school fee could be in the order of 6*d.* or 1*s.*[62] The convent community room served as a school room for the select school as well as serving as the nuns' refectory while the primary school was held in the church with the sanctuary screened off until 1893 when the nuns had a new school built at a cost of £850.[63] The school syllabus followed by the Brigidines would not have been unfamiliar to them since the bishops of New South Wales had decreed that the children in Catholic schools follow the same syllabus as that laid down for the state schools, which since 1848 was based on the Irish national school system of arranging pupils in classes 1 to 5, based largely on the set

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[57] *Brigidine Sisters in Coonamble*, p.15.
[58] Mother Benedict Moore to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Tullow, 29 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.
[59] Ibid.
[60] *Brigidine Sisters in Coonamble*, p.15.
[61] Coonamble annals. The high school closed in 1975.
[62] Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, i, p.350.
[63] Mother M. Benedict to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Tullow, 29 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.

of Irish National Commissioners' graded reading books.[64] The books, well-produced and cheap, were acceptable to the government since their religious content had served the mixed Irish population and thus were deemed suitable for the similarly mixed populations of New South Wales and later Victoria.[65]

In choosing a Catholic school, even a 'bush' Catholic school like Coonamble, parents could be assured, as Campbell and Sherington argue, that 'their offspring would have the benefits of a good Catholic education: strict discipline, knowledge of Irish traditions and a 'commitment to continue the faith into the next generation'.[66] To further the spiritual formation of their pupils (their 'special apostolate to the girlhood of Australia') the sisters introduced the sodality of the Children of Mary, which became so much part of the religious life of the schools and parish of Coonamble that Bishop Joseph Patrick Byrne commented that 'Coonamble must be looking up religiously when the Children of Mary have the courage to run the church bazaar. They deserve success. Bravo Children of Mary!'[67] Sodalities such as the Children of Mary, introduced into all Brigidine schools, did much to inculcate in Catholic girls and women a strong feeling of belonging not only to the parish but to an 'identifiable and respectable group' and, wearing their badges, rosettes or cloaks, they 'possessed a pride in their Catholicity'.[68]

However, not all parents were prepared to send their children to the convent school. For many, financial considerations overcame any episcopal threats. For example, in 1895 about forty children left the convent school for the public school although the convent school was, in the opinion of Bishop Byrne of Bathurst (Coonamble was reattached to Bathurst diocese in 1887), 'beyond the standard required and if it was not superior to the public school was certainly not inferior in secular teaching'.[69] The fall off

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[64] Government Schools of New South Wales from 1848 (http://www.governmentschools.det.nsw.edu.au/facts/division.shtm) (25 Jan. 2013); Peter Musgrave, 'Readers in Victoria, 1851–1895', *Paradigm*, 26 (Oct. 1998) (http://faculty.education.illinois.edu/westbury/paradigm/Musgrave.html) (25 Jan. 2013).
[65] Musgrave, 'Readers in Victoria, 1851–1895'.
[66] Geoffrey Sherington, 'Education' in *Dictionary of Sydney* (2008) (http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/education) (20 Mar. 2013).
[67] Monsignor Denis O'Haran's, *Reminiscences of the Brigidine nuns and education at the Golden Jubilee of Mother Stanislaus Hayden*, SAA; Bishop Byrne to Mother John Synan, Bathurst, 31 May 1898, BPA/NSW/ Correspondence with M.J. Synan/Box 11/Series 108.1.
[68] Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, i, p.202.
[69] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 20 Mar. 1895, BPA/NSW/ Correspondence with M.J. Synan/Box 11/Series 108.1.

in numbers was, the bishop suspected, due to lack of money—caused by drought and low prices for wool. The loss of the primary school children was compounded by the low numbers attending the boarding school.

From the outset the sisters received requests to take boarders from Catholic and Protestant parents. On 1 February 1884, when the sisters opened their boarding school, there were at least two Protestant girls among the seven boarders.[70] Brigidine school prospectuses drew attention to the fact that they were open to pupils of any denomination. (See Appendix 3) Fogarty points out that the presence of Protestant girls in Catholic schools during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was at a time when the convent high school constituted practically the only organized system of secondary education for girls that Australia possessed.[71] The 'accomplishments' taught by the nuns were the 'qualities' seen 'as essential to the gentlewomen of those days'.[72] Racial tolerance, however, was not a 'quality' considered essential by 'the gentlewomen' of Coonamble.

In 1888 when Mother John Synan was about to accept a Chinese child as a boarder, such was the 'unconquerable antipathy towards the Chinese' (second only to the Irish in forming a significant 'ethnic' group) that racial prejudice forced her to seek advice from Bishop Byrne. Australian national sentiment was then so obsessed by the 'Yellow peril' and rapidly evolving towards a 'White Australia' policy to such an extent that Cardinal Moran, who denounced the anti-Chinese legislation of the1880s and 1890s as unchristian was dubbed the 'Chow's Patron' by the right-wing literary magazine *The Bulletin* because of his liberality towards them.[73] Although believing 'Chinese children to be quite as good as any other children (not excluding even Irish children') Byrne advised her that, 'situated as she was', to put the school's interest and her own before the 'poor child's and not receive her'.[74] He judged that 'her presence would damn the school

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[70] Coonamble annals. The house cost £800 to build and accommodated twelve boarders with a schoolroom to suit both boarders and high school pupils.
[71] Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia,* i, p.348.
[72] M. Fintan Fennelly to Bishop James Murray, 8 Jan. 1883, MDA, E.2.2; BPA/NSW/Box 51/transcriptions; *Brigidine Sisters in Coonamble*, p.42.
[73] O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, pp 67 &174; Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Remembering Cardinal Moran (http://www.sydneycatholic.org/news/features/2011/2011816_234.shtml) (30 Jan.2013).
[74] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 28 Dec.1888, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series/108.1/File 5.

forever' but he thought that there could be 'no reasonable objection to the little one attending the day school'.[75]

Pupil school attendance was a mainstay of convent finances and when attendance was reduced by droughts and floods, outbreaks of typhoid fever and childhood illnesses, so too was their finance. Other times the sisters' illnesses affected the finances. For example, in 1885 when Mothers Stanislaus Hayden and Ignatius Fitzpatrick contracted typhoid fever, the sisters were forced to close the boarding and select schools for several months but they managed to keep the primary school open.[76] This was a considerable setback to the work of the schools and to the finances of the convent, but they did receive support 'from Catholics and non-Catholics'.[77]

One other mainstay of convent finances was music teaching. The quality of music teaching offered by Mother Ignatius Fitzpatrick attracted many pupils both school-going and externs for private tuition after school hours. As Josephite sister, Janice Tranter of Maitland diocese argues, the Catholic migrants of the east (Bathurst and Maitland dioceses) were not so poor that they could not afford to have music lessons for their children. Moreover, they expected music to be taught.[78] Individual pupils and choirs were presented for A.M.E.B. examinations to sixth grade as well as for Trinity College, London examinations.[79] In 1900 the annals claimed that the musical successes were phenomenal.[80] The significance of fees from music teaching could not be underestimated. It was, as Fogarty points out, a question of either keeping themselves by their music lessons or, as the nuns themselves put it, throwing themselves 'upon the kindness of the bishops in order to pay their way'.[81] Truly, as Brigidine experience shows, 'the foundation of a Catholic school in Australia was built upon the piano'.[82]

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Coonamble annals. The sisters contracted typhoid in February and the school was closed from 13 Mar. to 1 Jul. 1895.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Tranter, 'The Irish dimension of an Australian Religious Sisterhood:, p.241
[79] *Brigidine Sisters in Coonamble*, p.49.
[80] Coonamble annals.
[81] Catholic Education Association, Teachers Conference, 1911, p.45 in Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia,* i, p.445.
[82] A Vincentian priest quoted by Mother Brigid Kelly in her account (*c.*1924) of the foundation of Woodstock in Woodstock annals, BPA/NSW/Box78/Series114.3.3/1.

Where possible owning their own convent and schools was a policy the Brigidines held to in Australasia. In this way they were independent of the whims of parish priests who could, if the convent and school buildings were parish property, invite another congregation to replace the Brigidines if they grew tired of them. It was a threat used against the Brigidines in Ararat, Victoria and Masterton, New Zealand where the buildings were church property. Where the threat was carried out against other congregations, the Brigidines for example, took over from the Sisters of St Joseph in Cowra and the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Randwick, Sydney which created difficulties for them in each case.

The original pioneers were supplemented with sisters from Ireland. The first to arrive in September 1884 were 28-year-old Mother Alacoque Miller and 21-year-old Sister Patrick Phelan, a lay sister. They were accompanied on the voyage by Bishop Moran who was making his first voyage to Australia as Archbishop of Sydney. The two sisters would, in Mother Fintan's words, gladden the bishop's heart in that they would never admit that *they had half enough to do* and as to goodness she didn't think either would know *how to set about being bold.*[83] Both nuns in their own ways made outstanding contributions to the Brigidine congregation in Australasia. Two years later saw the arrival of Mothers Brigid Desmond and Aloysius Shanahan who, on entry, had offered themselves for the Australian mission.[84] Their arrival in Coonamble on 30 October 1886 brought the complement of nuns to ten. According to a Bathurst newspaper 'they would make a considerable addition to the teaching staff of the convent school'.[85]

In July 1891 three Brigidines came from Mountrath: Mothers Augustine Brennan, Francis Humphreys and Fintan Dunne and one from Tullow, Mother Benignus O'Leary. The latter, affectionately known as 'Mother Nig', taught in the primary school until her death in 1943.[86] They were followed two years later by Mothers Borgia Morrin and the 'delicate' Michael Synan. The latter, a cousin of Mother John's, was a gifted

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[83] Fennelly to Murray, Mountrath, 23 Jan.1884, MDA, E.2.7; BPA/NSW/Box 51/transcriptions.
[84] Mountrath annals.
[85] *Bathurst Free Press & Mining Journal*, 9 Nov. 1886.
[86] *Brigidine Sisters in Coonamble*, p.20.

musician and 'was absolutely needed to teach the violin'. Sister Benignus 'was beside herself with joy' to have the new sisters and the 'talk of Tullow'.[87]

Australian Entrants

Two lay sisters Sister Joseph Irwin and Sister Agnes Murphy were the first New South Wales Brigidine entrants. Johanna Irwin owned a millinery and dressmaking business in Maitland and had begged Bishop Murray to guide her to a religious congregation.[88] Ellen Murphy of Carcoar, 'a very eligible young person' was sent to them by Bishop Byrne who thought that not only would her appearance be in her favour but so also would her name.[89] After their six months trial as maids both received the postulant's cap on 15 August 1889 and on the same day Margaret Tobin from Larg, Maitland, another Murray recommendation, entered as a choir postulant. She brought with her a dowry of £100 and received the religious name Ligouri.[90] All three made their profession on 26 July 1892 before Bishop Byrne with Bishop Murray in attendance.[91]

That the three should bypass the larger novitiates in Maitland, Sydney and other large centres for the 'humble little cottage in the far north-west of New South Wales' was much appreciated by the convent community. It showed, according to the annalist, that the finger of God was pointing out their 'humble convent to the Australian-born as he had pointed out the manger to the Three Wise Men'.[92] Nevertheless, Coonamble's 'humble cottage', in reality little more than a wooden shack, could not have been an attractive prospect for Australian subjects. Between 1883 and 1901 when the novitiate moved to Randwick of the twelve subjects professed eight were Australian and four Irish and three of the Australians were lay sisters. In the following six years ten Australian subjects were professed in Randwick.

The Australian outreach to Coonamble proved to be a pivotal moment in the evolution of the Brigidine institute which, excepting the Roscrea foundation, had not established itself successfully outside the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin since its

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[87] Mother John Synan to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Coonamble, 3 Dec. 1893, BPA/NSW/Box51/TL.
[88] Coonamble annals.
[89] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 7 Mar. 1889, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/6c.
[90] Ibid. Coonamble annals; Barron, *Brigidines 1883–1986*.
[91] Coonamble annals.
[92] Ibid.

foundation in 1807. Coonamble's little band's spirit of adventure, mission and generosity became the exemplar for all those who followed and it also set down deep roots of Brigidine commitment to Australasia.

New Foundations – Cooma

Just four years after their arrival in Coonamble, the Brigidines' first affiliation in Cooma (it had no Catholic schools) gave Mother John the longed for entry into the archdiocese of Sydney—an entry that could only be had at the invitation of Cardinal Moran. Cooma's parish priest, Dean Slattery had built a substantial and imposing Gothic style stone convent (he was expecting the Sisters of Charity) at a cost of £5,000, towards which the people contributed £3,587'.[93] Situated in the centre of the town and close to the church, it was surrounded by several acres of land, and was a far cry from Coonamble's 'wooden hut'.[94] The invitation was made probably for three reasons: he knew from Bishop Murray that Mother John was 'desirous' of making a foundation in his diocese, he was urged by Mother John's nephew, Father Cornelius Conway, that Cooma's cool climate would be beneficial for the nuns (Conway had experienced the intolerable heat of Coonamble), and that the Brigidine system of free schools and fee-paying day and boarding schools would suit the needs of Cooma admirably. As there was no boarding school within 100 miles of Cooma, the cardinal expected that large numbers of Catholic farmers' children in the district would quickly fill the boarding school.[95] Despite only issuing the invitation in early November, the cardinal expected the nuns to be settled in Cooma by Christmas (Cooma was 600 miles from Coonamble) and to have the schools ready to open in January after the summer vacation.

Besides this stipulation there were other draw backs to the new venture. There was an outstanding debt of £2,000 on the convent. The cardinal's invitation had to be approved by Bishop Byrne who did so only on the condition that the sisters would not be held responsible for the debt. The debt was to be the responsibility of the dean and the community and, as a consequence, the people were not inclined to give any financial

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[93] Copy of the *Freeman's Journal,* 1889 in Cooma annals.
[94] *Australia Town and Country Journal*, 28 Dec 1889 (http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/result?q=New+convent+school+in+Cooma&s=20) (4 Feb. 2013).
[95] Byrne to D'Arcy, Bathurst, 4 Nov. 1887, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series 108.1.

assistance to the nuns. In time, however, the people proved to be somewhat generous.[96] Another drawback was that the cardinal's imposition of the Brigidines on Cooma was a source of much unhappiness to the dean and the people many of whom had never heard of the Brigidines and had expected the Sisters of Charity.[97] The cardinal, however, decided that the latter could not be spared from their work in Sydney.[98] To resolve matters the cardinal ordered that two sisters take immediate possession of the convent which they did on 21 December 1887 after a seven day journey from Coonamble. Mother John, ever the diplomat, perceiving the ill-will and also in deference to Dean Slattery's feelings, named the convent the 'Holy Cross', after the dean's home parish and not St Brigid's for which the cardinal had given permission. Due to the difficulties of bush travel the second party of sisters nearly met with a watery grave before they reached Cooma on 5 January 1888.[99]

The foundation sisters were 'four efficient' choir sisters and one lay sister (Mother Gertrude Banahan, who was appointed superior on the authority of the cardinal and not Mother John, and Mothers Ignatius Fitzpatrick, Stanislaus Hayden, Brigid Desmond and lay sister Patrick Phelan) the 'pick and choice of the nuns'.[100] The cardinal, however, did not think four sisters sufficient for the requirements of Cooma and suggested to Bishop Byrne that the whole Coonamble community should move to Cooma and that 'there would be work, room and support for all'. Possibly this was his intention in offering Cooma since he stated that the Brigidines could be easily replaced in Coonamble by the Sisters of St Joseph as they (the Josephites) could change to their other houses in times of great heat in Coonamble. [101]

This suggestion was not welcomed by Bishop Byrne since, in his estimation, the Josephites were not suitable and if the whole Brigidine community left Coonamble

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[96] Banahan to Murray, Cooma, 9 May 1889, MDA, E.2.41; Cooma annals; Because of a disagreement between the dean and his parishioners he threw the papers in the fire and took over the debt himself, Banahan to Murray, Cooma 9 May 1888, MDA, E.2.41.
[97] Cooma annals.
[98] Cardinal Moran to Mother John Synan, 2 Nov. 1887, BPA/NSW/TL.
[99] Cooma annals.
[100] Synan to Murray, Coonamble 12 Apr. & 16 Jun.1888, MDA, E.2.38 & E.2.42.
[101] Ibid., 12 Apr. 1888, E.2.38; Byrne to Synan, Orange, 2 Dec. 1887, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/file 5.

immediately 'it would do grave injury to religion'.[102] Mother John, however, had no intention of moving the whole community to Cooma even if Bishop Byrne had no objection to her doing so.[103] Her reason for not going was that the people of Coonamble had been very good to them and it would be treating them very badly to desert them so soon.[104]

The new foundation meant that help was urgently needed for the two convents. It was hoped that the noviceship of two Australian bound sisters could be expedited. However, as Bishop Lynch would not accede to the early professions, reinforcements did not arrive until the 29 November 1888. Murray paid their passages out to Australia and Mother Gertrude Banahan promised to pay him back the passage of one sister within a few months as, to do so immediately, would 'cripple them financially'.[105] The community was further enlarged with the entrance of Sara Lambert as a choir postulant on 18 December 1888. She was the convent's first Australian subject.

On 9 January 1888 the nuns opened three schools within the convent—the high school, St Thomas's primary school and the infant's school. Mother Gertrude was disappointed with the number of children (only sixty on the first day) as she hoped for large numbers to help pay off the debt incurred for furniture and improvements.[106] By April they had 140 pupils and all except ten were Catholic. By January 1889 she claimed that the school had a very good name and asked that Bishop Murray (when visiting Mountrath) to impress on Mother Fintan Fennelly that only well-educated novices be sent to Cooma. In the 'fight against their terrible enemy, the public school,' she feared that although the sisters 'worked like galley slaves if the name of the school once dropped they would never recover it'.[107] The boarding and select schools' curriculum appears to have been wider than that of Coonamble. Among the languages offered were English, French Latin, and Italian. Other subjects offered were arithmetic, algebra, geometry, history and geography, geology, use of the globes, book-keeping, music,

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[102] Byrne to Synan, Orange, 2 Dec. 1887, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/file 5; Synan to Murray, Coonamble, 12 Apr. 1888, MDA, E.2.38.
[103] Synan to Murray, Coonamble, 12 Apr. 1888, MDA, E.2.38.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Banahan to Murray, Cooma, 3 Apr. 1888, MDA, E.2.37; Murray to Synan, Maitland, 19 Jun. 1888, BPA/NSW/Box51/TL.
[106] Banahan to Murray, Cooma, 9 May & 23 Jul. 1888, MDA, E.2.41 & 45.
[107] Ibid.

singing and notation. To round out the curriculum, accomplishments such as drawing, painting (oil and water-colour), plain and ornamental needlework, fretwork, point lace, wax modelling, paper flowers, dancing and calisthenics were taught.[108]

As in Coonamble, their successes in the music examinations were founded on the work of Mother Ignatius Fitzpatrick. Music was not only a source of income but it was also a source of prestige for all convent schools in New South Wales as a reading of the results lists in the *Sydney Morning Herald* shows. Cooma convent was ahead of Coonamble in presenting students for the Junior university examinations (Sydney University) when, at their first attempt in September 1889, they had two successes, a boy and a girl. The boy, the first from a convent school on the university list, passed every subject. It was unusual for a convent to put a boy forward but Mother Gertrude and the nuns 'thought it well to give the boys a chance'.[109] Of the nine candidates presented for the Junior university examination in 1890, eight were successful.[110] The schools continued to flourish until affected by the severe droughts from 1894 to 1896 when there were no boarders. This placed the convent in considerable debt. It was not until March 1900 when, with an increase in pupils due to a couple of good seasons as well as the proceeds of a bazaar and art union, the nuns were able to pay off some of the convent's 'heavy debt'.[111]

The 1890s were made even more difficult as the sisters decided not to amalgamate with the other Irish and Australian convents in 1889 (amalgamation was necessary to gain papal approbation) preferring to remain autonomous and separate.[112] Mother Gertrude did not see amalgamation as a blessing rather she thought of it as lending itself to a 'great deal of discontent' and was 'happy to be away from the confusion'.[113] The secession was a serious worry to Mother John who feared she would lose her foothold in the archdiocese. When papal approbation was granted in 1892 Bishop Byrne believed that 'Cooma's charmed circle would not object or stand aloof any

[108] Convent advertisement in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 Jan. 1891.
[109] Banahan to Murray, Cooma, 13 Apr. 1890, MDA, E.2.52.
[110] Convent advertisement in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 Jan. 1891.
[111] Cooma annals; M. Hilary to Sr Patricia, 4 Oct. 1982, BPA/NSW/Box 26/Series 114.1/Item 3.
[112] Banahan to Murray, Cooma, 13 Apr. 1890, MDA, E.2.52.
[113] Ibid., n.d.

longer' however, he was proved wrong.[114] Father Thomas O'Farrell (who was well known to all the Brigidine convents through the retreats he gave) was also displeased that Mother Gertrude was 'holding herself aloof from the rest' but believed that 'time would show her mistake' and hoped her old reverend mother (Mother John) would 'be able to lead her back'.[115] One wonders if there was a hint of pride or ambition in Mother Gertrude Banahan from Bishop Byrne's observation that 'she will be like a little General Gertrude in the Sydney archdiocese, if she can succeed in getting sufficient numbers to keep up her staff'.[116] If she succeeded in doing so, the bishop recommended Mother John not to interfere with her.[117] Although he advised Mother John to write to Mother Gertrude as to what her intentions were, he counselled her 'not to hurry about Cooma or to worry over it; if she [Mother Gertrude Banahan] joined well and good; if not, she [Mother John] would have enough to care for without Cooma'.[118] Cooma remained autonomous until May 1894 when Mother John received permission from the cardinal to establish a novitiate in Sydney. In Bishop Byrne's words 'the good sisters of Cooma were not slow to see the necessity of returning to the fold and that Mother Gertrude did this gracefully before poor Mother John started for Europe'—a general chapter meeting in Tullow.[119] This episode points to the strength of character of Mother Gertrude described by her former Mother Superior Fintan Fennelly as 'a real Connaught ranger ready to set about clearing the bush if necessary' and may possibly be behind Mother John's decision to appoint her superior of a mission to Masterton, New Zealand.[120]

The request for a foundation was made by Father John McKenna in 1897.[121] It meant that besides Mother Gertrude the convent would lose four other sisters. Father Byrne, parish priest of Cooma, wrote to Cardinal Moran in June 1897 strongly deprecating the removal of Mother Gertrude.[122] He feared that her loss would spell

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[114] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 29 Jun. 1892, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/5.
[115] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Ararat, 27 Feb. 1893, DA/BC/BGA/392.04; Father O'Farrell to Mother John Synan, Ararat, 17 Oct. 1893, BPA/NSW/Box11/ Series108.1/Folder2.3
[116] Bishop Byrne to Mother Provincial John Synan, Bathurst, 4 Oct.1893, BPA/NSW/Box 11/Series 108.1/File 5.
[117] Ibid., 10 Oct. 1893, BPA/NSW/TL.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid., May 1894, DA/BC/BGA/374.201.
[120] Fennelly to Murray, Mountrath, 8 Jan. 1883, MDA, E.2.2; BPA/NSW/Box51/transcriptions.
[121] Cooma annals.
[122] Cardinal Patrick Moran to Mother John Synan, Sydney, 13 Jun. 1897, DA/BC/BGA/373.201.

'disaster if not absolute failure for the convent' and asked the cardinal to cancel or delay her removal.[123] His letter may have delayed the mission for little over a year as Mother Gertrude and her companions did not sail to New Zealand until 9 December 1898.[124] However, Father Byrne's fears were unfounded as the nuns continued their 'noble work with renewed courage'.[125]

Cowra Foundation – 'The Rich Brigidines'

Unlike the foundations in Coonamble and Cooma where there were no Catholic schools, the education of the Catholic children in Cowra, the Brigidines' first off-shoot in the Bathurst diocese, was well provided for by lay teachers who were guaranteed their salary by the parishioners. From 1879 Catholic education was given over to the Sisters of St Joseph (Josephites) whose apostolate was to the children of the poor who could not afford to remain at school beyond primary level.[126] However, by the 1890s both the priests and the more affluent members of the parish wanted more for the children than just a primary education. According to Josephite sister, Sister Maria Looney, the invitation to the Brigidines was made at the instigation of the Cowra priests who thought them more highly educated than the Australian Josephites.[127] Dr Maria Crowley states that there was a strong feeling among priests that congregations from Ireland were better in every way than the Josephites.[128] There is no stated reason for the 'recall' of the Josephites in June 1894 'to other missions' but the most probable reason was Cowra's need for secondary education. The changeover was facilitated by the Josephite rule 'to consider themselves the least among all religious orders [and] to give place and preference to the religious of every other order'.[129]

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[123] Father P. Byrne to Cardinal Moran, Cooma, 10 Jun. 1897, DA/BC/BGA/373.201.
[124] Masterton annals, DA/BC/BGA/523.008.
[125] Cowra annals.
[126] Timothy Reen, *Catholic Cowra: An Outline of its History, 1820–1939* (Cowra, 1939), p.24; Jan Cheevers, 'Catholic Education' in Joan Marriott (ed.), *Cowra on the Lachlan*, (Cowra, n.d.), pp 193-200, p.193; Naomi Turner, 'Our early history' in *Catholic Observer,* (Diocese of Bathurst), 23 Oct. 1994, p.8; Cowra annals. During her final illness Mother Aloysius Shanahan, founding superior of Cowra (1894–1921) had all correspondence etc destroyed. The annals as such were written in 1934 on the direction of Mother Provincial Claver Cooke and Superior Mother Cecilia Carey.
[127] Sister Maria Joseph Looney, *Memoirs* (c.1970s), emailed to me 18 Feb.2013 by Dr Maria Crowley, archivist of the sisters of St Joseph, Perthville, Australia.
[128] Dr Maria Crowley as stated in her email of 18 Feb. 2013.
[129] Turner, 'Our early history', p.8.

Bishop Byrne offered Cowra to Mother John in May 1893 even though 'the pastor of the place (Father Denis O'Kennedy) had asked for Mercies' but in Byrne's opinion 'the pastor did not know what was good for him'.[130] One serious problem facing Mother John was finding at least four 'highly efficient' teaching sisters and one lay sister.[131] Well qualified sisters were needed as the new select and boarding schools would be in competition for pupils with the nearby Dominican and Mercy convents and public schools of Bathurst. One of the sisters also had to be a 'proper' musician. The 27-year-old Mother Aloysius Shanahan, selected as superior by Mother John, was not only a 'proper' musician but also an 'educationalist of remarkable ability', a good writer who taught English, Latin, French and Euclid as well as music.[132] Also selected were Mothers Alacoque Miller (Mistress of Novices), Francis Humphreys (in charge of the primary school), Sister Catherine Bergin (lay-sister), white veiled novices Sisters Stanislaus Nolan and Brigid Kelly and a postulant Sister Marie Barry, later Mother Alphonsus.[133]

After a difficult and hazardous journey from Coonamble the foundation was begun in great poverty due in part to the ill-feeling towards 'the rich Brigidines' (as they were perceived) caused by the withdrawal of the Sisters of St Joseph.[134] As a consequence, the gifts so freely given to the Josephites were withheld from them.[135] A comment of one sister highlights the terms under which they worked: 'the priests were to retain control of the parish school while the nuns were to run the high and boarding schools as best they could'.[136]

For some months the nuns had a very lean time. To boost their income Mothers Aloysius and Alacoque made, exhibited, sold or raffled many pieces of embroidery as well as wax and paper flowers.[137] They often took first prize at the horticultural shows

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[130] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 9 May 1893, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/File5.
[131] Synan to Mother General Kelly, Coonamble, 3 Dec.1893, BPA/NSW/Box51/TL.
[132] Ibid.; Naomi Turner, 'Brigidines in Cowra 1894–1994', (15 Aug. 1994) , p. 3.
[133] Cooma annals.
[134] Memoirs of Mother Stanislaus Nolan, p.5. Found by author and Sister Maree Marsh in files in a disused room in Cowra old school in 2009. Written in 1930, it is more than probable the memoirs of Sister Stanislaus Nolan who spent all of her seventy-four years of religious life in Cowra and died 8 Feb. 1968 aged 99.
[135] Mother Stanislaus Nolan, Record of Cowra convent written between 24 May 1934 and 5 Jun. 1934, BPA/NSW/Box71/Series 114.3.2/Item 12/1.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.

for their much 'admired and envied' work.[138] Sister Francis's paintings also won many prizes at the shows. As well as earning a little money, being prize winners proved a great advertisement for the schools. Typing lessons given by Sister Brigid Kelly to the businessmen and bank clerks of Cowra, the wood carving classes of Sister Xavier Kenny, the needlework classes of Sister Alphonsus Barry (arranged so that the 'social ladies were in one and the less aristocratic in the other') and private tuition in music, all added to the income of the convent.[139] The sisters were also helped financially by their old Coonamble friends while Father Brennan, parish priest of Mountrath gave them a loan of £200 in 1894 which was repaid in 1898. It took time to overcome the hostilities and effect any real friendly feeling towards the nuns. The accounts for 1897 showed for the first time that they were in receipt of gifts of money that amounted to £4. 13*s*. 6*d*.[140]

Undaunted by their cold reception the nuns immediately placed an advertisement in the *Cowra Free Press* offering a course of secondary education. J.C. Ryall, claimed that with the advent of the 'talented and intellectual' Brigidines an era of success was inaugurated such that:

> The capabilities of the Sisters as teachers became so manifest that their powers were often taxed beyond endurance, but they nevertheless perseveringly continued at their post of duty and systematically provided for every contingency.[141]

Ryall, whose six boys attended the Brigidine schools, argued that it was through their high academic attainments and undoubted skill as teachers that they succeeded in raising their school to a high school status. Such high praise was well earned but was only attained through sheer hard work, often at great cost to the sisters and drew the comment from Mother Superior Aloysius that she 'really did not know how the poor nuns held out'.[142]

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[138] Memoirs of Mother Stanislaus Nolan, p.7.
[139] Ibid., p.4.
[140] Cowra receipts – Black book, BPA/NSW.
[141] J.C. Ryall, 'Cowra in Days Gone Bye', 5/ pp38-40 in Frank Murphy *My Early Pioneers and Their Lives* (http://www.frankmurray.com.au/?page_id=5404) (12 Feb. 2013); Nolan, Record of Cowra convent.
[142] Mother Aloysius Shanahan to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Cowra, 27 Oct.1907, DA/BC/BGA/391.01.

However, when the high school opened on the 10 July they had only one pupil, 'Matt' Walsh whose fees were £4. 4*s*. 0*d*.[143] She was also their first music pupil and 'though she was no way brilliant she was very acceptable for the funds of the convent were nil and pupils were slow to come'.[144] Mother Aloysius was known to attend every day at the primary school seeking high school and music pupils among the children of the well-to-do. The priests also 'left no stone unturned' to procure pupils and one, Father S.H. McGee, acknowledged the grit displayed by the nuns in their herculean efforts to have their schools second to none in the diocese.[145]

To make accommodation for the boarders Father O'Kennedy refurbished the old chapel and the nuns opened their boarding school in 1895.[146] As with the high school they had just one pupil, Grace Fox on opening day. Boarders were encouraged to come by Father P.J. Doran who often paid part or all of their pensions if the parents were not able to do so. This was especially so if he thought the pupils would benefit educationally or if he thought they might have a vocation.[147] Enrolment, however, was adversely affected by the countrywide depression but the progressive young community's high educational standards increasingly encouraged pupils to come to the high and boarding schools.[148]

The primary school, which opened school on 9 July 1894 with an attendance of sixty-one pupils, was held in the ironbark shed.[149] In his diocesan report of 1902 Inspector Brophy found that 'the school was very satisfactory, the teachers' interest very fine and the discipline very good'.[150] Their noted love of music was demonstrated in their purchase (though in straitened financial circumstances) of an organ for the primary

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[143] Cowra annals.
[144] Cowra notepad of Mother Stanislaus Nolan, p.1. Found by author and Sister Maree Marsh in files in a disused room in Cowra old school in 2009.
[145] Ibid., p.6.
[146] Reen, *Catholic Cowra*, p.41; Cheevers, 'Catholic Education', p.196.
[147] Cowra annals.
[148] Byrne to Shanahan, 20 Aug.1895.
[149] Turner, Brigidines in Cowra, p.4.
[150] Inspector Brophy, Report of Cowra School examined 16 &17 Sept. 1902, BPA/NSW/Box71/Series 114.3.2.

school to help with class singing, which in Brophy's report was 'unusually carefully taught'.[151] According to J.C. Ryall 'they shone out conspicuously as teachers of music'.

Much to her surprise Mother Francis Humphreys became the centre of controversy on the control of convents and schools in the diocese. When the Brigidines were asked by Cardinal Moran to run the Sacred Heart Primary school at Randwick in 1902 there was an urgent need for an experienced and professed sister to take charge. This was particularly so in the face of local hostility raised by the removal of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart who had been in the parish since 1894. Mother General Gertrude Kelly's choice was Mother Francis, 'the soul of Cowra school'.[152] Both Bishop Dunne and Father O'Kennedy objected strenuously to the transfer of the 'principal teaching sister' just as the 'school was getting a reputation for the sisters'.[153] Neither was consulted on the transfer, which came as a 'painful surprise' to the bishop.[154]

This proposed transfer raised the question of who had control of convents and schools, since for the Brigidines; amalgamation gave control to the mother general in Tullow. This left the bishops and priests, according to Bishop Dunne, at 'the mercy of one or two women, who could make what changes they pleased'.[155] Indeed, this instance shows, as Kehoe argues, that 'women with religious authority who demonstrated a willingness to use what independence they had to further their mission provoked intense anxiety among clerics'.[156] Dunne described the state of affairs between himself, O'Kennedy and Mother John as 'civil war' in which nothing was too hot or too heavy for the pastor and himself.[157] O'Kennedy threatened that if the bishop gave permission for Mother Francis to go to Randwick he would seek the removal of the Brigidines. Mother John capitulated and allowed Mother Francis to stay and 'Sister Patrick was

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[151] Ibid. Inspector Brophy, Report of Cowra School examined 16 &17 Sept. 1902, BPA/NSW/Box71/Series 114.3.2; Cowra Annals. The organ cost £16.13*s*.0*d*.
[152] Cowra annals; Bishop John Dunne to Father Denis O'Kennedy, Wellington, 12 Oct. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/373.201; Sister Aloysius Shanahan to Mother John Synan, Cowra, 15 Oct. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/391.01.
[153] Bishop John Dunne to Bishop Murray, Bathurst, 29 Dec. 1903, BPA/NSW/Box51/9.
[154] Dunne to O'Kennedy, Wellington, 12 Oct. 1903.
[155] Ibid. Dunne to O'Kennedy, Wellington, 12 Oct. 1903.
[156] Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church,* p.75.
[157] Dunne to Murray, 29 Dec. 1903.

loaned as a very poor substitute in her place'.[158] For twenty-four years and without missing a day, Mother Francis worked indefatigably to build up the reputation of St Raphael's primary school as one of the best schools in the state.[159] She was part of the nationalist Irish Humphreys family and was sister-in-law to the O'Rahilly—writing in 1903 on Home Rule she suggested that the Unionists should have their necks wrung long ago.[160]

Sister Stanislaus Nolan, who taught all her life in the infant school, began the kindergarten school with thirty 'babies', which quickly became eighty. Through lack of space she taught the 'lads' on the steps of the nuns' stairs, the upper step acting as a desk while written work was done.[161] She was also noted for her work in instructing converts and for teaching the catechism to the Aborigines of Erambie mission. Instruction took place at a wood-pile at the back of the convent since the Aboriginal people were not allowed to go near the front of the convent and had to sit at the back of the church.[162] Her work took place during what present day scholars see as the protection and segregation phase (1830–1940) of colonial responses to, and relations with Australia's Indigenous population.[163] Among the many she taught was the grandfather of the Aboriginal activist and social worker, Shirley Smith, better known as MumShirl who remembered Mother Stanislaus from her own girlhood as an 'old' but 'very wise old nun'. Mother Stanislaus' work with the Aboriginal people is all the more laudable given that Cowra was then, according to MumShirl, considered a very racist part of New South Wales.

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[158] Cowra annals.

[159] Ibid. Turner, Brigidines in Cowra, p.4.

[160] Mother Francis Humphreys (Nora) to Nell Humphreys, Cowra, 8 Nov. 1903, Sighle Humphrey's papers, IE UCDA p.106/435/(1).

[161] Cowra notepad, p.6.

[162] Sister Stanislaus Nolan, deceased members file, BPA/NSW/Series 401 Shirley Smith, *MumShirl an autobiography with the assistance of Bobbi Sykes* (Melbourne, 1981), BPA/NSW/Province Roll.

[163] T.A. O'Donoghue, 'Colonialism, education and social change in the British Empire: The cases of Australia, Papua New Guinea and Ireland' in *Paedagogica Historica* (Europe), 45; 6 (2009), 787–800. DOI:10.1080/00309230903335686 Tom O'Donoghue pp787–800. The three major phases were: protection and segregation (1830s–1940s); assimilation and integration (1950s–1972); and self-determination and self-management (1972–present). In 1909, New South Wales passed its first piece of legislation—Aborigines Protection Act (1909)—that dealt specifically with Aboriginal people. The act provided the Aborigines Protection Board, which had existed since 1881, with legal powers to provide for the protection and care of Aborigines. The act was repealed by the Aborigines Act 1969 in The Aborigines Protection Act, (http://www.findandconnect.gov.au/guide/ref/NE00010) (15 Feb.2014).

Cundletown (1899–1905)

This brief affiliation was made in response to the request of Cundletown's Catholics to Bishop Murray for Catholic education.[164] Cundletown, in the diocese of Maitland, was noted for its sectarianism and was, according to the *Freeman's Journal,* 'a most bigoted little spot' such that the coming of the nuns was 'openly and secretly opposed'.[165] For the Catholics of the area, the *Freeman's Journal* considered their arrival 'a notable event in the history of the diocese of Maitland as well as in that of Catholicity on the Manning'.[166]

The Brigidines were not Murray's first choice and possibly not even his second choice because of their rule of enclosure.[167] Had Mother John visited Cundletown beforehand (as she had wished but was advised by Bishop Byrne not to put Bishop Murray to the trouble of accompanying her due to his age and financial position) she would have understood the significance of the afterthought in Murray's letter of invitation that 'I forgot to mention that *for some time* your convent or rather residence at Cundletown will be some distance from the church' and would most probably have refused the foundation [Murray's emphasis].[168]

On 11 September 1899 Mother Superior de Sales Maher, one of the original Coonamble pioneers, and Sisters Ligouri Tobin, bursar, Borgia Morrin and lay sister Agnes Murphy left Coonamble for their new mission. The journey to Cundletown was a major undertaking: an exhausting coach journey to Bathurst, then by train to Sydney, a coastal sea voyage to the mouth of the Manning river before crossing its treacherous bar to reach Cundletown a few miles upstream where they were met on 21 September by what the *Freeman's Journal* called 'a numerous assemblage of townspeople and residents of surrounding districts'. Cundle House, 'a quaint looking pretty cottage' was their new 'convent' and was large enough to accommodate the sisters and a good

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[164] Bishop Murray, response to the address of welcome of R.J. Stapleton , *Freeman's Journal,* 23 Sept.1899, in Anita Murray, *Opening of Cundle Convent*, BPA/NSW/Series800/Cundletown.
[165] Ibid., 24 Nov. 1899.
[166] Ibid., 23 Sept. 1899.
[167] Bishop Murray to Cardinal Moran, Maitland, 21 Mar. 1899 in Garaty, *Providence Provides*, p.39.
[168] Murray to Synan, 19 Mar. 1899, Anita Murray, 'Brigidines in Cundletown, New South Wales' in *Brigidine Focus* (Dec. 2005), p.20.

number of boarders.[169] Leased at £30 per annum, it was also their home during the holiday period due to the difficulty and expense of returning to Coonamble.

The sisters opened the first Catholic primary school in Cundletown on 19 October 1899. Conditions were primitive. The school was an old produce shed with a boarded floor with a loft overhead from which wisps of straw blew down on the pupils.[170] The sisters also opened a select high and boarding school for girls as well as a boys' boarding school. Accomplished musicians and artists, the sisters were not long in breaking down local prejudice when parents of all denominations sent their children to be taught music and painting.[171]

By February 1900 the number of Catholic pupils that were withdrawn from the two public schools to go to the convent school had so depleted the rolls of both schools that there was some talk of reducing the classification of both.[172] For the Brigidines it meant an extension of the school buildings plus the building of a new dormitory for the boarders.[173] In its comment on the quality of a Brigidine education, the *Freeman's Journal* of December 1900 noted that through the 'nuns' tact and firmness' failure was an unknown quantity with the 'children of St Brigid'.[174]

Despite such a glowing testimony and the bursary and other prize winners among the boys and girls, the nuns found it difficult to keep pupil numbers up. In 1904 there were forty-seven primary school children on the rolls, the lowest since the school opened.[175] Such figures were not unusual at this period. Anita Murray argues that education was a luxury which many families could not afford as both boys and girls were needed at home to assist with the farm work. As a consequence, many children were given only a year or so of primary education, which left convent finances at a 'pretty low' ebb.[176] The notion that children left school as soon as they were of use at home or were able to earn a living reciprocates what happened in Ireland where David Fitzpatrick

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[169] *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Dec.1900.
[170] Sister Raymond White, *Cundle,* Archives Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar, NSW in BPA/NSW/Series 800/Cundleton.
[171] *Freeman's Journal,* 16 Dec.1900.
[172] Ibid., 24 Feb.1900.
[173] Ibid., 16 Dec.1900.
[174] *Freeman's Journal,* 16 Dec.1900.
[175] Mother de Sales to Bishop Murray, Cundleton, 17 Jul. 1904, BPA/NSW/Series 800/Cundletown. This letter was in the archives of the Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar.
[176] Ibid.

has shown how the variations in the levels of school participation can be explained by the extent to which children continued to participate in the labour market: schooling had a low value in regions where child labour could still be profitable.[177]

By May or June 1905 the decision was taken to leave Cundletown. Among the many factors contributing to this decision were: the shortage of pupils, isolation from other Brigidine communities, the loss of daily Mass and the distance to the chapel. In his reply to Mother John's letter seeking permission to withdraw from Cundletown, Bishop Murray stated that he was not 'at all surprised that her sisters should be anxious to leave and as far as he was concerned he would offer no opposition'.[178] They were replaced by Josephite sisters. Three of the departing group were founding members of communities in New Zealand while Sister Ligouri Tobin went to Randwick as superior to face the challenges of that young foundation.

Masterton, New Zealand

The request was made for a Brigidines foundation in Masterton, New Zealand by Father John McKenna, who had travelled with the sisters in 1883. One important reason for his request was the proposal that New Zealand's secular public elementary education established under the Education (or Bowen) Act of 1877 (education was free up to age 15 and compulsory to age 13 with an estimated 40 per cent attendance of Catholic children) be extended to post-primary education.[179] This became a reality in 1903 when, with the introduction of the Secondary Schools Act 1903, free secondary education became the norm. A Brigidine foundation would meet McKenna's needs by providing primary and fee-paying day and boarding schools. However, his introduction of religious into his primary school meant that the school's three lay teachers, Mr Dolan, head

[177] David Fitzpatrick, '" A share of the honeycomb": education, emigration and Irishwomen' in Dickson and Daly, *The Origins of Popular Literacy in Ireland,* p.172 quoted in Logan, 'The Dimensions of Gender in Nineteenth-Century Schooling, p. 40.
[178] Murray to Synan, Maitland, 13 Jun. 1905, BPA/NSW/6b.
[179] Herbert Roth. 'Hogben, George - Hogben, George', from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 30-Oct-2012 (www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/2h44/hogben-george) (4 Mar.2013); Akenson, *Half the World from Home*, p.179.

teacher and teaching in St Patrick's for six years, Miss Carrick teaching for eleven years and 18-year-old pupil teacher Miss Hourigan, all lost their positions.[180]

McKenna proposed to pay the sisters £1 per head for each child attending the primary school (on average 70 to 80) and he would pay all incidental expenses such as cleaning and firing.[181] His terms did not compare well with those paid by the education boards to the state schools where, in 1899, salaries for teachers in a school with an average of twenty pupils were between £70 and £115 and for a school with an average attendance of 100, salaries were between £160 and £225.[182]

The foundation pioneers in late 1898 were all Irish—Mothers Gertrude Banahan, Brigid Desmond, Joseph Flahavan and lay sister Sister Patrick Phelan all from Cooma convent and Mothers Teresa Flynn and Claver Cooke loaned from Coonamble convent. For Mother Gertrude, Masterton was 'an exercise of the virtue of fortitude to a heroic degree' in that, eleven years after she founded Cooma convent, this was her third foundation since leaving Ireland in 1883.[183] The new convent was opened and blessed on 12 February 1899 by Archbishop Redwood of Wellington. New Zealand became a separate ecclesiastical jurisdiction from New South Wales in 1887 but its Brigidine convents remained subsidiary to the Brigidine New South Wales province.

At the takeover by the Brigidines of St Patrick's primary school on 24 January 1899 the school had sixty-four pupils while St Bride's boarding and day school opened on 2 February 1899 with eleven students—the 'New Zealand Eleven' as they were known.[184] The skill and expertise of the sisters is highlighted by the fact that, within a few months of opening, the schools earned the 'highest commendations' from the government inspectors—the first time Catholic schools were examined by government inspectors. From the time of this inspection ('a new epoch in the annals of the Brigidine congregation under the Southern Cross') cordial relations existed between the inspectors and the nuns.[185] By year's end Sister Joseph's ability as music and singing teacher was

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[180] Helena M.Fouhy, *One Love Many Faces:Brigidines in New Zealand 1898–1998* (Masterton, N.Z., 1998), p.30.
[181] McKenna to Mother Gertrude Banahan, 31Mar. 1898, DA/BC/BGA/374.501.
[182] Report of the Royal Commission on the Staffs of Schools and Salaries of Public School Teachers, New Zealand, 1901 (www.atojs.natlib.govt.nz/teachers+salaries--) (5 May 2013).
[183] D. Vincent Twomey, *The End of Catholicism?* (Dublin, 2003), p.33.
[184] Fouhy, *One Love Many Faces*, p.37; Masterton annals, DA/BC/BGA/523.008.
[185] Masterton annals, DA/BC/BGA/523.008.

recognized by the state and the convent was given official recognition as a centre for Trinity College, London music examinations.[186] In July 1901 the teaching staff of St Patrick's was increased with the arrival from Ireland of Mothers Raphael Doyle and Michael O'Beirne and the school was extended by two classrooms.[187] In 1906 Mother Borgia Morrin, a Cundletown pioneer, joined the community.

The primary school curriculum was changed by the Education Act 1904. For Mother Gertrude, however, the new syllabus 'was just awful'.[188] She criticized the minister of education [R.J. Seddon] as 'a most illiterate man' and declared that 'whoever he got to draw up the new syllabus seems to have done it to make a great show of knowledge but inadvertently exhibited his want of judgement and we all have to pay for it'.[189] The nuns, however, adapted to the new syllabus. In September 1906 the school's 101 pupils were examined by Inspector Fleming. Ninety-one students passed giving a highly creditable success rate of 93 per cent.[190]

That same year the Brigidines made their second foundation at Pahiatua. This was at the request of Father John McKenna's brother, Father Tom McKenna, whose parishioners nearly 'all Irish' and 'of good Catholic stock' were, unlike Masterton, without a Catholic parish school.[191] Although Mother Gertrude acceded to the request, in her estimation Pahiatua 'was not very much in *itself* but as an outpost it was absolutely necessary for them not for its *present* worth but to save Masterton convent' [Mother Gertrude's emphasis].[192] Its importance was due to the fact that the convent got most of its boarders from that district. She worried that if they didn't take Pahiatua (Father Tom's preference was for the Brigidines but he was prepared to take any order so that his school would open in January) the Sisters of Mercy or the Sisters of St Joseph would get it and that these orders would either open a boarding school there or send all the children they would get to their headquarters in Wellington or Wanganui.[193]

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[186] Fouhy, *One Love Many Faces,* p.42.
[187] Ibid.; Masterton annals, DA/BC/BGA/523.008.
[188] Mother Gertrude Banahan to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Masterton, 5 Apr. 1904, DA/BC/BGA/383.01.
[189] Ibid. R.J. Seddon was Prime Minister and included education in his portfolio of ministries.
[190] *Wairarapa Daily Times*, 20 Sept.1909 (www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast) (11Mar. 2013.
[191] Vincent J. McGlone, *Fruits of Toil* (Carterton, N.Z. 1957), p.83.
[192] Banahan to Mother General Kelly, 5 Apr. 1904, DA/BC/BGA/383.01.
[193] Ibid.

Of the four founding sisters, three were Irish and one, Sister Margaret Mary Hourigan, was a New Zealander. The three Irish sisters were Mother Brigid Desmond, appointed superior from Masterton, Mother de Sales Maher and lay sister, Sister Alphonsus Burke, both Cundletown pioneers. The sisters lived in the presbytery vacated for them by Father McKenna until December 1912 when they moved into their new convent. The sisters opened St Anthony's, the first Catholic school in Pahiatua with fifty-one pupils on 6 February 1906 just eight days after their arrival. It was held in the rented 'dilapidated, uncomfortable and cramped' Church of England mission room as it was the only premises available.[194] Despite its inconvenience (it had only one room and a stage) by year's end the school's pupil numbers had increased to ninety-one and it was affecting pupil numbers at the local state schools. For twelve years and in all weathers the sisters walked the four blocks of rough road to their 'school' until a new school was built in 1918.

Following this foundation two more foundations were made—Foxton (1911) and Carterton (1917).

Finding a Place in Sydney

The Brigidines had proved themselves as educationalists in Cooma for seven years when Cardinal Moran offered Mother John an opening in Sydney in 1894. However, because of lack of funding (the home authorities would not advance her any money) they had to wait until 1901 for the cardinal to find another 'opening' for them—they could only enter Sydney with his permission. In 'making room' in Sydney for the Brigidines it was only because they were in a position to meet the cardinal's criterion that Brigidine schools would compete with the best of the public schools in the curriculum offered and through public examinations.[195]

The departure of the Loreto sisters left the rich suburb of Randwick without high school education for girls and, as the cardinal reminded Mother John, 'many others were sure to apply for Randwick' to replace the Loreto sisters—the Loreto sisters had to

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[194] Fouhy, *One Love Many Faces*, p.97.

[195] J.Tighe Ryan, *The Attitude of the Catholic Church. A special interview with his Eminence Cardinal Moran* (Sydney, 1894.), pp21-6 in Patrick O'Farrell, *Documents in Australian Catholic History,* ii (London, 1969), p.71; Randwick annals, BPA/NSW/Box 91/Series 114.3.15/Item 2.

vacate their rented premises, Aston Hall as they could not make the asking price for it when it was put up for auction by its owner Aston Watkins. It was sold to the Little Sisters of the Poor who opened a novitiate there.[196] Mother John opened a high school on 23 September 1901 just fifteen days after the Loreto sisters left Randwick highlighting for all her remarkable abilities and competence and that of the other sisters. The school held in Strathallen, a rented doctor's premises, had an enrolment of eight girls which quickly reached twenty-eight.[197] One nun recalled that, understandably, the people for the most part did not know they were there nor did they ever hear of the Brigidines.[198] It was an unsuitable premises for a school with a small strip of land in front and a small back yard where the washing had to be taken in before classes could begin.[199] It was so unsuitable that Cardinal Moran, despite their enclosure, encouraged the community to pray and to go out walking to look for a suitable site. On their walks they realized the great possibilities of the Daintry estate as a boarding school despite its unkempt appearance and extensive though overgrown grounds. In February 1903 the nuns moved to Daintry which was purchased for £5,400 and converted to a convent, novitiate and schools at a cost of £1,700.[200] Mother John received £300 from the mother general and a loan of £400 from the cardinal which brought her to £1,900 of the purchase money. The remainder was secured by mortgaging the property.[201] In Monsignor Haran's estimation only two schools, St Patrick's, Manly and the Sacred Heart Convent, Rose Bay, had more beautiful vistas than Daintry or Mount St Brigid as it became.[202] From its opening the school successfully competed with the 'great Sacred Hearts and Loretos' for pupils.

There are two contradictory accounts in the Randwick annals as to how the Brigidines took charge of the primary school. One account states that Mother John asked to have charge of the primary school. This was on the advice of 'leading ecclesiastics'

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[196] Cardinal Moran to Mother John Synan, Sydney, 24 Aug. 1901, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series 108.1/2; MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p.244.
[197] Randwick annals, BPA/NSW/Box 98/Series 114.3.16/11; Synan to Mother General, 14 Oct. 1901.
[198] Sister Patricia Whitby, *Stone Upon Stone, the Centenary of Brigidine Randwick, 1901–2001* (2001), p.5.
[199] Randwick Archives, BPA/NSW/Box 26/Series 114.1/Item 14.
[200] *Sydney Morning Herald,* 8 Dec. 1902(http://trove.nla.gov.au) (24 Feb. 2013).
[201] Mother John Synan to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Randwick, 14 Oct. 1901, BPA/NSW/Box26/Series 114.1/15;Crick, Crick & O'Carroll, Solictors to Cardinal Moran, 8 Jul.1902, Brigidine Correspondence, SAA.
[202] O'Haran, *Reminiscences of the Brigidine Nuns*, SAA.

for the following valid reasons: it would give the nuns a claim on the parish, they would get a great number of pupils from the primary school for their high school, and the junior sisters could be trained there for primary teaching.[203] The second account states that Cardinal Moran offered them the primary school but that Mother John was reluctant to take it. The offer to the Brigidines in September 1901, however, caused controversy in the parish with the parish priest Father Peter Treand pointing out to the cardinal that the removal of the sisters of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (an affiliation of his Missionaries of the Sacred Heart) from the school would be depriving the nuns and priests of income which they used to fund their missionary work on the South Sea Islands.[204] Although in the cardinal's words Treand had called on the Brigidines 'to enforce his views on them', Treand denied this and stated that he had only suggested that the Brigidine sisters confine their claim on the cardinal's kindness to the high school and novitiate.[205] However, although the cardinal put a stay on the changeover, whatever hope Treand had of changing the cardinal's mind was dashed when the cardinal received a petition from twenty-two parishioners. He regarded it as 'impertinent' and the work of 'the enemy who is trying to mix himself up in the present question'. On 13 January 1902 the Brigidines took charge of the primary school. They faced an uphill task in winning over the people and the priests. However, the cardinal 'had no doubt' that the opposition and humiliation was a sign 'that their work would succeed since the cross has touched it'.[206]

On the 7 July 1907, the laying of the foundation stone by Cardinal Moran for St Brigid's Centenary Hall, which included classrooms on the ground floor and dormitories upstairs, was the outward sign that the sisters had overcome their early difficulties. The cardinal donated a hundred guineas and Bishop Murray twenty-five guineas to the cost and the new hall was ready for occupation in 1908.[207] An essential aspect of the Brigidine Australian mission was the willingness of the sisters to go into debt to further enhance their schools.

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[203] Randwick annals.
[204] Fr Treand to Cardinal Moran, 17 Sept. 1901 quoted in J.F. McMahon, *Randwick Catholic Church Centenary 1885–1985* (Kensington, NSW, 1985), p.27; Synan to Mother General, 14 Oct.1901.
[205] Moran to Treand, 18 Sept. 1901 & Treand to Moran 20 Sept. 1901 quoted in McMahon, *Randwick Catholic Church*, p. 28.
[206] Randwick annals..
[207] *Sydney Morning Herald,* 8 May 1907 (http://trove.nla.gov.au) (24 Feb. 2013).

Mother John Synan

The success of the Brigidine institute in Australasia owes much to the leadership of Mother John Synan, described by Monsignor Denis O'Haran who knew her well as 'a brilliant if rough diamond but possessing a heart of gold'.[208] Daughter of John Synan, a grocer and draper and his wife Mary, nee Sullivan, she was born in Limerick on 26 January 1837. On completion of her schooling in Mountrath boarding school, she entered Mountrath convent and was professed in 1857.[209] In 1871 Mother John was appointed bursar by Bishop Lynch and re-elected 1874. After six years in office, in conformity with the rules, she was not eligible for re-election in 1877 and stood down. She was a member of the congregation for nearly thirty years when Bishop Lynch, knowing her financial and administrative capabilities and her 'combination of unalloyed sanctity and commonsense', selected the 46-year-old first among the volunteers for Coonamble and as their superior.[210] She has been described as 'a combination of Queen Victoria and the Little Flower since she was humble and brainy, gruff and kindly' and as 'strict, upright, blunt, yet with a warmth of personality'.[211] In the opinion of Mother Xavier Kenny, who travelled out to Australia with Mother John as a postulant in 1894, Mother John was warm-hearted, generous, cultured, witty and humorous and was loved by all from little children to great men. She claimed that 'she never saw such attention from one in high place to another in lowly as from Cardinal Moran with his Roman manners, attentive to her least want'—high praise indeed.[212] Bishops Murray, Byrne and Dunne's correspondence show the regard they had for Mother John. One bishop noted in his Coonamble visitation report that 'the community's wonderful spirit, warm-heartedness and happiness, was due to the leadership and great personality of the superior'.

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[208] O'Haran, *Reminiscences of the Brigidine Nuns*, SAA.
[209] Mountrath annals.
[210] Ibid.; Souvenir of Golden Jubilee of Brigidine Convent, Randwick, 1901-1951.
[211] O'Shea, *It Groweth Green Again*, n.p.; Zita Barron, *Brigidines 1883–1986* (Apr, 1987), DA/BC/BGA/621.03; Naomi Turner, 'Synan, Mary (1837–1915)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University (http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/synan-mary-8737/text15299) (4 Feb. 2013).
[212] Mother Xavier Kenny to Mother Cecilia, Cowra, (n.d.), BPA/NSW/TL

In an unusual comment, for she was still living (praise was normally given only in the obituary), one Victorian sister admired her courage and aptly summed her up as 'large hearted and strong minded', that she had the courage of her own convictions while at the same time she could yield her opinion where she saw it was for the general good—a pragmatism that stood her in good stead.[213]

Her capabilities were recognized when, in the wake of papal approbation of the amalgamated autonomous houses of the Brigidine congregation in Ireland and Australia, she was appointed first Australian provincial in 1893. The appointment of the provincial was a difficult task for the mother general and her council in Ireland. They received a warning from Mother Gertrude Kelly, Ararat as to the danger involved in appointing a sister from an Australian house.[214] She claimed that such an appointment would not succeed and that her opinion was in accord with that of Ararat Redemptorist priest and retreat giver, Thomas O'Farrell. As such, he knew his nuns. His advice was to select a home sister in whom the general council had confidence as Australian provincial who could then select her own assistant from the Australian houses. He recommended Mother John as the senior and most worthy member of the institute for the position of assistant, particularly as she knew the country and people well. If the council adopted this line he claimed there would be no petty jealousy between houses for the home sister would be independent of the Australian convents and would have no natural preferences. He suggested that this was the only way to bring harmony and avoid the failure which an Australian appointment as provincial would bring. A further bonus to this strategy would be the conciliation of the bishops not all of whom favoured amalgamation in particular, *Bishop James Moore of Ballarat who would not have a superior from another diocese* to govern in his diocese [Mother Gertrude's emphasis].[215] A month later mother general received a letter from Bishop Moore stating those exact sentiments and suggesting that Mother Bernard Hughes should be appointed provincial.[216] In 1888, Moore had met Mother Bernard on his visit to Abbeyleix convent where she was superior.[217] 'Remarkable' and 'talented', an able administrator and educationalist, she held several

[213] Mother Vincent Brennan to Mother General Kelly, Echuca, 13 Dec 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.08.
[214] Kelly to Kelly, Ararat, 27 Feb. 1893, DA/BC/BGA/392.04.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Bishop James Moore to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Ballarat, 14 Mar.1893, DA/BC/BGA/373.301.
[217] Abeyleix annals.

senior positions—twice as mistress of novices in Tullow convent, and superior of Mountrath and Paulstown convents before her appointment as superior of Abbeyleix.[218]

Nevertheless, Mother John's appointment was welcomed by the bishops and Father O'Farrell, the latter stating that he 'thanked God' when he heard of her appointment as he 'was very much afraid anyone else in Australia should be chosen'.[219] Her good friend and confidante Bishop Byrne of Bathurst was both glad and sorry on hearing the news of her appointment. She had his sympathy as he knew her 'cares would multiply manifold on her taking office' and that 'everything pertaining to its duties would be new not only to herself but to all'.[220] For that reason he advised her that 'it was her duty to display a masterly inactivity and hasten slowly, very slowly'.[221] Similar advice from Bishop James Murray of Maitland counselled her 'not to interfere much with the Victorian communities (established from 1886) but to be content to let well enough alone'.[222] Bishop Stephen Reville coadjutor of Sandhurst diocese, Victoria offered Mother John congratulations on behalf of Bishop Martin Crane and himself and enclosed £5 to help defray the expense of visiting Victoria.[223] Bishop James Moore of Ballarat, in sending his congratulations, was glad that the 'choice had fallen on one so well fitted for the position'.[224] She actively sought advice from experienced religious superiors of general congregations including from Mother Febronie Vereruysse, of the Religious of the Sacred Heart (this congregation had taken over the Brigidine convent, Roscrea in 1842).[225] In May 1895 her burden was eased somewhat on the division of Australia into two congregational provinces, New South Wales and Victoria. She was appointed provincial of the former while Mother Alacoque Bourke of Wangaratta

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[218] Obituary, Tullow annals.
[219] O'Farrell to Synan, 17 Oct. 1893, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/Folder2.3.
[220] Bishop Joseph P. Byrne to Mother John Synan, Bathurst, 4 Oct. 1893, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series 108.1/File 5. Both were in regular correspondence and the bishop's letters were homely and chatty often about the people of the diocese. They are full of friendly advice which she must have sought but unfortunately her letters to the bishop are not extant. When the author visited Bathurst diocesan archives in 2009 and especially in 2010 no relevant Brigidine material could be found.
[221] Byrne to Synan, 10 Oct. 1893, BPA/NSW/TL
[222] Byrne to Synan, 28 Oct.1893, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series 108.1/File 5.
[223] Bishop Stephen Reville to Mother John Synan, Sandhurst, 30 Sept. 1893, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series 108.1/File 5.
[224] Bishop James Moore to Mother John Synan, Ballarat, Apr. 1894, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series 108.1/File 6C.
[225] Mother Febronie Vereruysse to Mother John Synan, London, 3 Jul. 1894, BPA/NSW/Province Roll. The Sacred Heart nuns took over Roscrea as seen in chapter three.

convent was appointed provincial of the latter.[226] Mother John's stamina was said to be amazing to endure the hardships of bush travel, a constant factor in her life as provincial. She undertook lengthy sea voyages to and from Ireland in 1893 and in 1907 and across the Tasman Sea on her visitation of New Zealand in 1905.

She was not without her faults however. She showed her obstinacy, it could be considered nothing less, in the matter of her last voyage to Ireland in 1907. She was adamant that it was necessary for her to attend the general chapter in 1908 and particularly to find candidates for the Australian mission. She was, however, 70-years-old, with a heart condition made worse by being overweight—she was 'impossibly fat and heavy'. Her health was of such concern that the sisters believed 'the great heat of the Red Sea would end her days' and specially selected Mother Alacoque Miller as her travelling companion.[227] Alacoque Miller, in Coonamble since 1884, was also one of the great and influential Brigidine pioneers. She was held in great respect not only by Mother John but also by Cardinal Moran and Monsignor O'Haran.[228]

Although Mother John was not alone in her attitude (Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat convent for instance) an attitude that reflected the class divisions within the wider society of the period, her class-bias is apparent when in 1888 she deplored her inability to get a lay sister for Coonamble to provide her with an effective and cheap source of labour. She would, in fact, be worth the cost of bringing her out from Ireland.

Under Mother John's leadership the prestige of the congregation increased with the 'development of the high standard of education that characterized the Brigidine convents'.[229] The *Freemans' Journal* found it an intriguing but strange coincidence that wherever the Brigidines were established in the colony the name of the town began with the letter 'C': Coonamble, Cooma, Cowra and Cundletown.[230]

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[226] Mother Paul Barron, A survey of vicissitudes through which the Brigidine novitiate of the Victorian province of the institute in Australia accomplished God's designs from its earliest foundation in Victoria February 1886 to its permanent location and definite organisation at Malvern where since January 1917 the loving care of an All-Watchful providence has established it in ideal circumstances, (1935), DA/BC/BGA/702.

[227] Mother Alacoque Miller to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Randwick, 27 Apr. 1907, DA/BC/BGA/391.01.

[228] Mother John Synan to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Coonamble, 3 Dec. 1893, BPA/NSW/Box51/T.

[229] Souvenir of Golden Jubilee of Brigidine Convent, Randwick, 1901–51; Turner, 'Synan, Mary (1837–1915).

[230] *Freemans' Journal*, 24 Nov. 1900, BPA/NSW/Series 800/Cundletown.

This formidable, empathetic and pragmatic woman developed a good working relationship with her diocesan bishops and, notwithstanding, her frequent frustration with the home authorities over funding for city based general novitiates, found a middle way, albeit with some difficulty, between the constraints of the old monastic ways of the Irish convents to the different needs and customs of the more open and increasingly secular and democratic Australian society. She helped to forge a new identity for the Brigidines in their new home 'at the end of the world', which in time changed the diocesan bound institute to one of centralized government with its own mother general.[231]

Conclusion

The Brigidine sisters, through their schools, helped shape New South Wales' Catholicism and the Catholicism of the Wairarapa district of New Zealand. At Mother Stanislaus Hayden's golden jubilee, Monsignor O'Haran of Sydney spoke of the singular blessing conferred on the Australian church through the heroism by which the nuns fulfilled their apostolate of education.[232] But this 'blessing' came at a cost. In answering this call for help, Fraser contends, that 'sisters in the late nineteenth century and throughout more than half of the twentieth century conceded too readily their independence, under pressure from an education system which saw them primarily as expendable for the sake of the kingdom'.[233]

In expending themselves for the sake of the kingdom many of the sisters suffered considerable loneliness. One newly arrived young sister in Coonamble in acknowledging her loneliness declared 'I gave up my home and homeland for Christ, and I never want to take them back'.[234] Mother Gertrude, who faced the challenge of three foundations, wrote resignedly of the loneliness and isolation of the Masterton community without a house of their order 'nearer than 1,332 miles':

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[231] Archbishop Vaughan, *A Suggestion for Lent*, 1881 (Pastoral), pp 5-6 in O'Farrell, ed., *Documents in Australian Catholic History*, i, p.426.
[232] O'Haran, *Reminiscences of the Brigidine Nuns*, SAA.
[233] Fraser, A comparison of spiritualities, p.13.
[234] Fouhy, *One Love Many Faces*, p.32.

> No one but those who have gone through the worries and troubles of a new establishment understand *all* it means. I have been through the mill three times and ought to have a little experience. I pity those concerned in such a thing from my heart but if we expect to do any good we must be ready to meet what leads to it.[235]

Although the foundation of new houses put considerable strain on the personnel involved, it also put a strain on the personnel in the Irish houses to maintain staff in their schools. However, this did not prevent them, as is discussed in the next chapter, sending foundations to Victoria where they played a significant role in the small rural towns in the Church's battle against free, secular and public education introduced under Victoria's Education Act 1872.

[235] Mother Gertrude Banahan to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Masterton, 5 Apr. 1904, DA/BC/BGA/383.01.

CHAPTER 6

1886–1907

VICTORIA

As in New South Wales the Brigidine institute responded to the request for religious congregations to counter the 'godless' secular education introduced under the Education Act 1872. But, whereas the Brigidine foundations in New South Wales were daughter houses of the first Brigidine house at Coonamble, the first four Victorian houses were separate foundations from Ireland: Tullow – Echuca (1886); Abbeyleix – Beechworth (1886); Goresbridge – Wangaratta (1887); Abbeyleix and Goresbridge – Ararat (1888).



Echuca

During a meeting in Rome in 1885 Bishops Crane and Lynch agreed to the founding of two convents in Echuca and Beechworth in Crane's Sandhurst diocese. It was also agreed that both groups of nuns would travel together to Australia. The Mountrath Brigidines had first received the invitation from Bishop Crane in 1884 but due to Mountrath's other commitments, Bishop Lynch decided that Tullow would make the foundation to Echuca instead while the Abbeyleix nuns would go to Beechworth.[1] The Brigidines were thus the second religious congregation in the diocese of Sandhurst after the Mercy sisters (1876).[2]

Bishop Lynch chose the following nuns from those who volunteered: Mother Borgia Hayden aged 40, appointed superior and Mothers Benedict Moore, aged 38, Thomas Healy, aged 26 and Vincent Brennan, aged 25.[3] Mother Borgia was following in the footsteps of her younger sister, Mother Stanislaus Hayden, one of the Coonamble pioneers. There was no lay sister among the four. It may have been thought that domestic help was readily available in Echuca. The first lay sister, Sister Monica Burke, entered in 1890.

Mother Vincent Brennan recorded the conditions on which the nuns came to Echuca. Bishop Crane was to pay the travelling expenses from London to Echuca and the convent was to be presented to the nuns fully furnished and free of debt—this was Apsley House or Number One, Echuca the former home of Henry Hopwood, founder of Echuca. It was purchased by James J. McGillicuddy, parish priest of Echuca, four years before their arrival to serve as a convent as he wanted religious to run the parish school. The clergy were to be responsible for the support of the community and to collect the school salary (not stated) for the nuns. When the nuns took up residence a debt of £700 was cleared by collections among the people and help from Bishop Reville.[4]

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[1] Mountrath annals.
[2] The arrival & departure of the religious orders in the diocese, (www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/index.php/a-short-history12/a-short-history) (26 Mar.2013).
[3] Tullow and Echuca annals.
[4] Echuca annals.

On their arrival in Echuca on 27 February 1886 the sisters were given an enthusiastic welcome by the mayor and a crowd of over 500 people.[5] With a population of almost 5,000, the town was far superior to Coonamble as it had a good water supply and gas for street and house lighting. Nine days later Mothers Benedict and Thomas commenced teaching the girls and infant boys in one side aisle of the church while the primary school teacher A.R. Larkin kept charge of the older boys in the other side aisle.

On 22 March 1886 the nuns opened St Joseph's high school in the convent parlour with eight pupils. By the end of the year some thirty pupils were attending. The stables of Apsley house were converted that same year for use as a high school at a cost of £125 paid for by Bishop Crane. As with other Brigidine high schools boys were accepted. Two months later the boarding school took in its first boarder (Katie Scott from Rochester) but within a week she was joined by five other students. The school was the only boarding school for hundreds of miles in the greater part of the Riverina district of New South Wales north and west of Echuca.[6] The *Kyabram Union* was sure that, in such a wealthy district, the parents could easily pay the small sum of £30 for the 'priceless jewel of education'.[7]

When the parish was handed over to the Augustinians in 1887 Prior Coleman built St Mary's Primary School and within a year the school had 140 pupils. On the 1 May 1889 the nuns also took charge of the boys' school which was part of St Mary's and had an average attendance of about forty boys.[8] St Mary's school was, however, a mile from the convent making it impossible for the nuns to maintain enclosure. The problem of enclosure and of daily travel was solved when at the instigation of Bishop Reville the nuns were presented with a carriage by the people 'to retain the sisters' health'.[9] Because of its distance from the convent, St Mary's came to be seen as 'a great drag' and 'drawback' on the community however, there were no sites available close to the school where the sisters could live.

What was held beyond doubt by the nuns was that children bring more to their home by the refinement and sound religious training they received in their first class

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[5] *The Mercury,* 3 Mar.1886 (www.trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/9118443?) (2 Mar. 2013).
[6] Undated Echuca School prospectus.
[7] *Kyabram Union*, 6 May 1892 (http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/result?) (1 Apr. 2013).
[8] *The Advocate*, 15 Sept. 1888, Melbourne State Library, 2010.
[9] *The Mercury,* 3 Mar.1886; Echuca annals.

boarding and high schools.[10] It was the province of the school therefore to form, not only the scholar, but the lady and the *Christian* [emphasis in prospectus]. To uphold their laudatory claims for the school, the Echuca nuns' emphasized the building of a suitable environment for the students. This meant that in their first thirteen years in Echuca the nuns expended an extraordinary sum of £10,413. After converting the stables to a high school, under the direction of Prior Coleman, a convent wing was added at a cost of £2,635. 19*s.* 0*d.* The money was made up of a loan of £1,021 received from Bishop Crane and dower money of £1,045. A kitchen and cellar were added at the cost £576. In 1892 a strip of land adjoining the convent was purchased for £150 and paid for by the convent. Two years later a school wing, classroom and hall were added at a cost of £2,886. In 1899 a chapel was built for £2,326. 1*s.* 2*d.* again using dower money amounting to £1,680 and the money from a bazaar and art union which raised £839. 12*s.* 5*d.* In 1899 renovations to their residence cost £1,100. This was paid for by a bazaar and queen competitions.[11] No further building was carried out until 1917.

The striking thing about this early expenditure was the use of dower money. Canon law strictly regulated the use of this money since the dower was to be available if ever the nun left the convent. The capital sum could not be touched until after the nun's death. The dower money was invested and its interest went towards the nun's maintenance. Only with a bishop's permission and his agreement to take responsibility from the mother superior, could the dower be touched. In the Echuca building projects Bishop Crane's signature appears on the financial statements.[12] The explanation for the apparent ease with which the Echuca nuns were allowed to take on building projects is seen in the answer Mother Provincial Alacoque Bourke gave to her mother general in 1901 when she declared that Bishop Crane, as a bishop in a missionary country, had many privileges and that he believed that the safest way to invest the dower money was in buildings.[13]

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[10] See discussion below on Ararat convent.

[11] Echuca annals. Monies received included two donations each of £229.13*s.* 6*d.* & £130; a legacy of £88; sports day £216. 6*s.* 0*d.*

[12] Jan Penney, (ed.) *Number One Echuca:St Joseph's College Centenary History, 1886–1986* (Vermont, 1986), p.20.

[13] Mother Provincial Alacoque to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Echuca, 8 Apr. 1901, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.

Convent finances were also helped by the fees from the private tuition of extern students—at year's end (1886) thirty extern pupils were attending for music, singing and needlework among other subjects. Mothers Borgia Hayden and Thomas Healy taught music and singing and the latter was described as 'famous for her cultural achievements in music and languages', skills that were so necessary in the educational milieu of the period. As with the other Brigidine convents this was the beginning of a tradition of excellent results in the Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College, London music examinations.

The convent at Echuca did not escape from the affects of tuberculosis, which in the late nineteenth century was the leading cause of death in Australia—20 times deadlier per capita than all cancer conditions of today put together.[14] A 'desolate and heartbroken' community lost their mother superior, Mother Borgia Hayden to 'lung disease' on 4 March 1890.[15] Fear of this 'wasting disease' was such that on the entry of Agnes Callanan (Mother Fidelis) into the convent on 24 April 1895 her father, the Surveyor–General of Melbourne, rented a holiday home at the beach at Black Rock to give them respite from the nearby tuberculosis sanatorium, which was seen by a public councillor as 'undesirable and a menace to the public health'.[16] Most of the deaths of seven young nuns between 1900 and 1907 were due to tuberculosis. Mother Margaret Mary Bourke, niece of Mother Provincial Alacoque, argues that it was the availability of the nuns to the needs of the town that resulted in the contraction by some of tuberculosis, since the local hospital patients were using their chapel.[17]

Notwithstanding this disadvantage, the Echuca Brigidines under the direction of Mother Benedict Moore attracted many postulants to their institution. Two of the early entrants were Gertrude Chalk (Mother Josephine) from Ballarat, who entered four months after the foundation and Catherine O'Keane (Mother Stanislaus), just eight months later on Christmas day. The 'Australianization', as Sturrock puts it, of the Victorian province had begun. In 1896 Echuca became the central novitiate for Victoria

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[14] Professor Warwick Britton, *TB in Australia* (http://www.centenary.org.au/p/ourresearch/infectious/tuberculosis/TB_in_Australia/) (29 Mar. 2013).
[15] *Australian Town and Country Journal,* 8 Mar. 1890. (http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/65708213?search) (2 Apr. 2013).
[16] *The Argus*, 25 Feb. 1896 (http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/8892503?searchTerm=&searchLimits=l-publictag=Cobden) (29 Mar. 2013).
[17] Sister Margaret Mary Bourke, in O'Riordan, *Pathfinders: The Tullow Story*, p.51.

and Mother Alacoque Bourke the new Victorian mother provincial took up residence in the convent on 21 November 1896 bringing with her two postulants and a lay novice from the former short-lived Rochester central novitiate. From the outset (there was no specific professional teacher training required) Irish sisters were considered trained and experienced teachers and able to train the younger sisters. However, Mother Benedict Moore ensured the high standard of her schools by sending Australian born sisters for teacher training at the Loreto Teacher Training College in Ballarat.[18] While no Brigidine sister had a tertiary education, once Archbishop Carr established the Central Catholic Training College in Albert Park, Melbourne in 1906 at least six Brigidine sisters attended for training.[19] Of the fifty-nine women who entered Echuca convent between the years 1886 and 1906 only four (after the pioneers) came from Ireland. These were Mother Berchmans Foley (1891), Sister Patrick Foley (1891) and the two nieces of Mother Benedict Moore, Mothers Ursula Gaynor (1894) and Gertrude Moore (1897).[20]

Mother Margaret Mary Bourke summed up the mission to Echuca; her words are apt for all Australian foundations:

> The first sisters arrived, not just for the Catholics of the area, but for the whole town and district. Their literacy and cultural classes were offered to all. Workers came from the farms in the evenings. Town women trained in sewing classes. Lecturers from Melbourne used their hall. Girls and young women came to board.[21]

Beechworth

Beechworth was the first of the gold rush towns in which the Brigidines made a foundation. Because of the numerous Irish among the prospectors such towns had a tradition of establishing Catholic schools. Beechworth's Catholic parish school, St

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[18] Sisters to receive their training in the Loreto Training College were: Stanislaus O'Keane, Ignatius Harkin, Philomena Maher, Xavier Cantwell, Alacoque Griffin, Imelda Hynes, Aloysius and Borgia Harty, Agnes O' Keane in Morna Sturrock, *Women of Strength Women of Gentleness* (Melbourne, 1995), p. 60.
[19] The sisters were: Ligouri Quinn, Columba Clancy, Dara Whiting, Dominica Reidy, Marie Therese O'Sullivan and Clement Matthiesson, in Sturrock, *Women of Strength Women of Gentleness*, p. 62.
[20] Mother Berchmans (Elizabeth) Foley from Charleville, Co. Cork who entered of 28 May 1891; Sister Kate Foley (Patrick) from Waterford who entered on 26 Apr. 1891;Mother Ursula Gaynor (Bridie) from Tullow who entered on 8 Sept. 1894; Mother Gertrude Moore (Bridie) also from Tullow who entered on 17 Jun. 1897. Both cousins came to Echuca aged 15 and spent several years in the boarding school before entering.
[21] Mother Margaret Mary Bourke, in O'Riordan, *Pathfinders: The Tullow Story*, p.51.

Joseph's was established in 1859, however, by the time of the Brigidine foundation in 1886 the majority of the children were attending the free public school. The loss of Catholic children from St Joseph's was of serious concern to Dean William Tierney. One of Tierney's parishioners, Doctor Martin Cleary (whose sister, Mother Clare was a Brigidine nun in Mountrath) suggested the possibility of a Brigidine foundation which was agreed to by the two bishops in Rome.

However the foundation was delayed for some months as Tierney stated that besides teaching in St Joseph's he expected the nuns to pay pastoral visits to Beechworth's hospital, gaol and benevolent asylum. Such conditions were outside the scope of the Brigidine apostolate as an enclosed congregation. Following negotiations between Bishops Lynch and Crane and Tierney it was agreed that Tierney would: pay the passage of the four sisters, transfer ownership of the house and grounds he had purchased to them, furnish their convent and give them a fund to begin with and require them to teach the select and primary schools and giving up his requests for visitations.[22] The following sisters were chosen for the foundation: Mother Vincent Cummins (superior) who was a proven able administrator, Mother Stanislaus Nolan (assistant and novice mistress), only appointed superior of Abbeyleix in December 1885 and previous to that novice mistress and two newly professed sisters, Borgia Walsh and Thomas Kerr.[23] In 1892 the latter was joined by her sister Mother Bertrand Kerr, a first class linguist and accomplished on the harp, organ and violin, as well as in painting and modelling while Mother Stainslaus Nolan was joined by her niece postulant Helena Conlon (Mother Alphonsus), an accomplished musician on zither, violin and piano. [24] The nine month delay meant that the Echuca sisters had already left for Australia. The sisters arrived in Beechworth on 27 November 1886 and were met by Dean Tierney and a large number of the parishioners.

Unlike the successful relationship between the Echuca nuns and the Augustinian priests the relationship of the Beechworth nuns with their secular parish priest over financial matters was initially difficult. The nuns were shocked to discover that their promised 'furnished convent' was the failed Oriental Bank building and comprised of

[22] Beechworth annals. DA/BC/BGA/521.013.
[23] Abbeyleix annals, DA/BC/AIr/18.
[24] Beechworth annals, BPA/Vic/Box507A.

only four beds, two chairs and one table.[25] Their shock was compounded when Tierney asked them to pay him £1,000 before he would hand over the deeds contrary to what was agreed. This placed the community in a bind since they had no money to return to Ireland and in staying they took on a debt of £1,000. They had only brought £46 with them.[26] Adding further to their difficulties, the convent was at some distance from the primary school and the church, which meant that the nuns could not keep the rule of enclosure. Their position was most unsatisfactory. Tierney partially redeemed himself when he gave the nuns the small sum of £20 to buy furniture and £73. 14*s.* 0*d.* as a loan to start a bank account. He also lent them the school piano. The nuns also bought another two pianos (the fees from tuition were necessary to supplement their income), one on three month's credit for £75 and the other for £30, plus a sewing machine for £10 which were to be paid for by the bazaar committee.

Sisters Borgia and Thomas took full possession of the primary school on 17 January 1887. It is probable that the £10 the sisters received in December from the church committee was their salary for teaching in the primary school.[27] The nuns opened their boarding and select day convent school (vital for convent finance) on 2 February 1887 but not without a colossal effort as the building had to be remodelled before desks and school equipment could be installed.[28]. There were several boys among the first pupils of the select school and Ada Cummins, Mother Vincent's niece, was the first boarding school pupil. Her father gave them a gift of £7 which was used to purchase a cow.[29] Numbers quickly increased in both the select and boarding schools and an appeal was made to the Loreto sisters in Ballarat for an extra teacher who came in October. Singing and day pupils earned the convent £132. 8*s.* 0*d.* by year's end.[30] At Christmas the nuns were able to hold the traditional Brigidine Christmas concert and distribution of prizes. Considering their ongoing difficulties, particularly financial, this was a remarkable achievement for the small community. This was publically recognized in his 'unbiased opinion' as a 'Dutchman' by Father Van der Hayden in a lengthy letter to the

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[25] The failed Oriental Bank was worth £8,000 but Dean Tierney purchased it for £1,000.
[26] Beechworth Accounts, BPA/Vic/Box 507.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid. A bazaar held in March raised £170 and helped defray the cost of refurbishment.
[29] Beechworth annals in Riordan, *Pathfinders the Abbeyleix Story*, iii, p.63.
[30] Beechworth accounts, BPA/Vic/Box 507.

Advocate newspaper.[31] The annual concerts and prize giving were reviewed in glowing terms in the local newspapers.

The question of enclosure remained critical and Mother Vincent was advised by Dr James Dunne (later Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes) not to spend any more money on the convent but instead to look out for somewhere more suitable and closer to the church.[32] The situation was resolved when they purchased a cottage with land adjoining the church. Mother Vincent showed her resourcefulness and ingenuity in the purchase of the property as the owner, a Mr Kyle, would not sell to the nuns and the dean had to be convinced of the need for the move. Accordingly, Mother Vincent arranged with her nephew, Frank McCarthy, a barrister in Sydney, to negotiate with the owner to purchase the property. Throughout the negotiations Mother Vincent mistakenly believed that the dean would pay for the cottage and land in exchange for the return of the convent. By August and with the contract signed the dean refused to help and insisted that Mother Vincent call a public meeting at which the nuns were to attend. Mother Vincent (who had never spoken in public) realized that she could not show the 'white feather' and clarified the necessity for enclosure and for £500 as a down payment on the property or £700 the full price to ensure they could keep enclosure. Mother Vincent reassured the audience that the poor man's penny was equally as welcome as the rich man's cheque and hoped that no one would be ashamed to give the widow's mite. The audience must have been sympathetic to the embarrassing position in which the dean placed the nuns as the committee formed under Dr Cleary, managed to raise £150 with the promise of more. A subscription list was opened in the *Advocate* newspaper and collectors appointed for outlying areas.[33] The dean in fact led the list of subscribers with £500 and Dr Cleary came next with £100. The subscriptions and a bazaar amounted to £770. 11*s.* 5*d.* and the cottage was purchased.

On 5 March 1888 a contract was signed for a three storey brick building at the cost of £3,168. 11*s.* 5*d.* Mother Vincent's only asset at the time was £1 so she borrowed the money from the bank. It says much for her faith in St Joseph, courage, business acumen and her trust in the generosity of the people of Beechworth that she would

[31] *Advocate* 31 Dec.1887, p.9, Melbourne State Library, 2010.
[32] Beechworth annals, BPA/Vic/Box507A.
[33] Ibid.

attempt such a venture. On 16 December 1888 the new building was solemnly blessed and with a floor space of 30,000 square feet, it held a commanding position in one of the most beautiful areas of Beechworth. Between 1888 and 1893 Bishop Crane gave £2,398. As in Echuca dower money was also used for building purposes. The accounts for 1894 carried the brief reference: 'credit balance £178.1*s.* 9*d.* — first since started'.[34] In 1895 when her term of office expired, Mother Vincent 'gave up her accounts free of debt'.[35]

On the death of Dean Tierney on 2 November 1891 and despite their early difficulties with him, Mother Vincent acknowledged that the dean was:

> a genuinely kind friend and father to the sisters. [...] He never interfered with their schools, primary or select. No-one dare say anything unkind about the sisters in his presence. His buggy was a familiar sight [...] bringing fruit and vegetables from the country to the sisters.[36]

The dean left an estate valued at £12,671.[37] Although Sturrock says the convent did not benefit from his will, Mal Nolan of the Sandhurst Diocesan Historical Commission states that the Beechworth convent and school benefited to the extent of about £2,000.[38] The convent accounts for 1902 state that they received £1,000 from Tierney's estate. The difference is possibly accounted for by the fact that they had to pay the dean's sister three per cent annually of £1,000 but on her death they had no further obligation.[39]

Dean Tierney's successor, the Archpriest Father Kennedy, was difficult and unco-operative in money matters so much so that Mother Provincial Alacoque Bourke wrote and spoke with Bishop Reville on the matter and was obliged to bring the matter to the attention of the mother general.[40] The sisters only received about £40 per annum for the primary school from Kennedy and he did not make any collections for them. In his view the Brigidines would be much more useful as a visiting order to the hospitals and poor—a use which many of the Australian based sisters agreed with but which

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[34] Beechworth Accounts, BPA/Vic/Box507.
[35] Beechworth annals, BPA/Vic/Box507A.
[36] Sturrock, *Women of Strength Women of Gentleness*, p.26.
[37] Mal Nolan, 'Fr William Tierney – Pioneer of the North-East', (http://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/index.php/a-short-history12/from-the-archives/item/641-fr-william-tierney-pioneer-of-the-north-east) (10 Apr. 2013).
[38] Sturrock, *Women of Strength Women of Gentleness*, p.26.
[39] Beechworth Accounts, BPA/Vic/Box507.
[40] Thelma Murtagh, *Brigidine History Victorian Province 19th Century, 1886–1900* (n.p., 1985), p.13.

mother general would not sanction.[41] The bishop did nothing for the nuns as he 'did not like to interfere with Father Kennedy', however, as a consequence, 'the poor nuns suffered' for fourteen years until his death in 1905.[42] It must have been grim for the nuns as they left a record with some coins in a time capsule (recovered many years later) which was placed in a cavity behind the foundation stone of an extension to the convent.[43] It tersely stated: 'Father Kennedy was parish priest. He never helped the nuns in any way from the time he came to the parish he consistently worried them'. This recognition of his unkindness was unusual as the priests, whether they were or were not kind, were always remembered for their 'holiness', as 'a truly kind father', a 'good pastor'.

Beechworth convent flourished with five postulants entering before Echuca became the general novitiate. To aid in the religious formation of the younger children, they were admitted to the Sodality of the Holy Angels and the Dean Gaffney gold medal was awarded for fidelity to school rules. In 1888 the Sodality of the Children of Mary was established for the boarding school and extern children and adult catechesis and the instruction of converts was also carried out.

Of the schools one newspaper claimed that Beechworth's fame as an educational institution had extended to the remotest parts of the region.[44] Their examination results were such that the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* argued that 'their pupils had to be very seriously reckoned with in public examination in that they rarely failed and frequently scored very high'.[45] Perusal of the many Australian country and city newspapers show this to be true.

Wangaratta

The Brigidine apostolate of bringing religious and secular education to the small towns of Victoria was further extended when, in 1887, they answered Bishop Crane's request for a four sister mission to Wangaratta. This was the third foundation within a twenty

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[41] Mother Alacoque Bourke to Mother General Kelly, Echuca, 29 Aug. 1899, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.
[42] Ibid.
[43] *Albury Banner & Wodonga Express*, 6 May 1904 (http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper) (15 Apr. 2013).
[44] Ibid.
[45] *Ovens & Murray Advertiser,* 14 Mar. 1908; *Yea Chronicle* 26 Mar. 1908 (http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper) (accessed 12 Apr. 2013).

month period. Like Echuca and Beechworth, Wangaratta had a Catholic primary school, St Patrick's, established in 1857. Before the nuns' arrival, Francis O'Neill, a Dublin University classics graduate was master. Mountrath and Tullow, having already sent out pioneers were not in a position to send out more. Four sisters from Goresbridge were selected by Bishop Lynch: Mother Catherine Farrell (superior), Sister Dominic Tobin (assistant) and Sisters Canice Wyer and Gertrude McDonnell. On 1 November 1889, the latter was joined by her older sister Ellie who, taking the religious name Margaret Mary was professed on 27 April 1892 by Dean Davey of Benalla.[46] It was a very young community setting out for Australia with only fifteen years separating the eldest, 37-year-old Mother Vincent, and the youngest, 22-year-old Sister Gertrude McDonnell. The Goresbridge annals record the bishop's decision as 'a wise selection'—the three recently professed 'black novices with their novice mistress'. Although the four volunteers had some awareness of the difficulties ahead of them, little did they realize the extent of the sacrifice they would be required to make.

On 27 August 1887 they left home and convent and reached Melbourne on 15 October 1887. As had the other two foundations, the nuns broke their journey at the Presentation convent at Windsor. During their stay they met and impressed student teacher Katherine Kreckler who decided to become a Brigidine sister declaring that 'these are the nuns I want to enter with'. Seven weeks later, even before the convent opened, she became the new foundation's first postulant. Artistic and a good crafts teacher, she taught for almost fifty years in Wangaratta and Beechworth.

In Wangaratta the nuns were welcomed by a 'group of horsemen with buggies who drove them along the streets' to their new home, the fine parish presbytery generously given to them by Father English.[47] Tradition holds that this was the only occasion that Sister Canice Wyer was in the streets of Wangaratta in her fifty-six years educating the town's children. On 2 November 1887 the people witnessed the formal installation and official welcome of the sisters by Bishop Reville.[48]

On 9 January 1888 they formally took charge of St Patrick's primary school and opened a select day and boarding school at the convent. Classes were held in the

[46] Beechworth annals, BPA/Vic/507A.
[47] Sturrock, *Women of Strength Women of Gentleness*, p.29.
[48] Beechworth annals, BPA/Vic/Box507A.

parlour—a feature of some of the early Brigidine schools. Many of the local papers welcomed their arrival as a 'red letter day' (a favourite term), praised 'the high educational standards of the institute in Ireland' while the *Advocate*, not to be outdone, declared the 'boarding school to be of the upper class'. The Wangaratta nuns offered the same education as provided in all the other Brigidine convents with French, Italian, German, and Latin the languages offered as well as painting, drawing and fretwork among the other subjects. All were the accomplishments expected in a 'young lady' by the new middle-classes of the post gold rush era. The boarding school fee was set at thirty-five guineas with no allowance given for absence except through illness. The usual extras were offered including singing lessons, privately at £1.10*s*.0*d*. or in class at 10*s*. One also had the choice between piano and harmonium at £2. Select or high school fees were set at £1. 10*s*. 0*d*. paid quarterly and fees for extras were the same as for the boarding school. Three months notice was required before a child could be removed from school. The school prospectus also advised that if pupils did not return at the opening of classes (a common fault in Ireland and Australia) they would not be allowed to compete for the principal prizes. The nuns offered to prepare pupils for matriculation if it was the wish of the parents. Outside of this, instruction of converts and the organization of the different sodalities formed another part of their apostolate. Catechism classes were held at the weekend for the children attending the state schools.

In advertising that there would be 'no interference in the religious principles of pupils of different persuasions', the sisters were setting out their stall in the face of Wangaratta State school which had 264 pupils on the rolls. At the convent's first speech and prize giving day on 22 December 1888, Father English emphasized the point of the non-interference with the religious principles of non-Catholic children. Noting that the 'good sisters were ladies as well as Catholics', he stressed to the audience that the sisters were providing 'a sound, solid, moral education and not a Catholic education'. He reinforced the sisters' promise that any non-Catholic parents who placed their children 'under their roof' and 'entrusted the children to their fostering care, would never hear one word of religion'.[49] As late as 1900, one in every eight or nine girls in a Catholic

[49] Beechworth annals, BPA/Vic/Box507A.

secondary school in Victoria was a Protestant.[50] In 1891 the convent account book showed an income of £66. 5*s*. 2*d*. from the boarding school, £51. 10*s*. 0*d*. from the high school and £26. 7*s*. 6*d*. from the primary schools. No pupil numbers were given but these amounts appear to point to relatively low numbers compared to the state school. The extras, such as music and drawing, brought in another £63. Convent finances were further helped by a donation of £15 from Father McDonnell, Sister Gertrude's brother and a donation of £40 from Dean Tierney.

While Cardinal Moran stated in 1891 that girls education as far as possible be adapted to domestic life the Brigidines were not slow in moving, as Fogarty highlights, 'to the important task of training girls to earn a living'.[51] Commercial classes were offered to school students and externs by the nuns from an early date. The success of the Brigidines' rounded education is evident from an examination of the state, commercial and music examination results in the newspapers.

Father English was prescient in his remarks at the prize giving day when he highlighted the simple fact that the Brigidine sisters had come to Wangaratta 'to labour, to live, and if necessary to die in the noblest cause that woman can be engaged in that of education'.[52] Three of the young sisters paid the ultimate price of their lives within the space of three years. The severity and rigours of the climate, the frugal living and the heavy work load may have weakened body systems making it easier for them to succumb to that 'fatal illness', consumption. On 23 October 1891, the 26-year-old Sister Gertrude McDonnell died from 'pulmonary infection', a devastating blow not only for the community but also for her sister, Sister Margaret Mary, who was not yet professed. Eight months later their 'Cross of suffering' was further intensified with the death of their 43-year-old Mother Superior, Mother Catherine Ida Farrell.

The continuity of convent life had to be maintained and on 10 October 1892 Bishop Crane appointed Mother Alacoque Bourke as superior. However, just six months into her term of office, the third of the pioneers, the 'talented lady' and 'greatly

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[50] Fogarty, *Catholic Education in Australia*, i, p. 472.
[51] Ibid., p. 346.
[52] Beechworth annals, BPA/Vic/Box507A.

respected' 33-year-old Sister Dominic Tobin died.[53] Her death left the convent in need of help. With Bishop Moore's permission, Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat convent sent Sister Malachy Byrne to Wangaratta to help. As a former Goresbridge sister, she would have been of great support to her fellow Goresbridge sister, Mother Canice Wyer who was just two years her senior in Goresbridge. How long she stayed in Wangaratta or if she arrived at all is unknown as there is no mention of her in the Wangaratta annals or in the Brigidine register. There is, however, the intriguing comment in a letter of Mother Gertrude:

> How sad about poor Sister Malachy. We were very sorry but not surprised. I always feared it would come to this with her. I suppose you know she gave a lot of trouble here. It nearly killed me.[54]

One source states that she left Australia and returned to Ireland but, if she did, she did not go to a Brigidine convent.[55] Mother Alacoque was four years superior when she was named provincial and novice mistress of the newly created province of Victoria. She was succeeded as superior by Mother Patricia Fogarty, who died in 1898 after a short and painful illness and she in turn was succeeded as superior by Mother Canice Wyer.

Also in 1898 the kindly Father English died and was succeeded as parish priest by Father Byrne. As with Father Kennedy in Beechworth he too appeared to have little time for the Brigidines—his attitude was 'a puzzle and sorrow to the sisters'. He made every 'effort to reduce the nuns' means of support'—presumably support for the nuns meant that money was reduced for parish funds. It is not recorded how he went about doing this or how successful he was. As in Beechworth, the nuns' complaints to Bishop Reville went unheeded.[56] Regardless of this difficulty, during Mother Canice Wyer's term of office as superior additions to the convent at the cost of £500 were built. In 1900

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[53] She died on 4 Apr 1893, *The North Eastern Ensign,* 11 Apr.1893 (http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/result) (17 Apr.2013).
[54] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother Provincial Synan, Ararat, 16 Nov. 1893, DA/BC/BGA392.04.
[55] Irish Nuns and Sisters of the Catholic Church in Australia 1838–1918 (http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/don_tran/emigration/irish_nuns_australia_surname2.htm) (26 Apr. 2013)
[56] Mother Provincial Alacoque Bourke to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Echuca, 28 Aug. 1899, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.

the building fund set up to raise money received £100 from the St Patrick's School Sport's Day and a £100 legacy from a Mr O'Halloran.[57]

An example of the good relationship that existed between the nuns and the people of the district was the annual wood day commenced by the Klemm boys who saw that the sisters working in the convent kitchen were out of wood. On an arranged day, wood was brought in from the surrounding countryside and the carters were served their dinner along with appetizers and thirst quenchers, the dinners and drinks being supplied by the local business people. With the countrymen cutting and drawing the logs and others supplying money to pay for their cutting into blocks, the wood day became a community effort. The priests and schools were also involved. With the changeover to other fuels the last wood day was on Anzac Day 1975.[58]

The Brigidines of Wangaratta were acknowledged as 'being remarkable for their broad outlook on humanity' and that:

> the most important thing with regard to their teaching is that every subject that they have taught they have taught in union with religion that the learner may be led to God, for our God is the God of all truth.[59]

Ararat

The next foundation in 1888, the last to be made from Ireland, was not to the Sandhurst diocese but to the diocese of Ballarat. It was made at the request of Bishop James Moore who paid a visit to Abbeyleix convent in May 1888 hoping to 'take' five sisters to open a Brigidine foundation in Ararat. Here too they were to take over the established Catholic parish school, whose headmaster, Thomas Williams, also coached private pupils for the Matriculation and civil service examinations, which meant there was a ready source of pupils for a select school.[60]

Having sent so many sisters to Australia within five years no single house could spare five nuns so Bishop Lynch took sisters from Abbeyleix and Goresbridge convents.

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[57] Wangaratta annals and Wangaratta accounts, BPA/Vic/Box559D.
[58] Brenda Leitch, *Through Women's Eyes at Pioneering Days* (Wangaratta, 1985).
[59] Dr Francis Flynn, P.P. of Yarrawonga as quoted in an unnamed newspaper cutting report (1937) of the 'Brigidine Convent Golden Jubilee', Wangaratta annals, BPA/Vic/559D.
[60] His new teaching post was in Ballarat in Margaret Shea, (ed.), *Seed Time and Harvest: The History of the Catholic Parish of Ararat, 1858–1988* (Ararat, 1988), pp 9-16 & 79.

From Abbeyleix Bishop Lynch chose the 37 year-old and fifteen years professed Mother Gertrude Kelly who was then mistress of novices, the 26-year-old and five years professed Josephine Clancy and Paul Barron, 22-years-old and three years professed. From Goresbridge he chose Mother Cecilia Synnott (sometimes Sinnott) and Malachy Byrne, just professed one year. The 44-year-old Mother Cecilia, professed for twenty-two years, was appointed superior. Most probably strangers to one another, Bishop Lynch ordered that the three Abbeyleix sisters go Tullow to spend some days getting acquainted with the Goresbridge sisters before they journeyed to Australia. On 28 September they sailed for Australia and they were joined by Bishop Moore at Naples. The nuns' weeks of proximity to their bishop in the confines of life aboard ship most probably provided an opportunity for both parties to assess each others' strengths, fortitude and character. On 9 November 1888 the sisters 'set foot on *terra firma* at Melbourne after a most prosperous voyage'.[61] One of the welcoming parties was solicitor T.G. Grano who became a lifelong friend to the sisters.[62] His family looked after the legal affairs of the convent for a hundred years as well as paying for the sisters' funerals for many years.[63]

On 14 November 1888 they made their home in the presbytery, which was vacated for them by Father Robert Meade and his curate Father Michael Barrett until a convent was built. Six days later they received a visit from Bishop Moore who arranged for a firm of architects to design a convent for them. However, despite this exciting news, the annals acknowledge the loneliness of the little group: 'For weeks we felt homesickness weigh heavily but as time went on we got to love our southern home'.[64] Their homesickness was compounded by the bigotry and hostility they experienced from a small number of non-Catholics. The nuns, however, understood that 'no really great work was ever accomplished which did not bear the seal of the Cross stamped upon it'. Their tenth anniversary celebrations highlighted the good relationship they had 'won' for themselves with the non-Catholics of the district, as did the number of non-Catholics in

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[61] Abbeyleix annals, Goresbridge annals & Ararat annals (1888-92), BPA/Vic/505A.
[62] Shea, *Seed Time and Harvest*, p.58.
[63] Foley, account of school life, BPA/Vic/Box505A/505.08. Her mother was a close friend of Queenie Grano; Sturrock, *Women of Strength Women of Gentleness*, p.32. The Grano family lived opposite the presbytery in a spacious two-storey house called Dominica named after the Dominican Republic from which the family originally migrated.
[64] Ararat annals (1888-92), BPA/Vic/505A.

their schools.[65] On the whole, the Brigidines experienced few instances of bigotry in Australia. Objection to the early morning sound of the convent bell ringing in Randwick and a sectarian outburst in Mentone when the nuns purchased the 'Coffee Palace' as their convent and replaced the British flag with a cross on the tower of their convent, appear to be the only other recorded instances.

On 14 January 1889 St Mary's primary school re-opened under the nuns' care with a first day attendance of sixty and, with an extension to the school, by the end of the year they had 160 pupils.[66] The school continued to develop and in 1900 achieved 97.28 per cent when about 140 children were examined over two days in September by Inspector James Conlon. He reported that the children 'were thoroughly proficient in all subjects' and the teaching was 'scientific, sound and thorough'. He found that the 'children took an active and intelligent interest in the school work' and reported favourably on their reading skills noting that 'it was a pleasure to listen to the reading it was so distinct, bold, fluent and expressive'.[67] This was the first year of inspection of Catholic schools by the state's school inspectors. Already used to having Catholic schools examined by his diocesan inspectors, Archbishop Carr argued to have all Victorian Catholic schools receive state inspection.

On 4 February 1889 the sisters opened their select school, named St Stanislaus, in the wooden four room cottage home of the former teacher.[68] Here in the 'unpretentious building' they taught 'the wealthier classes' from primary through secondary school to matriculation. School numbers were low at first but gradually increased from the original seven (fifty-four in 1893). From the outset the pupils were given 'a thoroughly sound religious training' as per the Brigidine constitutions and only then were the pupils prepared for matriculation and other public examinations. One of the first pupils recalled: 'Above all, we learnt religion ... to know it, to love it, to practice it, to live it'.[69] Irene Cecily (Queenie) Grano was the first pupil and the first of eleven Grano children to

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[65] *The First Ten Years, 1859–1899*. This account written by the early sisters to celebrate their first ten years in Ararat was republished for the Brigidine centenary 1988 in *Ararat Advertiser*, 29 Oct. 1988, BPA/Vic/Box48/506.1-4; Shea, *Seed Time and Harvest*, pp106-10.
[66] Ararat annals.
[67] *The Ararat Advertiser*, 25 Sept. 1900, BPA/Vic/505A.
[68] Ararat annals; *The Ararat Advertiser*, 25 Sept. 1900, BPA/Vic/505A.
[69] Pat Grano, 'The Good Old Days' in Shea, *Seed Time and Harvest,* p.116.

be schooled by the Brigidines. A year later the select school pupils moved to an 'up-to-date apartment in their 'truly noble new convent building'.

To 'keep Catholic girls and boys out of the state schools' the sisters understood that 'the curriculum of the boarding and day schools in Ireland would never do in the colonies' for the simple reason that they were in competition 'against *all denominations*, who possessed many advantages from a pecuniary point over Catholic schools'. For them, therefore, the 'tone of education *had to be* of a higher standard than that in Ireland to compete against the Godless schools and colleges' [Mother Gertrude's emphasis].[70]

The select school was co-educational, nevertheless, while the usual subjects were offered to both sexes the girls studied algebra while the boys took geometry. Over and above the matriculation and public examinations the pupils had to take the annual examination prepared and corrected by a 'distinguished' Melbourne university professor retained by the nuns to do so. The nuns believed that these annual examinations furthered the pupils' education. A report (1898) found the papers of the matriculation class 'most satisfactory', while their 'mathematical papers were excellent'.[71] Without any undue humility in 1899, the nuns stated they achieved 'singularly happy results' as shown in their university results. Over the years the nuns earned a great reputation for their university, music and commercial examination results.

Within six months of their arrival, whether it was due to the climatic conditions or some other cause, Mother Superior Cecilia Synnott 'had discovered that Australia was not to be her resting place'.[72] With Bishop Moore's permission (he also paid her fare) she returned to Ireland on 11 April 1889. She died three years later in Goresbridge convent on 11 March 1902. The inestimable Mother Gertrude Kelly was appointed in her place but Mother Cecilia's loss must have been keenly felt by the little community. Flagging morale would have received a boost on 11 June 1889 when the digging of the foundations for the new convent (estimated to cost £10,000) commenced on a 'commanding site' next to the church. During the convent's construction, the enthusiasm of Father Meade for the project was so great that he 'literally lived in the building'. His anxiety that everything should be right for the sisters is evident from the revealing

[70] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Ararat, 27 May 1895, DA/BC/BGA392.06.
[71] *The First Ten Years.*
[72] Goresbridge annals.

comment in the annals that 'not a brick nor stone was placed that escaped his eagle eye and woe betide any man who tried to pass off inferior workmanship or materials that didn't reach 100 per cent standard'.[73] (See Appendix 4)

While the annals record with pleasure that their first donation towards the building of the convent was 'five shillings from an old Irish woman', they give a 'prominent place to their benefactor', Edward McCabe, who in May 1889 not only gave them the deeds of the new convent site he also generously gifted them £7,000 towards the building costs. The nuns believed this to be an answer to their novena as he had as yet not made their acquaintance. Possibly McCabe was encouraged to consider the nuns by Father Meade. Until his death in 1891, McCabe and his wife 'were the kindest friends to the sisters'.[74] Father Meade too was also a most generous benefactor to the nuns paying all their expenses until their schools were established.[75]

The convent was completed by March 1890 and in 1891 the sisters were given permission by Bishop Moore to add a new wing to the convent. The extra accommodation meant that in July 1893 they were able to open a boarding school with a first day attendance of four pupils. The Ararat convent's *Rules for the Boarding School* (1899) covering boarding school etiquette are enlightening in highlighting what the Brigidine sisters believed to be the qualities expected of a 'young lady'—a girl was 'expected to be agreeable', to be able to 'keep up an intelligent conversation' to critically discuss the 'merits and demerits' of the books read, she would not 'infringe on the rights of others' and would 'guard her own'. The rules were not to be seen as 'restraints to chafe' but as 'a guide on the path of true independence and self-respect'. The rules are, presumably, indicative of the boarding school rules in other Brigidine convents of the period. Another essential aspect of boarding school life was the award of a testimonial for exemplary conduct: punctuality in returning to school, a ladylike deportment, uniformly good conduct, and a high class average. Since a 'testimonial was a direct

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[73] Ararat annals.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Murtagh, *Brigidine History Victorian Province*, p. 17. In 1904 he purchased a farm of sixty acres with a house for them stocking it with eight cows and a horse and presented the title deeds to the mother superior. Father Meade's generosity was further demonstrated when his will was read (he died on 17 May 1904) he had bequeathed all he possessed to the convent.

reward from the sisters' it was to be 'prized as the highest honour'.[76] (See Appendix 5) Pupils also took part in the end of term *Soiree Musicale* at which they were required to sing, play, recite and read the best essays prepared for the occasion. Through such an education Brigidine pupils were expected to take their place in society academically and socially.

One early example of the nuns' belief in the need for girls' education was Mother Gertrude's recognition of the ability of one of her first students, Margaret Bartels. She encouraged the parents to keep her at secondary school. After her protégé matriculated with honours, she acted as a student teacher until she was employed in a nearby business.[77] Such encouragement shows that country girls, like Margaret Bartels were not disadvantaged in their Brigidine country schools where because of small class sizes the pupils received individual attention.

Because of the return of Mother Cecilia to Ireland the sisters were under pressure coping with their school work. In September 1889 in response to Father Meade's plea for more sisters Mother Ursula Phelan, a professed nun of fourteen years standing was selected. Two former boarders, Elizabeth Brennan (Abbeyleix) and Mary Ryan (Mountrath) and the latter's sister Margaret also volunteered for the mission. Mother Gertrude Kelly sent £200 from Ararat to cover travelling expenses. The four travelled to Australia with the newly professed Sister Berchmans Storey from Tullow convent and two other prospective postulants, Kitty Stafford and Brigid Gaynor. Elizabeth Brennan (Sister Alphonsus) spent all her long life teaching in Ararat. The Ryan sisters Mary (Sister Bernard) and Margaret (Sister Xavier) made considerable contributions to the Victorian province, the latter becoming mother provincial of Victoria.[78] Australian postulants who entered at the same time were Kate Griffin (Mother Alacoque), Ellen Sheehan (Sister Veronica) entered as a lay sister, and Minnie Tobin (Sister Stanislaus), who was destined to be the Brigidines' first great Australian-born teacher-educator.[79] Over the following years Ararat was successful in attracting Australian and Irish postulants. In 1900 there were twenty-two nuns to conduct the three schools: St Mary's

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[76] *Ararat Advertiser* 29 Oct. 1988; Shea, *Seed Time and Harvest,* p.111-14.
[77] Foley, account of school life, BPA/Vic/Box505A/505.08
[78] Ararat annals.
[79] Sturrock, *Women of Strength Women of Gentleness*, p.33; O'Riordan, *Pathfinders:The Abbeyleix Story*, iii, p.70.

primary school with 140 pupils, St Stanislaus' high school with 70 pupils and St Joseph's boarding school with 22 boarders. The schools offered a 'curriculum from the most primary to the doors of the university'.[80] The culture and ethos of the Brigidine school was handed on by the Ararat community to two other towns Maryborough (1902) and Horsham (1920).

Rochester

Rochester's Catholic parish was erected in 1889 and put in the charge of the Augustinians. Prior O'Hanlon aware of what the Brigidines had accomplished in a few years at Echuca saw the advantages of having a convent parochial school in Rochester. Mother Benedict Moore of Echuca agreed to Bishop Crane's request for a foundation and in 1891 the prior with the help of 'generous parishioners' built a two-storey 'beautiful convent' and 'a gem of a school' beside the Augustinian church and priory.

Rochester was the first 'Victorian' Brigidine foundation in that it was neither commissioned nor staffed from Ireland. It was also the first, though short-lived, general novitiate for Victoria. In April 1892 the bishop named Echuca pioneer Mother Vincent Brennan, as superior (1893–1902) and the young Australians, Sisters Josephine Chalk and Aloysius Harty, for the new foundation but it was later decided that extra sisters were needed and Sisters Berchmans Foley and Veronica Rausch, a lay sister were loaned for a time.

The nuns did not leave for, as they described it, 'the little unassuming town of Rochester' until 13 January 1893. Two days later Bishops Crane and Reville blessed the convent and new schools.[81] At the solemn High Mass the parishioners showed their further generosity and appreciation of the new undertaking by contributing £400 at the collection. That seven priests, including three priors, attended the ceremonies showed the importance attached to the establishment of Catholic schools.[82]

The parochial school, St Joseph's, opened on 23 January 1893 and the select school and boarding schools six days later. The high school opened with nineteen pupils

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[80] *The Ararat Advertiser,* 25 Sept. 1900, BPA/Vic/Box505A.
[81] Rochester annals, DA/BC/BGA/522.056.
[82] *Kyabram Union*, 20 Jan. 1893 (http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/65709799?) (6 Apr. 2013).

while Mary Cristal was the first of the seven boarders who came the first year.[83] The schools flourished and increasing numbers meant the building of a new school which, dedicated to the Sacred Heart, was blessed and opened in 1899. As with their mother house, various sodalities soon became part of school and parish life. The influence of the sodalities, combined with that of the nuns, most assuredly fostered vocations among the pupils. Boarder and Child of Mary, Nellie Ryan, became the first Rochester postulant entering the novitiate there on 16 August 1896. Taking the name Joseph she was professed on 6 July 1899 and spent the sixty-two years of her religious life in Rochester.[84]

Her superior until 1905, when she was 'freed' from office, was founding pioneer Mother Vincent Brennan possibly the only Brigidine sister to leave any personal record of being a superior. In the annals she described being superior as 'the Cross placed on her by her superiors' a view of office possibly shared by many superiors. She was helped through her term by the 'spirit of zeal, earnestness and fidelity to holy rule' of those she governed. She rather humbly declared that:

> [She] did nothing of note, but merely satisfied [her] conscience by always consulting the mothers and acting on their advice and by never purchasing or disposing of ought without their entire knowledge. The most trifling affairs were kept within the community. May God and all forgive me of my short comings.[85]

From the above comments her rule appeared to be one of sound common sense.

The nuns maintained a good relationship with the different priors who had charge of Rochester and in turn, priests and people were appreciative of their sacrifice and hard work in the education and formation of the children of the district.

Maryborough

The Brigidines' reputation for 'high class teaching' had spread throughout the Ballarat diocese and Maryborough was just one of the many parishes requesting Bishop Moore to send them a community of Brigidine nuns, however, difficulties relating to Ballarat

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[83] Murtagh, *Brigidine History Victorian Province,* p.21
[84] Echuca annals.
[85] Ibid.

diocese becoming a second Brigidine Victorian province delayed the establishment of new foundations.[86]

In 1901 Bishop Moore requested a Brigidine foundation for Maryborough, a strongly Irish area of the Victorian Western District because: it was eminently suitable to their needs as it had a large population, there was no community of nuns in Maryborough and it was only forty miles by rail from Ararat and the climate would suit Mother Gertrude Kelly and the other sisters.[87] The sisters constituting the first community were: Mother Josephine Clancy appointed superior and Sisters Xavier Ryan, Evangelist Purcell, Philomena Kelly, Clare Hanrahan and Gabriel Fogarty, a lay sister.[88] Four of the sisters were Australian and two Irish. Their convent was a rented and impoverished weatherboard cottage; the poverty of their surroundings was equated to the poverty of the stable in Bethlehem. It confirmed for them that God's seal was set on poor beginnings and Maryborough was no exception.[89] The foundation day was 29 January 1902.

On 3 February 1902 the sisters opened their select high school, St Joseph's. However, their financial position was precarious for some time as pupils were slow to attend the school—only three pupils attended at first. As the only Catholic high school 'things improved', as Bishop Moore had stated and with over 200 pupils on the rolls, the school offered 'keen opposition to the state and technical schools'. The sisters took over St Augustine's primary school on the same day they opened their select high school. The annals record, that from the beginning, the children were well behaved and the people well disposed towards the nuns.[90]

On 1 June 1902 in St Augustine's church, Bishop Moore used the occasion of the administration of the sacrament of Confirmation to inaugurate an appeal for funds to build a convent for the nuns. The appeal list was headed by the bishop's £50 followed by

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[86] Bishop Moore to Mother General Kelly, Ballarat 30 Dec. 1896, DA/BC/BGA/373.301. Other parishes were Hamilton, St Armand and Koriot.
[87] Bishop Moore to Mother Josephine Clancy, Ballarat, 12 Nov. 1901.
[88] Maryborough annals (1902-1981), DA/BC/BGA/522.046
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.

three other donations of £50 each and the total amount reached was £600.[91] In May 1904, the nuns took possession of the 'palatial' Convent of the Sacred Heart, which was then the first building to catch the eye of visitors to the town.[92] It was affectionately known as the 'Doll's House' because of 'its tall architecture and high chimneys'.[93]

Mentone

The Victorian Brigidines entered into the archdiocese of Melbourne through the 'unexpected' invitation of Father Michael Gough, parish priest of Elsternwick, who had Archbishop Carr's approval for the sisters to open a convent and school.[94] Elsternwick, a parish within Melbourne's metropolitan radius, had a considerable but scattered Catholic community without any means of religious instruction. The Echuca sisters were familiar with Father Gough and the area since they attended Mass at St Patrick's church, Mentone when on holidays there.

Their new convent, the vacant Mentone Coffee Palace, a hotel next door to the church, was purchased in secret for them by James McGuffie for £2,050. This was a necessary ruse because of 'Orange hostility'.[95] The annals claim that if it were known that the purchasers were religious, 'the non-Catholics would have prevented the calamity, as they regarded it, or at least have increased the purchase price tenfold'.[96] That this was a necessary subterfuge is clear from the following report in *The Moorabbin News*:

> The main building which cost £16,000 to build, and occupies two and three quarters acres in the heart of Mentone, together with large stables, tennis courts, etc., and a brick building, known as the old post office, which alone cost £850 to erect. The whole of these together with the furniture [valuable Chippendale and Sheraton chairs and tables with matching furnishings] which cost

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[91] Ibid.; *Bendigo Advertiser,* 2 Jun. 1902 (http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/88564700?) (28 Apr.2013.)

[92] The convent building and furniture cost £4,000. This was paid off by the efforts of the nuns, people and priests. Two bazaars in 1906 &12 raised a total of £1,200 and in 1913 Bishop Higgins gave £600 to the building fund. This money was left to the bishop by a relative for charitable purposes and he though the convent deserving of all the help it could get.

[93] Maryborough annals.

[94] Copy of letter of Father M.C. Gough to Mother Provincial Alacoque Bourke, Elsternwick, 21 Jun.1904, DA/BC/BGA/374.301.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Mentone annals.

when new over £1000 was purchased by a Roman Catholic orginisation (sic) for the ridiculous sum of £2000.[97]

On 29 July 1904 the pioneer sisters left their much-loved superior Mother Benedict Moore and Echuca 'for a new plot in Christ's vineyard'.[98] The pioneers were Mother Provincial Alacoque Bourke, as temporary superior, and Sisters Agnes O'Keane, Fidelis Callanan, Margaret Mary Murphy, Ligouri Quinn, Michael Shea and novice Sister Angela Molony. Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat was appointed novice mistress and took up office on 4 August 1904. By 1906 the sisters could offer holiday accommodation to the sisters of the inland convents where, because of the privacy afforded by a nearby beach, the sisters could 'indulge in sea bathing' from which they emerged with 'fresh vigour and energy' to face the coming years work.[99]

On 7 August 1904 Archbishop Carr officially blessed and opened the convent under the patronage of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. On the following day the sisters opened the first Catholic primary school (St Patrick's) in the district with twenty-five pupils in the 'primitive' wooden church which served the double purpose of church and school. Mother Anthony Byrne was principal. When the school was inspected in 1906 it achieved an 80 per cent mark and was ranked first class B. By 1907 it was ranked first class A, having achieved a mark of 96.7 per cent from J.N. Cooke, the state inspector.[100]

The secondary school also opened the same day with three students.[101] Classes began in earnest in February 1905 and while enrolment of day pupils increased steadily, it was soon apparent that a boarding school was badly needed. However, the conditions on which they came and were accepted by the mother provincial, did not allow them to have a boarding school. Although Archbishop Carr at first 'resolutely withheld his permission' through the persuasive power of the parents, he gave his permission and 'fervent blessing' to their new 'endeavour' when he called to the convent on 26 December 1905.[102]

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[97] Damian Smith, The Mentone Coffee Palace (http://localhistory.kingston.vic.gov.au) (30 Apr.2013).
[98] Kilbreda College (http://www.kilbreda.vic.edu.au/) (30 Apr.2013).
[99] Mentone Council Meetings, BPA/Vic/Box 539B.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Kilbeda College. The Brigidine Convent Mentone, as the school was known, changed its name to Kilbreda in the early 1930s.
[102] Gough to Alacoque Bourke, 21 Jun. 1904; Mentone annals.

However, with the introduction of the Registration of Teachers and Schools Act that same year, Brigidine schools and all Catholic private schools were subject to compulsory state inspection. Mothers Margaret Mary Murphy and Fidelis Callanan successfully faced the challenge of turning the combined secondary and boarding schools into a viable project conforming, if not going beyond, the standards laid down for state schools. This was of the utmost importance for the maintenance of the community since, in its first thirteen years it depended solely on the fees of the school as well as the fees from commercial subjects.[103]

Conclusion

The Brigidine sisters willingly answered the many calls to teach in the parish schools of country towns even though at times this stretched their resources to the limit and was often at a cost to their health. In coming to these country towns, they brought with them the culture of an Irish Catholic school and provided role models for their students. With many of the sisters spending all their lives in the same parochial school, they brought stability to them. Archbishop Mannix was convinced that the schools 'constituted the ante chamber of the church' in the sense that 'without the parochial schools the churches would have been empty'.[104]

The Brigidines took cognizance of the 'signs of the times' and adapted their curriculum to the changing needs of society while at the same time they saved all that was essential and precious in the older education'.[105] Not only did they give their pupils an academic education but they also gave them a thorough grounding in book-keeping, typing and commercial subjects, as well as instilling in them the rules of etiquette. The education the Brigidines provided in these country towns opened up employment and career opportunities for the children, which they otherwise might not have had. MacGinley points out that the 1921 Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, shows in its section 'Religion v. Grades of Occupation', the relatively higher level of

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[103] Mentone annals.
[104] Archbishop Mannix, address at opening of St Brendan's School, Flemington in the *Argus*, 16 Mar. 1914 quoted in Fogarty, ii, p.304.
[105] Archbishop Carr, Address at the inauguration of Catholic Training College, 1906, *Age* 6 Aug. 1906 quoted in Fogarty, i, p.382.

representation generally of Catholic women among employers and self-employed than of women belonging to the other major Christian denominations in Australia—Church of England, Presbyterian and Methodist.[106]

The Brigidines' missionary outreach was 'an ideal of service based on the incarnational precedents of the Gospel'. The 'ideal of service' was assimilated in the training given to postulants and novices whose formation in the novitiate and the establishment of novitiate houses in Ireland and Australia (New Zealand was a subsidiary of New South Wales province) is reviewed in the following chapter.

[106] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p.338.

CHAPTER 7

1828–1907

NOVICES AND THE POST AMALGAMATION VICISSITUDES OF THE AUSTRALIAN NOVITIATE FOUNDATIONS

In the nineteenth century 'no woman could exercise any public office—welfare, administration, diplomacy, the universities, government, etc were all the exclusive domain of the male' as was the power to vote.[1] At the same time a woman's identity was defined by her role within the family—bounded by the three Ks: *Kirche, Küche, Kinder* (Church, Cooking, and Children).[2] Marriage was seen as the high point of true womanhood while single life, in a period where one historian has argued that 'daughters were largely redundant', was 'deemed unattractive and a personal failure'. Those who remained single were 'often stigmatized' and were teased and taunted on Chalk Sunday and Ash Wednesday.[3] Hill contends that the consistently high rates of female emigration and [a post-Famine] marriage rate significantly lower than in the rest of Britain reflected the paucity of opportunities for young middle-class women in Ireland.[4]

Besides emigration and marriage, however, there was another option open to a small but significant number of Catholic women—that of the religious life. Lavinia Byrne proposes that 'in entering a convent, women and girls chose (whether under God's calling or in complete ignorance of it) to move from the private sphere of home life and

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[1] Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens, *The Nun in the World: Religious and the Apostolate*, trans. Geoffrey Stevens (London, 1963), p.13.
[2] Ibid., p.12.
[3] David Fitzpatrick, 'The Modernisation of the Irish Female' in Patrick O'Flanagan, Paul Ferguson and Kevin Whelan (eds), *Rural Ireland Modernisation and Change, 1600–1900* (Cork, 1987), 162–80, pp164 &173:the economic value of daughters was low, except in regions where the linen and textile trades created a demand for their labour as domestic spinners. As the domestic textiles industry contracted [...] the economic contribution of rural daughters was diminished; Bridget Haggerty, *What if you were still single by Ash Wednesday?* (www.irishcultureandcustoms.com) (21 Aug. 2012). Chalk Sunday was the first Sunday in Lent. Children and younger men would hide in doorways and when their victims passed by, they would whip out a piece of chalk and make a mark on their backs.
[4] Hill, 'Gender, Culture and the 'spiritual empire', 203–226.

family to the public sphere of work in and for the world'.[5] In realizing their vocation to 'the exalted religious life', nuns were 'freed from familial and sexual demands', and so Aspinall argues, they 'could realize themselves within a community of like-minded characters' playing an increasingly significant role in the work of the church.[6] Similarly, Kehoe claims that the countless migration of women to the religious life represents the radicalization of women who turned their backs on marriage and motherhood, opting instead for a life that gave them professional status.[7] Or, as O'Donoghue states, it was here within community that women constructed their professional lives as integral to their religious vocation.[8] Fahey asserts that the eagerness with which nineteenth century Catholic women took up this option also suggests that its availability was no insignificant element in defining their relationship to the world.[9] By joining a religious institution, such as the Brigidines, young women could experience a full-time respected career. In fact, being 'called' to the religious life was seen as the 'holiest vocation that the Redeemer could give to a woman'.[10]

Most Catholic families not only accepted their daughters' separation from the family unit as the 'will of God', they also recognized that being a nun was seen as a 'prestigious vocation'.[11] However, to be a choir sister a candidate had to be in a position to give a dower to the convent. Dowers were, according to McGrath, the financial mainstay of convents and in 1828 Bishop Doyle set the sum at not less than £600.[12] However, as Clear found in her study of Irish convents, the amounts varied in size: the minimum for acceptance as a choir nun in the Presentation convent, Galway in the early nineteenth century was £500, the lowest dower acceptable in the Galway Mercy from 1840 to 1857 was £200, while the average was £375, and occasional larger sums were not uncommon in many convents when, for example one postulant to the Loreto convent,

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[5] Byrne, *Woman at the Altar*, p.1.
[6] Bernard Aspinwall, 'Roman Catholic Orders in the Nineteenth Century' in W.J. Sheils (ed.) *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition: Papers Read at the 1984 Summer Meeting and the 1985 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford, 1985), pp.351-364, p.362.
[7] Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church*, p.75.
[8] O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers*, p.1.
[9] Fahey, 'Female Asceticism ', p.4.
[10] O'Haran's, *Reminiscencesnof the Brigidine Nuns*, SAA.
[11] Hill, *Women in Ireland*, p.32.
[12] McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.116.

Rathfarnham entered with a dower of £35,000.[13] For the Brigidines, this sum was rarely negotiable the norm being between £200 and £300, though some parents paid more. For example, Mary Fay's father paid £500 to Tullow convent in 1872.[14] Beechworth postulants Sister Aloysius Fritsch's dower was £2,550 while Sister Xavier Coghlan's dower was £500 and her father also gifted the convent £1,000 in Ballarat Brewery shares—he was the owner of the brewery. James Skelly provided large dowers for his daughters Ellen (£900 and an annuity) and Annie (£600) to Victoria's Echuca convent.[15] As a consequence in 1884 of one parent not paying the promised dower of £500 before his daughter's imminent profession (he was written to and told the profession would be postponed) Bishop Lynch laid down that the dower must be given at profession and only on this condition could any subject be admitted.[16] The giving of the dower and any other property at the time of final profession was, as Clear states, an element of the vow of poverty.[17]

Besides the dower money the parents also had to pay for their daughter's upkeep and clothing during her postulancy and noviceship as well as the cost of the religious ceremonies of reception and profession.[18] (See Appendix 6) Such costs meant that postulants came from the comfortable backgrounds of the urban commercial and professional classes and from the substantial strong Catholic tenant farmer class and precluded many from becoming choir sisters. Instead, some took the option of becoming lay sisters taking on the 'more lowly tasks of the day-to-day life of the convent'.[19]

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[13] Clear, *Nuns,* p.87; Prunty, *Margaret Aylward,* p.129.

[14] Tullow Receipt & Expenditure Book Jan.1858-70, DA/BC/AIr/543. From Edenderry, she entered Tullow convent from the boarding school in 1869 and celebrated her Golden Jubilee on 15 May 1922, Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.

[15] James Skelly, Skelly Papers, BPA/Vic/Box 539-543A.

[16] Tullow HCM, DA/BC/AIr/518. The sister was professed a little later.The dower money was immediately invested in the safest way possible, which was usually in government stock, railway or bank shares.

[17] Clear, *Nuns*, p.70.

[18] During the period covered by this thesis, board generally cost £10 per half year. At her entrance in 1869, Mary Fay's half-yearly board was £12.12*s*.0*d.* Her reception, where she received the religious habit and her religious name of Sister Mary Berchams, cost £7.4*s*. 5*d*. Her profession ceremony cost £14.7*s*. *3d.* Her reception money paid for yards of white and black serge and a meal, which included chickens, meat, plum cake, confectionary and a dozen bottles of wine. Her profession money included £6.18.5. for various items including a bed, mattress and palliasse. The luncheon feast cost £7.8.10. The menu comprised lamb, chops, hams, tongues, bread, confectionary, oranges, lemons, wine and tea in Tullow Receipt & Expenditure Book Jan.1858–70, DA/BC/AIr/543.

[19] Hill, *Women in Ireland*, p.32.

Although lay sisters could not be part of the administration they were, nonetheless, true religious in the same sense as choir sisters. The same laws applied to both except that a dower was not required at the profession of a lay sister.[20] The need of the convent and their labour was sufficient reason for their free admission.[21] All lay sisters who left the convent were required to sign a document stating that the sum they received discharged all the liabilities of the convent.[22]

On 26 January 1856, Mary McNally joined the Brigidine convent in Abbeyleix as its first lay postulant.[23] Unusually, for a lay postulant, she brought £100 to the convent, which was lodged in the bank to be returned to her 'if she should leave the convent'. In September 1861, after several years as a postulant, it was decided by vote that she did not have a vocation as a lay sister. She also believed that her life was not with the Brigidines. Instead, within a few weeks of leaving Abbeyleix she joined Margaret Aylward's Daughters of St Brigid, established on 15 September 1861.[24] Aylward immediately wrote to the convent for McNally's money, which was duly sent on to her.[25] The attraction for Mary McNally with a dower of £100 was that in her new community dowers were not necessary for admission but they were acceptable neither was there a division between lay and choir sisters (all sisters would do household chores) and as well she could teach or do administrative work in the orphanage, the latter two occupations forbidden her as a Brigidine lay sister.[26] According to Prunty, of the first forty-one entrants between 1859 and 1867 only five brought money. Although Prunty does not name her Mary McNally was probably the entrant who brought the dower of £100.[27]

Because of the shortage of choir sisters in Ireland created by the Australasian mission, the Brigidines when the revenues of the convent permitted accepted well educated and 'gifted' girls of 'remarkable virtue' without a dower. This is in accord with Mangion's contention that education, especially in the latter part of the nineteenth

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[20] Devine, *Convent Life*, p.293.
[21] Ibid. If they left the convent they were entitled to a sum of money to cover the period of their labour.
[22] Nolan & Burke MSS, DA/BC/BGA/364.01
[23] Abbeyleix annals, DA/BC/AIr/18.
[24] Peadar MacSuibhne, *Paul Cullen and his contemporaries* (Kildare, 1965), iii, p. 408.
[25] Abbeyleix annals, DA/BC/AIr/18.
[26] Prunty, *Margeret Aylward,* p. 127.
[27] Ibid.

century, was an asset that could be used as a dower.[28] However, such postulants were destined for the Australasian mission only.[29] Indeed, the discontented Mother Brigid Morrin (she was sent from convent to convent in Australia and New Zealand in the hope that she would settle and not be a disruptive force in the communities) was refused permission to return to Ireland as she wished. Where necessary the Australasian convents similarly took young, able and clever postulants without dowers. Still, not all congregations, for instance the Loretos and the Society of the Sacred Heart, as Mangion points out, were so accommodating to postulants without a dower preferring instead to hold fast to their dower requirements in order to encourage a better class of postulant.[30]

Becoming a nun, however, whether choir or lay, was no easy matter. It involved three stages: acceptance first by the bishop and local superior, a six month period of postulancy, reception, which marked the beginning of a two-year trial period known as novitiate upon successful completion of which, culminated in final profession. The Brigidine postulancy, a probationary period of six months for choir sisters and twelve months for lay sisters, had the double purpose of eliminating unsuitable subjects and preparing the suitable for novitiate.[31] From the beginning of the Brigidine foundation, Bishop Delany was single-minded in keeping the 'stream pure at source' and would not accept any postulant who he thought would have difficulty in reaching the standard of austerity that he demanded: 'the hard lying and early rising, the fasts and the constant application to work or prayer, perfect obedience and renunciation of their own will and self'. In addition they had to accept 'poor and gross fare which meant meat that was often not of the best or most delicate sort and then only twice a week and tea could only be had on extraordinary occasions'.[32]

Even for generations of later Brigidines being accepted as a postulant was no easy matter. There was a rigorous process to go through beginning with the 'Queries' officially set down for all Brigidine convents by Bishop Lynch in 1869. He commanded that each house council book list the following prescription: age, mental and physical

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[28] Mangion, *Contested identities*, p.204.
[29] *Constitutions of the Sisters of St Brigid, Ireland* (1892), p.19, DA/BC/AIr/210.05
[30] Mangion, *Contested identities*, p.205.
[31] The postulancy, handwritten and unsigned notes, DA/BA/AIr/535.
[32] Delany to Mother Francis, Tullow, undated 1810, DA/BC/AIr/700. She was to inform the Misses Lalor on how difficult a vocation could be. The two perserved as Sisters Mary Anne and Brigid.

health, education (where and to what extent), profession and character of parents, whether there was any insanity in the family and a sample of writing and the dower.[33] Any history of ill health or of hereditary mental illness meant that a person was not eligible for the religious life.[34] For those who did enter 'delicate health' was the reason given for many leaving before novitiate commenced.

Many applicants came with a formal recommendation from their local priest or from the superior of the applicant's convent school. It was more acceptable to have the recommendation of both the priest and of 'a satisfactory account' of the entrant from the superior of her school. Such recommendations were necessary, particularly if the candidate was unknown to the convent. Not all recommendations by priests were accepted. One candidate recommended by a Father Doyle was rejected because she had three fingers missing on her right hand.[35]

Mangion claims that the link between Catholic boarding school education and vocations was particularly strong in that boarders were considered first-class candidates for the religious life.[36] Their attraction to the religious life was often encouraged by their teachers. Mother Margaret Power was noted for her 'exaltation of the religious life' in her desire to induce the boarders to become nuns.[37] Many of the pupils of the gifted Mother Cecilia Sinnott (Synnott), who had charge of the boarding school, became nuns. Some joined the Brigidine congregation while others joined one of the numerous religious orders in Ireland and elsewhere and who, in their turn, became successful teachers.[38] Among the many boarders who entered was Francis Banahan (Mother Gertrude), a remarkable religious who entered in 1873. She was a pioneer of the Brigidine foundations in Coonamble, Cooma and Masterton.[39] Another boarder, Elizabeth Dunne (Sister Fintan) who offered herself for the Australian mission, entered on 14 April 1888 and served in New South Wales until her death in 1952. It was no different in the Australian province where many of the Brigidine's first Australian

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[33] Mountrath HCM 1869-83, DA/BC/AIr/337.
[34] *Constitutions of the Sisters of St Brigid, Ireland* 1828, 1850, 1892.
[35] Tullow H CM, DA/BC/AIr/518.
[36] Mangion, *Contested Identities,* p.81.
[37] Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).
[38] Ibid.
[39] Mountrath HCM 1869-83, DA/BC/AIr/337; Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324; Barron *Brigidine Sisters 1883–1986.*

boarders such as Mary Faulkner (Cooma), Mary Finn (Cowra), and the two Newman sisters (Coonamble), offered themselves to the congregation. Another Australian boarder who entered at Ararat convent was described as a 'strong girl' (health was all important) who had succeeded in 'her music and singing examinations' (music was a most desirable aptitude) and whose father would give her £100.[40] However, not all girls could be encouraged to choose the Brigidines. Despite Father Patrick Raleigh's encouragement and his fervent wish that his sister would be under Mother General Gertrude Kelly's jurisdiction, he could not persuade her to change her choice of congregation for the Brigidines.[41]

The putative postulant faced two critical oral examinations before admission into the congregation, one by the superior and her assistant of the convent, the other by the bishop of the diocese. These interviews determined whether or not the applicant had the necessary attributes for the religious life. If the bishop was convinced of the applicant's qualities she was allowed to enter. If successful the applicant was received into the novitiate to enter her period of six months postulancy. An applicant lay sister had to spend at least two years on trial as a servant in the convent before being accepted to do a twelve month postulancy.

Guide and Director to the Postulant: The Mistress of Novices

Through her guidance and instruction, the mistress of novices was the key person in the life of the postulant. According to Delany, her office 'is the most important' in that she was responsible for the good order and preservation of the religious congregation as a whole.[42] Delany's own lengthy instructions on religious formation were quoted exactly in all Brigidine constitutions until 1922—he placed particular emphasis on the importance of obedience since, in obeying their superiors, they were obeying God.

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[40] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Ararat, 5 Jul. 1904, DA/BC/BGA/392.05.
[41] Father P. Raleigh, OSA to Mother Gertrude Kelly, Rome, 30 Oct. 1895, DA/BC/BGA/230.14. Raleigh was procurator for the Brigidines in Rome from 1892 to 1895.
[42] Guide of the Mistress of Novices, DA/BC/AIr/536; Bishop Delany to Sister Joseph Fitzpatrick, Tullow, 14 Jul. 1810, DA/GC/BGA/100.6. Mother Joseph was later appointed superior of Mountrath convent by Delany.

The next major source and reference for the duties of the novice mistress was that offered in 1856 by Father Edward Mulhall, former professor at Carlow College.[43] Because of his esteem for Mother Peter Stein, then superior and mistress of novices in Mountrath, he presented her with his own 'clear, concise, short and methodical manual on the duties of the mistress of novices'. He believed she would find in his book, in precise form, the answers of every point applicable to the guidance of novices.[44] In this respect Mulhall argued, as did Delany, that it is through the labours of the mistress of novices that religious congregations are renewed and perpetuated, the religious spirit regenerated, preserved and transmitted from generation to generation.[45] Kindness was also looked for in the mistress of novices by Bishop Byrne of Bathurst diocese, while at the same time she was 'enforcing strict observance of the rule which [he] regarded as the source of the charity and holy peace which reigns supreme in every well ordered community'.[46]

The mistress of novices role also demanded that she have the ability to be a true reader of character as her report to chapter on whether a postulant or novice was a fit person to become a member of the Brigidine community was crucial as the vocal religious (the sisters who had a vote) did not always know the character of the postulant or novice whose fate they were determining.[47] Novice mistress and superior Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat convent looked for a simple disposition in her novices so that they would become good, useful and docile sisters.[48] Through experience, she had found that while her Australian born novices were good and docile they lacked the discipline to develop the deep faith or spirit of self-sacrifice seen in many of the Irish novices.[49]

The assessment of the postulants 'readiness' was, in Mulhall's opinion, a 'terrible responsibility'.[50] He held that if the novice mistress made an 'inaccurate report' the nuns could admit a subject who did not have a vocation or, what was even more unforgivable,

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[43] Edward Mulhall retired from his position as a professor in Carlow College due to ill-health. He lived in Mountrath with his mother and died in 1857.
[44] Mulhall MS, 25 Mar. 1856, DA/BC/AIr/362.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Bishop Byrne, Parkes, to Mother John Synan, 17 Jun. 1889, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series 108.1/file 5.
[47] Mulhall MS, 1856; *Constitutions of the Sisters of St Brigid, Ireland*, 1828, 1850, 1892, 1922,
[48] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother Provincial Alacoque Bourke, Ararat, 25 Nov. 1893, DA/BC/BGA/392.04 & 7 Jun. 1895, DA/BC/BGA/392.06.
[49] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Ararat, 23 Feb. 1891, DA/BC/BGA/392.04.
[50] Mulhall MS, 1856; Mangion, *Contested Identities,* p.102.

that they could reject one who had a good and solid vocation. He warned if this happened what answer would she make to God? Such demanding accountability took a toll on health and some found that they were not suitable for the task. According to the Goresbridge Annals it was a 'charge' Mother Teresa Murphy 'dreaded'.[51] She was appointed novice mistress in Tullow convent in 1860. Within two years she was dead, or as the annals pointedly state, 'she laboured until her divine spouse freed her from the charge she dreaded'.[52] Mother Agnes Metcalfe resigned after two and a half years in office.

However, not all sisters 'dreaded' the office. One noted mistress of novices was Mother Joseph Walshe of Tullow convent. Appointed to the position in 1877, she was responsible for the training of postulants and novices for twenty-five years. Her success was seen in those who took their place 'in the ranks of those who [...] added glory to the name and fame of the Brigidines, as teachers [...] in Ireland, Australia and New Zealand'.[53] She was succeeded by Mother Xavier Roche, another gifted novice mistress, who held the position for years until her election as mother superior of Tullow convent. That the office was so challenging and onerous was also recognized in the constitutions where it was stated that, if it were at all feasible, the novice mistress should not have any other duty other than being mistress of novices.

One of the major objectives of the postulate and of the novice mistress was to complete and round out the postulant's Christian formation to the point at which she was capable of receiving a more strictly religious formative programme and ensure that the Christian foundation was there on which the religious life was to be built.[54] It gave time to the convent superior and the mistress of novices to assess the postulant's fitness for 'the rigours and privations of the spiritual, vocational and communal life'.[55] For many, the rigorous life of discipline and obedience was very hard particularly for those who were of a more 'independent spirit'.[56]

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[51] Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).
[52] Ibid. She died on 7 Jun. 1862.
[53] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[54] The postulancy, handwritten and unsigned notes, DA/BA/AIr/535.
[55] Mangion, *Contested Identities*, p.91.
[56] Sister Gloria Perez quoted in Carole Garibaldi Rogers, *Habits of Change: An Oral History of American Nuns* (Oxford, 2011), p.11.

In following their time-table postulants soon discerned the rigour and regularity required of them in their daily life of prayer, spiritual exercises, study, work and some participation in the community life. It provided the postulants with the opportunity to increase their awareness of personal responsibility and to develop their maturity. Every moment was accounted for—spiritual reading, spiritual classes, secular duties, teaching classes, choir practise, music and elocution lessons, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, with two periods of recreations and meal times.[57]

Throughout this period of training, the postulant's 'disposition' and her 'progress in virtue' were subtly monitored. According to Mulhall in her report to chapter at the end of the term of postulancy, the novice mistress had to take into consideration: what motives determined the postulant to enter the convent, what motives determined her to remain and how she conducted herself during her probation period.[58] If the postulant's progress was satisfactory she had to satisfy two further conditions before she could be received into the institute—she had to gain the consent of the bishop or his delegate and the consent of the vocal nuns.

Two months notice had to be given to the bishop to allow time for the canonical examination and for the chapter's vote. It was a period when many of the postulants lived in fear of being 'sent home'.[59] The purpose of the canonical examination was to protect the liberty of the postulant. Through it the bishop found whether her choice of religious life had been fully considered, or whether she had entered religious life through force, fear, mistake, or of her own free will and desire.[60] The chapter's decision, which took account of the novice mistress's detailed and exact report, was taken by secret vote. If the majority of the secret vote was in the postulant's favour she was permitted to begin her novitiate, otherwise, she was asked to leave. Some were deemed unsuitable for health reasons, others for not having the charism or aptitude to become a religious. In what must be one of the shortest periods of postulancy, Sarah Gaffney entered on 4 July 1865 and on 14 August 1865 'she returned home having no vocation'.[61]

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[57] MS on education and formation, DA/BC/BGA/700 (undated).
[58] Mulhall MS, 1856.
[59] A Day of Sharing History (Kilbreda, 16 Jun. 1984), DA/BC/BGA/632.01.
[60] Devine, *Convent Life*, p.43.
[61] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.

Up to 1850 the reception, or clothing ceremony, of a postulant and the profession ceremony of a novice were those of the Presentation Sisters, which Bishop Doyle gave to the Brigidine community 'to better their order' in 1828.[62] With Bishop Haly's permission these ceremonies were changed slightly to reflect the culture and work of the Brigidines. Reflecting centuries of Catholic tradition, the symbolism and sacredness attached to every facet of the rituals performed within the ceremony of reception, either publically in the parish church or privately in the convent chapel, were emblematic, Mangion states, of the visible transition from one state of life to another.[63] It also symbolically differentiated between the choir and lay sister—the former receiving the white veil, the latter receiving a cap.[64] For one young postulant, Brigid Murray, the ceremony of reception on 8 December 1853 had added significance in that she received the religious habit and the name Sister M Angela de Merici from her uncle, Bishop Haly.[65] The solemnity of the clothing ceremony at one reception was emphasized by Monsignor Murphy who declared to the postulants that 'it was in truth their wedding feast' while at another Archbishop Redwood of Wellington took the opportunity of the reception of New Zealanders Ulita Truman and Theodora Shapter and Irish girl Margaret Cooke to explain the importance of the nuns' vows and the 'excellence' of the religious state as the 'perfect life consecrated to the service of their Creator and the education of the children of the convent'.[66]

In signifying the transformation of the postulant into a novice, the reception ceremony (when the young postulants dressed in white dresses 'suitable to the rank they held in the world', left the lay state and were transformed into religious sisters) and the later ceremony of profession marked the most momentous events in the life of a religious and, as Mangion maintains, they were useful as a means of deepening the relationship between women religious and their congregation.[67]

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[62] Relatio Status (1829) of Bishop James Doyle. Copy supplied by Dr Thomas McGrath in DA/BC/AIr/uncatalogued notes of Sr Mary O'Riordan.
[63] Mangion, *Contested Identities,* p.96.
[64] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.
[65] Ibid.
[66] *Wairarapa Daily Times,* 13 Jul. 1906 (http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper) (12 Mar. 2013).
[67] Ceremony of Reception (1828), DA/BC/AIr/358; Mangion, *Contested Identities,* p.96.

Noviceship

Throughout her period of noviceship it was understood that the perfection of the novice came before perfection of the works (in this case teaching).[68] As Cardinal Suenens remarked, 'the Church wants her future religious to be Mary before being Martha so that later she can the better be Mary and Martha together in one vocation'.[69] Under the careful guidance of the novice mistress the novice would learn to 'know herself, to correct her faults, to discover the meaning and true values of her vows and of life in community' in preparation for the great day of profession and for the life of the faithful religious.[70] As an aid on this journey of discovery the novice was given a copy of the Constitution of the institute to read and study under the direction and guidance of the novice mistress. This would help provide her with an increased understanding of the spirituality and history of her own Brigidine institute.[71] Suenens stressed the importance of this time of spiritual formation:

> The girl who has just left the world to consecrate herself to God must start by getting away from the world she is leaving. She must discover for herself that which she has so far only perceived fleetingly—intimacy with God.

Religious perfection was built not only on prayer but also on two kinds of mortification—one of the spirit and the other of the body, the latter through penitential practices in force in the convent. The former was achieved through the weekly public avowal of faults. Brigidine custom was that only a mother superior could accuse a sister of any of twenty faults for example, not answering the bell immediately, making a noise in the cell or choir or walking heavily.[72] (See Notes) The observance of the rules could

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[68] Congress of novice mistresses, (n.d.), DA/BC/BGA/227/710.
[69] Suenens, *The Nun in the World*, p.139.
[70] Ibid.; MS typed and unsigned notes on the type of sister aimed for at training, DA/BC/AIr/535.
[71] Suenens, *The Nun in the World*, p.139.
[72] Custom and Regulation, DA/BC/BGA/528. The faults to be acknowledged were: not answering the bell immediately, coming late to choir, refectory and general recreations, being absent from regular observance without permission, showing reluctance to discharge any duty, neglecting an appointed duty, taking a drink or food out of meals without leave, speaking in times or places of silence, making a noise in the cell or choir, walking heavily throughout the convent, entering another cell without permission, untidiness in dress or cell, refusing to oblige a sister, speaking of the peculiarities or faults of a sister, contradicting or answering impatiently, wasting time on recreation days, not joining in the general recreations, remaining

lead to scrupulosity in a sister often leading to mental instability and admittance to mental hospital.[73]

Manual work, an important component of a novice's formation, was done in unquestioning obedience to the will of a superior. Such tasks as dusting, waxing corridors, shining brasses, 'peeling peas, beans, pears and apples, sewing and mending, making cream cloaks and habits' were all performed to 'complete the divine will'.[74] While Mangion states that the 'dutiful performance of manual labour showed the resilience of the postulant, this 'self-abnegation' or 'the perfection of ordinary actions', as O'Riordan termed it, became, O'Riordan argues, 'a kind of lodestar by which Brigidines were to define the 'ordinariness' of doing each thing as if it were the only one to be done'.[75] However, while some postulants and novices felt 'the pain of the novitiate' and the 'inhumanness of some of the rules they had to keep' it was more than made up for by the companionship and the 'strong bond of friendship forged as they 'battled' through novitiate in, as one Australian nun put it, the 'spirit of the Anzac'.

At the end of two years of unbroken training (any absence, except by dispensation, meant that it had to be repeated) the novice choir or lay sister had to make a formal request in writing to make her final vows.[76] As with the reception of a postulant, two months notice had to be given to the bishop to allow time for the canonical examination and for the chapter's vote—it was not always favourable. One novice, Anastasia Kinsella, who did not receive the necessary votes from the Goresbridge community in 1885, was on Bishop Lynch's instruction, allowed to continue with her novitiate in Abbeyleix convent and successfully petitioned to have her votes taken for profession which took place on 30 November 1886.[77] Some thirty years earlier novice mistress Mother Joseph Walshe had 'the great happiness' of making her vows in the presence of her uncle, the newly consecrated Bishop Walshe.[78]

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with a visitor beyond the prescribed time, speaking of the advice received in confession or from superior, Speaking of the subject of particular examen, speaking of general or particular reproof.

[73] Mountrath Profession Register, DA/BC/Air.

[74] A Day of Sharing.

[75] Mangion, *Contested Identities*, p.92; O'Riordan, DA/BC/AIr/uncatalogued notes of Mary O'Riordan. Blue folder, unnumbered

[76] Father Alphonsus Walsh to Mother Gertrude Kelly, Rome, 13 Oct.1907, DA/BC/BGA/230.15.

[77] Abbeyleix annals, DA/BC/AIr/18.

[78] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508.

As with the ceremony of reception, the profession ceremony (which was the same for both choir and lay sister) was replete with symbolism and ritual, which, Mangion maintains, reflected the importance of the change in identity from novice to professed sister.[79] Especially chosen hymns, versicles, and psalms were used throughout the ceremony with profession taking place after the Communion of the Mass when the novice pronounced her vows. Once the Act of Profession was signed the novice then received the veil from the celebrating bishop or priest. There is a symbolic power in the ritual of changing the veil from white to black, as there is in the emotional impact of the antiphon, *Veni Sponsa Christi*, 'Come spouse of Christ, receive the crown which the Lord hath prepared for thee in eternity' as the celebrant places the veil on the novice's head and intones the words: 'Receive the holy veil, the emblem of chastity and modesty, which may thou carry before the judgement seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou may have eternal life, and may live forever and ever'. There is also the visual sign that the professed novice has entered a heavenly marriage bond with the placing of a ring by the celebrant on her third finger.[80]

For the newly professed the wearing of the religious habit was and is 'a significant symbol of identity' and signified to the nuns of all congregations, to priests, and to the general public, that the woman wearing it lived a dedicated, holy chaste life.[81] For the Australian sisters the habit also asserted their Catholicity at a particularly trying time for the Catholic church.

Establishment of Central Novitiates

Not only was postulancy and noviceship strictly regulated, so also was the place of the novitiate.[82] Under amalgamation, a central novitiate for the Irish houses and another for the Australian houses was a prerequisite but it meant the loss to each house of novices to teach in the schools. With the Irish Brigidine convents situated in one diocese and under the direction of Bishop Lynch, amalgamation did not create any serious problems and on 22 August 1889 it was decided at general chapter that Tullow convent, as the mother

[79] Mangion, *Contested Identities,* p.105.
[80] The Order of the Ceremony of Profession (1874), DA/BC/AIr/535.
[81] Mangion, *Contested Identities*, p.98; A Day of Sharing; Rogers, *Habits of Change*, p.xi.
[82] Vermeersch, Novice.

house, should be the novitiate house and the novitiates in the other convents be closed. Thenceforth, the decision on the reception of a postulant and the profession of a novice was taken by the mother general and her council in Tullow and in the Australian provinces by their respective mother provincials and councils. However, Mountrath novitiate remained open until the three subjects training for the Australian mission (Sisters Fintan Dunne, Francis Humphreys and Augustine Brennan) had completed their noviceship.[83] The transfer of the novices from the other convents according to one account proved to be a 'severe and testing time' for them.[84] While they were given the choice of completing their novitiate in Tullow or 'returning to the world' the white novices 'willingly made the sacrifice'.[85] Bishop James Lynch was pleased with the working of the new rule of amalgamation and declared that 'it is delightful to see our community here of young novices all trained by our experienced sisters in uniform observance'. He found that the major disadvantage of separate independent communities was finding fit persons to be mistresses of novices.[86]

The Australian Central Novitiate

While the place for the central novitiate was settled apparently amicably in Ireland, this was not the case in Australia. From the beginning Mother John Synan, the provincial for all of Australia, understood the importance of having a central provincialate and novitiate in a city and away from the small inland 'bush' towns where they were situated.[87] It meant that the congregation could also establish a large school where, crucially, the novices would be trained as 'good and efficient teachers as well as good religious'.[88] In this they would be following the example of other congregations like the Sisters of Charity who had their headquarters in Sydney and the Loreto sisters who had foundations in Melbourne and Sydney. However, Bishop Byrne of Bathurst urged caution on Mother John as none of the country convents in either New South Wales

[83] Tullow annals, DA/BC/AIr/508; Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[84] Goresbridge annals, DA/BC/AIr/232(2).
[85] Ibid. The white novices were Sisters Gertrude Phelan and Teresa Kennedy from Mountrath, Bernardine Treacy and Bertrand Kerr from Abbeyleix and Columba Tierney from Goresbridge.
[86] Bishop James Lynch to Mother Catherine O'Farrell, Tullow, 10 Sept. 1890, BPA/Vic/Wang/ Box 559A.
[87] Mother John Synan to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Coonamble, 3 Dec. 1893, BPA/NSW/Box 51.
[88] Byrne to Synan, 4 Oct 1893, BPA/NSW/Box 11/Series108.1/File5

(two) or Victoria (five) were suitable for a central novitiate. His advice was to 'let things stand as they were' unless 'otherwise directed by mother general'.[89]

This was the position when the first provincial council met on 24 February 1894 in Echuca. With no room in any house for a central novitiate, the cost of building a new novitiate or a further extension could not have been welcomed by any of the already debt burdened convents.[90] Although Mother Benedict Moore of Echuca convent pointed out the urgency of making the decision on a central novitiate as soon as possible, suggesting Echuca as the only suitable place, the majority, including the mother provincial, were against it.[91] Mother Stanislaus Nolan agreed with mother provincial's proposal that the novitiate be in Melbourne, 'where', in Mother Stanislaus' view, 'the novices would have the benefit of spiritual direction and instruction from professors'—a view held generally by the bishops, priests and mother provincial.[92] Mothers Ursula Phelan and Patricia Fogarty were of the opinion that, as the object of the general novitiate was to effect unity, the houses ought to support each other—a fact that got lost in the ensuing years of debate.[93] It was the unanimous opinion of the council that, until the central novitiate was established, the training of the novices would have to be carried on as of old.[94] The whole matter was referred back to the mother general for her opinion. But the failure to come to a decision was a matter of concern for Mother John and in reply to her letter, Byrne advised her to write to Cardinal Moran seeking a place for a central novitiate in Sydney and if she failed there to write to Archbishop Carr for a place in Melbourne.[95] Again he cautioned her not to be 'too anxious to hurry the work' but to 'build slowly that she build strongly'. Notwithstanding Byrne's optimism, the failure of the provincial council to come to any sort of decision allowed the matter to drift. It became a source of discontent between the different convents, of displeasure for the bishops of Victoria, particularly Bishop James Moore of Ballarat, and a matter of considerable stress for Mother General Gertrude Kelly in Tullow and the sisters of Ararat convent, the only

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[89] Ibid., 10 Oct. 1893, BPA/NSW/TL.
[90] Bishop Martin Crane to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, Sandhurst, 20 Apr. 1894, DA/BC/BGA/373.301.
[91] Australian council meeting, 13 Feb. 1894, DA/BC/BGA/702.1
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Byrne to Synan, Mar. 1894, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series 108.1/File 5.

Brigidine convent in Ballarat diocese, because of Bishop Moore's determination to keep on the novitiate in the Ararat convent. Mother General Kelly's lack of understanding of the conditions, vastness and climate of the two colonies, the slowness of communication between Ireland and Australia and between Victoria and New South Wales were other contributory factors in the delay in reaching agreement on the place for a novitiate.

Moreover, for many of the bishops, seen as ecclesiastical father figures in a convent, a congregation having a central novitiate meant a certain loss of the control and authority they held over their diocesan novitiates. The elderly Bishop Martin Crane of Sandhurst diocese would 'not allow the removal of novices to Cowra which he believed would to be to detriment of the convents in his diocese'.[96] Mother John had made Cowra the provisional central novitiate in 1893 just before her visit to Ireland. In late 1894 'the little unassuming town' of Rochester in the Sandhurst diocese (canonically sanctioned from Rome on 12 March 1895) was appointed by the general council as the central novitiate for the Australian province.[97] Despite papal sanction, Bishop Crane was not happy with the decision and continued to write to the mother general about the climate and particularly on the cost and financial risk of building a large novitiate to accommodate novices and the lack of support of the people for it.[98] Rochester had only a population of 500 of which, one-fifth was Catholic, the rest was Protestant.[99]

Bishop James Moore of Ballarat

If the question of the site of the central novitiate was a cause of concern for Bishop Crane (who had four Brigidine convents in his diocese) it was also one for Bishop Moore of Ballarat who, with only one Brigidine convent in his diocese at Ararat, was discommoded when Rochester was chosen as the central novitiate. He appeared to consider it a personal slight that the novices of his diocese were required to be trained in the Sandhurst diocese. Moore was, 'according to his friend Dean Goidanich, gracelessly

[96] Crane to Mother General, 20 Apr. 1894, DA/BC/BGA/373.301.
[97] Rochester annals 1893–1986, DA/BC/BGA/522.056.
[98] Crane to Mother General, 13 May 1895, DA/BC/BGA/373.301.
[99] Robert Meade to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, 21 May 1895, DA/BC/BGA/374.1.

conscious of the dignity and power of his office, more than any bishop in Australia'.[100] One can, however, understand, his annoyance given that he had used his influence with Archbishop Carr of Melbourne (at Mother John's request) to open up the archdiocese to the Brigidines with the offer of Essenden as a site for a central novitiate.[101] For some reason (possibly the home authorities did not approve) the offer was not taken up.

Moore's annoyance over Rochester was such that he sent the following telegram to Tullow on 15 May 1895: 'Disappointed arrangements; if carried out close convent, agreement violated, writing'.[102] Five days later he sent the following broadside to the mother general:

> A more unfortunate spot could not have been chosen, even by an enemy. The climate is about the worst in Australia....To build on such a locality, I cannot help saying no sane person would think of it.... It is the very far end of the colony, and therefore, the expense of going to and from there will always be heavy.[103]

Although Griffin states that Moore was 'quick-tempered, vigilant and ruthless', nevertheless, Moore wanted the best for the Ararat community and Rochester could not provide it.[104] It was too far away from Melbourne and its professors who could provide the same tuition for the novices and *the sisters from home* as the Loreto sisters were receiving in Ballarat [Moore's emphasis]. To drive home the point he declared that the three Loreto schools in his diocese were educating the children of the *leading Catholics* of the Sandhurst diocese even though she had four convents there [Moore's emphasis].[105] For the Brigidines Melbourne '*should be the place* [...] near professors and a centre for every house in the colony' [Moore's emphasis].[106] Despite his good will towards the congregation if Mother Gertrude Kelly (as novice mistress) and the novices were sent to Rochester he would have no compunction in closing the convent and finding another

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[100] James Griffin, 'Moore, James (1834–1904)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University (http://adb,anu.edu.au/biography/moore-james-4233text6829) (13 Jan. 2013).
[101] Bishop James Moore to Mother John Synan, Maryborough, Apr. 1894, BPA/NSW/Box 11/series 108.1/6c.
[102] Moore to Mother General Kelly, 15 May 1895, DA/BC/BGA/373.301.
[103] Ibid., 20 May 1895.
[104] Griffin, 'Moore, James.'
[105] Moore to Mother General Kelly, 20 May 1895.
[106] Ibid.

congregation to replace them. The loss of Mother Gertrude and the novices meant a loss of teachers.

Robert Meade, parish priest of Ararat also took up the cudgels and pointed out that the Ararat schools were in competition with the Ballarat schools whose buildings were 'palatial and whose prestige was supreme' nevertheless, the sisters were 'acquiring [...] a name that would [...] make Ararat convent one of the most important houses of the order'.[107] There were over 170 children in the schools, of whom, between sixty and seventy belonged to the boarding and select schools. He drew her attention to the 'foolishness of leaving the education of all these in the hands of four nuns'.[108] In Meade's further opinion the 'frying pan' of Rochester was no place for a central novitiate—its climate was so bad for four or five months of the year that it had earned itself the title 'the frying pan of the colony'.[109]

Ararat superior, Mother Gertrude Kelly also added to the chorus of disapproval and declared Rochester to be 'extreme folly'. It would cause 'unpleasantness' with Bishop Moore if the general novitiate was in 'bush' places. She too opted for Melbourne, as 'it had every facility for religion and secular training. [...] It was most convenient for all Victoria, at least, and even for New South Wales. [...] It was preferable to Sydney for climate'.[110] The location of a central novitiate was not resolved until the decision was taken to divide Australia into two separate provinces.

The great distances between convents, the financial outlay on journeys between them and particularly the educational divergences between the New South Wales and Victorian colonies were insurmountable obstacles to the continuance of Australia as one province.[111] Mother John Synan's visitation of the five Victorian communities in 1894 confirmed her belief that central jurisdiction was impractical. The general council in Tullow, on receiving Mother John's conclusions, decided in May 1895 on two provinces, New South Wales (which included New Zealand whose system of education was similar) with Mother John Synan as provincial superior and Victoria, with Mother

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[107] Meade to Mother General kelly, Ararat, Vic., 21 May 1895, DA/BC/BGA/374.1.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother General Gertrude Kelly, 27 May 1895 DA/BC/BGA392.06.
[111] Barron, *Vicissitudes of the Brigidine novitiate of the Victorian province.*

Alacoque Bourke of Wangaratta convent as provincial superior and mistress of novices. This separation was canonically approved by papal rescript in 1896.[112] Each province was to have its own mother house and central novitiate, with Coonamble in New South Wales and Echuca in Victoria designated as such in 1896, this despite both places 'peculiar climatic discomforts'. The 'Rochester novitiate fiasco' was no more and instead priority was given to Echuca, it 'being larger and more suitable' than Rochester.[113] Nevertheless the division of Australia into two provinces did not find agreement with Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat who feared that having two provincials would not promote charity. The Loreto sisters and the Sisters of Charity who were as widespread as the Brigidines managed with one and she questioned why they could not.[114]

New Victorian Provincial

Mother Alacoque Bourke was twenty-three years professed when she was appointed Victorian provincial. Other than her appointment as superior of Wangaratta convent in October 1892 by Bishop Crane she had not held any other posts of responsibility.[115] In this she was unlike Mother John who spent twelve of her thirty years in Mountrath convent as bursar before she was selected by Bishop James Lynch in 1883 to lead the first Brigidine mission to Australia. On the basis of one letter written by Mother Alacoque Bourke to Bishop Moore, Father Meade was very dismissive of her to her mother general:

> I have seen her letter to Dr Moore. It is not that of an educated woman. To place her in the position she now occupies is to court defeat, collapse and disaster of the whole order in Victoria

[112] Ibid.
[113] Meade to Mother Provincial Bourke, Ararat, 29 Jul. 1896, DA/BC/BGA/374.31; Barron, *Vicissitudes of the Brigidine novitiate of the Victorian province*; Rochester annals, 1896.
[114] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother General Kelly, 27 May 1895.
[115] Record of the Sisters of St Brigid who died in the province of Victoria, BPA/Echuca/Evi/B14/Box Misc.

> in the very near future. You at home think anything is good enough for the colonies. In this you are very much mistaken.[116]

Bishop Moore stated that he could make 'nothing of his letter from the provincial' but that he was 'sure she is fully suitable'. [117] Her writing style lacked the expression and clarity of Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat but in no way is it that of an uneducated woman, rather it was written more in the oral tradition. It was probably hard for Mother Alacoque Bourke, called the somewhat derisory 'Sandhurst Provincial' by Moore and Meade, to take over the reins of power from such a strong personality as Mother John. Their seeming disregard for Mother Alacoque as Victorian provincial (they regretted 'the restriction of Mother John's jurisdiction') probably exacerbated their dispute over the location of the central novitiate at Echuca as they appear to have bypassed her to deal directly with the mother general.[118] Nevertheless, Mother Alacoque Bourke had the confidence of the mother general and her council and served as provincial from 1895 to 1908.[119]

Echuca Novitiate (1896–1907)

The establishment of Echuca as the novitiate was considered not only by Bishop Moore but also by the priests as a completely unsuitable location. One experienced Australian Jesuit, who was directing a young aspirant for the Brigidines, praised the order but declared that 'the novitiate was in the worst spot in Victoria'.[120] While Moore wanted mother general to appoint a provincial superior and a separate central novitiate for the diocese of Ballarat (in his opinion he could easily get a dispensation from Rome), this was not his ideal solution, his preference was for a central novitiate in Melbourne.[121] The

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[116] Meade to Mother General, Ararat, 21 May 1895. In the opinion of author her writing style lacked the expression and clarity of Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat, however, according to Dr Derek Coyle it is in no way that of an uneducated woman, rather it was written more in the oral tradition.
[117] Moore to Mother General Kelly, Ballarat, 20 May 1895, DA/BC/BGA/373.301.
[118] Meade to Mother General Kelly, Ararat, 21 May 1895, DA/BC/BGA/374.1.
[119] General Council Book, DA/BC/BGA/350 & General Chapter, DA/BC/AIr/894.
[120] Mother Joseph Cooper to Mother General Kelly, Beechmount, 28 Jul. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/203.04.
[121] Moore to Mother General Kelly, Ballarat, 30 Dec 1896, DA/BC/BGA/373.301.

archbishop was still willing to give them a place in Melbourne.[122] However, there is no material extant as to whether there was a definite offer from him.

Bishop Moore remained adamant on not allowing the novices go to the central novitiate at Echuca. He would profess them contrary to the Brigidine rules on novitiate. On 2 September 1897, mother general wrote to the Ararat House Council of her displeasure that they had professed a sister without the votes of the Mother Provincial and her council.[123] Her unhappiness with the continuing situation in Ararat is clear in her reminder to the council that novices must be trained in the central novitiate and that she could not give permission to any convent to retain novices.[124] Moreover, she further reminded the sisters that it was only on condition of their having a central government and central novitiate that approbation was given to the congregation.[125] There was every reason for her anxiety over Ararat convent's non-observance of the rule on novices as the rules and customs of the congregation were on trial for a period of five years before final approbation of the congregation would be considered.[126]

Although on 19 July 1898 mother general directed Ararat that all novices must transfer to Echuca, Bishop Moore continued with his campaign to have the central novitiate in his diocese or in Melbourne. On 10 October 1900 Mother Josephine informed mother general that Bishop Moore would offer them new foundations at Koroit and Maryborough on condition that he would be allowed to form his diocese as a separate province and that she empower them to open the two houses. However, mother general's granting of permission for the foundation in Koriot coincided with a letter from Doctor Kelly of the Irish College, Rome, informing Moore that it was mother general who had the right to apply to Rome for permission to form a province and not the bishop.[127] Moore believed that she would not do so and withdrew the offer of Koriot.[128]

On 1 February 1901 mother general stated her views to Mother Josephine:

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[122] Moore to Provincial Alacoque Bourke, Ballarat, 18 Feb. 1896, DA/BC/BGA/373.301.
[123] Mother General Gertrude Kelly to Ararat House Council, Tullow, 2 Sept. 1897, O'Riordan, *Pathfinders,* iii, p.74.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Prior Patrick Glynn to Mother General Kelly, Rome, 9 Jun. 1892, DA/BC/BGA/230.13. Glynn acted as the Brigidine agent in Rome.
[127] Mother Josephine Clancy to Mother General Kelly, Ararat, 28 Aug. 1901, DA/BC/BGA/392.06.
[128] Ibid.

> It ought to be clear on all sides, in my opinion, that the decision of Rome [she had sent a cablegram to Rome on the matter] has to be awaited, before taking any steps in dividing the province—which has been established by its authority. The bringing of the novices from the novitiate to Ararat, where as yet there is not a novitiate by permission from Rome would be an act beyond my power to authorize.[129]

In response to this statement Mother Josephine wrote in April 1901 that the bishop agreed to abide by the existing regulations for novices, however, she believed that if the novitiate was in Melbourne he would give up his drive to create another province.[130] The following month Moore sought a brief from Rome to form a new province and, pending permission, he asked mother general to allow Ararat to be *governed directly from home* [Moore's emphasis]. To forward the process in Rome in July 1902 Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat wrote to mother general asking her to petition Rome for the province stating that 'it was all in her hands and in the common interest of all'.[131] Bishop Moore received sanction for a novitiate in Ararat in October 1903 but not for a province. As the diocese did not have the status of a province neither had the novitiate that of being a central novitiate. Both the bishop and Mother Gertrude Kelly were said to be disappointed at not having a province sanctioned.[132] Within nine months the bishop was dead. He died on 26 June 1904.

It would be another four years before Archbishop Carr gave permission for the establishment of the general novitiate for Victoria in Mentone—the Echuca nuns had established a convent there in 1904.[133] The rescript from Rome was received by him on 2 June 1907. Mentone, known as the 'Queen of the Watering Places', was noted for its revitalizing and bracing sea air and it was this fact which made it the logical place to transfer the novices.[134] It was suspected that some promising novices had already contracted tuberculosis from the nearby sanatorium in Echuca.[135] In addition to the benefit to the novices' health they received an educational benefit by being near to the

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[129] Mother General Kelly to Mother Josephine Clancy, Tullow, 1 Feb. 1901 in O'Riordan, *Pathfinders*, iii, p. 76.
[130] Clancy to Mother General Kelly, Ararat, Apr. 1901, in O'Riordan, *Pathfinders*, iii, p. 76.
[131] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother General Kelly, Ararat, 23 Jul. 1902, DA/BC/BGA/392.05.
[132] Mother Provincial Bourke to Mother General Kelly, Rochester 15 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.
[133] Echuca annals, Echuca convent, photocopied 2010.
[134] Mentone annals 1904-1981, DA/BC/BGA/522.049.
[135] Sturrock, *Women of Strength*, p.49.

higher educational facilities of Melbourne—Loreto Central Catholic Training College and the nearby University of Melbourne. [136] Access to higher education was an urgent consideration since, under the Registration of Teachers and Schools Act 1905 Brigidine sisters needed higher level qualifications. In 1907 two sisters attended the nearby University of Melbourne in pursuance of Bachelor of Arts degrees and Diplomas of Education.[137]

New South Wales Central Novitiate

The general novitiate in New South Wales was established with less difficulty. As early as 1894 we know from Bishop Byrne's letters that the newly elected Australian Provincial, Mother John Synan, had been granted permission by Cardinal Moran to establish a foundation at Mossman Bay, Sydney, which would act as the seat of government and central novitiate for the Brigidines in Australia.[138] Significantly, she was given the freedom to choose any place in or around Sydney, which she thought suitable for her purposes. But, and it was a large but, giving permission to enter his archdiocese was the only thing the Cardinal would do for any congregation—the archdiocese would not provide any financial assistance.[139]

Bishop Byrne, who believed that they had a great future in Australia, advised Mother General Gertrude Kelly that the property would be a good investment in that it would establish the Brigidines on a permanent footing in Australia and, moreover, they would have the powerful protection of Cardinal Moran. Despite his encouragement, mother general and her council in Tullow were unwilling to fund the project leaving the unsuitably situated Cowra convent as the provisional central novitiate. Mother John had established Cowra as such while she was absent in Ireland for a general council meeting in 1893.[140] This was because there was no novice mistress in Coonamble as novice mistress Mother Alacoque Miller was one of the founding pioneers of Cowra and the white novices had to accompany her there.

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[136] Mentone annals 1904–81, DA/BC/BGA/522.049.
[137] Mentone HCM, BPA/Vic/Box 539B; Barron, A survey of the Victorian province.
[138] Bishop Byrne to Mother General Kelly, Bathurst, May 1894, DA/BC/BGA/374.201; Whitby, *Stone Upon Stone*, p.4.
[139] Bishop Byrne to Mother General Kelly, Bathurst, May 1894, DA/BC/374.201.
[140] Ibid.

In September 1897 Bishop Byrne did not mince his words to mother general on the question of the novitiate remaining at Cowra:

> It was evident to me that Cowra could not continue to support the novitiate as well as the sisters required in the schools. Secondly I instructed Mother John to remove her novitiate back again to Coonamble until a more suitable place could be found.

[The novitiate was closed on 28 July 1897 after the profession of novices: Sisters Xavier Kenny, Claver Cooke and Frances de Chantal Coady.]

> When the novices were sent to Cowra it was thought that in a short time they would go to Sydney. Unfortunately this arrangement fell through owing to you refusing to help with a loan. [...] You would not have lost a penny or run any risk and you would have placed your congregation on a footing with all the other religious congregations in Australia....[141]

He pointed out how anxious Cardinal Moran was to see them settled in Sydney but, as it was, they would have to struggle in their country houses:

> Hoping against hope that someday before our great Irish cardinal dies, and is succeeded by an English prelate, some of their friends may give them a helping hand to enable them to establish themselves in Sydney.[142]

He fired another warning shot across her bow this time on the advantages of having a general congregation for which he could see none:

> Perhaps, dear mother, you may supply me with some good reasons for their remaining united. [...] In advocating the establishment of the Sisters of St Brigid in Sydney, I have solely the interest of the congregation in view. Personally and as far as my diocese is concerned I could gain nothing and I would lose Mother M. John and Mother M. Alacoque and the best sisters I have in the diocese.[143]

He concluded his letter by signing himself as 'her very sincere, even if too candid friend in Jesus Christ'. In December 1897 he sought a loan from mother general for Mother John to purchase a place in Sydney from where the novices could be 'well taught the art of teaching and be up to date with the secular education provided by the best of the high

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[141] Ibid., 9 Sept. 1897.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.

class schools'. In an effort to persuade her he cited (as had Bishop Moore some four years earlier) the Loreto sisters as an example of what the Brigidines could attain if only given the chance:

> The Loreto nuns came out from Ireland to Victoria a few years ago, talented and accomplished indeed, but not a whit more of finish than your own sisters. They at first employed professors to teach classics etc. but now they can dispense with these professors because they have in their community sisters who themselves have taken their degrees of BA and MA in the university. I anticipate a like success for our sisters of St Brigid if once they get their novitiate in Sydney.[144]

As further persuasion he referred to Mother John's excellent skills as a financial manager and hoped that her (mother general's) 'good bishop's guardian angel would persuade him (Bishop Foley) to think twice before he refused to allow her to lend the necessary funds for the purchase of a Sydney house'.[145] As an added measure he suggested that she (mother general) should come out to Sydney to establish the novitiate. In doing so, the Australian sisters would feel that she understood and sympathized with them in their hardships and difficulties and that 'they then would have more confidence in following her advice and directions'.[146] Again he met with no success—Bishop Foley was particularly cautious in spending home monies.

Coonamble continued as the central novitiate for New South Wales but it did not attract many postulants. Father Brophy, its parish priest, reasoned its lack of success was that 'its climate was much better calculated to give one velocity for departure'.[147] Moreover, it was obvious, that Coonamble could not provide the spiritual and educational facilities necessary for the training of the young religious. Accordingly, the indomitable Mother John continued her search for a suitable property in Sydney while at the same time sending a community to make a foundation in Masterton, New Zealand. Although Bishop Byrne believed that it was a 'good thing that they were spreading to the end of the earth', he declared that it would be far more advantageous to the Brigidines if they established 'a great centre of light and learning in Sydney' and he remained puzzled

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[144] Ibid., 26 Dec. 1897.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Father Brophy to Mother John Synan, 1898, BPA/NSW/Series 108.5/ correspondence with priests.

as to why they were not receiving 'practical encouragement from home'.[148] Three years later, on 12 January 1901, the bishop died and Mother John lost her stalwart friend and adviser.

The task of establishing a novitiate lay in abeyance until 1901 when Mother John wrote to Cardinal Moran asking for a vacancy in Sydney where 'she could open even a small place for a beginning'.[149] In the words of Monsignor Denis O'Haran, Cardinal Moran's secretary, 'the Cardinal made room for a foundation of the Brigidines at Randwick'.[150] Coonamble's last profession and reception ceremonies took place on the 7 October 1901—Sister Gabriel Noone received the habit and Sisters Anthony Faulkner and Philomena Maloney made their vows.[151] Within two days of the ceremonies Mother Alacoque Miller and her three novices made the 'long and arduous journey' to their new home 'Strathallen', Randwick. Their arrival on the 12 October 1901 is marked as the foundation day for the relocation of the novitiate in Randwick.[152]

There is an enlightening but humorous record of the difficulties and sacrifices faced by that first Randwick community in their new but totally unsuitable home:

> On the ground floor were two rooms separated by folding doors. These rooms were used as classrooms during the day and as a novitiate after school hours. There was a small dining room which had also to undergo a daily metamorphosis to enable it to serve the double purpose of providing a place for infants to partake of their first crumbs of knowledge and the sisters of their mid-day meal. The second storey was reached by two flights of stairs. Here was the chapel, a small room looking on to the front street, and an equally small reception room and balcony overlooking a tiny backyard.

Age was no bar in facing the discomforts of Strathallen:

> Sleeping accommodation was on the third storey. It consisted of two bedrooms and three mattresses. This of course provided a certain amount of variety in the sleeping quarters and saved the more adventurous spirits from the monotony of sleeping in the same place every night. In fact,

[148] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 3 Nov. 1898, BPA/NSW/Box 11/Series 108.1
[149] Randwick annals, BPA/NSW/Box 91/Series 114.3.15/Item 2.
[150] O'Haran, *Reminiscences of the Brigidine Nuns,* SSA.
[151] Coonamble annals.
[152] Whitby, *Stone Upon Stone*, p.6.

> the whole community must have appreciated this little 'break' for the foundress herself in spite of her age, regularly took her turn on the floor.[153]

Ever after these first novices were known as the 'Lofties'. Though the account is amusing in its depiction of life at Strathallen, such was the lack of financial resources in the convent that providing food is said to have made 'a first class economist of the novice who had charge of the pantry shelves'. Within fourteen months they were in Aeolia, the Daintry estate in Randwick, which, in time, and renamed Mount St Brigid, became their novitiate for New South Wales and New Zealand. By 1903 it was a fully functioning novitiate with eight unprofessed sisters.[154]

New Zealand

From the outset Mother Gertrude Banahan, superior of Masterton convent (1898) sought permission for a novitiate voicing her grave concern about the distance from Masterton to the central novitiate at Coonamble—a round trip of some 3,166 miles including a lengthy sea-voyage and an equally long journey over 'awful country'.[155] There was also the expense to be considered and she worried that the subjects would not pay their novitiate pension, outfit, and railway, steamer, coach fares etc.[156] The dislike of the New Zealanders for Australia was a cultural factor that had also to be taken into account. For those reasons she feared that expecting young girls to travel to Coonamble to do their noviceship would have disagreeable consequences for the fledgling community.

Archbishop Redwood had also shown his disquiet about the subjects making such 'a perilous trip' and warned that 'they would see about it'.[157] Alarmed and anxious she stated frankly to her mother general that she considered the archbishop: 'An arbitrary man [...] who would act in our regard as he has with regard to other orders in the archdiocese, namely make them purely diocesan or send them whence they came'. She mentioned the Sisters of St Joseph as a case in point. The archbishop would not allow

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[153] Randwick Archives, BPA/NSW/Box 26/Series 114.1/Item 14.
[154] Garaty, *Providence Provides*, p.59.
[155] Mother Gertrude Banahan to Mother General Kelly, Masterton, 18 Sept. 1899, DA/BC/BGA/383.01; Dean J. McKenna to Mother General Kelly, Masterton, 2 Apr. 1900, DA/BC/BGA/Formation/Education/NZ/703.
[156] Banahan to Kelly, 18 Sept. 1899.
[157] Ibid.

their postulants to make their novitiate in New South Wales and, instead, placed the congregation under diocesan jurisdiction. Her agitation and fear that the New Zealand Brigidines could be reverted back to being a diocesan congregation by the archbishop was such that she declared:

> If I were to follow the bent of my own feelings I'd much rather go back to New South Wales than remain in New Zealand but it would look like *failure* to do that, and we would not like to break with the other nuns of our institute by being made diocesan. We consider our present isolated state quite enough.[158]

Mother General Kelly, nevertheless, did not reply immediately to give permission for a novitiate. Delays in communication delayed the process. On 28 April 1902, Mother Gertrude Banahan received a letter from the archbishop stating that Rome had granted him authority to establish the novitiate in Masterton.[159] In late February 1903, in the presence of the assembled community in the chapel, Dean McKenna read the indult (faculty) he received from Archbishop Redwood canonically establishing their house as a novitiate.[160] Difficulty with Dean McKenna over the ownership of the convent property delayed the building of an extension to accommodate the new postulants. In December 1903 the novitiate opened with Mother Joseph Flahavan as novice mistress. The first postulants were Theodora Shapter and Ulita Truman who entered on Christmas Day 1903 and Margaret Cooke, Queen's County, Ireland who entered on 10 January 1904 having left Ireland the previous November.[161]

Conclusion

Brigidine religious life provided a novice with the means through study, spiritual exercises and manual labour ('that great equalizer') to become a 'spouse of Christ'. It also gave, at a time when there were little career options open to a woman, a life of fulfilment as either a primary or secondary school teacher if she was a choir sister or, if a lay sister, fulfilment in taking care of the household duties of the convent—a vital support for the life of the convent.

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[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid. 3 Jun. 1902.
[160] Ibid. 3 Mar.1903.
[161] Masterton annals 1897-1980, DA/BC/BGA/523.008

Where the candidates underwent their novitiate was regulated by canon law. As has been discussed this did not present any problem to the Irish houses (they were all in the one diocese) when they amalgamated, but proved to be an almost intractable problem for the amalgamated Australian houses due almost entirely to distance and to the intransigence of some of the Australasian bishops in their different dioceses. Over and above this, probably the greatest handicap in establishing the general novitiate in Australia and later when it was divided into two provinces was the lack of funding from Ireland—the debt burdened Australian houses did not have the financial resources or probably the will (or 'charity') to come together and make a general novitiate a reality. One sister claimed that this lack of will 'in not agreeing and not working together was bringing shame on them' and making them 'the talk and laughing stock of the country'.[162] Its importance as a factor in the loss of subjects to other congregations with novitiates in Sydney and Melbourne cannot be underestimated. Lack of subjects created difficulties for convents in making further affiliations.

The interest or otherwise of the bishops (many of whom preferred to keep their religious congregations as diocesan and thereby subject to their control) played a significant role in the struggle for definitive approbation for the institute as did the obligatory amalgamation of the houses. However, throughout this process, as is discussed in the next chapter, one voice was not heard that of the lay sister. Her position in the community is examined as is the kindly interest shown by some Australian bishops to her position.

[162] Mother Vincent Brennan to Mother General Kelly, Echuca, 8 Dec.1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.06

CHAPTER 8

1807–1907

THE STRUGGLE FOR APPROBATION AND THE UNHEARD VOICE OF THE LAY SISTER

'Constitutions, of their nature, are a bilateral document in which both the institute and the Church play necessary and complementary parts. The institute produces the text; the Church approves it; and both dimensions are essential.... A constitution determines the specificity of the institute ... [it is] the touchstone of unity, since they are what all the members have in common no matter what their culture, age, nationality or period of history'.[1] Despite the importance attached to the Constitution, it took a 100 years for the Brigidines to become a fully legitimated religious institute when, in 1907 the year of their centenary, they gained definitive papal approbation for the rules and constitutions which governed their religious life. Indeed, Devine regarded definitive approbation as 'a kind of canonization given to the rules and constitutions of an institute'.[2]

Bishop Delany's dilatory approach to obtaining approbation at the outset probably stunted the institute's early growth and confined it to the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. In his letter to Archbishop Cullen on 3 August 1852, Bishop Haly declared that 'had they [Brigidines] received approbation years ago their establishments would be far more numerous than they are at present for young ladies find a difficulty in joining a religious community not sanctioned and confirmed by the Holy See'.[3] Seven years later the Brigidines only numbered sixty-seven while the Mercy sisters (who had definitive approval almost from the beginning) numbered a staggering 3,000 worldwide.[4] Indeed, the Brigidines were so inconspicuous that in 1865 they go unmentioned in Murphy's *Sketches of Irish Nunneries.*[5] The same fate befell them almost 140 years later when they were not recognized in Susan O'Brien's essay on 'Roman Catholic Women's

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[1] Barbara Walsh, *Roman Catholic Nuns in England and Wales, 1800–1937: A Social History* (Dublin, 2002), p.89.
[2] Devine, *Convent Life*, p.15.
[3] Haly to Cullen, 3 Aug. 1852; Tullow annals.
[4] Bishop James Walshe, Memorandum of the Congregation of St Brigid, undated, DA/BP/JW/11/1857/16.
[5] *Commission on Education in Ireland* First Report 370–9415 C20F 1825, p.87 in Kealy, *Dominican Education*, p.29; Murphy, *Sketches of Irish Nunneries*.

Congregations in Great Britain and Ireland' (2004).[6] The sisters were caught in a vicious circle: lack of approbation meant lack of numbers and lack of numbers meant only temporary papal approbation.

Although the Mountrath annals, written much later, suggest that Delany had applied for canonical approbation in 1813 there is no evidence to support this. Possibly he was unsure of the viability of the institute (he was prepared to sacrifice it in 1808 for a contemplative order) or, as the Patrician brothers maintain, that Delany believed it would take twenty-five years for the rules and constitutions of an institute to develop and mature. Bishop James Doyle, who succeeded to the bishopric in 1819, attempted to further the institute's cause. He found that the sisters had only Delany's spiritual letters of guidance which, as McGrath points out 'could hardly be construed into a rule and constitutions'.[7] Believing it necessary to regularize their status, Doyle revised their rule and incorporated most of the Presentation rules as their new rule. In doing so, it provided the sisters with a 'more workable regimen for a teaching order' but it deprived the young institute of its own particular identity and spirit as set out by Delany.[8] Doyle died before he obtained canonical approbation for the rule.[9] His successor Bishop Edward Nolan drew attention to the community's position in his *Relatio Status* of 1836 but his death on 14 October 1837 left the institute's position unresolved.

It was not until 1844 that the matter of approbation was taken in hand by Mother Catherine McAuliffe, superior of Tullow convent. This was in response to a request from Bishop Haly to Mother Joseph Fitzpatrick of Mountrath for a copy of their rules.[10] Well educated, Catherine McAuliffe willingly set to the 'task imposed on her' by Mother Joseph 'to insert what was thought necessary to show the duties the institute required of its members' so as 'to have the institute regularly sanctioned and the rules confirmed'.[11] All professed sisters consented to the revised rules which remained as Bishop Doyle's 1828 rules but which better fitted the Brigidine apostolate to the better off and the poor.

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[6] O'Brien, 'A survey of Research and Writing about Roman Catholic Women's Congregations, p. 109.
[7] McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.122.
[8] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p.62.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Bishop Haly to Mother Joseph Fitzpatrick, Rome, 16 Nov. 1844, DA/BC/AIr/886.
[11] Mother Catherine McAuliffe to Mother Joseph Fitzpatrick, Tullow, 13 Dec. 1844, DA/BC/AIr/310.

It was this text that Bishop Haly presented in Rome in 1845.[12] Haly was informed that his testimony in their favour would go a long way in procuring papal approbation.[13] However, although the petition was placed before the Holy See by the then rector of the Irish College, Paul Cullen, only an initial commendation was given on the grounds that the institute was too small to warrant full approbation.[14]

The question of definitive approbation lay in abeyance for another five years until Mother Peter Stein, superior of Mountrath convent, wrote on the subject to Bishop Haly at the Synod of Thurles. She mistakenly believed that the question of their approbation could be settled at the Synod however, the bishop informed her that it was a matter for pontifical sanction only but he would be happy to expedite the matter later.[15] This he did in 1852 when he wrote to Cullen of the 'three large flourishing convents' with boarding schools and 'large schools where the children of the poor are educated *gratis* and their minds formed to piety, order and industry'. In 1854 while he was in Rome for the declaration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the sisters again asked Bishop Haly that their case be put before Pope Pius IX. Cullen promised that he would get the rules translated into the necessary Italian.[16] Three years later it is probable that Bishop Walshe sent a memorandum on the history of the Brigidines and their 'works' to Rome in which he gives particular mention to the Brigidines' *characteristic and peculiar work of teaching in the respective parish churches adjoining the respective convents for three hours on Sundays and holydays* [Walshe's emphasis].[17] On 21 July 1858 Bishop Walshe received the pope's blessing for the institute but not the definitive approbation for his sixty-seven member institute.

On 27 May 1866, Bishop Walshe petitioned Propaganda Fide presenting two copies of the rules, one in Italian and the other in English.[18] As a consequence, a questionnaire on the rules of the congregation was sent by Dr Kirby of the Irish College

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[12] Ibid. Mother Catherine McAuliffe to Mother Joseph Fitzpatrick, Tullow, 13 Dec. 1844, DA/BC/AIr/310.
[13] Haly to Mother Joseph Fitzpatrick, 16 Nov. 1844.
[14] Haly to Cullen, 3 Aug. 1852.
[15] Haly to Mother Peter Stein, Thurles, 4 Sept. 1850, DA/Bp/FH/11.
[16] Tullow annals.
[17] Bishop James Walshe, Memorandum of the Congregation of St Brigid, undated, DA/BP/JW/11/1857/16. It is filed as having been written in 1857 but could possibly be for his 1866 presentation of rules.
[18] Tullow annals.

to Walshe. The questionnaire arose from doubts that the consultor held that some of the rules were not 'sufficiently explicit'.[19]

Seven years later the questionnaire remained unanswered. Giving voice to the delay on the questionnaire, a Tullow house council meeting of 11 January 1873 considered it 'a source of much unhappiness to have it [non-approval of the rules] as it is now' and sought that Bishop Lynch would get the questionnaire from Bishop Walshe, to have it answered and have the rules approved. A memorial was sent on 8 March 1873 to Bishops Lynch and Walshe 'signed by the superiors of the four houses begging their lordships to "give confirmation of the rules" their most serious attention' however, over a year later on 6 June 1874, (there had been no action) Tullow council decided that their superior should petition the two bishops to empower a Father Kehoe, a Franciscan at St Isidore's, Rome to present a memorial requesting his holiness to approve the institute formally.[20] Again it appears that no action was taken. That the two bishops seemed content with episcopal approbation for the Brigidine institute, numbering only eighty-seven in personnel, is evident in the action of the sisters who went beyond the two bishops and wrote to Bishop Moran in 1881 on the matter. Possibly the 78-year-old Bishop Walshe did not have the enthusiasm to pursue the matter of papal approbation (it was a lengthy and painstaking process) and, if this were so, the 74-year-old Lynch, as coadjutor under canon law (407.3), was bound to think and act in accord with his bishop.

On Bishop's Moran advice that, if the questionnaire was answered there would be no delay in getting approval of the rules, the questionnaire was answered but it was only taken to Rome when Bishop Lynch went there on 8 April 1885.[21] (See Appendix 7) He also brought with him copies of the rules and constitutions, which were unchanged since 1845, plus new information on the Brigidines' mission to New South Wales.[22] Again there was no change made in the Brigidines' canonical status.

However, Lynch, on his succession to Bishop Walshe in 1888, commenced the process of achieving the *Decretum Laudis* or decree of praise, the next step for the

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[19] Ibid. Tullow annals. The questionnaire was dated 18 Dec. 1866 and titled 'Questions regarding the Rules of the Congregation of the Sisters of St Brigid of the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, exhibited to the Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, for Approbation'.

[20] Tullow HCM, 6 Jun. 1874, DA/BC/AIr/516(2)

[21] Ibid. 10 Dec. 1881.

[22] Ibid.; Tullow annals; On 27 Jun. 1885 a letter was received from the Abbé Gualdi, Rome stating that the rules were translated at a cost of £15, DA/BC/AIr/518.

Brigidines to move from diocesan approbation to papal jurisdiction.[23] However, by this time centralized government with a superior or mother general was required for approbation of new constitutions. This made it necessary for Lynch to seek the amalgamation of the four Irish houses and, although there was some initial opposition to Lynch's plan since it meant a loss of independence for each convent, loss of property and particularly, the 'greatest loss' the loss of help from their own novitiates, each convent was persuaded by the advantages set out by Lynch—uniformity in training, papal approval and above all that it was the will of God.[24] Amalgamation took place in June 1889.

With Irish amalgamation accomplished, the Brigidines obtained the services of Prior Patrick Glynn, superior of the Irish Augustinian College in Rome, to act as their procurator (1890–97) in the approbation process. One of his concerns was whether the sisters and the bishops of their dioceses in Australia wished to unite with Lynch and the home sisters in seeking approval of the new rule of amalgamation or, as Bishop Byrne of Bathurst expressed it, their 'willingness to join hands and hearts with the old folks at home'.[25] One bishop who approved was Bishop Reville, coadjutor bishop of Sandhurst, Victoria who promised to present the rules for approbation in Italian when he left Ireland on 27 February 1890.[26]

Prior Glynn met with Bishops Murray and Reville in Rome, both of whom were highly complementary to him of the work of the Brigidines.[27] Glynn brought Reville, his fellow Augustinian, to meet with Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide.[28] Reville explained the bishops' anxiety to have the rules approved and was told by the cardinal that there was 'no doubt that the rules would gain approval'. It would, however, be a lengthy process but as they were 'nicely drawn up in Italian it

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[23] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p.59; Mangion, *Contested identities*, p.216.
[24] Mountrath annals, 31 Aug. 1888 & Jun. 1889.
[25] Prior Patrick Glynn to Mother Fintan Fennelly, Rome, Easter Sunday, 1890, DA/BC/BGA/230.13; Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 28 Dec. 1890, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/5.
[26] Tullow annals.
[27] Glynn to Fennelly, 22 Mar. 1890, DA/BC/BGA/230.13.
[28] Glynn to Bishop Lynch, Rome, 20 Feb. 1891, DA/BC/BGA/230.13.

would hasten the result'.[29] Due to illness Reville had to leave Rome and left the rules in the care of the prior.[30]

On 2 June 1890 Bishop Byrne declared that he would place no obstacles on amalgamation with Ireland, Victoria and Cooma if this was what Mother John Synan desired. He believed that because of her isolated position in Coonamble it 'would be cruel of him' to prevent unification under one superior general and if this 'promoted their welfare' he was 'happy to promote their cause', however, he suggested that because of the distance between Ireland and Australia, there should be an Australian provincial superior with discretionary powers.[31]

However, as late as September 1890, 'the saintly' Bishop Crane of Sandhurst objected to the 'new rule of centralization' (the convents had petitioned Bishop Crane some months earlier). This would, Bishop's Lynch warned, deprive the Sandhurst houses of getting Irish subjects.[32] Probably bearing this in mind and with the persuasion of Bishop Reville, an advocate of amalgamation, Bishop Crane wrote, as did the bishops of Ballarat, Bathurst and the archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Moran, as well as Bishop Lynch, the crucial commendatory letters to the Holy See. The cardinal would, according to Glynn, 'give an excellent report'.[33]

In late February 1891 Glynn wrote to say that Cardinal Mazella was doing all in his power to have the rule and constitutions approved as soon as possible.[34] Thirteen months later he informed Mother General Gertrude Kelly that 'pontifical sanction' of the institute had been received but that she was to keep the news private until Bishop Lynch received official notification.[35] Once the announcement was made public she was to have copies of the rule and constitutions printed in English and Italian for the cardinals, for Propaganda and for the mother house. (See Appendix 8) On 19 March 1892, Glynn explained that what had been done for the sisters of St Brigid far exceeded his expectations and he was informed that the institute received certain privileges especially in connection with the voting power of the Australian sisters which were refused to other

[29] Reville to Lynch, Naples, 21 Feb. 1890, DA/BC/BGA/910.03.
[30] Glynn to Fennelly, 22 Mar.1890;Tullow annals, part of letter from Reville to Lynch.
[31] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 2 Jun. 1890, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/5.
[32] Lynch to Mother Catherine O'Farrell, Tullow, 10 Sept. 1890, BA/Vic/Box559A.
[33] Glynn to Fennelly, 22 Mar. 1890.
[34] Glynn to Bishop Lynch, Rome, 20 Feb. 1891, DA/BC/BGA/230.13.
[35] Glynn to Mother General Kelly, Rome, 7 Mar. 1892, DA/BC/BGA/230.13; Tullow HCM, 12 Mar. 1892.

institutions—Bishop Lynch had included certain changes to the rule and constitutions recommended by Bishop Byrne as more applicable to Australian conditions.[36] The *Decretum Laudis* ('the equivalent to a sort of beatification of the rules and constitutions') was for a five year trial or testing period after which if everything was satisfactory definitive approbation was given.[37] Glynn congratulated Lynch on his *splendid success* and would send him the *precious document* while mother general was 'glad that the bishop had the pleasure of seeing the happy termination of the cause during his lifetime' [Glynn's emphasis].[38] Glynn suggested that, as a matter of form, it was proper to present the Holy Father with a copy of the rule and constitutions printed on fine paper and bound in satin with the arms of Leo XIII on the back and particularly advised mother general that at the end of her address to the pope she should *most humbly beg of the Holy Father to name a cardinal protector for her institute* [Glynn's emphasis].[39] He explained that once she had obtained this 'very great privilege' that she would 'not need anything else as a religious body'—the cardinal protector's position superseded that of the local ecclesiastical superior.[40] That same year five of the six autonomous Australian houses amalgamated as one province and joined with the Irish houses all under the new rule and constitutions published in 1892. Cooma amalgamated in early 1894.

With the death of Bishop Lynch in 1896, his successor, Bishop Foley most probably did not have sufficient time to prepare their case for definitive approbation for 1897. Rome decided that another trial period, this time of ten years of 'living' the rule and constitutions was necessary. Possibly the fact that the Australian province was only just divided into two separate provinces by papal rescript in 1896 as well as the difficulties surrounding the establishment of a general novitiate in the two provinces were taken into account in not giving the definitive approbation.

Rome's caution was justified, as within a short period, amalgamation appeared to be unravelling. The difficulties experienced over finance for Australian projects with the

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[36] Glynn to Mother General Kelly, 19 Mar. 1892, DA/BC/BGA/230.13; Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 29 Jun. 1892 BPA/NSW/Box 11/Series 108.1/file5.
[37] Devine, *Convent Life*, p.15.
[38] Glynn to Lynch, Rome 9 Apr. 1892, DA/BP/JL/1892/05; Mother General Kelly to Mother Benedict Moore, Tullow, 16 Mar. 1892, BPA/Vic/Box 559C.
[39] Glynn to Mother General Kelly, Rome, 7 Mar. 1892.
[40] Ibid., 30 Mar. 1892,

mother general caused Bishop Byrne to reconsider his position. He questioned 'the advantage to the Australian communities of unity with the home community' and admitted that he 'did not see any', except 'perhaps a purely sentimental one which was not of much practical value'.[41] The problem was, as Bishop Byrne saw it, 'that the mother general and her council never saw the country or the people and were thus not in a position to judge the requirements of the communities'. Even Cardinal Moran, to whom Byrne mentioned their financial difficulties, seemed 'to think that it was useless to keep united'.[42]

There was also unhappiness at provincialate level. Mother John, an advocate of union, was 'dissatisfied with home government' and now believed that 'nothing could be gained' from it. According to Victorian Mother Paul Barron, it 'was clear' changes were needed in the governance of Australia since 'the bond of charity [...] no longer existed among the houses'.[43] Mother Josephine Clancy in acknowledging the general dissatisfaction insisted that '*heads* were needed more than willing and eager hearts to build up the institute' [Mother Josephine's emphasis].[44]

Coincidently, mother general had just begun the process for definitive approbation part of which was to receive the opinions of all the Irish and Australasian choir sisters on her suggestion that Australasia elect a mother general and four assistant generals for its government. Each sister was free in confidence to make any suggestions she wished.[45] Even before mother general sent out her letter one Irish sister believed that in giving this freedom to the Irish and Australian sisters the generalship could pass from Tullow since some of the home sisters might wish to transfer the generalship to Australia with its greater number of houses and sisters, while the Australians might overwhelmingly opt to have their own mother general.[46]

Some of the division between the two provinces comes through in both provincials' replies to mother general. Mother Alacoque Bourke believed that all the

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[41] Byrne to Mother General Kelly, Bathurst, 9 Sept. 1897, DA/BC/BGA/374.201.
[42] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 10 Nov. 1897, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series 108.1/6a.
[43] Mother Paul Barron to Mother General Kelly, Ararat, 17 Jul. 1901, DA/BC/BGA/392.05.
[44] Mother Josephine Clancy to Mother General Kelly, Ararat, 24 Apr. 1901, DA/BC/BGA/392.05.
[45] Mother General Kelly to Mother Benedict Moore, Tullow, 22 Apr. 1903, BPA/Vic/559C. Some of the changes suggested were on nomination & appointment of local and provincial superiors; on the franchise for local superior and provincial elections; on having a mother general and four assistants for Australia etc.
[46] Mother Patrick to Mother General Kelly, Goresbridge, 17 Mar. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/30.02.

Sandhurst houses were in favour of keeping united to home rule in Tullow but, interestingly she claimed that it was an open secret that 'the New South Wales and the Ararats would wish to shake off the Tullow yoke' and that it was her belief that:

> they would not be satisfied unless they could 'lord' it over every other and we think if they had the power they would *take* the best of *everything* for themselves as they are all one clique which would make things very unpleasant for us in this diocese [Mother Alacoque's emphasis].[47]

Mother John Synan had an equally biased opinion of the Victoria province. She declared that the sisters in New South Wales were not at all pleased with the idea of a mother general for Australia, that they wished to remain united with the home government but that all believed that Victoria and New Zealand would *want* a *general* [Mother John's emphasis].[48] However, Mother John and her council would support being under a separate mother general if it were considered necessary to gain approbation.[49]

Both provincials were right in thinking that Gertrude Banahan would favour separation. Other than her objection to the proposed electoral changes, she was favourable to the other changes to the rule for the 'dear institute' which was 'tossed about for nearly a century'. What caused her concern was that only convents with ten professed choir sisters could send delegates to an election and no convent in New South Wales or New Zealand had the necessary ten professed sisters. From her point of view, a rather illuminating one, 'the colonial convents were to be *punished* for multiplying; and the home communities to be *rewarded* for keeping large numbers in four convents in the same diocese for almost a hundred years'[Banahan's emphasis].

Cultural differences, however, between Ireland and Australia were to the fore when pioneer sister Mother Vincent Brennan argued that 'a mother general for Australia would be regarded as the death blow to their loved institute'. For her Australians were 'not a bit green' and were not 'backward in giving out their ideas on religious orders and

[47] Mother Provincial Bourke to Mother General Kelly, Echuca, 2 Jun. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.
[48] Synan to Mother General Kelly, Coonamble, 9 May 1903, DA/BC/BGA/381.01.
[49] Ibid.

customs'. She saw the division of an institute as the curse of the age and where it happened in Australia it caused much scandal.[50]

Another of the veteran pioneers, Mother Benedict Moore, was forthright in her opinions on the proposal for a mother general for Australia exclaiming that the letter 'nearly took her breath away', that she 'would have nothing to do with it', that 'nothing would be more ruinous' and that they could 'keep their rule *faithfully* without a general at their heels' [Mother Benedict's emphasis]. She believed that there was 'too much jealousy among the houses' such that she would not vote for any in the Australian convents [...] there would be chaos after a year or two. Rather humorously hitting at Australia's colonial status she added:

> There is no king out in Australia. Poor old Eddie the VII can manage us well enough, so can and will our dear mother general in Tullow convent, the cradle of the institute and our mother house.[51]

For mainly sentimental reasons the Australian born sisters were in favour of keeping the union with Ireland. They had no wish to become 'republicans', 'separation would mean endless misery', 'whoever suggested change was deluded', 'it would be a sad day'. A common sentiment was that 'if they were cut off from the mother house in a few years they would be different from the Irish Brigidines'. For one 'shy Australian daughter' there should be 'one lord, one pope, one mother general'. She questioned what 'would become of union and charity if the bond with the old land' was broken. Answering her own question she was convinced that if it ever came to pass it would sound the death knell of the congregation in Australia.[52]

In December 1903 the decision was taken and was approved by the sisters of all the Irish and Australasian convents. Separation was out. Australasia would not only elect its own provincial and assistants (to be ratified in Tullow) it would also elect its own delegates to send to Ireland for the general chapter.[53] Mother Gertrude Banahan agreed to 'submit to whatever arrangements were made'. In her opinion, people throughout the process were considering *themselves* more than the *general* good of the *institute* [Mother

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[50] Mother Vincent Brennan to Mother General Kelly, Echuca, 1 Jun. 1903 & 8 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.08.
[51] Mother Benedict Moore to Mother General Kelly, Rochester, 1 Jun. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.06.
[52] Sister Gertrude O'Connell to Mother General Kelly, Rochester, 7 May 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.06.
[53] Mother Bertrand Kerr to Mother General Kelly, Beechworth, 22 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.05.

Gertrude's emphasis].[54] It was a relief to former Goresbridge nun, Mother Canice Wyer, that the union was maintained. Keeping in touch with the 'spirit of the Irish institute' was, she argued, necessary in a *very* free country where religious orders were more inclined to relaxation than discipline [Mother Canice's emphasis]. In this regard, she quoted the words of advice given to her by a Jesuit priest 'you should pray to be under a general at home as in a few years time you will become so degenerate in this country that you will not recognize yourselves'.[55] The whole sense of relief that the institute was at last being 'put on a proper basis' for approbation is reflected in the words of Mother Vincent Brennan:

> I can put up with being made little of myself but when our loved institute is run down or made little of I cannot stand it. Now those new changes will have us on the same standard as the Loretos, Sacred Heart, etc. Oh! I am so pleased.[56]

With the amended rule and constitutions, changes about elections and the giving of absolute power to the mother provincial 'without the least reference to the bishop of the diocese' passed by the entire institute, mother general set in motion the procedures to gain definitive approbation from Propaganda Fide.[57] She engaged Father Alphonsus Walsh, OSA to act as procurator in Rome on their behalf. Enclosing copies of the amended rule changes, she wrote to the bishops of Sandhurst, Ballarat, Bathurst and to the three archdioceses, Sydney, Melbourne and Wellington, N.Z. seeking letters of recommendation of the work of the Brigidine sisters to be sent to Rome.[58] Bishop Foley of Kildare and Leighlin took their petition for approbation as well as his recommendation to Rome in 1904.

One noteworthy unfavourable reaction to the amended rules was that of Bishop Dunne of Bathurst. His lack of sympathy arose out of the previous year's contretemps over the mother general's transfer of Mother Francis Humphreys to Randwick when neither he nor the parish priest of Cowra, Father O'Kennedy were consulted. In his eyes, this was a threat to his authority and interference in the internal management of the

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[54] Banahan to Kelly, 23 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.03.
[55] Mother Canice Wyer to Mother General Kelly, Wangaratta, 28 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.07.
[56] Brennan to Mother General Kelly, Echuca, 8 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.08.
[57] Bishop Dunne to Cardinal Moran, Bathurst, 1 Aug. 1904 in Garaty, *Providence Provides,* p.56.
[58] Mother General Kelly to Bishop Murray, Tullow, n.d., BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.2/9.

diocese. He was incensed at the change that gave power to the mother provincial to appoint, remove, and recall sisters and local officials without any reference to their bishops.

He fulminated:

> If that rule is approved of I may as well at once tell you that you [Bishop Dwyer of Maitland] can have a present of the Brigidines of the Bathurst diocese as soon as you require them.[59]

Further, he placed the matter before Cardinal Moran to try to stay proceedings in Rome until it was discussed at the Australian plenary council of bishops (1905).[60] In a letter to the cardinal he was forthright in his dismissal of the mother general and her lack of personal knowledge of Australian conditions stressing that she was 'sure to blunder often sadly, unless she could borrow infallibility from the pope whenever she would have to deal with her communities in this country'.[61]

However, there is no mention in the letters of procurator Walsh that the Australian bishops did not send the vital commendatory letters to Rome. By November 1905 the rule and constitutions were placed before a special commission to be examined for their 'purity of Catholic thought' and practicality.[62] Although Walsh reassured mother general in February 1906 that everything was proceeding satisfactorily, by June Cardinal Satolli 'found that the tenure of their legislation to be in open conflict with *the normae* of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, and ordered that a new text be submitted'. Walsh, with his consultor, argued that as the constitutions were already 'praised and approved', they stood on their own merits and that if modification were needed these might be easily grafted on the original documents.[63] However, the Cardinal thought otherwise. That the rule and constitutions failed 'the ordeal' was disappointing to Walsh who thought it 'a disaster and a defeat'.[64]

In December 1906 Walsh sent mother general the proof sheets of the revised text and asked her to scrutinize them *word by word* in order to assure them of absolute

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[59] Bishop Dunne to Bishop Dwyer, Dubbo, 1 Aug. 1904, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.2/9.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.; Garaty, *Providence Provides,* p.56.
[62] Father Alphonsus Walsh to Mother General Kelly, Rome, Feb. 1906, DA/BA/BGA/230.15;Mangion, *Contested identities*, p.216.
[63] Walsh to Mother General Kelly, 28 Jun. 1906.
[64] Ibid., 8 Jul. 1906.

correctness and clarity from every point of view. Walsh was sure that the text, as it stood, was 'clearly forcible and formally correct' and that it would 'pass the scrutiny and criticism that awaited it in the *inexorable Roman crucible*' [Walsh's emphasis].[65]

Although the text was presented in March 1907 accompanied by a letter from the mother general confirming that she had conformed to the instruction of 1906, in July she received a telegram stating that there were 'great difficulties' with the rule and constitutions. Walsh needed her immediate consent to act for her otherwise there would be a delay of another year. It was imperative that she telegraphed him *yes* or *no* as no time could be lost.[66] With the help of his consultor and Monsignor Melata, both 'from the beginning fast friends of the congregation' and a diplomatic visit paid by Walsh to Cardinal Satolli which 'disarmed any hostility on the part of his eminence', the rules were definitively approved in perpetuity by Pius X in an audience granted on 18 July 1907 to Cardinal Gotti. The decree was sent from Rome on 26 July 1907.[67] (See Appendix 9) In Walsh's words '*the war was over*' and they had '*reached constitutional peace*' [Walsh's emphasis].[68] It also meant that at last they were on an equal footing with other congregations such as the Loreto, Mercy, Presentation and Sacred Heart sisters to attract aspirants to their congregation. Within six months of gaining definitive approbation for her institute, Mother General Gertrude Kelly was dead.[69]

Between 1907 and 1922 there was a 48 per cent increase in postulants entering the congregation (Ireland and Australasia) over the previous fifteen years between the decree of praise granted in 1892 and the definitive approbation of 1907. As a right the institute's convents were no longer subject to a local bishop who lost the power to intervene in the affairs of the convent.

Lay Sisters

Throughout the protracted negotiations for papal approbation there is no evidence that the voice of the lay sister was heard. This is in keeping with Clear's statement that:

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[65] Ibid., 19 Dec. 1906.
[66] Ibid., 10 Jul. 1907.
[67] Ibid., Jul. 1907, reply to letter of 19 Jul. 1907; Tullow annals.
[68] Ibid.19 Dec. 1906.
[69] She died on 21 Jan. 1908.

'histories, biographies, internal records, guide books and even rule-books of the period either do not mention lay religious at all, or at least stop short of defining their exact position in the convent'.[70] In respect of the Brigidines for example, their rule-books for 1850 and 1892 have only one brief bland half-page devoted to the lay sisters—in the former they were 'destined for duties and services of another sort' and in the latter 'employed in other things'. Nevertheless both choir sisters (who engaged in teaching) and lay sisters (who engaged in domestic and manual work) took the same vows of religion, were bound by the obligations of those vows in regard to poverty, chastity and obedience and other than the provision of a dowry by the choir sisters the same laws applied to all.[71] For the lay sisters, however, the vows were non-binding whereas the choir sisters made solemn vows.[72] Another distinction between choir and lay sisters was that according to rule, the latter were without voice in chapter and did not have a vote in community elections.[73]

Although many of the new congregations from the mid 1860s in keeping with the growing democratization of society had only one class of membership (the Sisters of the Holy Faith (1867) and Sisters of St John of God (1871) for instance) illustrates, as Kehoe puts it, 'the growing success of ultramontanism and its desire to incorporate as many people as possible into the machinery of the Church, the division of choir and lay sisters' was a system in which, as Presentation sister Rosa MacGinley comments, 'two communities lived under the one roof, each impinging on the other through services and procedures regulated by ancient custom'.[74] The essential constitutional difference between choir and lay sisters within the Brigidine institute and some of the other new Irish teaching congregations of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century had its genesis in the Middle Ages in the incorporation of servants in the monastic domain into a form of religious life under the auspices of the monastic community.[75] Women's contemplative orders (Poor Clares, Carmelites, Benedictines, and Augustinian for example) adopted the same practice which allowed their aristocratic choir sisters (who

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[70] Clear, *Nuns*, p.91.
[71] Devine, *Convent Life,* p.294.
[72] O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers*, p.49.
[73] Brigidine Rules and Constitutions (1845), DA/BC/BGA/210.02.
[74] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope,* p. 320.
[75] Ibid., p.318; Mary Dalton, email to author, 16 Jun. 2010.

had the obligation of reciting the Divine Office in choir and in Latin, for which they needed to be literate) to live a convent life that approximated to their life in the secular world while their serving women 'were able under the aegis of monastic life to live lives of recognized religious commitment' without pronouncing solemn vows hence the designation 'lay'.[76] In the newer congregations such as the Presentation, Brigidine and Mercy sisters and the Sisters of Charity, because of the amount of time spent in teaching and nursing, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary was recited by the choir sisters instead of the Divine Office.[77]

Lay sisters were not bound to recite the Divine Office or the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In its place, Brigidine lay sisters recited such prayers as the Our Father, Hail Mary and Creed. Instead of Prime, Tierce, Sext and None they said the Our Father and Hail Mary four times, and the Creed once. Instead of Vespers and Compline, the Our Father and Hail Mary were said seven times. In place of Matins and Lauds, the Our Father and Hail Mary were said ten times.[78] Such prayers could be learned by heart and did not require literacy—the first known Brigidine lay sister Elizabeth McMahon, who entered Mountrath convent on 15 October 1809, was not literate. Delany did not see this as an impediment, rather he encouraged her entry into religious life stating that 'she could love God and sing the paters'.[79] From 1850 up to and including the rules for 1922 the prayers for the Brigidine lay sisters remained exactly the same while they also practiced other exercises of piety as far as their occupations permitted. The lay sisters assisted every day at Mass yet, when at chapel in Mountrath, the choir community was not to be too free with the lay sisters neither were they to place them in a higher position.[80]

In respect of the weekly chapter of faults, unlike the Brigidines who had a more compassionate attitude to their lay sisters in this regard, the Mercy sisters' attitude provides further insight into the class distinction or hierarchy within Irish convents. The Brigidines did not insist, as did the Mercy sisters, that the lay sisters and lay novices leave the chapel immediately after making their accusations before the whole community

[76] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope,* p. 319.
[77] Constitutions of the Brigidine sisters from 1828; Devine, *Convent Life*, p. 179.
[78] Constitutions of the Brigidine sisters.
[79] Mountrath annals, DA/BC/AIr/324.
[80] Mountrath HCM, DA/AIr/337.

and before the choir sisters began their exercise of accusations. This unequal arrangement, Clear suggests, was nothing other than a conscious intention not to allow the lay sisters to know the faults and failings of the choir sisters. She further adds that this practice 'can only be interpreted as protection of a certain superiority enjoyed by choir nuns in the power structure of the convent'.[81]

In contrast to the Mercy sisters' rule, the order in which the Brigidine sisters presented themselves at the chapter of faults was far more democratic with the junior in each class making her accusation first. First came the lay postulants who, having accused themselves left the chapel. Next came the choir postulants who retired after their accusation. They were followed by the lay novices who after their accusation and retirement were followed in a similar manner by the choir novices. After their retirement, came the professed lay sisters who retired after accusing themselves. Last came the professed choir sisters who, having accused themselves returned to their places and remained until the chapter closed. In this public avowal of faults, the superiority enjoyed by the convent choir sisters in Brigidine convents was, at least once a week, put aside in the journey of both choir and lay sister 'to conquer pride through submission to admonition, reproof and humiliation'.[82]

However, despite the constitutional differences, the dependence of the Brigidines and many of the other congregations on the domestic service of the lay sisters was great. The domestic work of the lay sisters, O'Donoghue argues, freed the choir sisters to pray the Divine Office, engage in intellectual pursuits and do the apostolic work of the congregation, which was usually either teaching or nursing.[83] It ensured that teaching sisters, principals and convent leaders were, in the main, free to address their professional responsibilities.[84] This dependence on lay sisters created opportunities for women from small farming families and labouring backgrounds who may have felt the call to a religious life. Moreover, as many women saw life as the wife of a small farmer or of a labourer as a life of 'drudgery and slavery' within an 'oppressive and affectionless marriage' and, as employment options contracted throughout the nineteenth

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[81] Clear, *Nuns*, p.93.
[82] Mulhall MS, 25 Mar. 1856, DA/BC/AIr/362.
[83] Tom O'Donoghue & Stephanie Burley, 'God's antipodean teaching force: An historical exposition on Catholic teaching religious in Australia' in *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24;1 (Jan. 2008), 180–189.
[84] Ibid.

century, many may have seen domestic service as a lay sister as a reasonably agreeable option.[85]

While many of the women who became lay sisters were not literate others were women of ability and intelligence who wished for a religious life but did not have a dowry or could not afford a secondary education. One such was Sister Benignus Lynsky, a very clever woman who came from a background of school teachers. She entered in Masterton, New Zealand. Sister Canice Cooke entered as a choir sister but was professed as a lay sister by her own wish and with the permission of her parents because of her poor eyesight.[86] No matter what their abilities, it could be, as Margaret MacCurtain points out, that 'convent life with its rhythm, its security, and its sense of space was a desirable option for girls without dowry'.[87]

While religious life in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century was difficult for both choir and lay sister alike (teaching large numbers was no easy matter for the choir sisters) yet it was even more so for lay sisters 'who were to be very submissive and respectful to the mothers and sisters of the choir' thereby reinforcing the class division between them.[88] Although the 1850s constitutions stated that they were to be treated no differently in regard to 'bedding, eating, drinking, health-care, exercises for spiritual improvement', the 'time and place for their meals was to be regulated by the superior', which at first meant that the lay sisters had their meals at a separate table and later in a separate refectory to the choir sisters. Even though they were to be 'tenderly and cordially dealt with by superiors and other sisters' such that all were 'to live together with love, like Martha and Mary true sisters much loved by the Lord', the reality was often very different.[89] In this regard, on 30 October 1880, the house council meeting of Tullow convent found it necessary 'to remind some sisters to avoid giving unnecessary trouble to lay sisters'.[90] Similar choir sisters' attitudes were decried by Bishop Byrne of Bathurst, who 'felt that lay sisters were too often made—and sometimes cruelly—to

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[85] Mary Cullen, 'Breadwinners and providers: women in the household economy of labouring families, 1835–36' in Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy (eds), *Women Surviving studies in Irish women's history in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Dublin, 1990), pp 85–116, p.112

[86] Sister Canice Cooke to Mother General Kelly, Masterton, 4 Dec. 1907, DA/BC/BGA/713.

[87] MacCurtain, 'Godly Burdens', 245-256.

[88] Bishop Kennedy, Duties of Lay Sisters written c.1836 on back page of Doyle's 1828 Rule, DA/BA/359.

[89] Rules and Constitutions ,1845 & 1892, DA/BC/BGA/210.02 & 210.

[90] Tullow HCM, DA/BC/AIr/516(2).

know that they were the mere servants of not one but many mistresses'. He was convinced that this was 'not the true spirit of religion'.[91] Yet, occasionally, as mentioned in chapter two, a lay sister of strong character, such as Sister Elizabeth Coughlan, had a remarkable degree of power to 'reign' in the kitchen for sixteen years.[92]

The dominance and superiority of the choir sisters was subtly exercised. The titles by which they were addressed were distinct (sister as opposed to mother) which denied any semblance of equality. In the matter of dress, the lay sisters' 'habits could not be as long, nor as wide as those of the other sisters' and further they could have nothing to do with the administration of the convent. Such differences illustrate, as Trimingham Jack contends, the entrenched hierarchical relationship.[93] Their domestic chores were to be performed with 'cheerfulness, readiness, cordiality and charity' and carried out in 'a prayerful fashion in the way of St Martha and St Catherine of Sienna and of the humble hidden life of Jesus of Nazareth'.[94] The hard physicality of their work included, for example, the care of the boarders' dormitories and 'polishing the boarders' boots', laundry, milking cows, working on the farm and caring for the sick.[95] Trimingham Jack argues that the relationship between choir sisters and lay sisters [as described above] may be thought of as both hierarchical and symbiotic: 'It was hierarchical in that the lay sisters were considered inferior to the choir sisters; it was symbiotic to the extent that each category was partly defined by the other'.[96] She sees that the 'glorification' of the humble hidden service of the lay sisters allowed the choir sisters to feel comfortable about the lower status of their lay sister peers by temporarily promoting it above their own.[97]

Clear argues, however, that, in 'assigning an inferior status to the women who cooked, cleaned, scrubbed etc, the convents were not only preserving class based divisions of labour they were also reinforcing the widespread undervaluation of work

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[91] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 26 Jul. 1889, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/5.
[92] Tullow HCM, DA/BC/AIr/516.
[93] Christine Trimingham Jack, 'The lay sister in Educational History and Memory', in *History of Education: the Journal of the History of Education Society,* 29:3 (2000).
[94] Rules and Constitutions, 1845 & 1892, DA/BC/BGA/210.02 & 210.05.
[95] Tullow HCM, 26 Feb. 1870, DA/BC/AIr/516(2); Abbeyleix HCM, DA/BC/AIr/31; 30 Sept. 1921; Dalton to author, email, 12 May 2010.
[96] Trimingham Jack, *Growing Good Catholic Girls*, p.8 quoted in O'Donoghue, *Catholic teaching Brothers*, p.49.
[97] Ibid.

traditionally done by women'.[98] In Mountrath convent every effort was made to keep the distinction between the lay and choir sisters. On 10 April 1885 it was determined that the superior would 'implore the nuns to keep the lay sisters in their place' since some were getting 'very troublesome' and if they were 'left uncorrected' would become a 'scourge instead of a blessing to the house'.[99] It is probable that their 'blessing' was their invaluable domestic work as can be seen in the illuminating comment of Mother John Synan when she bemoaned her inability to get a lay sister for Coonamble in 1888. It seemed 'strange to her to set such value on getting a lay sister' from Ireland but she was 'paying eight shillings per week to a servant and six shillings every fortnight to a washer-woman'. She held that such an amount would soon pay for the passage of a lay sister 'not to speak of all that would be saved by having a person who would have an interest in the place'. Mother John further acknowledged that it would be more comfortable for the choir sisters to have a lay sister since it 'was so hard to have servants so near them in their little cottage convent'.[100]

The dichotomy between the two classes hardened and intensified over time. While recognizing that there was and should be a distinction between choir and lay sisters, Bishop Byrne complained that this distinction was often too strongly and unkindly insisted upon. In part, the distinction was carried to Australia by the Irish congregations. In the bishop's opinion 'there was more of that tyrannous class-distinction in Ireland than in any other country except India, and so much the worse for poor old Ireland'.[101]

Even in egalitarian Australia many of the Irish pioneering superiors hankered after the old relationship that existed between the choir and lay sisters at home. This is evident in their correspondence with the mother general. Some believed the Irish practice better than the changes that were made to suit the isolation of the many small Australian convent presbyteries and cottages where it was difficult to maintain the strict separation that existed in Tullow and the other large Irish houses. Others found it a difficult matter to keep lay sisters in their place. One superior mentioned their 'last professed lay sister

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[98] Clear, *Nuns*, p.98.
[99] Mountrath HCM, DA/BC/AIr/338.
[100] Synan to Murray, Coonamble, 16 Jun. 1888, MDA, E.2.42. In 1889 two Australian lay sisters entered, Sisters Joseph Irwin and Agnes Murphy.
[101] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 17 Jul. 1888, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/5.

was a good humble girl when we sent her to Echuca (novitiate) now she seems to think herself as good as any of the sisters'.[102] However, the experienced and well regarded Mother Benedict Moore, pleaded that the 'lay sisters not be treated as slaves'.[103]

If the lay sisters in Ireland had any opinion on the subject of recreation it was not given voice to. Writing on the subject in 1892 Mother General Gertrude Kelly stated that in Ireland the old land customs prevailed but while separation at recreation time was an approved custom it was not a requirement of the rule. The lay sisters were supervised at their recreation. The details of implementing recreation were left to each individual superior. In Tullow the lay sisters had permission to speak while clearing away and washing up after dinner, as this was part of their recreation hour. On wet days they assembled in their own refectory and no one could absent herself without afterwards making known the reason for her absence to the superior.[104] It 'worked more agreeably' not to have the lay sisters at refectory or recreation with the choir sisters.[105]

In Australia, opinions were divided on the vexed question on whether to have lay and choir sisters recreate together. Since there was nothing in the rules to prevent the sisters coming together, the superiors were left free to use their own judgement. A major factor which influenced the decision to come together for recreation was that, almost from the moment of their arrival in Sandhurst diocese, they were encouraged to do so by both Bishops Crane and Reville who insisted that they were not to be separated. The latter gave as his compelling reason that separation 'caused much bitterness etc for the lay sisters'.[106] Similar views were held by Bishop Byrne who argued that: 'choir sisters and lay sisters shall be together in heaven, why separate them here below?'[107] However, Victoria's Mother Provincial Alacoque Bourke saw the decision somewhat differently. She believed it was a necessary concession to the equality and independence of the Australian character.[108]

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[102] Mother Stanislaus Nolan to Mother General Kelly, Beechworth, 14 Jun.1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.05
[103] Mother Benedict Moore to Mother General Kelly, Rochester, 29 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.06.
[104] Tullow HCM, 3 Sept. 1887
[105] Mother General de Chantal Fennelly to Mother Alacoque Miller, Tullow, 13 Feb. 1912, BPA/NSW/Series108.2.
[106] Mother Alacoque Bourke to Mother General Kelly, Echuca, 12 Mar. 1907, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.
[107] Byrne to Synan, 26 Jul. 1889, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/5.
[108] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother General Kelly, Ararat, 23 Feb. 1891, DA/BC/BGA/392.04; Bourke to Mother General Kelly, Echuca, 13 May 1903.

As early as 1901 she was worried over the lack of conformity on recreation in the different convents and in 1907 she consulted Bishop Higgins of Ballarat on the matter.[109] He was convinced that the recreation of the two classes together 'would brighten the lives of the lay sisters and help them cheerfully bear the burden of religious life'. Furthermore, he 'believed' that such an arrangement would 'contribute to the contentment and happiness of the poor hard-worked lay sisters'.[110] Armed with Bishop Higgins considered opinion she held a meeting of superiors and consultors in Mentone and called for a vote on recreation. Five votes were in favour of the mixed recreation of the two classes while three were opposed. Mother Alacoque's two votes, if required, would have brought the 'for' vote to seven. Two letters to the mother general on that meeting give revealing insights on the life of the lay sisters and the distinctions between the two classes.

Diametrically opposed stances were taken between Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat leading the opposition of Beechworth, Maryborough, and Ararat convents while Mother Benedict Moore of Mentone convent led those in favour. The latter believed that it was of 'paramount importance' to have the matter settled. Her long-time concern was that the lay sisters were 'treated almost like slaves in some houses' and this was being brought to the notice of the nuns' retreat givers and confessors by the lay sisters.[111] Four years earlier she raised her concerns with the mother general when in December 1903 she pleaded that the 'lay sisters not be treated as slaves'.[112]

Mother Benedict highlighted the problem by giving the example of one lay sister in Mentone convent cooking for twenty boarders and fifteen nuns during hot summers. And then, when the boarders were home on holidays, she had over forty holidaying nuns to cook for. She argued that if a 'lay sister could not unburden her mind with a few bright conversations, perhaps not more than ten minutes, her life was little better than a slave'. She hoped that she herself 'would have left the world' if separation was established in all convents. She pointed out that the rule expected that the lay sisters

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[109] Bourke to Mother General Kelly, Echuca, 8 Apr. 1901.
[110] Bishop Higgins to Mother Alacoque Bourke, Ballarat, 28 Feb. & 23 Mar. 1907, BPA/Vic/Box559C & DA/BC/BGA/373.301.
[111] Mother Benedict Moore to Mother General Kelly, Mentone, 11 Mar. 1907, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.
[112] Ibid., Rochester, 29 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.06.

would be treated cordially but she 'failed to see this when lay sisters were left at recreation in the kitchen mending towels, etc'.[113]

Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat saw any association at recreation completely differently. She questioned whether the lay sisters (who were of 'no better class' than the sisters in Ireland) could enjoy recreation where the chief topic was teaching and school work. Somewhat condescendingly, she asked her mother general to imagine poor sisters working at the wash tubs or cooking all day having to have to listen to the 'ologies' of the day discussed 'without being able to join in one single word!' Where Mother Benedict saw a few minutes of conversation as a comfort and help for the lay sisters, Mother Gertrude believed it would be a 'big penance for them'. What was beyond doubt in her mind was that if *mixed recreation* was established, the lay sisters would be 'taken out of their place' and that the result would be dissatisfaction *for all* [Mother Gertrude's emphasis]. She believed that both choir and lay sisters had the same advantages in that each enjoyed separate recreation yet she did not see anything amiss in having 'a sensible choir sister supervise their long recreation' yet Beechworth convent choir sisters found it 'a dreary task' to spend time supervising two lay sisters at recreation.[114] Another sister believed it would be 'the ruination to charity and union to have them come to our (choir) recreation' and her fervent hope was to have the matter resolved at the 1908 general chapter.[115] There was no further correspondence on the matter, however, as the vote was in favour it is possible that all the convents allowed the lay and choir sisters to have their recreation together.

Although many Australian aspirant lay sisters took into consideration whether an institute allowed mixed recreation or not most were surprised to find that they had to undergo a trial period as a servant. This could be anything from six months to two years. Bishop Byrne thought this a good policy in enclosed orders where they would be received if they 'proved worthy'.[116] In fact many 'jibbed' or lost their 'vocation'.[117] In Ireland, where trial periods were accepted as the norm, Brigid McEvoy (Sister Columba)

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[113] Ibid.
[114] Mother Gertrude Kelly to Mother General Kelly, Ararat, 27 Mar. 1907, DA/BC/BGA/382.06 & Mother General Kelly to Moore, 5 Oct. 1892, BPA/Vic/Box 559C.
[115] Mother Vincent Brennan to Mother General Kelly, Beechworth, 8 Dec. 1907, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.
[116] Abbeyleix annals.
[117] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 17 Jul. 1888, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/5.

entered Tullow convent as a lay postulant in 1879 having spent two years as a servant. It appears that she was the only one, of three girls admitted on trial in 1877, who proved 'worthy'. Although another sister, Brigid Phelan (Sister Rose), was considered unsatisfactory because of 'serious disobedience' she was allowed to stay because of the intercession of Bishop Lynch, however, he warned her that 'she would not be professed if she did not overcome her self-will'. She was professed on 15 October 1883 and died in 1902.[118]

One very vexed question in the Australian convents was the obligation to wear the white apron while attending Mass in the convent chapel or the parish church or when travelling.[119] The lay sisters deeply resented this 'badge of servant-hood' that designated them as domestics. Whether it was resented by the lay sisters in Ireland is unknown as there is no mention of any disagreement in any of the Irish convent annals or at their house council meetings. The similarity between the wearing of the white apron by the sisters and the uniform of the domestic servants of the big house is, as Clear argues, 'hard to overlook'.[120] It was seen by some Australian superiors to reflect badly on the Brigidine convents as well as being humiliating for the lay sisters. The issue was addressed by Mother Gertrude Banahan of Masterton in 1903 when she questioned the need for the lay sisters to wear the aprons to the parish church and when travelling as it was not a *rule* [Mother Gertrude's emphases]. She believed it made 'the poor things' look very 'remarkable when out on the street or coming down from Holy Communion when the nuns had to face the whole congregation'. She acknowledged that Sister Patrick, the convent lay sister, *never objected* but she 'thought there were plenty of ways of making the lay sisters feel their position without having to wear the white apron which was not part of their habit [Mother Gertrude's emphases].[121]

Although Mother Provincial Alacoque Bourke raised the matter with the mother general (the lack of uniformity on the custom was 'causing people to talk') nothing was done about it until it was raised at the 1907 meeting of superiors.[122] Mother Gertrude Kelly of Ararat convent proposed that the lay sisters *not* wear white aprons in church, in

[118] Tullow HCM, 13 Mar. & 4 &11 Jun. 1880,
[119] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p.320
[120] Clear, *Nuns*, p.94.
[121] Banahan to Mother General Kelly, Masterton, 3 Mar. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/703.
[122] Bourke to Mother General Kelly, Echuca, 17 May 1904, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.

the oratory or opening doors to the visitors [Mother Benedict's emphasis]. The proposal was accepted by all except Mother Borgia Walshe of Beechworth.[123] Beechworth convent remained unconvinced on the need for the change and nine months later, Mother Vincent Brennan protested to the mother general that none of her 'good class' of lay sisters ever complained about wearing their white aprons. She mentioned that they wore large white aprons when working and nice little calico white aprons going to the oratory and to the door; and that they were as particular about those little aprons, as they would be about their habits.[124]

The wearing of the white apron when opening doors to the visitors, in church or travelling may appear to be a trivial matter yet it symbolized and reinforced the class distinction between the choir and lay sisters. This formal wearing was abolished by chapter decision in 1920 at the same time as the Mercy sisters did so. Indeed, sometime later, the attempt to make Sister Catherine Bergin look like a choir sister by blocking out her white apron in a photograph of the Coonamble pioneers signals some possible embarrassment about lay sisters. (See Appendix 10) The erasing of Sister Catherine's white apron, points to the fact that this class distinction had become, as Peckham Magray suggests, 'an embarrassing and regrettable, if not reprehensible feature of women's religious lives'.[125] Brigidine Sister Naomi Turner argues that the action is understandable but that, 'we do Sister Catherine no service [and the countless other lay sisters] and we ourselves lose something. We can easily forget what Catherine's life was like and what it can teach us'.[126]

For lots of Brigidine past pupils many lay sisters are recalled with a great deal of affection. The sisters made time for them out of their busy schedules. One Wangaratta boarder, Kit Kelly remembers the heavy work load of the four lay sisters, Brigid, Rose, Brendan and Veronica, in looking after and cooking for some forty boarders and fifteen nuns.[127] Yet Sister Veronica McCurran could find time to play tennis on the back court with the pupils or skip with them during the winter months. Irish born Sister Rose Clarke consoled many a tearful pupil with lollipops hidden deep in her pockets. Raspberry

[123] Moore to Mother General Kelly, Mentone, 11 Mar. 1907, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.
[124] Brennan to Mother General Kelly, Beechworth, 8 Dec. 1907, DA/BC/BGA/382.01.
[125] Magray, *The transforming power of nuns,* p.42.
[126] Turner, 'Our Early History'.
[127] Kit Kelly, Wangaratta past pupils' reminiscences, BPA/Vic./Box559C.

vinegar and a toffee sweet was Sister Brendan Rowley's remedy to soothe a lonely pupil who came to her laundry for solace. The four were careful to organize their holidays so that there was always one of them in attendance 'rather than leave the house to the mercy of those helpless teachers'.[128]

Having been 'virtually ignored' in the annals, it is only in the 'nuanced reverence' of the necrologies that we gain some insight into how the community saw the 'sacrificial devotion', the 'humble, hidden, meritorious works' and the 'religious piety' of a lay sister. At their death, some were seen as a 'great loss' to the community while others were noted for their 'amiability and unselfish kindness and charity' and some for their 'kindly good nature and wonderful spirit of self-sacrifice'. One sister was seen as a 'noble soul', another a 'big-hearted, generous soul' and another 'helped to brighten a dark hour for the sick' while 'hiding her own suffering under the cloak of a joyous witty manner'. More than probably necessary, a 'great sense of humour' appears to have been a characteristic of many lay sisters not forgetting, 'patience' and 'perfect resignation'. 'Full of merit and good works', many of the lay sisters according to the annals, were held in 'good esteem' by priests and bishops. Trimingham Jack contends that the glorification of any group ['noble', 'big-hearted', 'generous' lay sisters, for instance] in a 'lower social position to ourselves is a way of attributing to its members a status we are not prepared or able to offer them in a formal and ongoing way.[129] The glowing warm terms, however, cannot disguise the apparent taking for granted of the lay sisters as 'quasi-servants' which, perhaps though not intentional, wounded many in the process.

Conclusion

In this chapter the need for definitive approbation that would ensure that the Holy See put its seal to the Brigidines' constitution and on the mother general's sphere of 'legitimated' authority has been considered. In this long drawn out process of amalgamation and the attitude taken by the bishops was explored as was the fears of some of the sisters that the proposal in 1903 to have a separate mother general for

[128] Sturrock, *Women of Strength Women of Gentleness*, p.94.
[129] Trimingham Jack, *Growing Good Catholic Girls*, p.8 quoted in O'Donoghue, *Catholic Teaching Brothers,* p.50.

Australasia would lead to 'utter chaos' and that the order would simply go to '*ruin*' [Mother Borgia Walshes' emphasis].[130]

It was, however, under an Australian Mother General, Chanel Gough that the distinction between choir and lay sister came formally to an end at the general chapter of 1953. The decision was taken in response to a papal rescript abolishing the distinction. From 1954 all members of the congregation were addressed as sister. It was a distinction that in a hundred years of Brigidine history the voice of about sixty-eight lay sisters was unheard.[131] This distinction within the internal convent dynamics shows, as O'Brien states, that an all-female organization could and did mirror both the status differences and sexual divisions of the larger society, in which the 'feminine' works of domestic labour and devotional ardour was simultaneously lauded and accorded lower status.[132] Yet, without the willing work of the lay sisters, the Brigidines would not have flourished as an institute neither would their 'schools have been visible, much less successful'.[133] It was a division, as has been seen, that was maintained in the Irish Brigidine convents with no apparent difficulty (MacCurtain too argues that the hierarchy within the convent reflected public life of the period in Ireland) but it was one that fell into increasing disfavour in most of the Australian convents. Indeed, the hurt of the lay sisters' unheard voice was a wound which was slow to heal. It seems that the wise words of Bishop Byrne which went to the heart of the distinction between the choir and lay sister went unheard that 'it would be well to be very kind and condescending to those who serve religion. They shall still meet with humiliations enough to enable them to get a very high place in heaven. "Them is my sentiments"'.[134]

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[130] Mother Borgia Walshe to Mother General Kelly, Beechworth, 6 Jun. 1903 & 28 Dec. 1903, DA/BC/BGA/230.05.
[131] Of the 68: 32 belonged to the Irish convents, 13 to NSW & NZ and 23 to VIC.
[132] O'Brien, 'Lay-sisters and Good Mothers', p.460.
[133] Kealy, *Dominican Education*, p.6.
[134] Byrne to Synan, Bathurst, 26 Jul. 1889, BPA/NSW/Box11/Series108.1/5.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis has been to advance what is known about the religious congregation of the Sisters of St Brigid (Brigidines) in its first hundred years. This study examines the impact on the Brigidines of the lengthy illness and untimely death of its founder, Bishop Daniel Delany of Kildare and Leighlin. One of the most significant findings to emerge was that his demise hampered the congregation's development as he had not gained papal approbation for it. The death of three successor bishops before they could rectify the situation left the congregation almost forty years without any form of papal recognition, a matter which made the Brigidines less acceptable to aspiring postulants. This lack of recognition was appreciated by Bishop Haly who gained initial papal approbation in 1845. However, his successor Bishop Walshe showed little urgency in seeking further approbation for the Brigidines.

This study has found that on his succession to the See in 1787, Delany's determined objective was the continuance of the catechesis he had established to instruct and form the people in religious practices in line with neo-Tridentine norms. His attempts to establish religious communities in Mountrath (1792) and in Clonegal (1799) showed the value of an active 'religious' community. Mountrath is recognized as the first attempt to found a Brigidine congregation while its leader, Mary Dawson, is regarded from the late 1880s as the first Brigidine and model for Brigidine spirituality.[1]

As to the community in Clonegal, this study reveals that, although they lived as 'Brigidines', Delany appears to have abandoned the 'sisters' as he did not amalgamate them with the new communities of Tullow and Mountrath. This conclusion may appear harsh but the paucity of archival material leads to it. Possibly, the Clonegal 'sisters' wished to remain a separate community or perhaps parish politics came into play though, as the parish priest James Purcell was a friend and advisor to Delany, this is unlikely. Perhaps they may not have had the education or ability he desired. Whatever the reason, the Clonegal community, disbanded by Bishop James Doyle in 1824 and ignored in the

[1]O'Riordan, 'Life of Dr Delany: Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin' bound type-set script, written *c.* 1972, pp 36 & 40; Sturrock, 'Daniel Delany and his first sisters'.

Brigidine annals, was eventually recognized as part of the Brigidine tradition at their bicentenary celebrations held in Tullow in 2007.

With the leakage of his trained catechists to marriage, family commitments, the 'corruption of the world' or death, his fear of a Protestant education system and the zeal of the evangelical proselytizers of the Second Reformation, Delany established the Brigidines to bind together his chosen voluntary, zealous and pious catechetical teachers into a religious congregation to give permanence to the work of religious instruction. The Brigidines were unusual in being founded by a man and, unlike other active female religious in that they were not established in a city or large town but in the two small country towns of Tullow and Mountrath both Delany's mensal parishes.

The study also shows that again, unlike the other active female congregations, the congregation at its beginning was not 'fronted by members of the Catholic upper-middle class'.[2] Rather, it was fronted by a member of the Catholic gentry while its first members were the ordinary women of Tullow and Mountrath. These women were initiated into the religious practices of convent life by Bishop Delany and Judith Wogan Browne. Given Judith Wogan Browne's privileged family background and education at the Benedictine convent at Ypres it is not surprising that Delany chose her to assist him in establishing his religious congregation. What is surprising is the extent of the authority and control that he gave to her, both in religious and financial matters. With regards to the latter it was an authority that did not lessen with the passage of time, nor one which his successors challenged. With regard to her religious authority Judith Wogan Browne's position within the community was an anomalous one, and one with which Bishop Doyle did not agree suggesting that 'Miss Browne should be satisfied with managing the temporalities of the late doctor without aspiring to inherit his spiritual jurisdiction'.[3] However, he did nothing about the situation. It was, as Brigidine Sister Mary O'Riordan comments, not only an anomalous one in Brigidine history but in the history of all female congregations—she was very much an integral part of the pioneer community but nevertheless not of it in the sense of consecrated membership.[4]

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[2] Clear, *Nuns*, p.52.
[3] James Doyle to Martin Doyle, Carlow College, 10 Nov. 1814, DA/BP/01/JKL/1814/01.
[4] O'Riordan, *Judith Wogan Browne*, p.5.

Her financial authority as the executrix of Daniel Delany's will gave her such an unassailable position of importance and power that she refused not only the community but Bishop Doyle permission for the community to open boarding schools 'within her lifetime'—the Patrician brothers had boarding schools as early as 1827. From the evidence that is available it seems to be the case that her tight financial control and lack of boarding school income compounded by the poverty of the Catholic population of Tullow and Mountrath unable to support the communities kept both convents in a financially precarious position. Their financial insecurity would, according to Coonerty, have had a knock-on effect, for a house in a financially precarious position would not attract local recruits and with no subjects there could be no foundations.[5] Only thirty-seven postulants entered between Delany's death in 1814 and 1848, the year of Judith Wogan Browne's death, twelve of whom left before profession. Even in 1854, Mountrath convent had not sufficient funds to support prospective candidates '*respectably and permanently*' [Bishop Haly's emphasis].[6]

However, the importance of her presence in attracting middle class women of ability to the congregation is clearly supported by the fact that on the opening of their first boarding school in 1837 (Bishop Nolan allowed its establishment) the sisters confidently advertised courses which they taught in Italian, French, English, the sciences and all the 'accomplishments' necessary for 'the manners and life-style' of a 'young lady' of the Catholic middle class. However, neither the annals nor the profession books give any detail on the status of the parents of the sisters. This is not unusual given, as stated earlier, that most congregational archives have few details about the social origins of their members other than death notices or necrologies written for each sister which do not give such details.[7]

Although this study has addressed the question, it cannot say with any degree of certainty why Bishop Delany procrastinated in extending the Brigidine congregation beyond Tullow and Mountrath, if indeed he wished to extend it. In the seven years up to Delany's death in 1814, the Brigidine convents remained at two (both in his mensal

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[5] Paula Coonerty, 'The Presentation Sisters and the Education of 'Poor Female Children' in Limerick 1837–1870' in *The Old Limerick Journal* (Winter, 1996), 36–45 at 37; McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p.37.

[6] Bishop Haly to Mother Peter Stein, Carlow, 27 Jun. 1854, DA/BC/Air/314.

[7] O'Brien,'Lay-sisters and Good Mothers, pp.453-65

parishes) while the Presentation sisters had extended their convents by six to thirteen in Ireland. Similarly, Catherine McAuley between 1831 and 1841 had established twelve houses in Ireland and two in England. This may indicate that Delany's concerns were only for his mensal parishes (his confraternities were also concentrated in the two parishes) or it may be that he was reluctant to attempt to establish the congregation in other towns. It is reasonable to conclude that as each parish was managed by a parish priest, Delany could not establish the Brigidines in a town parish without the parish priest's support. Many parish priests would not have been in a position to take on the responsibility and financial care of a new and untried enclosed congregation. According to Coonerty, it was the Presentation sisters' education of poor female children that appears to have made them more attractive to priests in the cities and larger provincial towns (such as Carlow, Galway, Limerick, Kildare and Maryborough) where there was a concentration of prosperous Catholics to found and maintain the convents—Carlow's convent established in 1811 was under the patronage of its parish priest, Dean Staunton and not Delany.[8] Delany wanted more: to combine the elementary education of poor girls with the education of the fee-paying middle classes (equally in need of Catholic education but not willing to attend the poor school) and to instruct the parish children in church Sunday schools. Such was the class differences that later the more affluent parents in towns with Brigidine convents preferred to send their children to the boarding school rather than to their select day school.

Although only meriting a few lines in the Mountrath annals, the Brigidines' first overseas mission was to America in 1851. While there are no annals concerning the American mission the records from the University of Notre Dame archives show that, even with a bishop's permission to enter his diocese, a community experienced great hardship if they lacked finances, the support of the mother house, the parish priest and the parishioners. The American evidence shows that lack of financial support from the Irish convents was a contributing factor in their failure to establish themselves. It is frustrating that because of lack of evidence in the annals it can only be presumed that Bishop Haly gave permission for the risky American mission on the understanding that

[8] Coonerty, 'The Presentation Sisters', p. 118.

Father McFaul would provide for the two sisters—he did pay their fares to America. The other major factor contributing to their vulnerability was the lack of definitive papal approbation which left them defenceless against the plans and preferences of the bishops for their own dioceses.

The Australian experience showed what could be done when the necessary support was in place. Although the sisters' 'heroism' was seen as a 'singular blessing conferred on the Australian church' it was, to all intents and purposes, the exploitation of a valuable human resource which, as Brigidine Sister Loyola Fraser argues, 'saw them too readily concede their independence, under pressure from an education system which saw them primarily as expendable for the sake of the Kingdom'.[9] Examination of their correspondence as well as household records shows not only their courage and resilience in the face of many hardships but also their brilliance at budgeting, planning, investment and fund raising. The financial management skills and business nous for instance of Mothers John Synan, Alacoque Miller, Gertrude Banahan and Vincent Cummins are representative of the many women religious who Kehoe says 'are generally credited with being competent and clever businesswomen'.[10]

This study further reveals that many of the sisters spent all of their lives in the same schools, which may possibly have affected the dynamism of the congregation. In so doing, nevertheless, they brought stability to the schools, through which they effected religious change by ensuring that the children received 'an education in an environment supportive of their Catholic faith' and also social change through their academic education, which made the student eminently employable. Noted for their tuition in music and art, they were also a conduit for cultural change. This research shows their dependency on the fees garnered from those artistic skills as the mainstay of their frugal lifestyle. Hence, the constant cry to home to send music teachers of ability as well as the hope that new postulants would be musically gifted.

Not unsurprisingly the research has revealed the extent of the difficulties faced by a small congregation. The foundation of new houses in all three colonies stretched

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[9] O'Haran, *Reminiscences of the Brigidine Nuns*, SAA; Fraser, A comparison of spiritualities, p.13, DA/BC/BGA/130.2.
[10] Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church,* p.75.

their resources to the limit and put considerable strain on the personnel, often at a cost to their health. Although each sister was imbued with a sense of mission, how they performed that mission of evangelization wearing their heavy serge habits in the climatic conditions of the 'bush' is a wonder in itself. It was not until the general chapter meeting of 1953 that lighter material could be used in the habits of those working in 'hot climates' but, even then, the outer sleeves could only be removed by permission of the superior on 'hot sultry days'. While visiting Coonamble 126 years after the first Brigidine foundation in Australia, the author was struck by the searing heat, the feeling of isolation exacerbated by the lack of rail connections, the great distances that had to be endured to get from town to town and the tedium of seemingly endless plains. Even equipped with modern conveniences, Coonamble is a harsh place to live making the achievements of the Mountrath pioneers in 1883 all the more remarkable.[11]

Notwithstanding the difficulties they experienced, the congregation flourished in all three colonies under the leadership of the doughty Mother John Synan who worked to build a good relationship with both her diocesan bishops and home authorities. The research has shown that while Brigidine superiors were careful to acknowledge episcopal authority they were well able to defend their own. Defending their own became more difficult once the congregation had its own centralized government from 1892 and the diocesan bishops and priests felt the loss of their own authority in the governance of the convents and the distribution of personnel. The nuns, however, knew when to retire and to give way for the 'good of the institute'. As the findings show, they were 'active agents in manipulating their world and shaping their individual future as well as the future of the congregation'.[12]

The evidence from this research shows the importance of kinship in attracting subjects to the congregation in that, as Mangion contends and the evidence shows, women religious communicated their satisfaction with religious life to their siblings and other family members—the four Hayden sisters, the four Bourkes including two aunts

[11] The twenty-first of August 2009 marked the end of the Brigidine mission in Coonamble and the strength of feeling for the sisters was palpable at the public and religious services held in their honour. Although the closure of the convent meant the departure of the two remaining sisters, Clare Reilly and Finian Gaughan, the strong Brigidine ethos in the school they left remains.

[12] Mangion, *Contested Identities*, p.235.

and two nieces, the three Kerr sisters, Mother Benedict Moore and her two nieces are just a small example of the family ties.[13]

Convent education, particularly boarding school life was also a positive force in attracting 'moneyed and educated' young girls while clerical recommendations and membership of the Children of Mary were important but to a lesser degree. The evidence also shows that in 'marrying' into a life of full-time service to the church, becoming a nun provided these and other subjects with a safe fulfilled existence, a means to centre on their spiritual life, to have respect, a role, and a recognized profession and through that profession an opportunity for leadership and advancement not available within the family.[14] Mother Benedict was a noted superior of several Brigidine convents while of the Hayden sisters, Mother Borgia was first superior of Echuca convent while Mother Stanislaus was both a superior and also provincial of New South Wales province (1914-20).

The formation of a 'spouse of Christ' was exacting not only on the postulant and novice but particularly on the novice mistress as she sought to bring about as, Mangion maintains, a 'redefinition of the self from one's identity as daughter, sister or widow' to a reshaping of the self not only as an individual nun but as 'a member of a religious congregation'.[15] Her office as novice mistress was the most responsible of all the offices in a religious congregation as everything depended on her direction—both the future of the candidate and ultimately the future of the community. This research has shown that the requirements needed to be a novice mistress (the crucial ability to read character, discernment, discretion, prudence, kindness and strictness in the 'enforcement of the observance of the rule') were not easily found in any one person. In fact, one significant finding to emerge was that the responsibility and nature of the office of novice mistress was one that many sisters were unsuited for. Many hoped not to be appointed. One sister, 'who dreaded the task', died within two years of being appointed. Others resigned the position after a few years. Those who had the necessary gifts remained in the position for many years with one sister being novice mistress for twenty-five years.

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[13] Ibid., p.74.
[14] Hill, *Women in Ireland*, p.32; Mangion, *Contested Identities*, p.87.
[15] Mangion, *Contested Identities*, p.88.

Dramatic growth was not part of the Brigidine experience. Their development in Ireland took place, as did that of the Presentation and Mercy sisters, in conjunction with the growth of the national school system, nevertheless, in 1860 there were only four Brigidine convents Mountrath, Tullow (both founded by Delany) Abbeyleix and Goresbridge in existence with a community membership of sixty-seven. By comparison, the Mercy sisters numbered 3,000 worldwide and by the beginning of the twentieth century they numbered 8,000 whereas the Brigidines numbered 508. The Brigidines in the 1860s were so invisible that one contemporary writer failed to mention them in his book on nuns.[16] In 1873 they numbered eighty-seven. The Brigidines' slow development is shown not only in the comparison with the Mercy sisters' figures but is also seen in the census figures for 1901. While there were 8,031 nuns in Ireland in 1900, ('roughly 64 per cent of the country's religious personnel') the Brigidines, at 80, (7 less than in 1873) were only 1 per cent of the female religious population.[17] Such low numbers meant that the Brigidines were often stretched to the limits and under considerable strain to meet the demands placed on them by teaching, spiritual exercises, community finances, establishment of new houses and exacting priests and bishops. For example, in 1890 the select day schools in Mountrath and Goresbridge were closed to maintain the boarding and national schools while in 1892 the sisters withdrew from Paulstown convent and national school in a further effort to keep Goresbridge boarding school open. Given the rapid expansion of female religious congregations during the nineteenth century the question arises as to why their growth was so slow. This study has yielded several possible answers to this question.

Two charges could be laid against Delany. First was his failure to give the sisters a proper rule and constitutions. He could have used the approved rule and constitutions of the Presentation sisters (they were known to him) as a basis for his own rule. Catherine McAuley did so some years later adding on her own amendments to suit her Mercy sisters' mission. Delany may not, however, have felt any urgency to apply for approbation as, it was said, he believed that it could take up to twenty years to mature a rule or alternatively and probably, as McGrath puts it, he had no clear idea of what he

[16] Murphy, *Sketches of Irish Nunneries*.
[17] Magray, *The Transforming Power of the Nuns*, p.9; Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church*, p.11.

was trying to do.[18] Indeed, he was after all *'strongly, nay irresistibly impelled'* to sacrifice his *'little convent of St Brigid'* in favour of his 'golden dream' of a contemplative order [Delany's emphasis]. The possibility of having a contemplative order in Tullow was suggested to him by Bishop Moylan in 1808. On the advice of Judith Wogan Browne he did not proceed with the project, nevertheless, he still wondered, as late as February 1814, whether his religious community of St Brigid deserved that 'dignified appellation'.

The second charge is that the power he gave to her to control the finances of the convent was excessive. To be beholden to Wogan Browne for every shilling certainly begs the question whether she gave full support to the nascent community's attempts at expansion. By the time of her death in 1848 aged 98 it was probably too late for the Brigidines to expand to other dioceses as the Mercy and Presentation sisters and Irish Sisters of Charity had populated them. It is reasonable to conclude that Delany made a mistake in giving her too much authority. Although initially she brought great benefits to the congregation, her long years of power proved to be a hindrance to the congregation's development.

Because there is no surviving correspondence between Delany and Judith Browne or indeed, any other material concerning her, this added to the significant reticence in the annals in her regard, made it difficult to draw any conclusion on the relationship between the two. Was it one of equals? He was 'passionately fond of the society of intellectual and sincere friends' (Lord Clifden and Lord Cloncurry for example) where, as McGrath suggests, 'his Francophile manners and speech found a ready appreciation' or, as it seems, did his 'gentle nature' leave him too 'indulgent', too 'vacillating' and lacking in the drive of female founders such as Nano Nagle, Catherine McAuley, Mary Aikenhead and Margaret Aylward.[19] In her late fifties (when the Brigidines were founded) Judith Wogan Browne was probably too old and possibly too genteel to take on the responsibility to drive the community forward.

Another probable reason for the slow development was the sisters' own understanding of Delany's intention for them to instruct in the 'parochial' chapel. As

[18] Walker, *A Spirit of Kindness*, p.9; McGrath, *Religious Renewal and Reform*, p. 122.
[19] Fitzpatrick, *The Life of Dr. Doyle,* i, p.127.

early as 1845, Mother Catherine McAuliffe did not believe that it was Delany's intention that the parish church had always to be within the convent enclosure. She believed, rightly, that this would prevent the Brigidines from establishing in other places. She wished to remove the word 'parochial' from the amended rules but did not do so in consideration for the opinions of the other sisters. It was not always feasible for a priest to provide a convent close to the parish church to maintain enclosure. Enclosure would have prevented the Brigidines from being 'useful' in the eyes of many priests looking for congregations of sisters not only to teach but to visit the homes of the poor, hospitals and gaols. Such 'usefulness' was recognized and wished for by the Australian sisters who were conscious of not being able to offer practical support, as Kehoe describes it, to some of society's most vulnerable members. The general council, however, did not accede to their request.[20] It was this freedom to visit the homes that made 'walking nuns' (the Mercy sisters, the Irish Sisters of Charity and the Sisters of the Holy Faith) so popular among priests and people and attractive to new aspirants. Nonetheless, it has to be admitted that enclosure did not prevent the Presentation sisters from spreading in Ireland and abroad much earlier and to a greater extent than the Brigidines.

Probably the major factor impeding Brigidine growth was the absence of papal approbation. It was not until Walshe's death in 1888 and the expansion of the congregation to Australia that a concerted effort was made to gain definitive approbation. The *Decretum Laudis* or decree of praise, the step before definitive papal jurisdiction was achieved in 1892.[21] Research has shown that the delay in achieving the latter approbation (1907) was due, in part, to the division of Australia into two provinces (1895) as well as to the intransigence of some of the Australian bishops on where to site the central novitiates. This was compounded by the unfavourable reaction to the proposed amended rules (1903) by Bishop Dunne of Bathurst who placed the matter before Cardinal Moran to stay proceedings in Rome until it was resolved at the Australian plenary council of bishops (1905). It was to the bishops' advantage to keep the congregation under episcopal jurisdiction. The positive 'judgement' by the Holy See in 1907 'of the fitness and the utility of the institute in the church' meant the sanction of

[20] Kehoe, *Creating a Scottish Church,* p.75.
[21] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope*, p.59; Mangion, *Contested identities*, p.216.

their rule and constitutions as definitive.[22] It also meant that their rule and constitutions were now as Mangion states, 'tangible documents that could be utilized to achieve their ends, validate their authority as women religious and legitimate their right to exercise their authority in relation to internal institute management and their evangelical and missionary vision'—a missionary vision that was often one of suffering and loneliness particularly for the sisters who brought Catholic education to the Wairarapa district of New Zealand.[23]

By 1892 there were more Brigidine sisters in Australia than in Ireland. This is all the more surprising given that Australia was becoming increasingly secular and the Brigidine convents, up to 1901 in New South Wales and 1904 in Victoria, were all in small country towns. It is also surprising in that many of the Irish superiors saw a 'want of stability' as well as a 'want of submission' in the Australian character since some believed that from infancy 'the Australian was allowed to have her way' so that she 'naturally did not like to have anyone over her'. Yet, the 'good breeding, refinement and courtesy of speech and manner' and educational abilities of the pioneers (they always compared themselves to the 'Loretos' and the 'great Sacred Hearts') in these small towns is what attracted so many of these freer young Australian sisters (all of whom voted to retain the union with Ireland in 1903) who, in turn, brought their freshness to the old Irish ways particularly in the matter of the lay sisters. In the process, they made the congregation a more inviting place for other generations to continue the work of evangelization.

Throughout the hundred years (1807–1907) the voice of about sixty-eight lay sisters went unheard in any decision concerning the life of the Brigidine community.[24] The division between choir and lay sisters was maintained in the Irish Brigidine convents with no apparent difficulty but it was one that fell into increasing disfavour in many of the Australian convents. One Australian bishop complained that 'the distinction was often too strongly and unkindly insisted upon' while the superior of Echuca convent pleaded that the 'lay sisters not be treated as slaves'. However, despite these voices, it was a division carefully upheld in the convents up to the early 1950s. It was under the

[22] Devine, *Convent Life*, p.15.
[23] Mangion. *Contested identities*, p.234.
[24] Of the 115: 47 belonged to the Irish convents, 20 to NSW & NZ and 38 to VIC.

leadership of Australian Mother General Chanel Gough that the distinction came formally to an end at the general chapter of 1953. MacGinley expresses the view, as does Trimingham Jack, that the inertia of long establishment, together with papal approval of the constitutions, and the tradition of a religious lifestyle, held almost as sacrosanct, insulated the religious institutes from the changing realities of the increased democratization of the society around them.[25]

When the idea of this historical research was first mooted, the response from the Brigidines was overwhelmingly positive. They were 'happy to have [their] story written in a new language from a fresh outlook' namely that of 'a married woman' and welcomed 'the possibility that it might lead to publication in book form'. By undertaking this it has led one, as Trimingham-Jack puts it, 'to look again at one's assumptions and their origins and to recognize the value associated with using one's experience as part of the data gathering process'.[26] This thesis has taken a fresh approach to the examination and interpretation of the history of the Brigidines and their founder Bishop Daniel Delany. It has expanded the current state of knowledge on the foundation of the institute, the lives of many of the sisters and their significant role in education. As has been seen, Brigidine history was a history written in human lives but, as Clear maintains on female religious in general, 'by entering convents women had the chance to perform meaningful work, while maintaining a comparatively privileged position in the world which they had formally forsaken'.[27]

[25] MacGinley, *A Dynamic of Hope,* p.321.
[26] Trimingham-Jack, 'A Dose of Castor Oil', 1–12.
[27] Clear, *Nuns*, p.165.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

APPENDIX I (translation)

FIRST APPROVAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE SISTERS OF ST. BRIGID

To the Right Revd. Francis Hally
Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin

Right Rev. Sir,

The Sacred Congregation felt very great gratification in receiving the summary of the Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of St. Brigid, which your Lordship submitted to their consideration. From the perusal of these Rules and Constitutions, the Sacred Congregation has every reason to hope that the happy fruits which that Sisterhood has hitherto produced by educating female children, especially the poor, on Catholic principles, will not only be permanent, but also prudently augmented. It will afford the Sacred Congregation much pleasure, if your Lordship be pleased to inform these pious ladies, who are endued with so much love for Religion, and such zeal for procuring their neighbours' salvation, of the tenor of this letter; more particularly as it seems that its approval of their Institute will both give them great consolation and always serve for an additional incentive to them to aim at greater perfection in their works of charity. Meanwhile, I beseech God to give you a long and happy life.

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant
J. P. P Cardinal Franzoni, Prefectas

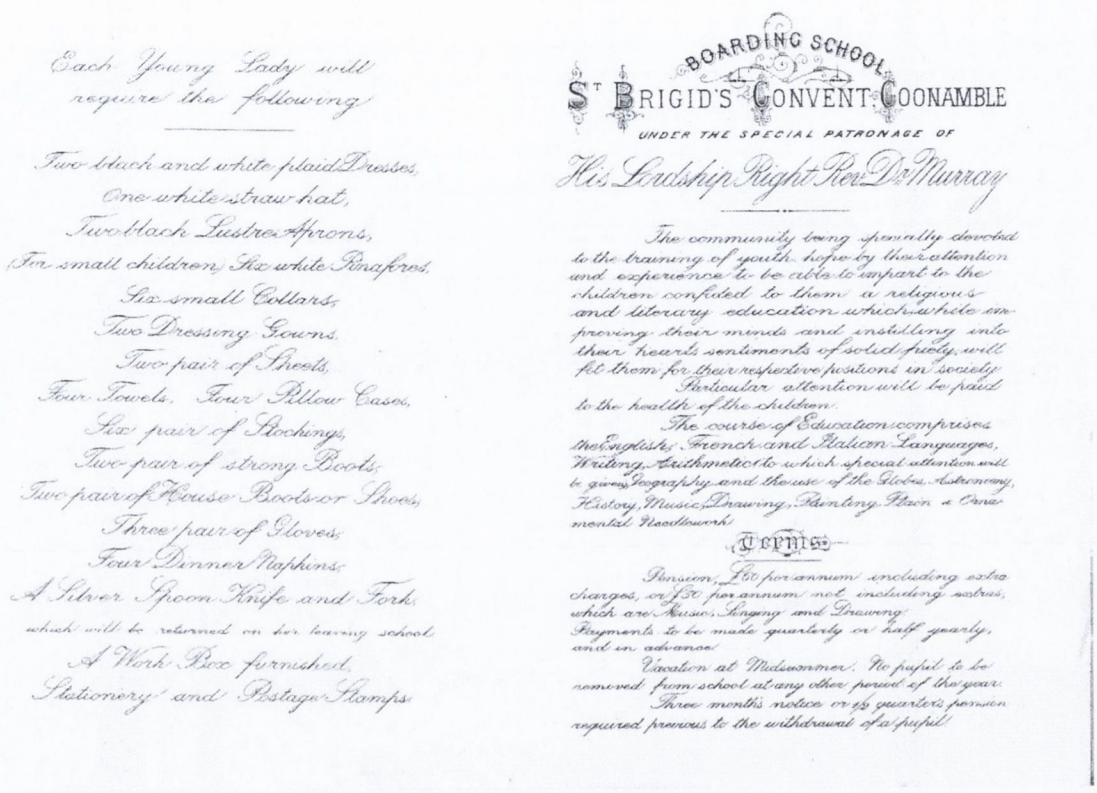
Rome, Office of the Sacred Cong. Of Propaganda
31st March 1845
Joannos Brunelli, Secretary

Appendix 2



The original Convent in Coonamble – the first home of the Sisters in 1883

Appendix 3



BOARDING SCHOOL

St BRIGID'S CONVENT COONAMBLE

UNDER THE SPECIAL PATRONAGE OF

His Lordship Right Rev. Dr Murray

The community being specially devoted to the training of youth, hope by their attention and experience to be able to impart to the children confided to them a religious and literary education which while improving their minds and instilling into their hearts sentiments of solid piety, will fit them for their respective positions in society.

Particular attention will be paid to the health of the children.

The course of Education comprises the English, French and Italian Languages, Writing, Arithmetic to which special attention will be given, Geography and the use of the Globes, Astronomy, History, Music, Drawing, Painting, Fancy & Ornamental Needlework.

Terms.

Pension, £30 per annum including extra charges, or £30 per annum not including extras, which are Music, Singing and Drawing.

Payments to be made quarterly or half yearly, and in advance.

Vacation at Midsummer. No pupil to be removed from school at any other period of the year.

Three months notice or 1/4 quarter's pension required previous to the withdrawal of a pupil.

Each Young Lady will require the following

Two black and white plaid Dresses,
One white straw hat,
Two black Lustre Aprons,
For small children, Six white Pinafores,
Six small Collars,
Two Dressing Gowns,
Two pair of Sheets,
Four Towels, Four Pillow Cases,
Six pair of Stockings,
Two pair of strong Boots,
Two pair of House Boots or Shoes,
Three pair of Gloves,
Four Dinner Napkins,
A Silver Spoon Knife and Fork,
which will be returned on her leaving school.
A Work Box furnished.
Stationery and Postage Stamps.

Appendix 4



Appendix 5

Testimonials.

TESTIMONIALS are awarded by the Community for exemplary conduct. These Testimonials being a direct reward from the Sisters, should be prized as the highest honours.

The requirements for Testimonials are:

I. Punctuality in returning to School at the close of the holidays.

II. Ladylike deportment.

III. Conduct must be uniformly good.

IV. Class average high.

[N.B.—Notable loss of marks disqualifies a Pupil from receiving a Testimonial. As violation of rule is punished in proportion to the offence by a loss of marks, the Pupils should realize from the very beginning of their school life the value of good marks.

[Perpetual Gold Medals and other prizes have been offered for different subjects in the various classes by patrons and friends of the Institute, so that honorable rewards are within the reach of all.

[Crowns are rewarded in each division for lady-like deportment and observance of rule. The Pupils vote for this distinction.

[The Prizes are awarded at the close of the year, according to the respective merits of the pupils.]

Appendix 6

POSTULANT'S LIST.

1. One Black Dress and Cape.
   Dress to reach the ankles and full width.
2. 1¼ yards good black net, with hems about 1 inch wide, except at one end that can be 2 inches wide; width of veil to be 42 inches.
3. Two Celluloid turned-down Collars and two pairs Cuffs.
4. One large black Woollen Shawl.
   One small black Woollen Shawl.
5. One black Underskirt.
6. Six pairs black Winter Stockings.
   Six pairs black Summer Stockings.
7. Two pairs Strong Boots.
   Two pairs Strong Shoes.
   One pair House Slippers.
8. Six Summer Night Dresses.
   Six Winter Night Dresses.
   All to have long sleeves and high necks.
9. Four warm Jerseys or Combinations.
10. Two Corsets and the usual Underwear.
11. Three pairs of Sheets.
12. Six Pillow Slips.
13. 2½ pairs Blankets.
14. Six Wash-hand Towels.
    Two Bath Towels.
15. Four Check Aprons, good size.
    Four pairs Check Sleeves.
    Six Check Dusters.
16. Two Check Quilts. 1½ breadths of material and 2½ yards long.
17. Four Table Napkins.
18. Knife, Fork, Tea and Dessert Spoon.
19. Writing Case, furnished.
20. A Work Bag or Basket, furnished.
21. Toilet Requisites.
22. One Umbrella (not Silk).
23. A Silver Watch.
24. Cell Furniture, £10.

BOOKS.

1 Office of B. V. Mary,
Latin and English.

1 Imitation of Christ.

New Testament,
Missal or other Prayer Book.

1 Meditations for Every Day in the Year, by a Father of the Society of Jesus. Two Volumes;

Or, Growth in the Knowledge of the Lord. Three Volumes, by Abbé Brandt.

School Books and Music.

BRIGIDINE CONVENT,
TULLOW, CO. CARLOW.

Appendix 7

Questions regarding the Rules of the Congregation of the Sisters of St Brigid of the diocese of Kildare & Leighlin, exhibited to the Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, for Approbation.

The following is a translation from the Latin:

1. It was asked if there were more houses of the institute – as only in part11 chapter XI, is mention made of registers to be kept in every house, and if there are, whether the sisters have intercourse with each other.
   Reply: There are four houses in the institute: one in Tullow, Co. Carlow, one in Mountrath, Queen's County, one in Abbeyleix, Queen's County and one in Goresbridge, Co. Kilkenny. When necessary they have intercommunication by permission of the bishop.

2. In like manner whether the enclosure, which is said to be, part1 chapter 6, is properly such since for part 1 chapter 2, says 'The schools for the children are placed within the enclosure', and also according to the rule the sisters ought to be ready to instruct the women in the rudiments of the Christian faith, and likewise on the feast days chapter 21 says the sisters ought to be ready 'to instruct in like manner the women in the church', all which things seem not consistent with enclosure so called.
   Reply: The enclosure meant by the Rule is a walled space around the convent within which are situated the parish church, and the schools. Beyond this enclosure the sisters cannot go, except on rare and necessary occasions, and with permission from the bishop.

3. Also inquiry is made of the quality of the vows, which from all the circumstances appear to be simple – however this is not expressed in the rules.
   Reply: simple-vows

4. Whether the place of the novitiate is separated from other parts of the house, according to the prescriptions of the Holy Canons, (because canon law required that: 'that the novices should have no communication with the professed sisters.
   Reply: The novitiate is a room in the convent, occupied only by the novices and their mistress, so that they may have no communication with the professed.

However, the novices and professed meet in the schools, the chapel, and the refectory.

5. The same is required about the boarders
   Reply: the apartments for the boarders are quite distinct from the convent.

6. When nothing is said in the rules of the dower and the qualifications of the postulants unless in general that it is appointed that they are to be examined by the bishop, and of sufficient age; and that so many be received as the funds of the institute will admit of, and only as by exception, that any should be admitted who may have a dower sufficient for her support hence it is inquired what age seems to be fixed on, and what amount of dower to be appointed; for, to receive without a dower seems to be a certain alienation, and only an exception could be made for those who seem to bring the most emolument to the institute, whilst in the meantime they are deprived of the goods of fortune.
   Reply: no sister was admitted before 16 years of age. Many sisters have been received without a dower – others have brought a dower, more or less according to the means of their families. What is chiefly regarded in one who seeks to be admitted is a true vocation to the religious state as well as depositions and ability to make good humble, useful members. When such persons present themselves, they are received, even if they have no dower, provided the house can afford to maintain them.

7. Why should a novitiate of 2 years as appointed by the rules, be left to the judgement of the bishop to be diminished or lessened?
   Reply: It has been desirable that the bishop should have the power, were it even to gratify the pious desires of a dying novice.

8. Why the burden is imposed on the novices of exercising the functions that are incumbent on the professed sisters.
   Reply: to train the novices to the duties of the institute.

9. Whether there is any particular cause, on account of the condition of the place, for continuing the time of school from 9 a.m. to 2.45 p.m. and for appointing 3 p.m. for dinner and after an interval of 5 hours, 8 p.m. appointed for supper.
   Reply: These hours suit the habits of the people of this country. The hours appointed for dinner and supper are found to be most convenient to the sisters so as not to interfere with duties.

10. Why is the recitation of the angelical salutation prescribed for 6 p.m. when it is contrary to the custom of the church to prescribe this hour for every time of the year; and the sisters would be deprived of the indulgences annexed to the recitation of the same salutation to be performed at the stroke of the bell after the setting of the sun?

Reply: the angelus is now said by the sisters, when the angelus bell rings.

11. It is inquired what is the usual number of sisters? What was it in past times? What progress has the congregation made from its foundation up to the present?
Reply: the founder Daniel Delany began the institute with four (sic) humble young women in the town of Tullow, on the feast of St Brigid, patroness of Ireland in 1807. Their numbers increasing the same bishop sent four sisters to found a branch in the town of Mountrath, Queen's County. Dr Delany died in 1814. In 1842 three sisters were sent from the mother house in Tullow, to found a branch house in Abbeyleix, Queen's County In 1858 three sisters were sent from the mother house to found a branch house in Goresbridge Co. Kilkenny. The present number: In community in Tullow is 26; in Mountrath convent 23; in Abbeyleix convent 24; in Goresbridge convent 14. Each house has schools for the poor and for the middle classes.

12. For election of superioress, part11 chapter 2 a majority of votes or suffrages is appointed, but it is not explained whether it be absolute or relative and how many vocals are required. It is added 'but if for the election of the superioress there are not 7 professed sisters, the election is to be made by the ordinary'. Hence it is necessary to be known, whether there is for all the houses a general superioress, or whether each house is governed by itself. In the former case it is necessary that a constitution be made, by which a general chapter may be appointed, the vocal sisters of it prescribed, the manner of electing a general superioress, her qualities, age, and the years of her profession, also the time she is to remain in office. If there is communion of the houses, it is necessary to appoint general counsellors whose consent in some cases the superior general ought to require, and whose advice she should ask in others. But if each house is governed independently of the others then also there should be consultation, and therefore it is suggested how many, and with what abilities they should be endowed.

13. The authority of the superioress seems to be too independent, for according to the rules exhibited, she herself chooses the other officials, even the primary ones as, assistant, bursar, mistress of novices, and can even assume one of the aforementioned offices, if it seems necessary to her; therefore it is inquired for what cause these statutes were made.
Reply: The majority of votes for the election of a superioress is absolute. All professed choir sisters out of the novitiate are vocals. There is no general superioress. Each house is self governed. That part which authorises the superioress to choose the other officials and to fill another office herself if she find it necessary is no longer in use. The present custom is: The superioress being canonically elected, then makes choice of such vocals as she in conscience deems fit to execute the offices of assistant/bursar/ mistress of novices; and then proposes them to chapter. The election is made by the plurality of votes, by black and white beans. Should any of them be negatized, the superioress then proposes

others. The election over the superioress with the advice of the three sisters newly elected makes choice of such other sisters, as she judges qualified for the other different offices.

(The replies to the twelve queries from Propaganda were given to Dr Lynch in 1873.
NB However, no use whatever was made of these replies. Instead others were drawn up in 1885 which Dr Lynch brought to Rome. Mary O'Riordans's comments)

Appendix 8

APPENDIX II (translation)

DECREE I: APPROBATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

As there have been in Ireland since the year 1807, Sisters of St. Brigid founded by the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin for the education of Catholic girls in his diocese and several religious houses having been founded after Tullow which is the Mother-house, the Superioress of these same most earnestly begs the approbation of the Apostolic See for the Institute and its Constitutions. Therefore, having weighed all matters stated by her, as well as the earnest letters of recommendation from the Ordinaries of the aforesaid Sisters having religious houses in their dioceses, this the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the name of Christ has had the Constitutions brought up for examination before the special commission for the approbation of new religious institutes in the presence of his Eminence, the Most Reverend P. D. Camillus, Cardinal Mazzella.
The Commission, in a testimony of praise judged the Institute to be most worthy of respect and approval and stated that the Constitutions be approved for a period of five years by way of trial, with the corrections added in the copy herewith attached and thus His Holiness has in his kindness disposed to approve, and confirm in everything this opinion through the undersigned Secretary to our Holy Father Leo XIII by divine providence pope, in an audience granted on the 27th day of March and has commanded this decee to be officially issued.

Given at Rome from the Office of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, 7th day of April, 1892.

M. Card. Leodochowski Ignatius
Archbishop, Prefect

Appendix 9

APPENDIX III (translation)

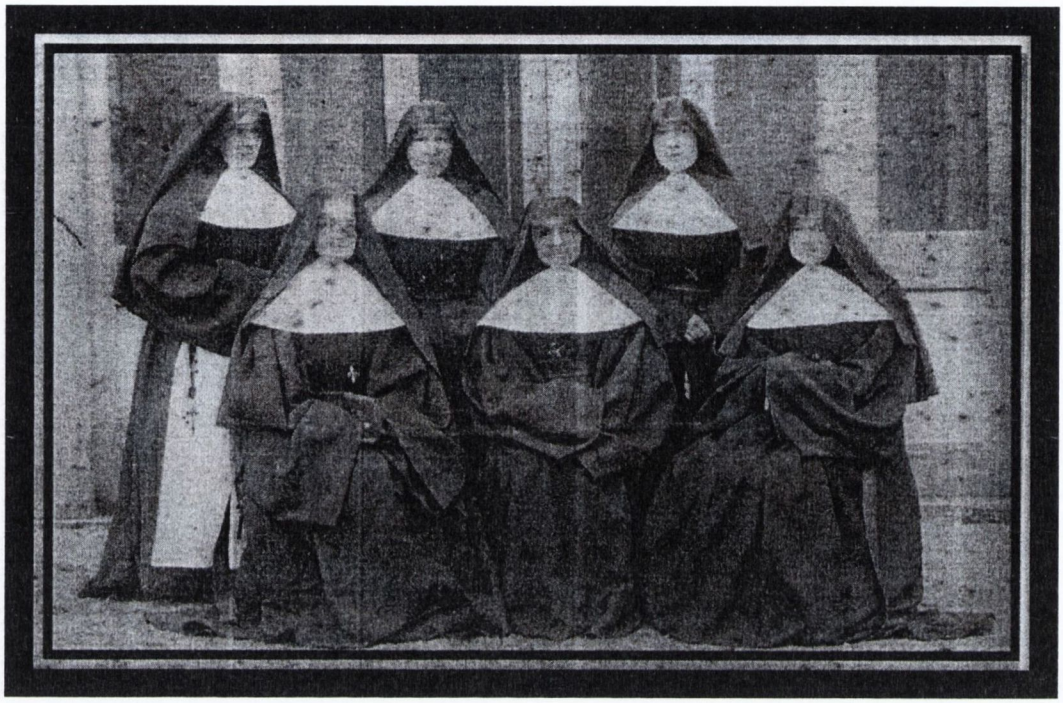
DECREE II: DEFINITIVE APPROBATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

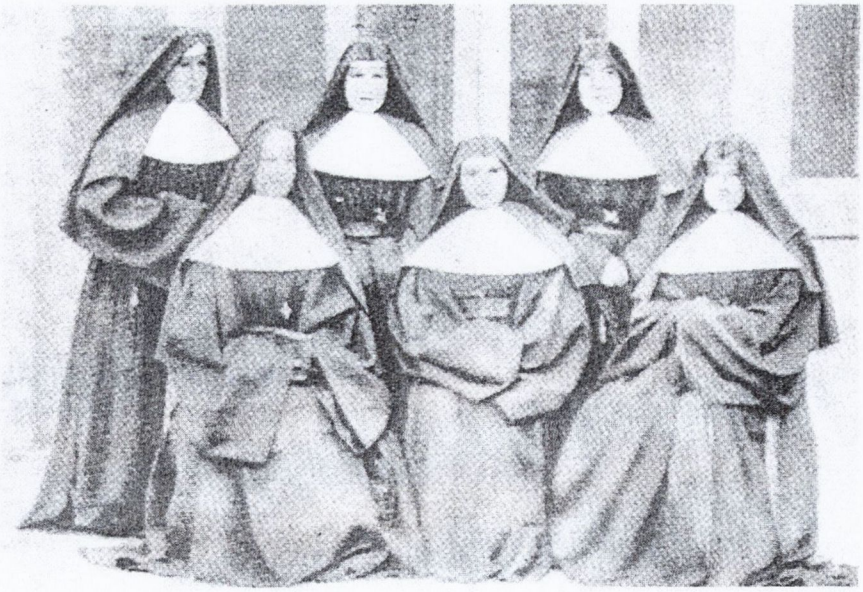
As the Sisters of St. Brigid, whose Mother-house is at Tullow, in the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, Ireland, have sent supplication and entreaties for the definite approbation of their Institute and Constitutions which already have been reformed, and which they present to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith a second time; the matter was brought before a commission especially appointed for this purpose for suitable examination, which was presided over by his Eminence Cardinal Francis Stalolli. The opinion of this commission in a meeting held 6th July was as follows that with respect to the spiritual profit of the aforesaid religious congregation, the spirit of piety in which it was founded as well as in consideration of the testamony of several bishops, the Institute of the Sisters of St. Brigid was most worthy of approbation, and that the constitutions were to be definitely approved, with some modifications however which are furnished in the copy herewith attached. This opinion having been brought before Our Holy Father Pius X, by divine providence pope, in an audience granted the 18th day of July, His Holiness was pleased to approve and ratify it, and ordered this present decree to be issued.

Given at Rome from the Office of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, 26th July, 1907.

F. H. M. Cardinal Prefect
Aloysius Veccia Sec.

Appendix 10





Above: The Original Pioneer Community that came to Coonamble. Seated: M.M. Ignatius Fitzpatrick (First Assistant, Mother M. John Synan (Superioress), M.M. Gertrude Banahan (Bursar). Standing: Sr. M. Catherine Bergin (Lay Sister), M.M. de Sales Maher (Second Assistant), M.M. Stanislaus Hayden (Sacristan).

PROSOPOGRAPHY

ANGLO IRISH PROVINCE SISTERS

* Denotes Lay Sister

BANAHAN, Frances (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Agura (Elphin) Roscommon
Professed 24/2/1876 Mountrath
Died 17/3/1932 Masterton (Age 77)

BARRON, Johanna (M Paul)
Birthplace Waterford
Professed 23/7/1885 Abbeyleix
Died 15/10/1948 Ararat VIC (Age 82)
Provincial Victoria, 1908–20

BARRON, Margaret (M Josephine)
Birthplace Thomastown
Professed 30/6/1892 Tullow
Died 27/10/1957 Tullow (Age 87)

BARTON, Anne Mary (M Aloysius)
Birthplace Paulstown
Professed 19/6/1860 Abbeyleix
Died 30/9/1907 Abbeyleix (Age 67)

BERGIN, Eliza (M Catherine)*
Birthplace Clough
Professed 12/12/1877 Mountrath
Died 1/10/1900 Cowra Age 52)

BOILSON, Margaret (M Bernard)
Birthplace Borris (Cashel)
Professed 13/7/1882 Mountrath
Died 21/1/1893 Mountrath (Age 32)

BOLGER, Margaret (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Ferns, Wexford
Professed 16/7/1851 Abbeyleix
Died 13/6/1861 Abbeyleix (Age 46)

BOLGER, Rose (M Brigid)
Birthplace Acore, Kilkenny
Professed 28/9/1876 Paulstown
Died 12/1/1881 Goresbridge (age 76)
One of the Paulstown nuns

BOURKE, Brigid (M Alacoque)
Birthplace Rathdrum, Wicklow
Professed 31/3/1875 Tullow
Died 19/2/1938 Kyabram, VIC (Age 82)

BOURKE, Mary
Birthplace —
Entered13/10/1869 Tullow
Left –/1/1870 ill health

BOURKE, Mary (M De Sales)
Birthplace Aughrim
Professed 30/6/1892 Tullow
Died 22/4/1897

BOURKE, Margaret (M Finbarr)
Birthplace Kilquade, Dublin
Professed 29/9/1892 Tullow
Died 17/3/1940 Tullow (Age —)

BRADY, Elizabeth (M Syra)*
Birthplace Bagenalstown
Professed 11/12/1894 Tullow
Died 22/5/1957 Mountrath (Age 86)

BRAZIL, Elizabeth (M Alphonsus)
Birthplace U.S.A
Professed 30/8/1888 Mountrath
Died 26/12/1947 Mountrath (Age 81) Mother General 1926–32)

BRENNAN, Catherine (M Vincent)
Birthplace Kilcullen, Kildare
Professed 7/7/1881 Tullow
Died 20/3/1945 Mentone, VIC (Age 86)

BRENNAN, Ellen (M Augustine)
Birthplace —
Professed 21/5/1891 Mountrath
Died 23/11/1950 Cooma, NSW (Age 86)

BRENNAN, Kate (M Magdalen)
Birthplace Carlow-Graigue
Entered 21/11/1863Tullow
Left 13/11/1865 ill health—intended to return—d. 29/1/1866

BRIEN Bridget (M Teresa)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 1808 Tullow
Died 22/12/1808 (Age 31)

BRIEN Mary (M Teresa)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed — Tullow
Died 21/9/1849 (Age —)

BROPHY
Birthplace —
Entered 11/2/1843 Tullow from Carlow Presentation convent
Left Tullow 20/8/1843

BROPHY, Mary Kate (M Bridget)
Birthplace Baltinglass
Professed 23/1/1862 Abbeyleix
Died 18/3/1910 Tullow (Age 61)

BULMER, Brigid (M Veronica)*
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 21/9/1880 Tullow
Died 9/6/1925 Tullow (Age 68)

BUNNEY, Rose (M Anne)
Birthplace Dorchester, England
Professed 8/12/1858 Abbeyleix
Died 24/1/1859 Abbeyleix (Age26)

BUNNY, Catherine (M Alphonsus)
Widow
Birthplace Dublin City
Professed 8/9/1851 Tullow
Died 24/8/1882 Tullow (Age 71)

BURKE, Julia (M Augustine)
Birthplace Kildare
Professed 31/5/1864 Mountrath
Died 26/12/1924 Mountrath (Age 85)

BURKE, Margaret (M Agnes)
Birthplace Dublin
Professed 19/6/1860 Abbeyleix
Died 8/3/1912 Abbeyleix (Age 78

BYRNE Catherine (M Martha)*
Birthplace Tullow
Professed annual vows Tullow
Died 13/4/1816 Tullow (Age 33)

BYRNE, Catherine (M Monica)
Birthplace Kilkenny
Entered 11/3/1846 Tullow
Left 23/11/1847 no vocation

BYRNE, Charlotte (M Bertrand)
Birthplace Stradbally
Professed 22/1/1901 Tullow
Died 26/12/1906 Mountrath (Age 33)

BYRNE, Eliza (M Aloysius)
Birthplace Ballylanders, Limerick
Professed 2/2/1846 Tullow
Died 25/7/1881 Tullow (Age 57)

BYRNE, Lucy (M Teresa)
Birthplace Stradbally
Professed 28/9/1905 Tullow
Died 15/5/1935 Goresbridge (Age 56)

BYRNE, Margaret (M Malachy)
Birthplace Ballybunion
Professed 17/5/1887 Goresbridge
Possibly returned to Ireland from Wangaratta but not to convent
Died —

BYRNE, Margaret (M Raphael)
Birthplace Clonmore
Professed 19/2/1906 Tullow
Died 3/4/1906 Tullow (Age 30)

BYRNE, Mary (M Agatha)
Birthplace Mountmellick
Professed 22/9/1863 Tullow
Died 24/5/1895 Tullow (Age 53)

BYRNE, Mary Anne (M Josephine)
Birthplace Tinryland
Professed 18/4/1900 Tullow
Died 12/9/1909 Tullow (Age 34)

BYRNE, Rosanna
Birthplace —
Entered 22/9/1892 Tullow
Left 4/3/1903

CAHIL, Maria (M de Sales)
Birthplace —
Entered 1848 Mountrath
Left before profession, n.d.

CAHILL (M Scholastica)
Birthplace —
Entered 18/11/1879 Abbeyleix
Left 1881 ill health, d. 1882

CAHILL, Mary (M Lelia)
Birthplace Thurles
Professed 23/4/1902 Tullow
Died 5/2/1949 Mountrath (Age 74)

CARROLL, Anastasia (M Canice)
Birthplace Gowran
Professed 23/4/1902 Tullow
Died 8/12/1959 Mountrath (Age 80)

CARROLL, Margaret (M Augustine)
Birthplace Ballygurteen, Kilkenny
Professed 28/9/1876 Paulstown
Died 7/8/1878 Goresbridge (Age 74)
One of the Paulstown nuns

CASSIDY, Brigid (M Veronica)
Birthplace Baltinglass
Professed 9/4/1896 Tullow
Died 25/2/1929 Tullow (Age 64)

CASSIN, Eliza (M Evangelist)
Birthplace Ballyhale, Kilkenny
Professed 12/2/1866 Abbeyleix
Died 23/12/1902 Abbeyleix (Age 65)

CAVANAGH Mary (M Augustine)
Birthplace Dublin
Professed 21/11/1828 Mountrath
Died 27/11/1834 Mountrath (Age 22)

CAVANAGH, Teresa
Birthplace —
Entered 1837 Mountrath
Left before profession

CLANCY, Lucy Agnes (M Josephine)
Birthplace Suncroft, Kildare
Professed 18/10/1883 Abbeyleix
Died —4/1915 on board ship returning Ararat VIC; buried in Red Sea (Age 53)

CLARKE Catherine
Birthplace —
Entered 1835 Mountrath
Left before profession

CLEARY, Honoria (M Clare)
Birthplace Nenagh
Professed 22/7/1875 Mountrath
Died 17/10/1905 Mountrath (Age 54)

CLEARY, Mary (M Agatha)
Birthplace Cahir
Professed 26/6/1904 Tullow
Died 4/8/1919 Abbeyleix (Age 42)

CONNELL, Georgina (M Anthony)
Birthplace St Andrews Dublin
Professed 21/9/1899 Tullow
Died 10/6/1951 Abbeyleix (Age 81)

CONWAY, Kate (M Paul)
Birthplace St. Michaels, Limerick
Professed 2/10/1861 Mountrath
Died 21/6/1873 Mountrath (Age 32)

CORMACK, Mary Anne (M Augustine)
Birthplace Johnstown, Kilkenny
Professed 16/8/1857 Abbeyleix
Died Bégard, Paris, c.1909

COUGHLAN, Bridget (M Elizabeth)*
Widow
Birthplace —
Professed 1/2/1854 Tullow
Died 23/8/1877 Tullow (Age 65)

COYLE, Mary (M Martha)
Birthplace Galmoy, Kilkenny
Professed 18/10/1883 Abbeyleix
Died 14/4/1921 Abbeyleix (Age 62)

COYNE, Brigid (M De Sales)
Birthplace Carbury
Professed 9/4/1896 Tullow
Died 23/3/1958 Tullow (Age 88)

CRONIN, Mary Josephine (M Aloysius)
Birthplace St John's Waterford
Professed 21/9/1899 Tullow
Died 27/4/1972 Tullow (Age 92)

CROOKE Mary
Birthplace Mountrath
Entered 1808 Tullow
Left 1809 ill health

CROSBY Sara (M Augustine)
Birthplace Clonenagh, Laois
Entered 1808 Tullow
Left 1823, did not take perpetual vows

CROWE, Margaret (M Vincent)
Birthplace Doon, Limerick
Professed 11/12/1894 Tullow
Died 15/8/1942 Goresbridge (Age 77)

CUMMINS, Joanna (M Vincent)
Birthplace Kinnity
Professed 19/6/1860 Abbeyleix
Died 21/5/1911 Victoria (Age—)

CUNNINGHAM, Hestor (M Agnes)
Birthplace India
Professed 23/10/1838 Mountrath
Died 3/1/1889 Mountrath (Age 77)

CUNNINGHAM, Sophia (M Joseph)
Birthplace India
Professed 23/10/1838 Mountrath
Died 21/3/1860 Caen, France (Age 43)

DALTON, Bridget (M Teresa)
Birthplace Golden Co Tipperary
Professed 7/7/1880 Mouthrath
Died 20/1/1888 Mountrath (Age 31)

DAVIS Margaret (M Clare)
Birthplace St Mary's, Cork
Professed 21/7/1868 Tullow
Died 13/6/1875 Tullow (Age 32)

DAWSON Eleanor (M Catherine)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 22/4/1822 Tullow
Died 25/8/1841 Mountrath (Age 64)

De PODESTA, Rosina
Birthplace —
Entered 3/10/1859 Tullow
Left 6/2/1860

DELANEY, Margaret (M Pius)*
Birthplace Raheen Co Laois
Professed 13/7/1882 Abbeyleix
Died 26/3/1951 Abbeyleix (Age 91)

DELANEY, Sarah (M Veronica)*
Birthplace Raheen, Laois
Professed 20/10/1880 Abbeyleix
Died 20/9/1945 Abbeyleix (Age 87)

DELANY Anastasia (M Bridget)
Birthplace Ballyfin, Laois
Professed 22/4/1822 Mountrath
Died 18/9/1848 Mountrath (Age 59)

DELANY Brigid (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Clonenagh, Laois
Professed 1822 Tullow
Left founded Roscrea convent

DELANY Kate (M Magdalen)
Birthplace Clonenagh, Laois
Professed 1822 Tullow
Left founded Roscrea convent

DESMOND, Margaret (M Brigid)
Birthplace Bandon, Cork
Professed 26/8/1886 Mountrath
Died 14/5/1914 Pahiatua NZ (Age 53)

DIGNAN, Catherine (M Benedict)
Birthplace Ballygar, Galway
Professed 27/6/1870 Abbeyleix
Died 6/10/1877 Abbeyleix (39)

DILLON, Eliza (M Francis Regis)
Birthplace Tinryland, Carlow
Professed 27/6/1870 Abbeyleix
Died 16/2/1910 Abbeyleix (Age 70)

DOHERTY, Brigid (M Augustine)
Birthplace Sologhead, Tipperary
Professed 9/4/1896 Tullow
Died 8/3/1897 Tullow (Age 26)

DONNELLY, Mary Brigid (M Alacoque)
Birthplace Eadestown, Kildare
Professed 13/7/1882 Abbeyleix
Died 18/5/1936 Abbeyleix (Age 75)

DONOHUE Anne (M Jane)
Birthplace Ardattin, Carlow
Professed annual vows Tullow
Died 26/7/1837 Tullow (Age 55)

DONOHUE Margaret (M Elizabeth)
Birthplace Ardattin, Carlow
Professed 1820 Tullow
Died 15/10/1851 Tullow (Age 71)

DONOHUE, Catherine (M Martha)
Birthplace —
Entered 1/1/1872 Tullow
Left 13/7/1874

DONOHUE, Mary Anne (M Cecelia)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 1880 Tullow
Died 27/4/1897 Tullow (Age 47)

DORAN, Mary
Birthplace —
Entered 12/11/1899
Left 13/11/1900

DOWLING, Mary Anne (M Alphonsus Ligouri)
Birthplace Lisdowney, Kilkenny
Entered 8/12/1866 Abbeyleix
Left c.1869

DOYLE, Ann (M Xavier)*
Birthplace —
Professed 6/8/1845 Tullow
Died 22/11/1877 Tullow (Age 69)

DOYLE Anne (M Agatha)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed Tullow
Died —/11/1812 Tullow (Age 23)

DOYLE Anne (M Magdalen)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed Tullow
Died 24/4/1864 Tullow (Age 80)

DOYLE, Brigid (M Raphael)
Birthplace Baltinglass
Professed 21/11/1895 Tullow
Died 1/2/1940 Carterton NZ, (Age 69)

DOYLE Catherine (M Clare)
Birthplace Ardattin
Professed 22/4/1822 Tullow
Died 19/2/1852 Mountrath (Age 73)

DOYLE, Elizabeth (M Magdalen Joseph)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 14/6/1870 Tullow
Died 17/1/1915 Tullow (Age 83)

DOYLE, Johanna (M Bridget)
Birthplace St. Mullin's, Carlow
Professed 21/7/1868 Tullow
Died 28/2/1899 Tullow (Age 63)

DOYLE, Mary (M Josephine)
Birthplace New Ross
Professed 20/6/1876 Goresbridge
Died 21/2/1941 Goresbridge (Age 91)

DOYLE, Mary (M Michael)
Birthplace St Anne's, Dublin
Professed 23/7/1885 Abbeyleix
No further information

DUFFY, Eliza (M Veronica)*
Birthplace Mullingar
Professed 15/2/1882 Mountrath
Died /8/1903 Mountrath (Age 66)

DUGGAN, Georgina (M Kevin)
Birthplace St. Kevins
Professed 20/9/1889 Goresbridge
Died 20/9/1956 Goresbridge (Age 87)

DUGGAN, Mary (M Clare)
Birthplace St. Peter and Paul
Professed 20/6/1876 Goresbridge
Died 22/1/1885 Goresbridge (Age 35)

DUNNE Catherine (M Teresa)
Birthplace Camross
Professed 22/4/1822 Mountrath
Died 19/11/1863 Mountrath (Age 74)

DUNNE, Elizabeth (M Fintan)
Birthplace —
Professed 21/5/1891 Mountrath
Died 22/10/1952 Cowra, NSW (Age 81)

DUNNE, Mary (M Magdalen Joseph)
Birthplace Glin
Professed 18/4/1900 Tullow
Died 9/2/1966 Mountrath (Age 88)

DUNNE, Mary Francis (M Margaret Mary)
Birthplace Killeigh
Professed 28/9/1905 Tullow
Died 17/2/1976 Tullow (Age 95)
Provincial, Ireland 1935-38
Mother General 1938-53

DUNPHY, Julia Francis (M Brendan)
Birthplace St John's Kilkenny
Professed 6/2/1902 Tullow
Died 20/5/1964 Abbeyleix (Age 87)

DWYER, Alice
Birthplace —
Entered 1/2/1899 Tullow
Left 22/1/1901

EGAN —
Birthplace Dublin
Entered —/4/1848 Tullow
Left —/4/1849

EGAN Margaret (M Francis)
Birthplace Gaesha
Professed 22/4/1822 Tullow
Died 4/4/1856 Mountrath (Age 73)

EGAN, Julia (M Evangelist)
Birthplace Kingstown, Dublin
Entered 17/3/1864 Mountrath
Left after first profession 2/7/1866.
Died 1909

EGAN, Mary
Birthplace Rhode, Offaly
Entered 8/9/1876 Goresbridge
Left c.1877

ENNIS, Teresa (M Liguori)
Birthplace Dublin City
Professed 21/11/1847 Mountrath
Died 9/6/1902 Mountrath (Age 74)

FARRELL, Ellen (M Anne)*
Birthplace Tinryland, Carlow
Professed 13/7/1882 Goresbridge
Died 1/2/1929 Abbeyleix (Age 72)

FARRELL, Leila Catherine (M de Sales)
Birthplace Ratheline
Professed 17/11/1846 Tullow
Died 26/6/1885 Tullow (Age 72)

FARRELL, Mary (M Catherine)
Birthplace Newbridge
Professed 13/6/1871 Goresbrige
Died 3/6/1892 Wangaratta, VIC (Age 42)

FAY, Ellen Gertrude
Birthplace Cootehill
Entered 4/10/1858 Tullow
Left 29/3/859 no vocation

FAY, Mary Agnes (M Berchmans)
Birthplace Edenderry, Offaly
Professed 15/5/1872 Tullow
Died 23/1/1923 Tullow (Age 73)

FENLON, Anne (M Teresa Joseph)
Birthplace Myshall, Carlow
Professed 15/8/1861 Goresbridge
Died 31/5/1891 Goresbridge (Age 73)
Novice in Presentation convent, Bagenalstown before entering Goresbridge

FENNELLY, Anne (M de Chantal)
Birthplace Moyne
Professed 6/9/1883 Mountrath
Died 1/1/1938 Mountrath (Age 80)
Mother General 1908–20

FENNELLY, Anne (M Fintan)
Birthplace Ballingarry, Tipperary
Professed 31/5/1864 Mountrath
Died 20/3/1915 Mountrath (Age 76)

FENNELLY, Mary (M Magdalen)
Birthplace Ballingarry
Professed 26/8/1886 Mountrath
Died 16/7/1902 Mountrath (Age 40)

FITZGERALD, Catherine (M Columba)
Birthplace Mountrath
Professed 22/7/1875 Mountrath
Died 17/1/1920 Mountrath (Age 69)

FITZPATRICK, Anne (M Xavier)
Birthplace Rathdowney
Professed 23/7/1885 Abbeyleix
Died 7/10/1913 Abbeyleix (Age 53)

FITZPATRICK, Brigid (M Leo)*
Birthplace Clonaslee
Professed 13/7/1882 Abbeyleix
Died 28/3/1939 Abbeyleix (Age 91)

FITZPATRICK, Kate (M Ignatius)
Birthplace Portarlington
Professed 7/1/1857 Mountrath
Died 2/4/1930 Mountrath (Age 95)
Returned from Australia 1903

FITZPATRICK Mary (M Joseph)
Birthplace Upperwoods, Laois
Professed 22/4/1822 Tullow
Died 17/1/1853 Mountrath (Age 64)

FLANAGAN, Mary (M Patrick)*
Birthplace Rosenallis, Laois
Professed 24/10/1887 Mountrath
Died 6/5/1934 Mountrath (Age —)

FLAVIN, Brigid (M Josephine)
Birthplace Waterford
Professed 3/5/1888 Mountrath
Died 22/7/1954 Masterton (Age 88)

FLYNN, Hanoria (M Finbarr)
Birthplace Desert
Professed 20/9/1889 Goresbridge
Died 12/12/1947 Goresbridge (Age 78)
Provincial Ireland 1928-35

FLYNN, Mary (M Patrick)
Birthplace Ardagh
Professed 7/6/1894 Tullow
Died 4/10/1908 Cowra NSW (Age 65)

FLYNN, Norah (M Teresa)
Birthplace Ardagh
Professed 12/6/1894 Tullow
Died 31/1/1925 Masterton NZ (Age 55)

FOGARTY, Agnes (M Agnes)
Birthplace Co. Kilkenny
Entered —/10/1888 Mountrath
Left 1/5/1889

FOGARTY, Mary (M Patrick)
Birthplace
Professed 7/4/1885 Tullow
Died 18/1/1898 Wangaratta VIC (Age 48)

FORAN Mary (M Mary Anne)*
Birthplace —
Professed 21/9/1837 Mountrath
Died —

FURLONG Catherine (M Augustine)
Birthplace Moyglass
Professed Tullow
Died 31/5/1853 Tullow (Age 56)

GAFFNEY, Sarah
Birthplace Blackrock
Entered 4/7/1865 Tullow
Left 14/8/1865 no vocation

GAHAN, Catherine (M Ursula)
Birthplace Graiguecullen, Carlow
Professed 5/2/1866 Tullow
Died 19/12/1913 Tullow (Age 70)

GAHAN, Mary (M Clare)
Birthplace Ross, Wexford
Professed 1/10/1878 Tullow
Died 12/9/1917 Tullow (Age 75)

GLYNN, Mary
Birthplace —
Entered 9/9/1901 Tullow
Left 17/4/1902

GRACE, Anne (M Magdalen)
Birthplace St. Johns, Kilkenny
Professed 23/9/1863 Abbeyleix
Died 28/3/1913 Abbeyleix (Age 71)

GRADY, Ellen (M de Sales)
Birthplace Co. Kildare
Entered 6/12/1863 Goresbridge
Left —

GUILFOYLE
Birthplace —
Entered 25/10/1838 Tullow
Left before profession 1841

HACKETT, (M Clare)
Birthplace Royal Oak, Kilkenny
Entered 11/3/1846 Tullow
Left 23/11/1847

HANLON, Mary
Birthplace —
Entered 11/10/1869 Tullow
Left 16/4/1870 no vocation

HANNIGAN, Ellen (M Ita)
Birthplace Old Waterford
Professed 1/2/1877 Goresbridge
Died 23/2/1941 Tullow (Age 86)

HANNON, Isabella (M Joseph)
Birthplace Newbridge
Professed 19/3/1866 Goresbridge
Died 4/12/1916 Goresbidge (Age 79)

HARRIS, Catherine (M Gonzaga)
Birthplace Kilcock
Professed 25/4/1878 Tullow
Died 6/8/1903 Mountrath (Age 66)

HARTIGAN (M Paul)
Birthplace —
Entered 1/1/1884 Mountrath
Sent as novice to Mercy, Carlow 29/6/1885, left –/10/1885
Died 1886

HASTINGS, Anne (M Teresa)
Birthplace —
Entered 1872
Reception 15/5/1873 Abbeyleix
Left

HAYDEN, Elizabeth (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Tullaherine
Professed 7/7/1880 Mouthrath
Died 13/1/1945 Randwick, NSW (Age 89)
Provincial NSW 1914–20

HAYDEN, Margaret, (M Evangelist)
Birthplace Tullaherin, Kilkenny
Professed 26/9/1876 Tullow
Died 15/12/1910 Tullow (Age 56)

HAYDEN, Margaret (M Ignatius)
Birthplace Athy
Professed15/6/1869 Abbeyleix
Died 18/12/1919 Abbeyleix (Age 75)

HAYDEN, Maria (M Borgia)
Birthplace Tullaherin, Kilkenny
Professed 27/10/1869 Tullow
Died 21/2/1890 Echuca, VIC. (Age —)

HEALY, Brigid (M Thomas)
Birthplace Gowran
Professed 21/9/1880 Abbeyleix
Died 27/8/1932 Tullow (Age 72)

HEALY, Catherine (M de Pazzi)
Birthplace Gowran
Professed 15/10/1883 Tullow
Died 11/8/1943 Tullow (Age 80)

HEALY, Mary (M Austin)
Birthplace Rathvilly
Professed 16/7/1877 Tullow
Died 31/5/1937 Tullow (age 82)

HEARNE, Catherine Mary (M Augustine)
Birthplace Kilgobinet
Professed 18/4/1900 Tullow
Died 1/2/1966 Goresbridge (Age 88)

HENNELLY, Jane (M Columba)
Birthplace Athenry
Professed 1/4/1880 Abbeyleix
Died 11/5/1909 Abbeyleix (Age 53)

HENNESSY, Catherine (M Columba)*
Birthplace —
Reception 1/6/1869 Goresbridge
Left —

HIGGINS, Annie (M Gonzaga)
Birthplace Newmarket, Clare
Professed 20/10/1880 Abbeyleix
Died 26/3/1919 Tullow (Age 60)

HIGGINS, Brigid (M Agatha)*
Birthplace Newmarket, Clare
Professed 20/10/1880 Abbeyleix
Died 8/7/1935 Abbeyleix (Age 77)

HOGAN, Bride (M Brigid)
Birthplace Paulstown, Kilkenny
Professed 2/7/1866 Mountrath
Died 30/4/1919 Mountrath (Age 72)

HOGAN, Ellen (M Canice)
Birthplace —
Entered 24/2/90 Tullow
Died 20/7/1891 Tullow (Age 23)

HORAN, Sarah (M Regis)
Birthplace Rosenallis, Laois
Professed 2/7/1866 Mountrath
Died 10/2/1928 Mountrath (Age 85)

HUGHES, Ann (M Teresa)
Birthplace Leighlinbridge, Carlow
Professed 17/1/1865 Tullow
Died 21/10/1923 Tullow (Age 84)

HUGHES, Ellen (M Bernard)
Birthplace Bagenalstown
Professed 15/11/1860 Tullow
Died 8/3/1907 Tullow (Age 67)

HUMPHREYS, Nora (M Francis)
Birthplace Glenstal, Limerick
Professed 1891 Mountrath
Died 8/2/1919 Cowra (Age 54)

JOHNSTON Elizabeth (M Clare)
Birthplace Dublin
Professed 20/1/1835 Tullow
Died 27/1/1896 Abbeyleix (Age 82)

KAVANAGH, Mary (M Magdalen)
Birthplace Borris
Professed 3/9/1874 Goresbridge
Died 11/2/1892 Goresbridge (Age 42)

KEARNEY, Anne Eliza (M Teresa)
Birthplace Bagenalstown
Professed 20/4/1856 Abbeyleix
Died 14/6/1868 Abbeyleix (Age 32)

KEHOE, Margaret
Birthplace Mount Neil, Carlow
Entered 20/11/1891 Tullow
Left 1892

KEHOE, Margaret (M Aloysius)
Birthplace Baltinglass
Professed 31/7/1884 Tullow
Died 4/9/1937 Tullow (Age 73)

KELLY, Annie (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Borris, Carlow
Professed 15/5/1873 Abbeyleix
Died 8/2/1929 Ararat, VIC (Age 78)

KELLY, Margaret (M Benignus)
Birthplace Ballycallan
Professed 26/10/1876 Goresbridge
Died 4/2/1923 Goresbridg (Age 71)

KELLY, Margaret (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Enniscorthy
Professed 16/6/1862 Tullow
Died 21/1/1908 Tullow (Age 75)
Mother General 1889–1908

KELLY, Mary Catherine (M Borgia)
Birthplace Celbridge, Kildare
Professed 15/2/1882 Mountrath
Died 8/5/1936 Mountrath (Age 81)

KELLY, Nannie (M Evangelist)
Birthplace Newbridge, Kildare
Professed 9/6/1874 Goresbridge
Died 26/11/1949 Goresbridge (Age 102)

KENNEDY, Brigid (M Teresa)
Birthplace Killenaule, Tipperary
Professed 19/5/1891 Mountrath
Died 5/6/1901 Mountrath (Age 32)

KENNEDY, Mary Ann (M Philomena)
Birthplace Newmarket, Clare
Professed 1/4/1880 Abbeyleix
Died 15/5/1921 Abbeyleix (Age 65)

KERR, (M Thomas)
Birthplace —
Professed 4/4/1884 Abbeyleix
Died 11/10/1953 Beechworth VIC (Age —)

KERR, Josephine (M Laserian)
Birthplace Dublin
Professed 18/6/1890 Tullow
Died 29/12/1940 Victoria (Age 70)

KERR, Teresa (M Bertrand)
Birthplace Dublin
Professed 19/5/1891 Abbeyleix
Died 15/10/1947 Victoria (Age 78)

KERWICK, Mary (M Baptist)
Birthplace Tullaroan, Kilkenny
Professed 23/9/1863 Abbeyleix
Died 29/4/1876 Abbeyleix (Age 36)

KINSELLA, Anastasia (M Laserian)
Birthplace Leighlin
Professed 30/11/1886 Goresbridge
Died 7/8/1932 Abbeyleix (Age 74)

KINSELLA, Elizabeth (M Magdalen)
Birthplace St. James, Dublin
Professed 26/7/1893 Tullow
Died 1/10/1953 Mountrath (Age 84)

KINSELLA Margaret (M Francis)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 1808 Tullow
Died 8/11/1835 (Age 76)

KIRBY, Agnes (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace —
Entered 15/10/1859 Tullow
Left 10/6/1861

KISSANE, Deborah (M Vincent)
Birthplace Ballybunion
Professed 24/4/1905 Tullow
Died 8/8/1940 Pahiatua NZ (Age 58)

LALOR Anne (M Mary Anne)
Birthplace Portlaoise
Professed 1822 Tullow
Died 24/4/1856 Tullow (Age 69)

LALOR, Anne
Birthplace Portlaoise
Entered 1872 Mountrath
Left 1872

LALOR Margaret (M Brigid)
Birthplace Ballyfin, Laois
Professed 22/4/1822 Tullow
Died 1/2/1871Mountrath (Age 86)

LALOR, Johanna (M de Sales)
Birthplace Paulstown, Kilkenny
Professed 14/5/1848 Abbeyleix
Died 9/3/1911 Abbeyleix (Age 93)

LALOR, Mary
Birthplace Clareygowan, Offaly
Entered 1889 Mountrath
Left —

LALOR, Mary (M Martha)*
Birthplace Abbeyleix
Professed 23/7/1885 Abbeyleix
Died 13/3/1940 (Age 79)

LARDNER, Julia (M Patricia)
Birthplace Athenry, Galway
Professed 15/10/1896 Tullow
Died 4/1/1940 Tullow (Age 74)

LOWE, Alice (M Angela)
Birthplace Carlow
Professed 9/4/1896 Tullow
Died 2/4/1903 Goresbridge (Age 39)

LYDON, Bridget (M de Pazzi)
Birthplace —
Professed 24/4/1884 Abbeyleix
Died 3/3/1933 Abbeyleix (Age77)

LYONS, Catherine (M Conleth)
Birthplace Kilmur, Ross
Professed 11/12/1894 Tullow
Died 11/12/1936 Tullow (Age 63)

LYONS, Elizabeth (M Aloysius)
Birthplace Leighlin
Professed 15/5/1866 Goresbridge
Died 12/12/1933 Goresbridge (Age 89)

LYONS, Kate (M Berchmans)
Birthplace Leighlinbridge
Professed 11/8/1869 Mountrath
Died 15/12/1914 Mountrath (Age 72)

MADDEN, Mary (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Irishtown
Professed 13/10/1853 Mountrath
Died 3/5/1875 Mountrath (Age 41)

MAHER, Brigid (M Julia)*
Birthplace Roscrea
Professed 2/8/1908 Tullow
Died 25/1/1978 Mountrath (Age 94)

MAHER, Ellen (M Bonaventure)
Birthplace Leighlinbridge, Carlow
Professed 23/4/1902 Tullow
Died 27/8/1912 Tullow (Age 32)

MAHER, Ellen (M Joseph)
Birthplace —
Entered 1/11/1858 Goresbridge
Left 9/3/1863 Goresbridge nuns objected to her profession

MAHER, Mary (M De Sales)
Birthplace Slieverue, Kilkenny
Professed 7/7/1880 Mountrath
Died 5/2/1929 Pahiatua NZ (Age 78)

MAHER, Mary (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Jordanstown, Kilkenny
Professed 17/8/1845 Tullow
Died 19/8/1873 Goresbridge (Age 46)

MAHER, Mary (M Laserian)
Birthplace Roscrea
Professed 29/5/1906 Tullow
Died 5/11/1926 Mountrath (Age 42)

MALONE, Maria
Birthplace Ballyadams, KIldare
Entered 1/11/1891Tullow
Left 9/11/1893 re-entered 26/8/1895
Left 28/1/1897

McAULIFFE Ann (M Catherine)
Birthplace Cork City
Professed 9/11/1828 Tullow
Died 14/2/1881 Tullow (Age 90)

McCARTHY, Anne (M Philomena)
Birthplace Dungarvan
Professed 8/11/1905 Tullow
Died 11/7/1927 Tullow (Age 46)

McDONNELL, Brigid (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Rattoo, Kerry
Professed 24/8/1886 Goresbridge
Died 23/10/1891 Wangaratta VIC (Age —)

McDONNELL or McDonald, Catherine (M Veronica)*
Birthplace —
Professed 20/6/1876 Goresbridge
Died 28/8/1937 Goresbridge (Age —)

McEVOY, Brigid (M.Columba)*
Birthplace Portlaoise
Professed 11/6/1883 Tullow
Died 23/6/1938 Tullow (Age 83)

McGRATH, Mary (M Alacoque)
Birthplace Cappaquin, Waterford
Professed 12/6/1894 Tullow
Died 4/10/1908 Mountrath (Age 37)

McGRATH, Julia (M Martha)*
Birthplace Tinryland, Carlow
Professed 1/6/1869 Goresbridge
Died 30/3/1908 Goresbridge (Age 69)

McKAY Johanna (M Angela)
Birthplace Rathdowney, Laois
Professed 1827 Mountrath
Died 18/1/1868 Titusville USA (Age 75)

McMAHON, Brigid (M Gabriel)
Birthplace Castletown, Laois
Professed 7/7/1881 Tullow
Died 28/3/1904 Tullow (Age 45)

McMAHON, Maria (M John Baptist)
Birthplace Raheen, Laois
Professed 21/5/1841 Tullow
Died 6/3/1883 Tullow (Age 75)

McMAHON Elizabeth (M Martha)*
Birthplace Ballyfin, Laois
Professed 22/4/1822 Mountrath
Died 28/11/1862 Mountrath (Age 83)

McNALLY, Mary*
Birthplace —
Entered 1856
Left convent 1861

McNAMARA, Ellen (M Philomena)
Birthplace —
Entered 1849 Mountrath
Left before profession

McNAMARA, Mary Anne (M Francis)
Birthplace Trough, Kildare
Professed 23/9/1863 Abbeyleix
Died 2/4/1901 Abbeyleix (Age 69)

METCALF, Frances (M Agnes)
Birthplace St. Nicholas, Dublin
Professed 12/2/1863 Tullow
Died 16/7/1899 Tullow (Age 65)

METCALFE, Bridget (M Cecilia)
Birthplace St. Nicholas, Dublin
Professed 10/2/1870 Abbeyleix
Died 30/6/1924 Abbeyleix (Age 79)

METCALFE, Margaret (M Patrick)
Birthplace Dunlavin, Wicklow
Professed 3/10/1859 Tullow
Died 20/6/1926 Goresbridge (Age —)

METCALFE, Mary
Birthplace Dunlavin Wicklow
Entered —/8/1817 Tullow
Left 1817 no vocation

MILLER, Catherine (M Alacoque)
Birthplace Mountrath
Professed 29/1/1880 Mountrath
Died 14/8/1932 Mountrath (Age 76)
Provincial NSW 1908–14, returned to Ireland 1914; Assistant General 1914 Provincial Ireland 1927–28

MITCHELL, Mary Ann
Birthplace —
Entered 22/11/1871 Tullow
Left 6/8/1872 no vocation

MOLONY, Catherine (M Ignatius)
Birthplace Co. Limerick
Professed —/9/1850 made vows on deathbed Tullow
Died —/9/1850

MOORE, (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Newtownbarry
Entered 21/7/1845 Tullow
Left –/4/1847 no vocation

MOORE, Margaret (M Benedict)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 20/12/1870 Tullow
Died 24/11//1915 Mentone, VIC (Age 67)

MORAN, Catherine (M Vincent)
Birthplace —
Professed 23/5/1861 Mountrath
Dispensed (1873)
Died 1919 France

MORAN, Julia (M Gonzaga)
Birthplace St. Kierans, Kilkenny
Professed 2/7/1866 Mountrath
Died 7/8/1921 Mountrath (Age 80)

MORRIN, Mary (M Borgia)
Birthplace Athy
Professed 26/7/1893 Tullow
Died 24/7/1948 Indooroopilly, NSW (Age 75)

MORRISSEY, Anne (M Dympna)*
Birthplace Tinryland
Professed 15/8/1900 Tullow
Died 10/8/1923 Tullow (Age 56)

MORRISSEY, Elizabeth (M Catherine)*
Birthplace Tinryland, Carlow
Professed 19/6/1903 Tullow
Died 17/3/1940 Tullow (Age 70)

MULHALL, Mary (M Benignus)
Birthplace Abbeyleix
Professed 16/4/1895 Tullow
Died 14/3/1951 Tullow (Age 80)

MULHALL, Mary Ellen (M Frances)
Birthplace Raheen, Laois
Professed 14/12/1869 Goresbridge
Died 27/5/1888 Goresbridge (Age 44)

MULHERN/MULKEEN, Brigid (M Elizabeth)*
Birthplace Bekan, Galway
Professed 23/4/1902 Tullow
Died 17/7/1957 Mountrath (Age 81)

MURDOCH Harriet
Birthplace Dublin
Entered 8/9/1828 Tullow
Left 1830 ill health

MURDOCH Maria (M Dominic)
Birthplace Dublin
Professed 11/6/1832 Tullow
Died 21/4/1878 Tullow (Age 78)

MURPHY, Anastasia (M Joseph)
Birthplace Mountmellick
Professed 13/8/1862 Mountrath
Died 31/10/1922 Mountrath (Age 81)

MURPHY, Anna Maria (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 26/9/1876 Tullow
Died 1/10/1936 Tullow (Age 80)

MURPHY, Bridget (M. Theresa)
Birthplace Goresbridge
Professed 8/9/1851 Tullow
Died 7/6/1862 Tullow (Age 30)

MURPHY, Brigid (M Colman)
Birthplace Graiguemanagh
Professed 8/11/1905 Tullow
Died 18/11/1945 Tullow (Age 70)

MURPHY Catherine (M Joseph)
Birthplace Tullow
Entered 31/1/1809 Tullow
Died 20/2/1855 Tullow (Age 76)

MURPHY, Ellen (M Brendan)
Birthplace Paulstown
Professed 1/2/1877 Goresbridge
Died 8/2/1898 Tullow (Age 45)

MURPHY, Ellen (M Vincent de Paul)
Birthplace —
Entered 2/11/1852 Tullow
Left 3/4/1853 ill health

MURPHY, Hannah (M Francis Regis)
Birthplace Providence, MA
Professed 22/9/1863 Tullow
Left 18/5/1872 ill health

MURPHY, Jane (M Rose)
Birthplace Borris
Professed 24/11/1880 Goresbridge
Died 13/11/1916 Goresbridge (Age 75)

MURPHY, Margaret Mary
Birthplace Littlefield
Professed 12/6/1894 Tullow
Died 29/12/1937

MURPHY, Maria (M Clare Stanislaus)
Birthplace Carbury
Professed 19/11/1857 Tullow
Died 3/4/1861 Tullow (Age 30)

MURPHY, Mary
Birthplace Wexford
Entered 1/5/1889 Mountrath
Left 1/10/1890

MURRAY, Bridget (M Angela)
Birthplace Powerstown, Kilkenny
Professed 11/6/1855 Tullow
Died 18/1/1907 Tullow (Age 89)

MURRAY, Ellen (M Vincent)
Birthplace Powerstown
Professed 30/5/1854 Tullow
Died 23/6/1909

NEIL, Catherine (M Agnes)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 1822 Tullow
Died 2/1/1854 Tullow (Age 70)

NICHOLSON, Mary (M Francis)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 1822 Tullow
Died 13/11/1855 Tullow (Age 69)

NOLAN, Anne (M Catherine)
Birthplace St. Nicholas, Dublin
Professed 23/1/1862 Abbeyleix
Died 19/12/1900 Abbeyleix (Age 64)

NOLAN, Helena Elizabeth (M Josephine)
Birthplace St Andrew's Dublin
Professed 9/4/1896 Tullow
Died 19/4/1940 Abbeyleix (Age 69)

NOLAN, Johanna (M Francis)
Birthplace Myshall
Professed 9/11/1858 Tullow
Died 29/7/1921 Tullow (Age 87)

NOLAN, Mary (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Baltinglass
Professed 28/5/1867 Abbeyleix
Died Beechworth,Victoria
2/11/1907 (Age —)

NOLAN, Mary Anne (M Angela)
Birthplace Westland Row, Dublin
Professed 27/4/1886 Abbeyleix
Died 23/8/1955 Abbeyleix (Age 88)

NOLAN, Sarah*
Birthplace Paulville, Tullow
Entered 9/5/1850 Tullow
Left 23/11/1852

NOONAN
Birthplace —
Entered 1888 Mountrath
Left 1888

NORTON, Mary (M Jane)
Birthplace Dunlavin, Wicklow
Professed 6/8/1845 Tullow
Died 17/10/1850 Tullow (Age 27)

NOUD, Flora
Birthplace —
Entered 24/3/1893 Tullow
Left 15/1/1894

O'BEIRNE, Anna Teresa (M Michael)
Birthplace Kilascalan (Elphin)
Professed 21/11/1895 Tullow
Died 28/6/1911 Mountrath (Age39)

O'BRIEN, Mary (M Borgia)
Birthplace Fedamore (Limerick)
Professed 29/6/1903 Tullow
Died 14/10/1949 Abbeyleix (Age 68)

O'BRIEN, Anne (M Francis Xavier)
Birthplace Burges (Tipperary)
Professed 28/9/1905 Tullow
Died 15/5/1970 Mountrath (Age 91)

O'BRIEN, Sara (M John Baptist)
Birthplace Fedamore (Limerick)
Professed 29/5/1906 Tullow
Died 28/7/1941 Abbeyleix (Age 57)

O'CALLAGHAN, Margaret (M.Ignatius)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 20/2/1860 Tullow
Died 11/3/1914 Tullow (Age 83)

O'DONNELL, Catherine (M Brigid)
Birthplace St. Marys, Kilkenny
Professed 10/10/1864 Goresbridge
Died 6/12/1891Goresbridge (Age 61)

O'FARRELL, Grace Margaret (M Anthony)
Birthplace Kildorrery (Cloyne)
Professed 28/9/1905 Tullow
Died 3/9/1952 Mountrath (Age 71)

O'GARA, Ellen (M Brigid)
Birthplace St Nicolas, Dublin
Professed 29/8/1888 Goresbridge
Died 1/7/1953 Goresbridge (Age 90)

O'GORMAN, Teresa (M Patrick)
Birthplace Clonmel, Tipperary
Professed 25/9/1866 Abbeyleix
Died 6/12/1920 Abbeyleix (Age 83)

O'KELLY, Elizabeth (M Alphonsus)
Birthplace Maynooth, Kildare
Entered 29/9/1886 Tullow
Reception 2/1/1887
No other information

O'KELLY, Mary (M Aloysius)
Birthplace Maynooth, Kildare
Professed 21/11/1839 Mountrath
Died 28/5/1905 Mountrath (Age 83)

O'LEARY, Margaret (M Benignus)
Birthplace St. Andrews Terenure
Professed 20/8/1890 Tullow
Died 18/7/1943 Coonamble NSW (Age 68)

O'LOUGHLIN, Mary
Birthplace —
Entered 6/5/1900 Tullow
Left 4/12/1902

O'MARA, Bridget (M Agnes)
Birthplace —
Professed 4/10/1856 Tullow
Died 1/3/1925 Goresbridge (Age 89)

O'MEARA Joanna (M John)
Birthplace Templetuohy, Tipperary
Professed 20/10/1880 Abbeyleix
Died 31/10/1892 Abbeyleix (Age 47)

O'NEIL Margaret (M Baptist)
Birthplace St. Johns, Limerick
Professed 26/4/1863 Mountrath
Died 12/3/1910 Mountrath (Age 72)

O'NEILL Mary Anne (M Berchmans)
Birthplace New York
Professed 30/5/1876 Abbeyleix
Died 19/12/1945 Abbeyleix (Age 71)

O'NEILL, Catherine (M Joseph)
Birthplace Paulstown, Kilkenny
Professed 28/9/1876 Paulstown
Died 26/2/1895 Goresbridge (Age86)
One of the Paulstown nuns

O'REILLY —
Birthplace Maynooth, Kildare
Entered 1/11/81 Tullow
Left 31/1/1882

O'TOOLE, Mary Rose (M Benedict)
Birthplace St Mary's Dublin
Professed 6/2/1902 Tullow
Died 6/7/1909 Abbeyleix (Age 32)

PHELAN, Annie (M Patrick)*
Birthplace —
Professed 11/7/1884 Mountrath
Died 25/11/1951 Johnsonville NZ (Age 88)

PHELAN, (M Anne)
Birthplace —
Entered 12/7/1882 Mountrath
No other information

PHELAN, Anne (M. Aidan)*
Birthplace Ballinakill, Laois
Professed 11/12/1894 Tullow
Died 2/10/1952 Tullow (Age 84)

PHELAN, Brigid (M Rose)*
Birthplace Castletown, Laois
Professed 1883 Tullow
Died 10/7/1902 Tullow (Age 44)

PHELAN, Brigid (M Ursula)
Birthplace Ballyragget, Kilkenny
Professed 30/5/1876 Abbeyleix
Died 16/6/18 Ararat VIC (Age —)

PHELAN, Elizabeth (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Bagenalstown , Carlow
Professed 19/5/1891 Mountrath
Died 13/2/1948 Mountrath (Age 85)

POWER, Brigid (M Margaret)
Birthplace Lismore, Waterford
Professed 24/11/1880 Goresbridge
Died 12/5/1907 Goresbridge (Age 64)

POWER, Ellen
Birthplace —
Entered 8/12/1902 Tullow
Left 1903

POWER, Mary (M Dympna)
Birthplace St. Patricks, Waterford
Professed 20/6/1876 Goresbridge
Died 23/8/1878 Goresbridge (Age 23)

QUAIN, Helena (M Kevin)
Birthplace Galbally Limerick
Professed 29/9/1892 Tullow
Died 12/5/1894 Goresbridge (Age 83)

REDDY, Margaret (M Francis)*
Birthplace Mullingar
Professed 15/2/1882 Mountrath
Died 22/2/1927 Mountrath (Age 80)

REDMOND Ellen (M Bernard)
Birthplace Ferns, Wexford
Professed Tullow
Died 25/1/1882 Abbeyleix (Age 84)

REDMOND, Anne (M Paul)
Birthplace Newtownbarry
Professed 9/11/1858 Tullow
Died 6/1/1882 Tullow (Age 56)

REID, Anne (M Bernard)
Birthplace Lahbough, Laois
Professed 21/11/1847 Mountrath
Died 23/5/1869 Mountrath (Age 44)

RICE, Ellen (M Joseph)
Birthplace Gowran, Kilkenny
Professed 20/4/1856 Abbeyleix
Died 4/7/1918 Abbeyleix (90)

ROCHE, Margaret (M Brigida)
Birthplace Kileentierna, Kerry
Professed 16/4/1895 Tullow
Died 31/8/1935 Abbeyleix (Age 60)

ROCHE Margaret (M Joseph)
Birthplace Rathoe, Carlow
Professed 25/11/1828 Tullow
Died 25/11/1848 Tullow (Age 49)

ROCHE, Mary (M Xavier)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 18/10/1880 Tullow
Died 10/4/1928 Tullow (Age 70)

RYAN
Birthplace Dublin
Entered 30/6/1847 Tullow
Left 8/2/1848 ill health

SCOTT, Sarah (M Gerard)*
Birthplace Hacketstown
Professed 9/7/1906 Tullow
Died 11/5/1970 Abbeyleix (Age 89)

SHANAHAN, Brigid (M Aloysius)
Birthplace —
Professed 26/8/1886 Mountrath
Died 29/8/1921 Cowra (Age 54)

SINGLETON, Eliza (M Magdalen De Pazzi)
Birthplace Fermoy, Cork
Professed (first) 26/5/1857 Tullow
Left 13/5/72

SINNOTT (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Wexford
Entered 21/11/1860 Goresbridge
No other information

SINNOTT Elizabeth (M Bridget)
Birthplace Maglass, Wexford
Professed 20/1/1835 Tullow
Died 2/4/1862 Tullow (Age 69)

SPENCER, Brigid
Birthplace —
Entered 24/9/1897 Tullow
Left 30/6/1900

STEIN, Mary (M Peter)
Birthplace Dublin City
Professed 19/4/1841 Mountrath
Died 14/1/1900 Mountrath (Age 87)

STOREY, Catherine (M Berchmans)
Birthplace Wexford
Professed 30/6/1892 Tullow
Died 20/1/1951 Wangaratta, VIC (Age 70)
M. Provincial, Victoria 1927–33

SYNAN, Kate (M Xavier)
Birthplace Bruff, Limerick
Professed 18/1/1859 Mountrath
Died 20/8/1900 Mountrath (Age 55)

SYNAN, Mary (M John)
Birthplace Limerick City
Professed 7/1/1857 Mountrath
Died 6/3/1915 Randwick NSW (Age 78)
Provincial Australia (first) 1893–96
Provincial NSW (first) 1896–1908

SYNAN, Mary Ellen (M Michael)
Birthplace St. Johns Limerick
Professed 30/6/1892 Tullow
Died 15/9/1903 Coonamble NSW (Age—)

SYNNOTT, Alice (M Cecilia)
Birthplace Wexford
Professed 19/3/1866 Goresbridge
Died 11/3/1902 Goresbridge (Age 58)

TALLON Eleanor
Birthplace —
Entered 1/2/1807 Tullow
Dismissed by Bishop Delany 1807

TIERNEY, Margaret (M Columba)
Birthplace Prosperous, Kildare
Professed 26/2/1889 Goresbridge
Died 26/10/1937 Goresbridge (Age 68)

TIERNEY, Teresa (M Laserian)
Birthplace Newbridge, Kildare
Professed 30/8/1913 Tullow
Died 12/1/1975 Goresbridge (Age 86)

TOBIN, Mary (M Domnic)
Birthplace Durrus, Cork
Professed 6/5/1886 Goresbridge
Died 5/4/1893 Wangaratta (Age 33)

TORPEY, Margaret (M Alphonsus)
Birthplace Rathcormack , Waterford
Professed 26/7/1893 Tullow
Died 8/4/1904 Tullow (Age 44)

TREACY, Catherine (M Bernadine)
Birthplace Monasterevin
Professed 19/5/1891 Abbeyleix
Died 19/12/1956 Abbeyleix (Age 86)

TROPPLEM Maria
Birthplace —
Entered c.1835 Mountrath
Left before profession

TURNER, Ellen (M Augustine)
Birthplace —
Professed 15/11/1860 Tullow
Died 23/5/1894 Goresbridge (Age 65)

WALSH, Elizabeth (M Borgia)
Birthplace Ballinakill, Laois
Professed 23/7/1885 Abbeyleix
Died 28/9/1935 Beechworth, Vic (Age 73)

WALSH, Kate (M Mary Ann)
Birthplace —
Entered 8/12/1858 Tullow
Left –/3/1860, died a short time after.

WALSH, Mary (M Cecilia)
Birthplace St Peters Parish, Cork
Professed 12/5/1885 Mountrath
Died 26/4/1932Mountrath (Age 68)

WALSHE, Brigid Teresa (M Berchmans)
Birthplace Cahir, Tipperary
Professed 6/5/1886 Goresbridge
Died 5/3/1948 Goresbridge (Age 85)

WALSHE, Catherine (M Dominic)
Birthplace Portlaoise
Professed 23/8/1900 Tullow
Died 3/11/1965 Abbeyleix (Age 86)

WALSHE, Elizabeth (M Agnes)
Birthplace Ballyhale
Professed 26/6/1904 Tullow
Died 11/7/1953 Tullow (Age 72)

WALSHE, Elizabeth (M Peter)
Birthplace Balyna
Professed 9/4/1896 Tullow
Died 31/3/1936 Tullow (Age 69)

WALSHE, Mary (M Joseph)
Birthplace Graigue Co. Carlow
Professed 20/8/1857 Tullow
Died 1/6/1927 Tullow (Age 88)

WEIR, Catherine (M Madeleine)
Birthplace Longwood, Meath
Professed 8/11/1905 Tullow
Died 24/2/1910 Abbeyleix (Age 28)

WHELAN Anna
Birth place —
Entered 1825 Tullow
Left after three months due to ill health

WHELAN Judith (M Brigid)
Birthplace Clonmore, Laois
Professed Tullow
Died —/12/1810 (Age 40)

WHELAN, Eliza (M Dominic)
Birthplace Portlaoise
Professed 2/10/1863 Mountrath
Died 24/8/1912 Mountrath (Age 70)

WHITE, Eliza
Birthplace Dublin
Entered 5/2/1851 Tullow
Left 16/1/1852 ill health, d.18/10/1851

WHITE, Georgina (M Joseph)
Birthplace Dublin
Entered 8/11/1849 Tullow
Left 16/11/1852

WHYTE Joanna (M James)
Birthplace Gowran, Kilkenny
Professed 4/6/1837 Tullow
Died 13/5/1845 Tullow (Age 29)

WHYTE Margaret (M Philip)
Birthplace Gowran, Kilkenny
Professed 4/6/1837 Tullow
Died 26/12/1874 Abbeyleix (Age 60)

WILSON, Catherine (M Monica)
Birthplace Newbridge, Kildare
Professed 8/11/1905 Tullow
Died 9/6/1909 Goresbridge (Age 29)

WYER, Brigid (M Canice)
Birthplace Killeigh, Offaly
Professed 21/10/1885 Goresbridge
Died 24/6/1943Wangaratta, VIC (Age 86)

NEW SOUTH WALES PROVINCE & NEW ZEALAND REGION

* Denotes Lay Sisters

BANAHAN, Frances (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Agula, Roscommon, Ireland
Professed 24/2/1876 Mountrath
Died 17/3/1932 Masterton (Age 7)

BARRY, Esther (M Alphonsus)
Birthplace Maryborough, Ireland
Professed 24/2/1897 Coonamble
Died 27/12/1940 (Age 71)

BERGIN, Eliza (M Catherine)*
Birthplace Clough, Ireland
Professed 12/12/1877 Mountrath
Died 2/10/1900 Cowra (Age 52)

BRENNAN, Ellen (M Augustine)
Birthplace Kilkenny, Ireland
Professed 21/5/1891 Mountrath
Died 23/11/1950 Cooma (Age 86)

BURKE, (M Alphonsus)*
Birthplace —
Professed 21/8/1903 Randwick
Died 18/6/1941 Masterton (Age —)

COADY, Catherine (M Frances)
Birthplace Scone (Kempsey), NSW
Professed 28/7/1897 Cooma
Died 21/1/1943 Randwick (Age 69)

COLLERTON, Elizabeth (M Columba)
Birthplace New Zealand
Professed Randwick
Died 13/11/1912 Masterton (Age 28)

COOKE, Nora (M Claver)
Birthplace Mountrath, Ireland
Professed 28/7/1897 Cowra
Died 18/10/1934 Randwick (Age 63)
Provincial NSW 1920–26

COOKE, (M Canice*)
Birthplace Mountrath, Ireland
Professed 21/11/1908 Masterton
Died 17/2/1955 Masterton (Age 63)

COTTER, Mary C (M Gerard)*
Birthplace Michaelago, NSW
Professed 19/3/1907 Randwick
Died 22/7/1951 Carterton (Age 68)

CROWE, Margaret (M Vincent)
Birthplace Doon, Limerick, Ireland
Professed 12/6/1894 Tullow
Died 29/12/1939 Randwick (Age —)

DESMOND, Margaret (M Brigid)
Birthplace Bandon, Cork
Professed 26/8/1886 Mountrath
Died 14/5/1914 Pahiatua NZ (Age 53)

DOYLE, Brigid (M Raphael)
Birthplace Baltinglass, Ireland
Professed 21/11/1895 Tullow
Died Carterton NZ 1/2/1940 (Age—)

DUNNE, Elizabeth (M Fintan)
Birthplace Laois, Ireland
Professed 21/5/1891 Mountrath
Died 22/10/1952 Cowra (Age 81)

DWYER, Nellie (M Joseph)
Birthplace —
Professed 9/8/1901 on her death bed Coonamble
Died 9/8/1901Coonamble (Age 28)

FAULKNER, Mary J (M Anthony)
Birthplace Cooma, NSW
Professed 7/10/1901 Coonamble
Died 20/4/1953 Pahiatua (Age 73)

FITZPATRICK, Kate (M Ignatius)
Birthplace Portarlington, Ireland
Professed 7 /1/1857 Mountrath
Died 2/4/1930 Mountrath (Age 95)
Returned to Ireland 1903

FLAVIN, Brigid (M Joseph)
Birthplace Waterford, Ireland
Professed 3/5/1888 Mountrath
Died 22/7/1954 Masterton (Age 88)

FLYNN, Mary (M Patrick)
Birthplace Ardagh, Ireland
Professed 12/6/1894 Tullow
Died 11/5/1938 Cowra (Age 65)

FLYNN, Norah (M Teresa)
Birthplace Ardagh, Ireland
Professed 12/6/1894 Tullow
Died 31/1/1925 Masterton (Age 55)

FOLEY, Brigid (M Brigid)
Birthplace Mudgee, NSW
Professed 7/10/1901 Coonamble
Died 23/6/1935 Indooroopilly QLD (Age 56)

FREEMAN, (M Zita)*
Birthplace —
Professed — Randwick
Died 10/5/1910 Randwick (Age —)

GILOOGLEY, Teresa (M Ita)*
Birthplace Dingo Creek, NSW
Professed 1/1/1905 Randwick
Died 7/8/1945 Cooma (Age 70)

HAYDEN, Elizabeth (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Tullaherin, Kilkenny
Professed 7/7/1880 Mountrath
Died 13/1/1945 Randwick (Age 89)
Provincial NSW 1914–20

HOGAN, Mary (M Patricia)
Birthplace Balmain, NSW
Professed 15/8/1906 Randwick
Died 12/11/1953 Marouba Bay (Age 76)

HORAN, Olive (M Xaveria)
Birthplace Queensland
Professed 1/1/1907 Masterton NZ
Died 13/8/1973 Randwick (Age—)

HOURIGAN, Mary (M Margaret Mary)
Birthplace New Zealand
Professed 21/12/1904 Randwick
Died 26/11/1962 Masterton (Age—)

HUMPHREYS, Nora (M Francis)
Birthplace Glenstal, Ireland
Professed 21/5/1891 Mountrath
Died 8/3/1919 Cowra (Age 54)

IRWIN, Johanna (M. Joseph)*
Birthplace Maitland, NSW
Professed 26/7/1892 Coonamble
Died 4/5/1923 Cowra (Age —)

KELLY, Mary (M Brigid)
Birthplace Laois, Ireland
Professed 20/6/1896 Coonamble
Died Sydney 7/9/1947 (Age74)

KENNY, Essie (M Columbiere)
Birthplace Victoria
Professed —
Died as a novice Randwick 1902

KENNY, Mary Ann (M Xavier)
Birthplace Wicklow, Ireland
Professed 28/7/1897 Cowra
Died 8/3/1933 Cowra (Age 59)

KISSANE, Deborah, (M.Vincent)
Birthplace Kilcone, Kerry Ireland
Professed — Tullow
Died 8/8/1940 Carterton NZ Age 58)

LAMBERT, Sarah (M Xavier)
Birthplace Morpeth, NSW
Professed 7/6/1892 Cooma
Died 2/6/1941 Coonamble (Age 70)

LYNSKEY, Catherine (M Benignus)*
Birthplace Canterbury, NZ
Professed 21/11/1908 Masterton
Died 4/1/1959 Johnsonville (Age —)

MACKEL, Alice (M Benignus)
Birthplace Camberdown, NSW
Professed 15/8/1906 Randwick
Died 30/1/1955 Randwick (Age 74)

MAHER, Mary (M de Sales)
Birthplace Slieverue, Kilkenny, Ireland
Professed 7/7/1880 Mountrath
Died 5/2/1929 Pahiatua (Age 78)

MAHONY, Margaret (M Berchmans)
Birthplace Cooma, NSW
Professed 21/12/1904 Randwick
Died 12/3/1942 Randwick (Age—)

MALONEY, Elizabeth (M Philomena)
Birthplace Tasmania
Professed 7/10/1901 Coonamble
Died 16/4/1963 Randwick (Age 84)

MILLER, Catherine (M Alacoque)
Birthplace Mountrath , Ireland
Professed 29/1/1880 Mountrath
Died 14/8/1932 Mountrath (Age 76)
Provincial NSW 1908–14, returned to Ireland 1914; Assistant General 1914 Provincial Ireland 1927–28

MOONEY, Brigid (M Patrick)*
Birthplace Offaly, Ireland
Professed 8/9/1899 Coonamble
Died 16/1/1942 Randwick (Age 89)

MORRIN, Mary (M Borgia)
Birthplace Athy, Ireland
Professed 26/7/1893 Tullow
Died 24/7/1948 Indooroopilly, QLD (Age 75)

MURPHY, Ellen (Agnes)*
Birthplace Carcoar, NSW
Professed 26/7/1892 Coonamble
Died 29/6/1956 Woodstock (Age 85)

NEWMAN, Brigid (M Joseph)
Birthplace Coonamble, NSW
Professed Randwick
Died Coonamble 3/8/1905 (Age 23)

NEWMAN, Winnie (M Margaret Mary)
Birthplace Coonamble NSW
Professed1900 Victoria
Died 10/8/1909 Coonamble (Age 29)

NOLAN, Julia (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Dunlavin, Ireland
Professed 21/6/1896 Coonamble
Died 8/2/1969 Cowra (Age 99)

NOONE, Catherine (M Gabriel)*
Birthplace Cundleton, NSW
Professed 21/12/1904 Randwick
Died 21/1/1961 Randwick (Age —)

O'BEIRNE, Anna Teresa (M Michael)
Birthplace Killosolan, Roscommon
Professed 21/11/1895
Died 28/6/1911 Masterton (Age 38)

O'Gorman Mary (M Brendan)
Birthplace Mountrath, Ireland
Professed 16/7/1902
Died 12/4/1952 Cooma (Age 73)

O'LEARY, Margaret (M Benignus)
Birthplace Terenure, Dublin
Professed 20/8/1890 Tullow
Died 18/7/1943 Coonamble (Age 68)

PETERS (M Catherine)
Birthplace Cooma, NSW
Professed 1/1/1907 Randwick
Died 2/4/1920 Coonamble (Age 39)

PHELAN, Annie (M Patrick)*
Birthplace —
Professed 11/7/1884 Mountrath
Died 25/11/1951 Johnsonville NZ (Age 88)

PHELAN, Brigid (M Columba)*
Birthplace Ireland
Professed 7/6/1892 Cooma
Died June 1958 Indooroopilly, Qld (Age 90)

RYAN, Mary (M Agnes)*
Birthplace Rossmore, Tipperary, Ireland
Professed 1/1/1907 Randwick
Died 9/1/1961 Cooma (Age 85)

SHANAHAN, Brigid (M Aloysius)
Birthplace —
Professed 26/8/1886 Mountrath
Died 29/8/1921 Cowra (Age 54)

SHAPTER, Theodora (M Peter)
Birthplace Wellington, NZ
Professed 21/6/1904 Masterton NZ
Died 15/5/1910 Masterton (Age 29)

SYNAN, Mary (M John)
Birthplace Limerick, Ireland
Professed 7/1/1857 Mountrath
Died 6/3/1915 Randwick (Age 78)
Provincial Australia (first) 1893–96
Provincial NSW (first) 1896–1908

SYNAN, Mary Ellen (M Michael)
Birthplace St John's Limerick
Professed 30/6/1892 Tullow
Died 15/9/1903 Coonamble (Age —)

TOBIN, Margaret (M Ligouri)
Birthplace Largs NSW
Professed 26/7/1892 Coonamble
Died 26/11/1939 Randwick (Age 72)
Provincial NSW 1926, 1935

TRUMAN, Julia (M Paul)
Birthplace Wellington, NZ
Professed 12/7/1906 Masterton, NZ
Died 9/10/1957 Johnsonville (Age 74)

WARING, Elizabeth (M Magdalen)
Birthplace Sydney, NSW
Professed 1901 Coonamble
Died 21/7/1901 Coonamble (Age 28)

VICTORIA SISTERS

*Denotes Lay Sisters

All birthplaces are Victoria unless otherwise stated

BARRON, Johanna (M Paul)
Birthplace Knockeen Ireland
Professed 23/7/1885 Abbeyleix
Died 15/10/1948 Ararat VIC (Age 82)
M.Provincial, Victoria 1908-20 & 1933–38

BARTLEY, Nora Maude (M Evangelist) Birthplace Sandhurst ,
Professed 1/8/1906, Echua
Died 22/10/1977 Albert Park (Age 98)

BLANCHEN, Catherine (M Rose)*
Birthplace Bendigo
Professed 19/3/1901 Echua
Died 15/1/1931 Albert Park

BOURKE, Brigid (Margaret Mary Alacoque)
Birthplace Rathdrum, Ireland
Professed 31/3/1875 Tullow, Ireland
Died 19/2/1938 Kyabram (Age 82)

BOURKE, Annie (M Brigid)*
Birthplace Tongala
Professed 15/2/1896 Wangaratta
Died 13/3/1946 Wangaratta

BOURKE, Catherine (M Monica)*
Birthplace Daylesford
Professed 13/3/1891 Echuca
Died 22/12/1953 Echuca

BRENNAN, Catherine (M Vincent)
Birthplace Kilcullen, Ireland
Professed 7/7/1881 Tullow, Ireland
Died 20/3/1945 Mentone (Age 86)

BRENNAN, Elizabeth (M Alphonsus Ligouri)
Birthplace Monasterevan, Ireland
Professed 23/7/1895 Ararat
Died 23/4/1965 Ararat

BUTLER, Ellen (M Evangelist)
Birthplace Belfast, Port Fairy
Professed 23/9/1894 Rochester
Died 14/1/1942 Mentone

BYRNE, Margaret (M Malachy Joseph) Birthplace Ballybunion, Ireland
Professed 17/5/1887 Goresbridge
Possibly returned to Ireland from Wangaratta but not to convent
Died —

BYRNE, Nora (M Anthony J)
Birthplace Wangaratta
Professed 31/1/1906 Echuca
Died 14/7/1958 Albert Park

CALLANAN, Agnes (M Fidelis)
Birthplace Gardiner
Professed 8/12/1897 Echuca
Died 25/12/1938 Echuca

CANTWELL, Mary (M Xavier)
Birthplace Gordon
Professed 17/1/1900 Echuca
Died 9/3/1960 Wangaratta

CASEY, Mary (M Aloysius)
Birthplace Maryborough
Professed 27/12/1906 Ararat
Died 19/11/1969 Maryborough

CHALK, Gertrude (M Josephine)
Birthplace Sydney, NSW
Professed 25/12/1888 Echuca
Died 11/4/1900 (Age 33)

CLANCY, Lucy Agnes (M Josephine)
Birthplace Suncroft, Kildare, Ireland
Professed 18/10/1883 Abbeyleix, Ireland
Died 19/2/1915 (at sea)

CLARKE, Brigid (M Rose)*
Birthplace Springhill, Ireland
Professed 18/3/1898 Wangaratta
Died 28/11/1946 Wangaratta

COUGHLAN, Maude (M Xavier)
Birthplace Ballarat
Professed 11/7/1894 Beechworth
Died 25/7/1915

COLL, Mary (M Berchmans)
Birthplace Richmond
Professed 29/1/1891 Beechworth
Died 15/4/1934 Beechworth

CONLON, Helena (M Alphonsus)
Birthplace Athy Ireland
Professed 11/7/1894 Beechworth
Died 4/2/1958

CONNELL, Brigid (M Agnes)
Birthplace Wangarrata
Professed 25/4/1907 Echuca
Died 11/6/1945 Wangaratta

COOPER, (M Joseph)
Birthplace Victoria
Professed 21/1/1891 Beechworth
Died 18/11/1944 Beechworth

CUMMINS, Joanna (M Vincent)
Birthplace Kinnity, Ireland
Professed 13/7/1860 Abbeyleix Ireland
Died 21/5/1911 (Age —)

CUNNINGHAM, Mary Josephine (M Cecilia)
Birthplace Lower Plenty
Professed 6/7/1899 Echuca
Died 19/1/1955

DOYLE, Elizabeth (M Philomena)
Birthplace Stawell
Professed 15/1/1901
Died 24/1/1957 Ararat

DULLARD, Mary Anne (M de Sales)
Birthplace Pine Grove near Kyabram
Professed 6/7/1899 Echuca
Died 26/6/1956

DWYER, (M Brigid)
Birthplace —
Professed 15/2/1896 Beechworth
Died 31/8/1936 Beechworth

ELLIS, Julia (M Teresa)
Birthplace Emerald Hill
Professed 8/1/1895 Echuca
Died 27/8/1965 Echuca

FAIRLESS, Margaret (M Magdalen J)
Birthplace Ballarat
Professed 19/3/1896 Ararat
Died 30/12/1949 Albert Park

FARRELL, Mary (A Agnes)*
Birthplace Richmond, NSW
Professed 22/12/1896 Ararat
Died 2/12/1930 Horsham

FARRELL, Mary (M Catherine)
Birthplace Newbridge, Ireland
Professed 13/6/1871 Goresbridge
Died 3/6/1892 Wangaratta (Age 42)

FOGARTY, Mary (M Patrick/ Patricia)
Birthplace Ireland
Professed 7/4/1885 Tullow
Died 18/1/1898 Wangaratta (Age 48)

FOGARTY, Catherine (M Gabriel)*
Birthplace Inglewood
Professed 18/10/1897 Ararat
Died 20/1/1940 Horsham

FOLEY, Elizabeth (M Berchmans)
Birthplace Charleville, Ireland
Professed 28/5/1891 Echuca
Died 15/5/1942 Mentone

FOLEY, Kate (M Patrick)*
Birthplace Waterford, Ireland
Professed 1/6/1893 Echuca
Died 13/6/1940 Echuca

FRITSCH, Christina (M Aloysius)
Birthplace Hawthorn
Professed 18/2/1899 Echuca
Died 24/9/1922

GAYNOR, Bridie (M Ursula)
Birthplace Tullow, Ireland
Professed 30/6/1897 Echuca
Died 20/2/1954 Echuca

GRACE, Margaret (M. Aquinas)
Birthplace Koyuga
Professed 23/9/1903 Echuca
Died 14/3/1959 Wangaratta

GRAHAM, Ellen (M Bernard)
Birthplace Rochester
Professed 6/7/1899 Echuca
Died 30/1/1955 Rochester

GRIFFIN, Kate (M Alacoque)
Birthplace Ballarat
Professed 5/4/1893 Ararat
Died 11/9/1936

HANRAHAN, Mary (M Clare)
Birthplace Warrenheip
Professed 22/12/1896 Ararat
Died 9/4/1926

HANRAHAN, Bridget (M Anthony)
Birthplace Bungaree
Professed 23/1/1902 Echuca
Died 18/5/1955 Ararat

HARKIN, Ellen (M Ignatius)
Birthplace Sale
Professed 1/2/1886 Echuca
Died 18/7/1946

HARTY, Martha (M Aloysius)
Birthplace Geelong
Professed 28/5/1891 Echuca
Died 10/4/1935 Rochester

HARTY, Frances (M Borgia)
Birthplace Geelong
Professed 8/12/1896 Echuca
Died 9/3/1900

HAYDEN, Maria Agnes (M Borgia)
Birthplace Tullaherin, Kilkenny, Ireland
Professed 27/10/1869 Tullow
Died 21/2/1890 Echuca

HEALY, Bride (M Thomas)
Birthplace Gowran, Ireland
Professed 21/9/1880 Tullow
Died 27/8/1932 Tullow (Age 72)
Returned to Ireland

HOWELL, Mary Anne (M Ignatius)
Birthplace Limerick, Ireland
Professed 31/11/1906 Echuca
Died 15/3/1934 Albert Park

HYNES, Elizabeth (M Imelda)
Birthplace —
Professed 20/8/1895 Echuca
Died 21/10/1914

KEATING, Annie (M Aloysius)
Birthplace Bendigo
Professed 23/1/1902 Echuca
Died 30/3/1907

KELLY, Annie (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Borris, Ireland
Professed 15/5/1873 Abbeyleix
Died 8/2/1929 Ararat (Age 78)

KELLY, Annie (M Philomena)
Birthplace Ararat
Professed 15/8/1901 Echuca
Died 3/9/1966 Maryborough

KENNY, Mary Catherine (M Angela)
Birthplace Burrowa, NSW
Professed 6/7/1899 Echuca
Died 26/7/1923

KERR, Teresa (M Bertrand)
Birthplace Dublin, Ireland
Professed 19/5/1891 Abbeyleix
Died 15/10/1947 (Age 78)

KERR, Josephine (M Laserian)
Birthplace Dublin, Ireland
Professed 18/6/1890 Tullow
Died 29/12/1940 (Age 70)

KERR, Sarah (M Thomas)
Birthplace —
Professed 27/4/1886 Abbeyleix
Died 4/10/1953 Beechworth (Age—)

KRECKLER, Katherine (M Joseph)
Birthplace Wagga Wagga, NSW
Professed 20/5/1890 Wangaratta
Died 24/1/1938 Wangaratta

LANE, Margaret (M Rita)*
Birthplace Port Fairy
Professed 25/4/1907 Echuca
Died 15/5/1963 Echuca

LEE, Brigid (M Aloysius)
Birthplace Ardath, Ireland
Professed 2/3/1897 Wangaratta
Died 24/12/1953 Wangaratta

LOUGHLIN, (M Columbiere)
Birthplace —
Professed 17/1/1900
Died 15/6/1952 Beechworth

MAHER, Annie Agnes (M Philomena)
Birthplace Ararat
Professed 12/1/1899 Echuca
Died 14/8/1920

MALCOLM, Annie (M Francis) *
Birthplace —
Professed 2/7/1907 Ararat
Died 22/7/1953 Maryborough

McCURRAN, Jane (M Gonzaga)*
Birthplace Whorouly
Professed 19/10/1904 Echuca
Died 12/10/1971 Lindfield, NSW

McCURRAN, Mary (M Veronica)*
Birthplace Whorouly
Professed 2/3/1897 Wangaratta
Died 7/11/1958 Wangaratta

McDONNELL, Brigid (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Rattoo, Ireland
Professed 24/8/1886 Goresbridge
Died 23/10/1891 Wangaratta (Age 25)

McDONNELL, (M Margaret Mary)
Birthplace Kerry, Ireland
Professed 27/4/1892 Wangaratta
Died 4/1/1919

McMAHON, Harriett (M Agatha)
Birthplace Chiltern
Professed 1/8/1906 Echuca
Died 17/10/1970 Mentone

MOLONEY, Annie (M Berchmans)
Birthplace Ararat
Professed 8/7/1897 Ararat
Died 4/7/1936

MOLONY, (M Angela)
Birthplace Boorhaman Wangaratta
Professed 1/8/1906 Echuca
Died 18/2/1968

MOORE, Bridget (M Gertrude)
Birthplace Tullow, Ireland
Professed 17/1/1900 Echuca
Died 7/2/1973 Mentone

MOORE, Margaret (M Benedict)
Birthplace Tullow
Professed 20/12/1870 Tullow
Died 24/11//1915 Mentone, VIC
(Age 67)

MURPHY, Margaret Mary (M Augustine)*
Birthplace —
Professed 8/5/1897 Rochester
Died 10/12/1960 Albert Park

MURPHY, Frances (M Margaret Mary)
Birthplace Tongala
Professed 12/1/1899 Echuca
Died 23/6/1948 Malvern
First Australian to be appointed M. Provincial, Victoria 1938–45

MURRAY, (M Monica)
Birthplace —
Professed 15/12/1896 Beechworth
Died 20/8/1918

NOLAN, Adeline Elizabeth (M Brigid)
Birthplace Echuca
Professed 4/7/1900 Echuca
Died 6/6/1952 Echuca

NOLAN, Ellen (M Cecilia)
Birthplace Echuca
Professed 31/1/1906 Echuca
Died 19/1/1967 Echuca

NOLAN, Mary (M Magdalen)
Birthplace Echuca
Professed 30/6/1897 Echuca
Died 23/3/1903

NOLAN, Mary (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Baltinglass, Ireland
Professed 28/5/1867 Abbeyleix
Died 2/11/1907

NOLAN, Mary Elizabeth (M Gerard)*
Birthplace Dunolly
Professed 21/11/1905 Ararat
Died 25/11/1932 Ararat

O'CONNELL, Ellen (M Gertrude)
Birthplace —
Professed 20/8/1895 Echuca
Died 30/7/1956 Rochester

O'KEANE, Catherine (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Geelong
Professed 18/8/1889 Echuca
Died 2/7/1934 Echuca

O'KEANE, Johanna (M Agnes)
Birthplace Ballarat
Professed 8/1/1895 Echuca
Died 30/1/1954

O'LOUGHLIN, Mary Ellen (M Columbiere)
Birthplace Yass, NSW
Professed 17/1/1900 Echuca
Died 11/6/1952

O'ROURKE, Mary Alice (M Alphonus)
Birthplace Beresford, NSW
Professed 30/8/1892 Echuca
Died 29/8/1940 Albert Park

PHELAN, Brigid (M Ursula)
Birthplace Ballyragget, Ireland
Professed 30/5/1876 Abbeyleix
Died 11/6/1918 Ararat

PURCELL, Mary (M Evangelist)
Birthplace Milford, Ireland
Professed 22/12/1896 Ararat
Died 28/6/1924

QUINN, Molly (M Anthony)
Birthplace Runnymede
Professed 27/1/1904 Echuca
Died 18/7/1976 Rochester (Age 97)

QUINN, Kate (M Ligouri)
Birthplace Warracknabeal
Professed 27/1/1904 Echuca
Died 19/7/1950 Mentone

RAUSCH, Mary Brigid (M Veronica)*
Birthplace Tatalia NSW
Professed 30/8/1892 Echuca
Died 3/12/1949

ROCHFORD, Johanna (M Martha)
Birthplace Hamilton
Professed 19/3/1896 Ararat
Died 23/6/1932

RYAN, Anastasia (M Francis)
Birthplace Bushy Park Kyabram
Professed 6/7/1899 Echuca
Died 29/10/1905

RYAN, Annie (M Xavier)
Birthplace Bushy Park Kyabram
Professed 23/9/1903 Echuca
Died 12/7/1960

RYAN, Ellen (M Joseph)
Birthplace Rochester
Professed 6/7/1899 Rochester
Died 9/3/1968

RYAN, Ellen (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Seymour
Professed 27/1/1904 Echuca
Died 12/7/1960

RYAN, Margaret (M Francis Xavier)
Birthplace Shotts, Scotland
Professed 23/7/1895 Ararat
Died 29/3/1959
M. Provincial, Victoria 1920–27 & 1945–51

RYAN, Mary (M Bernard)
Birthplace Shotts, Scotland
Professed 23/7/1895 Ararat
Died 15/7/1924

RYAN, Mary (M Martha)*
Birthplace Barnawartha
Professed 21/1/1893 Beechworth
Died 2/10/1932

SHEA, Margaret (M Michael)
Birthplace Bridgewater
Professed 23/1/1902 Echuca
Died 22/2/1965 Malvern

SHEEHAN, Ellen (M Veronica)*
Birthplace Port Fairy
Professed 7/8/1884 Ararat
Died 26/6/1941 Ararat

SINNOTT or SYNNOTT, Alice (M.Cecilia)
Birthplace Wexford Ireland
Professed 19/3/1866 Goresbridge
Returned to Ireland 1889
Died 11/3/1902 Goresbridge

SKELLY, Annie (M Anthony)
Birthplace Moira NSW
Professed 27/1/1904 Echuca
Died 1/2/1936

SKELLY, Mary (M Clare)
Birthplace Ararat
Professed 20/8/1895 Echuca
Died 5/6/1941 Mentone

SKELLY, Ellen (M Dominic)
Birthplace Moira NSW
Professed 17/1/1900 Echuca
Died 16/7/1935 Mentone

SLATTERY, Catherine (M Vincent)*
Birthplace Bendigo
Professed 19/3/1901 Echuca
Died 20/5/1951 Hawthorn

STOREY, Catherine, (M Berchmans)
Birthplace Wexford Ireland
Professed 30/6/1892 Tullow Ireland
Died 29/1/1951 Wangaratta, (Age 70)
M. Provincial, Victoria 1927–33

SULLIVAN, Francis Mary (M Scholastica)*
Birthplace Maryborough
Professed 21/1/1899 Echuca
Died 3/5/1957 Mentone

TEHAN, Katie (M Ignatius)
Birthplace Nanneela Rochester
Professed 19/10/1904 Echuca
Died 28/3/1926

TEHAN, Maggie (M Joseph)
Birthplace Corop
Professed 19/10/1904 Echuca
Died 2/7/1914

TOBIN, Mary (Maria) (M Dominic)
Birthplace Durres, Cork, Ireland
Professed 6/5/1886 Goresbridge, Ireland
Died 4/4/1893 Wangaratta (Age 33)

TOBIN, Mary Josephine (M Stanislaus)
Birthplace Ararat
Professed 22/12/1896 Ararat
Died 21/10/1939 Malvern

VOSTI, Mary (M Anthony)*
Birthplace Bendigo
Professed 15/8/1901 Echuca
Died 14/10/1912 Beechworth

WALSH, Elizabeth (M Borgia)
Birthplace Ballinakill, Ireland
Professed 23/7/1885 Abbeyleix, Ireland
Died 28/9/1935 Beechworth, Vic (Age 73)

WHITE, Margaret (M Antonia)
Birthplace Casterton
Professed 20/2/1903 Echuca
Died 3/8/1955 Ararat

WHITE, Johanna Caroline (M Brigida)
Birthplace Ararat
Professed 20/2/1903 Echuca
Died 22/8/1948

WHITE, Ellen (M Catherine)*
Birthplace Coleraine
Professed 15/1/1901 Echuca
Died 10/1/1932 Ararat

WIGGINS, Elizabeth (M Barbara)*
Birthplace Warrnambool
Professed 22/04/1906 Echuca
Died 27/12/1931 Echuca

WYER, Brigid (M Canice)
Birthplace Killeigh, Ireland
Professed 21/10/1885 Goresbridge
Died 24/6/1943 Wangaratta (Age 86)

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Victoria

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Doyle
Foley
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Walshe
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MacSuibhne

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Murray papers

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Bendigonian
Clarence & Richmond Examiner
Cowra Free Press
Dominion
Evening Post
Fielding Star
Finn's Leinster Journal
Freeman's Journal
Horowhenua Chronicle
Kyabram Union
Nationalist
Ovens & Murray Advertiser
Riverine Herald
Sentinel
Singleton Argus
Sydney Morning Herald

Sunday Independent
The Argus
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The Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser
The Mercury
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A History of the Brigidine Sisters in Ireland and Australia 1807-1907

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ABSTRACT

The religious institute of the Sisters of St Brigid (Brigidines) founded by Bishop Daniel Delany of Kildare and Leighlin in 1807 has been overlooked by historians in favour of larger religious congregations. This thesis aims to redress this situation by examining the history of the Brigidines over the course of one hundred years to 1907.

The Brigidines were part of the rapid expansion of simple-vowed congregations in the nineteenth century. They established a system of free and fee-paying day and boarding schools and Sunday catechetical schools to help meet educational and religious needs in towns in Ireland and Australasia.

In comparison to similar congregations, the Brigidines rate of expansion in its first hundred years was slow. This study has found that there were a number of possible reasons for this: the lack of drive and diocesan-limited vision of its founder, the grant of too much financial control to one person, and the procrastination and lack of interest of successive bishops in seeking papal approbation. All these factors made the institute less attractive to prospective postulants.

Despite these constraints and the many hardships suffered by the Brigidines on an almost daily basis, this study has revealed the important contribution which they made to the schooling of children in small towns in Ireland and isolated country areas in Australia who otherwise might have gone without education.

Although much has been revealed, the paucity of material on key figures and the reliability of the Brigidine annals have limited the comprehensiveness of this study. That said, the information researched and interpreted has expanded the current state of knowledge on the foundation of the institute, the lives of many of the founding sisters and their significant achievements in education.