HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY
of
THE SISTERS OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER
of
THE THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS

Edited by
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Volume I

Convent of the Sorrowful Mother
6618 N. Teutonia Avenue
Milwaukee 9, Wisconsin

September, 1960
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY

of

THE SERVANT OF GOD, MOTHER FRANCES STREITEL
Foundress of the Community,

and of

THE PIONEERING SISTERS,

Who, with Mother Foundress, laid the foundations of the early institutions of the Community
This book on the history of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother has been prepared for private use for the Sisters of the Community. Since it is not for publication, that is, it is not for sale, the imprimatur of the Bishop is not required by Canon Law.

Volume I of the Community's history will supply a long-felt need in the education of the young Sisters, novices, and candidates. The Sacred Congregation of Religious and others interested in the development of the young Sisters urgently recommend that the history of one's respective religious community be studied during the novitiate. This study should help to arouse in the mind and soul of the zealous novice loyalty, love, respect, and gratitude toward her own community.

Every religious community, no matter when and where founded, has been established on the rock foundation of humility and unspeakable difficulties, if the community has survived through the ages, Divine Providence has guided the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother and has showered abundant graces and blessings upon it because of the heroic prayer-life and humble self-abnegation of the Servant of God, Mother Frances Streitel, and her pioneering spiritual daughters.

May the study of the life and the works of Mother Frances effect that the true spirit of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother be renewed and preserved and that love and devotion to the Foundress be increased in the hearts of her spiritual daughters.

Editor
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Hail to thee, Mother of Sorrows,
Thou first Rose of Martyrs,
Thou purest Lily of Virgins,
O Mary, hail to thee!
By a special decree Cardinal Parocchi placed the Community under the protection of St. Joseph in October, 1886, at the request of Mother Frances. In one of her letters she wrote: "My love for St. Joseph is identical with my love for Jesus and Mary. This holy Trio possesses my whole heart. I may well say that it is our dear St. Joseph who has taught me to know and love Jesus and Mary. . . ."
St. Francis, our holy patron: "The Lord shapes all things as a cross, and the cross with its five symbols of love imprints itself deeply upon the soul, so that at death the likeness of Christ the Exemplar and His faithful image St. Francis may not be wanting." (Words of Mother Frances Streitel.)
House in Mellrichstadt, Bavaria, where Mother Frances Streitel was born.
The Servant of God, Mother Frances Streitel, Foundress of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.
Adam Streitel and Frances Hoerhammer, the parents of Amalia Streitel, the Foundress of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.
This picture of Amalia Frances Rose Streitel was taken shortly before her entrance into religious life.
Family picture: Left to right: Adam Streitel is sitting; behind him are Hedwig Streitel, Mother Frances, and Herman Streitel. These four are brothers and sisters. Herman's wife, Karoline Streitel, is sitting in front between their two sons, Oskar, sitting, and Herman, standing.
Chapter I

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE SERVANT OF GOD,

MOTHER MARY FRANCES STREITEL

until

THE BEGINNING OF HER FOUNDATION

The Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother was founded by the Servant of God, Mother Mary Frances Streitel of the Cross. Although the ancestors of the Streitel family had been foresters in Bavaria for five generations, Adam Streitel, Mother Frances' father, having completed his classical and legal studies, chose the career of government official. He was a noble-minded, honest, and prudent official, professing his religion publicly, which act in those days required great courage. Her mother, Frances Hoerhammer, was the daughter of Peter Hoerhammer, the owner of a brewery in Ingolstadt, Bavaria. The excellent training—physically, mentally, socially, morally, and spiritually—which Frances Hoerhammer had received, made her a righteous, integrated spouse and mother.

Soon after Adam Streitel had taken up his position as government official at Mellrichstadt, a small town in the diocese of Wuerzburg of about two thousand inhabitants, he and Frances Hoerhammer were united by the sacrament of holy matrimony on February 13, 1844. Toward the end of the year, on November 24, Amalia, the oldest of four children, who was destined to become the Foundress of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, was born. According to the custom of that time, the infant was baptized at her parental home on the day of her birth, which happened to be a rather cloudy and dull day; but while the pastor administered the holy sacrament of baptism, a flood of sunshine brightened up the room. Later the pastor took the infant into his arms saying, "This child is destined for something great."
In this genuinely Christian and noble-minded family, education of the children began in the cradle. At the age of two Amalia was able to make the sign of the cross and to pray, folding her little hands and raising her eyes to the heavenly Father above. Thus by the good example and the teachings of her parents the seeds of the virtues of charity, obedience, orderliness, and self-control were gradually implanted into the child's heart.

At the age of six Amalia began her formal elementary education in her native town at the girls' school of the Sisters of Notre Dame. From her school record we learn that she was a gifted child, having a good memory, a clear understanding, and a mind alert for knowledge. All through her school years her favorite study was religion. She did not simply memorize the catechism, but endeavored to penetrate truths far beyond her age.

The outstanding and unforgettable event in Amalia's early life was the day of her first Holy Communion, which, according to the custom of those times, she made in her early adolescence on the first Sunday after Easter, April 19, 1857. A few months preceding this great event were devoted to special preparations of mind, heart, and soul: knowledge and understanding of religious truths for the mind and the acquiring of virtue and love of God for heart and soul. Having longed for years for this happy union with her Eucharistic Lord and King, Amalia devoted herself wholeheartedly to a most loving preparation for this, the greatest day of her life. Studying her catechism and bible history most carefully, she followed with intense attention the special first Communion instructions given several times during the week. The inspiring literature for the first communicants, which was freely distributed to them, spurred her on to imitate the virtues of those heroic and devoted saints whose lives she read. Motivated by her study, reading, and prayer, she earnestly tried to prepare and adorn her pure soul with the flowers of manifold virtues for her first reception of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.
An incident which her mother related to Sister M. Scholastica Demer—Amalia's first companion in the foundation of the new religious community—most probably happened during the time of her preparation for first Holy Communion. Once when Mrs. Streitel was making Amalia's bed, she found therein little pieces of wood scattered about on the sheet and thus asked her daughter for an explanation. Amalia answered confidingly that she wished to make little sacrifices for the love of Jesus.

Amalia's first Communion day was indeed a happy and significant event. Her love and longing for the Holy Eucharist ever increased, and whenever possible and permissible, she received her Eucharistic Lord. The hours spent in prayer and meditation before the Blessed Sacrament never seemed too long for her, and by word and example she inspired others to a genuine love and devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

Later in her religious life she was a magnetic example in word and deed for all those who came under her influence, enkindling a burning love for the Holy Eucharist in their souls. Her dying wish, which as a sacred heritage she bequeathed upon her Community through her successor, Mother Mary Johanna Ankenbrand, was that the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament be always treasured and cherished in the Community which she had founded.

Soon after Amalia's first Holy Communion, her father, having been promoted to a higher government position at Weyhers, took the family there. Here Amalia received the sacrament of confirmation. As faithful and fervent as was her preparation for her first Holy Communion, so devoted and ardent was her preparation for the reception of the Holy Spirit. Since she was destined by God to accomplish a great work in Holy Church and to suffer much and since her heart was filled with burning love for God and neighbor, we may suppose that on her confirmation day the Holy Spirit poured into her pure heart His richest graces in abundance—His holy fruits and holy gifts.
After Amalia had completed her elementary school education, her parents sent her to Maria Stern at Augsburg, a boarding school for the daughters of the upper class. The aims of this academy, conducted by Franciscan Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, were a thorough education in the liberal arts and the religious and spiritual formation of the students, resulting in the practical cultivation of a noble and genuine Christian life and character.

Amalia, attending the academy from 1858 to 1862, majored in language and music. Although she found studying easy and made excellent progress in her academic training, she was not especially enthusiastic about her school work with the exception of the study of religion, into which she put her whole heart and mind. Prayer, religion, and the liturgy were her favorite occupations. With her keen intellect and watchful eye Amalia made several observations at the boarding school. She noticed that in this type of higher education—separate schools for the nobility and the rich—pride and arrogance might easily become character traits unless special effort be made in combating these vices. She formulated these observations into two principles which she put to good use in her later life: first, let humility always be the foundation and let it precede the thirst and pursuit of knowledge; secondly, let education never be the cause of treating others with disdain.

As is usually the case, Amalia had her share of homesickness at the academy and was always happy when vacation came around, for this meant a reunion with her family at Weyhers. Having successfully completed her studies in 1862, Amalia graduated and received a teacher's diploma. Being about eighteen years of age, she returned to her home at Mellrichstadt, whither the family had lately moved because Mr. Streitel had been promoted to a higher government position there.

The parents, well satisfied with the accomplishments of their daughter, hoped that Amalia would now enter the social life of the city in anticipation of a brilliant wed-
ding within the next few years. For this reason her mother
took great pains in instructing her in the various phases
of successful housekeeping and domestic management.

In a letter which Amalia wrote to the bishop of Augs-
burg when she was thirty-seven years old, she said: "At
the age of seventeen, I was called to the religious life
in a special manner." From Amalia's little notebook, which
is preserved in the archives of the Community of the Sis-
ters of the Sorrowful Mother, we learn that the call to
the religious life came to her in August, 1862; but she
does not reveal under what circumstances she received this
special grace. Amalia, fully realizing that her parents,
even though they were exemplary Christians who conscien-
tiously performed their religious duties, would not permit
her to enter religious life without some conflict, decided,
for the time being, not to speak to them concerning the
aspirations of her soul. But she considered within her
soul the words of Jesus: "He who loves father and mother
more than Me, is not worthy of Me." She increased her
fervor in prayer, spent many hours in adoration before the
Blessed Sacrament, and trusted that God would, in due time,
inspire her parents to give their approval to her wishes.
When her father gradually surmised Amalia's intention to
embrace the religious life, he was angry; and feeling con-
vinced that these "religious whims" of his daughter were
nothing else but a youthful enthusiasm, he considered it
his duty to discourage her. Amalia's reaction to her par-
ent's opposition was, however, a prudent silence. As her
parents increased opportunities for their daughter's social
entertainments, she increased her trust in God by sending
heavenward an unending stream of heartfelt affections.

Amalia's trust in God was not in vain, for Divine
Providence so ordained things in the family circle that
finally the parents, realizing that their daughter was not
made for the temporary pleasures of this world, permitted
her to enter religious life, under the conditions that she
would not enter a strict order nor dedicate herself to the
service of the sick. Although Amalia felt herself called
by God to a strict community and was attracted to humble
work such as the nursing of the sick, she decided to enter the Community of the Franciscan Sisters of Maria Stern at Augsburg, where she had attended boarding school, and which convent her parents favored.

Amalia was accepted into the Franciscan Community as a postulant during the year of 1866. Although she had not told her parents of her heart's desire to dedicate herself to the service of the sick, she hoped that, since the nursing of the sick was one of the activities of the community, she would eventually be assigned to this more humiliating work. At the time of her entrance she talked to her superior about this desire; but the superior, convinced of Amalia's educational and administrative abilities and accomplishments, answered her with an emphatic "no" and told her to continue her studies in French and music, which she had pursued in boarding school.

After some time in the postulancy, Amalia came more and more to the realization that in this community she would not be able to live the strict, ascetic religious life for which her heart and soul ardently yearned. Her confessor Monsignor Joseph F. Allioli, a learned and pious priest, whom she asked for advice, counseled her to be invested and to remain in the community. Considering this as the will of God, Amalia was invested on October 17, 1866, receiving the name Sister Mary Angela. Although her confessor permitted her penances as severe as was secretly possible, her vocational struggles continued throughout her novitiate. Her conscience frequently admonished her, "Your vocation is to a strict order." Offering to God all her interior sufferings and struggles concerning her holy vocation, she prayed fervently that God's holy will be done in her regard.

Sister M. Angela made her first holy vows on June 8, 1868, and soon after that was assigned to a teaching position in a local school at Noerdlingen, Bavaria. At the age of twenty-six, barely three years after her first vows, she was appointed superior of a new mission, a language and needlework school for girls at Altomuenster in the
Archdiocese of Munich. At this mission she was also in charge of giving music lessons.

This appointment to superiorship must have been a shattering of many of Sister M. Angela's hopes and ideals, for she greatly desired to live an interior life in humility with as much seclusion from the distractions of the world as possible, which way of life would be impossible as superior. Let us quote from a letter which the Superior General of the Franciscan Community of Maria Stern, Mother M. Salesia Ellersdorfer, wrote to Mrs. Adam Streitel on October 1, 1871, a few days before Sister M. Angela was to assume her duties as superior. "The acceptance of the dignity of superior has cost your daughter many a tear, but holy obedience gives her strength and courage, for she has so many virtues which assure her God's blessing. She has, moreover, a good practical knowledge of household management." (Rev. Aquilin Reichert, "Mother Frances Streitel--Her Life and Works," p. 18)

That Sister M. Angela had clearly manifested her administrative abilities at Altomuenster we may deduce from the fact that seven months later she was transferred as superior to a wider field of activities, St. Elizabeth's Home for Orphans in Wuerzburg. During the eight years of activity in this field of labor Sister M. Angela won for herself the confidence and love of most of the Sisters to such an extent that they gladly followed her example in a stricter observance of the Rule. However, at the motherhouse she had become the victim of calumny and false accusation because some of her subjects, displeased with her strict interpretation of the Rule, accused her to the higher superiors. But trusting that God would take care of her good name, she was silent, as was her custom—not saying anything in her own defense.

In 1880 the superintendent of St. Mary's Home, Wuerzburg, earnestly begged Sister M. Angela to accept the superiorship of that place, if the Mother General should ask her to do so, because an able and efficient superior was needed to bring harmony and regularity into the financial,
domestic, and religious disorders of that institute. The activities of this institution consisted of an orphanage, a day school, and a kindergarten. Although Sister M. Angela hoped that she would be spared from this new responsibility, she accepted the position when asked to do so and began her office as superior at St. Mary’s Home in April, 1880. To do God’s holy will in this institution and to satisfy those entrusted to her care, Sister M. Angela needed the divine and moral virtues in a high degree.

During these years of superiorship, replete with responsibilities, worries, and manifold difficulties, Sister M. Angela frequently felt a burning desire for solitude, a longing to give herself wholly and entirely to God in prayer, meditation, and penance. After about four months in her last mission, St. Mary’s Home, the bell of Hummelpforten, the Carmelite convent about two miles distant, very forcefully seemed to invite her at night to hurry thither and remain there. She heard the voice of Saint Francis within her heart: "You must learn to combine the active and the contemplative life." The call to Carmel must have come to Sister M. Angela in a clear and definite manner, for we find recorded in her notebook: "August 4, 1880—Call to Carmel."

Sister M. Angela talked to the confessor of the Carmelite convent about her desire to enter there. He, in turn, referred her to the prioress, who kindly listened to all she had to say and promised to admit her to Carmel as soon as there would be an opening. This answer, which she considered as the will of God, made her happy. She wrote, "I saw myself near the goal of many years of longing."

Later when doubts arose as to whether or not the transfer which she was contemplating was the holy will of God, she took recourse to a Franciscan Father renowned for his piety and prudence. He assured her that her transfer from the active to the contemplative life was the will of God and that she should relate frankly and trustfully all that burdened her soul to the Superior General, who was
expected at St. Elizabeth's Home within a short time. On February 23, 1681, Sister M. Angela had a personal interview with the Superior General, concerning which she wrote the following in a letter to the bishop of Augsburg:

On February 23, 1681, I spoke to the Superior General, who listened with maternal benevolence and a pious and noble attitude. My message, however, caused her sorrow. There was no reproach, no bitterness, no ill-humored nor uncharitable remark. She only regretted that she had caused me pain in the recent past because of having been misinformed. If I had not had the certainty that God was calling me, I should have yielded—for all the loving kindness she showed me—to the pleas of the worthy woman not to leave the Order.” (Rev. Reichert, p. 25)

On January 7, 1882, the Superior General of Maria Stern gave her consent to Sister M. Angela, whose petition to leave Maria Stern had already been made in writing. On January 11, Father Ambrose Kaess, the vicar of the Carmelite Order of Himmelspforten, informed Bishop Pancratius of Augsburg of Sister M. Angela's pious desire to transfer from the Community of Maria Stern to the Carmel. The permission of the bishop was given to Sister M. Angela through the Superior General on January 17, with the request that as soon as the transfer had been made it should be reported to him by the Carmelite Prioress.

On the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, January 25, 1882, Sister M. Angela, wearing her religious garb and accompanied by a lady, went to the Carmel. Soon after her arrival she was invested with the habit of a novice of Carmel, receiving the name Sister Petra. Feeling that now she could give her whole being, her undivided love and attention, to God alone, she was extremely happy; peace and joy flooded her soul. A few excerpts from a letter which she wrote on March 31, 1883, to Reverend Father Jordan give some insight into her state of mind at that time.
I entered the Carmel with the intention of serving God there as perfectly as possible in solitude and perfect obedience. My relation to God was a feeling of being drawn and of being close to Him....I found in Carmel what I had sought for years through sacrifice and prayer. I had a novitiate; I could be obedient. I had ample opportunity to correct the effects of the ten years during which I held the office of superior. Once again I became childlike and turned with great intimacy to the God of my heart. The Lord enlightened my mistress in many respects concerning her spiritual daughter. (Rev. Reichert, p. 30)

From that same letter we learn how Sister Petra, although she loved Carmel and its strict ascetical life, came to the realization that God did not want her to make her holy vows there.

About nine months ago (June, 1882) I knelt before the picture of the Sacred Heart. Up to that time communications of a higher order had not been vouchsafed to me.... I was altogether ignorant in this respect. Although I had recognized years before that the Lord would lead me along special paths, I did not wish to open a way to things opposed to my very nature through reading about them....When I approached the Sacred Heart with the question why I had been called to the Carmel I received the answer: "In order to unite the active life with the contemplative!" At once it became clear that the Lord would call me to found a community which would strive to foster at the same time both the active and the contemplative life. From then on, the direction of my soul by God tended to render me ever more docile and capable in the fulfillment of His plans. (Rev. Reichert, p. 30)

She talked this important matter over with her confessor, Father Cyprian, who agreed with her that she was not
called to Carmel but that God had called her to unite the contemplative with the active life. He corresponded with the superior of Maria Stern, concerning Sister Petra's return to that convent. But as the superior did not give her approval, Father Cyprian advised Sister Petra to return to her parental home until she would hear further from him. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1882, Sister Petra informed the Mother Prioress of her decision to leave Carmel. The Mother Prioress and many of the Sisters were surprised when they heard of Sister Petra's decision, for she had received a very favorable vote which qualified her to be admitted to holy profession.

With the permission of the prioress, Sister Petra left the novitiate of Himmelspforten in her secular dress on December 13, 1882. Her brother met her at the door of the convent and accompanied her to the railroad station, whence she continued to her parents' home in Bamberg, where the family had moved after Mr. Streitel's retirement from office.

That Sister Petra acted in good faith and thus was free from moral guilt is clear from her letter of May 10, 1884, to the Bishop of Augsburg. She wrote:

As a novice I came to see that it was the will of God to leave that convent...With the permission of the prioress I left Himmelspforten in secular dress. I did not ask for a special ecclesiastical permission to leave the convent and return home in secular clothes because at that time I did not know that such a permission was necessary. If I had known this, I would certainly have taken the necessary steps to obtain it.

At her parental home in Bamberg, Sister Petra keenly felt the humiliating position in which she found herself. Through fervent prayer and works of Christian charity she hoped that God would soon make His holy will known to her. She had an irresistible desire to live in a religious community in which the members, uniting the active with the
contemplative life, were living according to its original strict and unmitigated monastic rule.

In the meantime Reverend Father Cyprian, her confessor at Carmel, had written to Father Jordan at Rome, recommending Sister Petra as a suitable subject for his plans.

Sources:

Chronicle of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.

Reichert, Rev. Aquilin, Heldenmutiger Einsatz fuer Ideales Ordensleben—Der Dienerin Gottes, Mutter Franziska Streitel.

Reichert, Rev. Aquilin, Mother Frances Streitel—Her Life and Works.
Chapter II

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF

FATHER JORDAN AND HIS WORKS

The Servant of God, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, whose baptismal name was John Baptist, was born on June 16, 1848, at Gurtweil in Baden, Germany. Ever since his first holy Communion at the age of twelve, John Baptist had an irresistible desire to become a priest; but because of the extreme poverty of his family and his father's prolonged sickness and death when John was but fifteen years old, his desire was fulfilled only in his twenty-first year, when through unflinching trust in God, fervent prayer, and a strong will and determination, he, overcoming all difficulties and obstacles, succeeded to begin his studies for the priesthood. The day of Father Jordan's holy ordination, July 21, 1878, was for him, indeed, an extremely happy occasion.

Having been forbidden by the Bishop to submit to the examination demanded by the state as a result of the Kulturkampf, Father Jordan could not celebrate his first holy Mass at his home, and for that purpose he went to Switzerland. He decided to go to Rome with the scholarship he had received for further studies, because many priestly functions could not be pursued in Germany at that time unless it be done behind closed doors. Taking up his abode at the Campo Santo in Rome, where Monsignor Anton De Waal was rector, Reverend Jordan successfully studied the Oriental languages for two years at the Apollinaris.

Foundation of Religious Community for Men: Already in his seminary days, eagerly wishing to provide concrete and practical means for the religious instruction of the poor and neglected all over the world, Father Jordan cherished the hope of establishing an organization for that purpose. After he had completed his studies at Rome in 1880, he went to the Orient to practice and improve his linguistic abilities, for which he had special talents.
In 1881 Reverend Jordan laid the foundation for the establishment of an association of priests for missionary work. His first and most important disciple of the foundation was a young secular priest, Rev. Bernard Luethen, a native of Westphalia, Germany, who later received the name Father Bonaventure. His second disciple, a convert to the faith, was Father Frederick von Leonhardi, who had been an officer of the German army.

Father Jordan, who lived with his followers for some time in the house of St. Bridget at Rome, laid the foundation for his society there, choosing the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1881, as the date of the foundation. On that day Father Jordan offered holy Mass in the chapel of St. Bridget, at which his first two disciples assisted him and received Holy Communion from his hand as a sign of submission to their founder and superior. At that same time the Fathers made private holy vows silently for themselves.

Originally it was not Father Jordan's intention to establish a religious congregation, but rather an association of men united together in conjoint action against the spirit of unbelief. Since the title which he had given to the society—"Apostolic Teaching Society"—was viewed with disfavor in Rome, he named the association: "Catholic Teaching Society." In 1894 the association received its third and final title: "Society of the Divine Savior."

The purpose of the Catholic Teaching Society was threefold: First, to make the Catholic Christians more devoted to their Faith and more fervent in the practice thereof; secondly, to direct and educate Catholics so that they might defend their holy faith intelligently, heroically, and enthusiastically; thirdly, to train missionaries for pagan countries and other nations where people had gone astray.

The members of the Catholic Teaching Society were divided into three degrees. The first-degree members were to devote themselves exclusively to the purpose of the so-
The second-degree members were to consist of learned men who could remain at their positions in the world but would unite together for the sake of defending the Christian truth. The third-degree members were required to strive in the world for Christian perfection and by word and good example spread and defend the Catholic faith.

To make known the aims, objectives, and degrees of the Catholic Teaching Society, Father Jordan and his associates decided to publish missionary magazines in various countries. Since Father Luethen, a highly educated, talented, and zealous priest, was appointed to be chief editor of the German publication of The Missionary, he was to remain in Germany as Father Jordan's representative in that country. The first issue of the magazine appeared in Germany in September, 1881.

Female Branch of Catholic Teaching Society: In order to attain his aim of bringing the Catholic faith and good morals to as many people as possible, Father Jordan also planned from the beginning to establish a female branch of the Catholic Teaching Society for the purpose of the education of youth, the nursing of the sick, and other charitable works. Soon after the tiny seed of the society for men had been planted, Father Jordan discussed with Father Luethen the possibility of starting the first foundation of the female branch in Germany as soon as possible. At that time there was as yet no thought of a religious community in the strict sense of the word nor of the wearing of a religious garb.

Father Luethen became acquainted with Miss Thekla Bayer, the niece of a pious and zealous priest. Miss Bayer, coming from a distinguished family of Wuerzburg, had a good education and eagerly desired to dedicate herself to God and His work. Within a short time, four more ladies, won over for the good cause through The Missionary, declared themselves ready to begin community life, for which purpose a priest of the Diocese of Regensburg generously offered his house in that city. Father Luethen, considering Miss Bayer a God-sent instrument for Father Jordan's contem-
plated female branch of the society, appointed her superior of the foundation. One of the objectives of this beginning community was to have perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. To the regret of Father Luethen, things did not go very well. Since conflicts concerning the objectives of the association arose among the members within a short time, even before any of them had made private vows, the Bishop of Regensburg dissolved this experimental community in October, 1882. Thekla and two of her companions returned to Father Luethen, who sent the two companions to Neuwerk, another place of interest to the Catholic Teaching Society. Intending to send Miss Thekla Bayer to Rome later, Father Luethen asked her to remain in Munich.

Baroness Therese von Wueellenweber: Let us here relate the main events in the life of Baroness Therese von Wueellenweber, who, born in 1833 near Aachen in the province of Rhineland, was destined by God to become the first superior general of the female branch of the Catholic Teaching Society. The star of her holy vocation seemed to arise in her early youth at a mission given by the Jesuit Fathers, whose inspiring sermons enkindled in her soul the desire to consecrate herself to God and to work for Him in the missionary field. Hoping that she might find what she was seeking, she entered three different religious communities but left each one because she did not find the missionary activities for which her soul longed.

While living in the world, the Baroness prepared herself for her calling by diligently striving after Christian perfection and generously performing acts of Christian charity where and whenever possible. She began extensive charitable works at Neuwerk, a suburb of Cologne.

After having consulted Monsignor Ludwig von Essen, the newly appointed pastor of Neuwerk, Baroness Therese, hoping that she was almost at her goal, bought part of an old Benedictine convent in 1875 for the purpose of performing various charitable works, such as the care of the orphans and the sick in Neuwerk and its vicinity. The Baroness and Monsignor von Essen himself, who was also great-
ly interested in missionary activities, hoped that eventually this enterprise might develop into a religious community in which the members would be separated into choir and lay sisters. The members wore simple dresses and lived according to a rule given them by the pastor. A few older ladies, who had joined mostly for selfish purposes, left again, so that the anticipated religious community never materialized. Most of the time there were just two or three members.

On a nice spring day in 1882, Baroness von Wuellenweber, reading the Cologne newspaper, was fascinated by the bold-typed heading, The Missionary. Her heart was set on fire as she read the advertisement, which informed her that The Missionary was a magazine edited by Father Luethen in order to make known the Catholic Teaching Society with its aims and objectives. She wrote to Father Luethen, telling him about the aspirations and desires of her soul. Father Luethen, answering with an inspiring letter, supplied her with copies of The Missionary, which Therese read and re-read with delight. At last, now being nearly fifty years old, she seemed to have found what her soul had been seeking for so many years. In her enthusiasm she wrote to Father Luethen, informing him of her wish to become a first-degree member of the Catholic Teaching Society immediately. Since the first-degree membership required giving oneself exclusively for the purpose of the society, and since there was as yet no foundation for ladies, Rev. Luethen counseled her to have patience and to remain faithful to the good cause until the proper time would arrive.

In the meantime the Baroness had also written to Rev. Father Jordan, who, to her great satisfaction and delight, came on July 4, 1882, on his first visit to Neuwerk, where he stayed for three days and discussed with her those missionary matters in which both were interested.

On September 5, 1882, Therese, making private vows into the hands of Father Jordan through Father von Leonhardi, was the first woman to be officially admitted into the first-degree membership of the society. When Father
Jordan came on his second visit to Neuwerk on May 21, 1883, Therese made private perpetual vows, dedicating herself for life to the society of the Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society, of which Father Jordan was the General Director. The Baroness Therese von Wuelienweber rejoiced in receiving the name Sister Maria Therese of the Apostles. When Father Jordan told her later that according to his plans the center of the community would be in Rome and not in Neuwerk, she felt some regret and sadness.

Since it was Father Jordan's urgent desire that Sister Maria Therese and her companion live for some time at Rome with the Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society, (which had been founded in 1883) so that they might be initiated into religious community life, arrangements were made for that purpose. On July 22, 1884, Sister Maria Therese and Sister M. Ursula—her companion—traveled to Rome to live with the Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society. While there they wore the same religious garb as the other Sisters. But Sister Maria Therese and her companion, clearly recognizing that they did not have a vocation for the strict ascetical life which the Sisters in Rome were leading, returned after about three weeks to Neuwerk, where they continued their modified religious life.

Divine Providence so ordained and arranged things that Sister Maria Therese, whom God had destined to become the first superior general of the female branch of the Catholic Teaching Society, would finally reach her goal. In 1888 Father Jordan called Reverend Mother Maria Therese and the other candidates, who in the meantime had come together in Germany, to Tivoli near Rome, Italy, in order to lay the foundation of the female branch of the community. When in 1894 the title of the community of Fathers was changed to "Society of the Divine Savior," the Sisters of the society also assumed the title "Sisters of the Divine Savior."
This chapter was approved by the Most Reverend Bonaventure Schweitzer, S.D.S., Superior General, Societas Divini Salvatoris, Via della Conciliazione 51, Rome, Italy.

Sources:

Chronicle of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.


Chapter III

THE FIRST SISTERHOOD

of

THE CATHOLIC TEACHING SOCIETY AT ROME

Now let us return to Sister Petra, who, having left Himmelspforten on December 13, 1882, where she had been a novice for ten months, returned to her parental home in order to wait there for further instructions. Reverend Cyprian, Sister Petra's confessor at Carmel, had recommended her to Father Jordan as a capable leader for the contemplated female branch of his society. Father Luethen, having been asked by Father Jordan to interview Sister Petra regarding her fitness for the Catholic Teaching Society, sent Miss Thekla Bayer to visit Sister Petra in Bamberg, Bavaria, in order to win her over for the cause of the female branch of the Catholic Teaching Society.

Toward evening on January 26, 1883, Miss Thekla Bayer arrived at the Streitel home with letters for Sister Petra from Fathers Jordan and Luethen, which, needless to say, she read with great interest. Miss Barbara Demer, who later became Sister M. Scholastica, was at that time engaged in the Streitel home as a domestic servant. Thekla, talking in glowing terms to both women about Father Jordan's missionary works, declared that she felt herself called by God to found a religious community and that Father Jordan, who had already founded a community for men, had promised to assist her in establishing a new foundation for women, for which he had already rented a dwelling in Rome. The thought of a new religious community in its first spirit, with all the sacrifices necessarily connected with such an enterprise—intense poverty, mortification, and a fervent prayer life—appealed to Sister Petra. She decided to go with Thekla to Munich in order to discuss this important matter with Father Luethen. But she advised Miss Demer, who expressed the wish to go with them to
Munich and then to Rome, to remain another week or two at the Streitelm home until another young lady, desiring to join them, would arrive, so that the two might travel to Rome together.

Sister Petra and Miss Bayer left Bamberg for Munich on February 1, 1883. Father Luethen, being favorably impressed with Sister Petra, reported to Father Jordan that she had outstanding characteristics and seemed to be well prepared to guide and direct the prospective community for women in connection with the Catholic Teaching Society. Father Jordan, losing no time, wrote to Munich, informing Father Luethen that he expected both ladies to arrive in the Holy City at the date and hour specified in his letter. When Sister Petra informed Father Jordan that Thekla had become seriously sick and that for this reason the trip would have to be postponed, Father Jordan replied that she should leave Miss Bayer's care to someone else and come to Rome immediately.

Complying with this request, Sister Petra left Munich on Ash Wednesday, February 14, and arrived in Rome on February 16—two months after she had left Himmelspforten in Wuerzburg. The porter of Father Jordan's newly established society met Sister Petra at the depot in Rome and conducted her to Borgo Nuovo N. 151, the dwelling which Father Jordan had rented for the contemplated community of Sisters. Being greatly pleased with the poor dwelling, Sister Petra wrote the following probably on the day after her arrival: "The dwelling rented by you, Reverend Father, is exactly the one destined by the Lord for the beginning of the work." (Reverend Reichert, p. 46)

On February 18, the second day after her arrival at Rome, Sister Petra asked Father Jordan in writing to accept her as his spiritual daughter, mentioning that God had led her along unexpected and abnormal paths and that His grace had taught her these two prayers: "Lord, annihilate me beneath Thy feet and let me instead be raised up anew in Thy Sacred Heart"; the other: "Lord, would that I had a thousand lives, to surrender them all to Thee under unspeakable tortures!" (Reverend Reichert, pp. 46-47)
Sister Petra's correspondence with Reverend Jordan during the first few days after her arrival at Rome may well be called the conception of the new Sisterhood. In order to be able to evaluate the early growth and development of this contemplated community, the following observations are of significance and interest. In the spring of 1883 when Sister Petra had come to Rome, Father Jordan did not yet have a clear and well-defined plan as to the essential characteristics of his community. His original plan was merely to establish a pious association dedicated to missionary work. When Father Jordan asked Sister Petra for her opinion concerning the fundamentals of the newly contemplated community, she wrote the following:

The love of God and of my neighbor demands holy poverty. At the word poverty my whole being is filled with holy joy. Be strong, therefore, where it is a question of safeguarding the cause of perfect poverty, for it is the safest foundation for a new spiritual edifice, for your divinely-inspired establishment. If you lead truly poor members to the Church, you also lead to her humble and obedient children. I call poverty the mother of all religious virtues. This is the sentiment of your new daughter, which the Lord Himself taught her.

(Reverend Reichert, p. 47)

Sister Petra further stated that she wished only to pray, to struggle, and to suffer for the new work in order that the candidates might have the courage to lead a highly ascetical life in opposition to the shallow life of the day. She earnestly hoped that in the new community contemplation and action be closely united under poverty as the chief virtue.

Noticing Father Jordan's surprise at her clear, precise answer, Sister Petra apologized for her rashness in making known her viewpoint and begged not to be asked again. From the beginning of the meeting of these two noble souls we notice that there existed a great diversity of opinions between them.
When Father Jordan asked her again to make known her viewpoint concerning the foundation, she wrote, on February 21, that she considered it practical for the beginning of the community to introduce the original rule of St. Clare and to add a few regulations of St. Teresa of Avila. On this occasion she also mentioned that she favored a Franciscan habit of ash-gray color for the community.

Although Sister Petra always wrote and spoke most politely to Reverend Jordan, she did not hesitate to express firmly her convictions and beliefs. When coming to Rome at Father Jordan's invitation, she was going into her thirty-ninth year and had many years of both practical and theoretical knowledge of the religious life. After ten years of superiorship in one religious community, unmindful of human respect, she humbled herself to become a novice in a strict contemplative order, where God made known to her that she was called to unite the active with the contemplative life. Being thoroughly dissatisfied with the relaxed life in so many convents of that time, she urgently desired to live, in full detachment of all earthly things, a life of humility and annihilation—a strict ascetical life of prayer and penance.

In the spring of 1883, when Father Jordan met Sister Petra for the first time, he was going into his thirty-fourth year. He had little knowledge and no experience concerning religious life and therefore did not yet have any definite plans concerning the organization of his societies. As we learn from the following quotation, Father Jordan learned much about religious life from Sister Petra, who, more than anyone else, influenced him in establishing his societies as religious communities according to Canon Law.

Not only did he (Father Jordan) change his plans but also, one month after her arrival in Rome, against his own inclinations and those of his confreres, he changed his name and his habit.
Upon the divinely imposed mission of Father Jordan, a mission now become an historical reality, the arrival of the Servant of God in Rome throws unexpected light. With penetrating gaze Mother Frances clearly perceived the dangers which threatened the undertaking as originally planned. The collapse of a society of so many persons, however high their ideals might be, appeared to her inevitable without a firmer organization and a closer bond. (Reverend Reichert, p. 42)

When on the feast of St. Coletta, March 6, 1883, the first postulants—Barbara Demer and Margaret Eck—arrived from Germany to join Sister Petra, the new Sisterhood, named by Father Jordan "Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society," began community life in the poor convent at Borgo Nuovo N. 151. On the same day the little group of three went to the National German Church, S. Maria dell' Anima, for confession to Reverend George Jacquemin, whom they found to be such an excellent confessor that they and those to join later chose him as their confessor. For holy Mass and other devotions the Sisters went to the Carmelite church S. Maria Traspontina, where they daily attended all the holy Masses, the first of which began at five in the morning.

At Vespers on Palm Sunday, March 18, Sister Petra, overflowing with spiritual joy and unable to express in words God's goodness and mercy towards her, clothed herself in the poor Franciscan habit, which had been blessed on the preceding day by Father Jordan, and exchanged her shoes and stockings for a pair of sandals. Then she spent hours in deep recollected prayer—in sweet intercourse with Jesus, her divine Lover.

A still greater bliss entered Sister Petra's heart in the evening when she pronounced private vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience into the hands of Father Jordan, her spiritual director. In signing the document containing the formula of her holy vows and bearing the date March 13, 1883, she wrote for the first time her new name, Mary
Frances of the Cross. Father Jordan, prudently adding a note to the record, stated that he had accepted the vows only on the condition that he might dispense them in whole or in part at any time. He also added a few encouraging words of sincere congratulations to Mother Frances; and, predicting that she would have to suffer much, he assured her that her holy vows would be her support and buttress in all her sorrows and trials.

On Easter Sunday, March 25, 1883, six days after Mother Frances' investiture, the first three postulants received the habit. One of these left before profession because she had been forbidden the practice of extraordinary penances; the other two were Sisters M. Scholastica Dever and M. Katherina Bck.

In the beginning of July, 1883, Father Jordan, relying on Mother Frances' experience, asked her to write a rule. Since the two had already disagreed concerning the foundation rule, it seems that Father Jordan was hoping that they would yet come to an harmonious understanding, for otherwise he hardly would have asked her again to write a rule. Now, Mother Frances, wishing with all her heart to write only that which God would inspire her to write, asked to be released for nine days from all activities so that she might make a holy retreat of vigils, prayer, and penance to prepare herself to write the rule according to God's will.

Since Mother Frances based these rules on the primitive ideal of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, they were marked by great severity concerning evangelical poverty and austerity of life. Although Father Jordan himself was an admirer of the Franciscan ideal, he felt that he could not approve of such strict regulations, especially those concerning fasting, for members of a congregation destined for the strenuous works of charity in hospitals, schools, and missions. Nevertheless, he did not directly oppose her views but asked only for a few changes in non-essentials. He could not help but admire the happiness and interior peace of Mother Frances' first followers and the
remarkable fruits of sanctity which were produced in them under her guidance. He sincerely hoped that gradually actual experience would bring necessary changes and mitigations. Both Servants of God prayed fervently that God might make known His holy will in their regard.

About this time Mother Frances and her spiritual daughters prayed fervently for a promising young lady, Miss Elizabeth Ankenbrand, who ardently desired to join the new Sisterhood at Rome. Since Elizabeth was employed at Wuerzburg in the rectory of Reverend Ferdinand von Schloer, who later became the bishop of that diocese, she was well informed about the edifying life which Mother Frances had lived at Maria Stern and at Himmelspforten. When Miss Ankenbrand had heard that Mother Frances was preparing to go to Rome at the invitation of Father Jordan in order to become an instrument in God's hand in establishing a new religious community, she had an irresistible desire to go with her or at least to join her as soon as possible.

Father Schloer, admiring Elizabeth's intense prayer life and deep piety, told her that he would defray all her expenses for dowry, clothing, and so forth, if she should choose to enter a religious community such as Himmels- pforten. When, to the surprise of her relatives and friends, Elizabeth expressed her wish to go to Rome to join the new Sisterhood over which Mother Frances Streitel presided, she met with vigorous opposition from all sides because of the uncertainty and precariousness of a new enterprise of this kind. But convinced that God was calling her to join the Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society at Rome, Miss Ankenbrand remained firm in her decision and prepared herself for her entrance into the convent by fervent prayer, self-abnegation, and complete trust in God. On August 19, 1883, she wrote to Father Luethen in Munich, asking for admittance, which, of course, was most graciously granted to her. Finally, having received the approval of her relatives, she left for Rome within a short time.

On October third, while the convent family was in retreat in preparation for holy profession, Postulant Elizabeth Ankenbrand arrived at the convent in Rome. She was
immediately admitted into the retreat; and on October sixth, when two Sisters made their first holy vows, she received the holy habit and the new name Sister Mary Johanna of the Five Holy Wounds. Her virtuous and edifying life during the last seven months in the world constituted her preparation for holy investiture.

October 6, 1883, was indeed a great day in the Community, for it was the day of holy profession for the first two companions of the Foundress, holy investiture for the third companion, and the arrival of three postulants from Germany—Louise Klay, Theresia Gries—a granddaughter of Blessed Columba Gries of Bamberg—and Elisabeth Dirks. The twelve-year-old Kunigunda Demer, sister of Sister Mary Scholastica, also came along and begged to be admitted as an aspirant. Since she was an exceptionally pious child and was recommended by the bishop, she was accepted. On November 21, the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the three postulants were invested, respectively receiving these names: Sister M. Klara, Sister M. Columba, and Sister M. Josepha.

On Sunday, October seventh, Pope Leo XIII, moved by the sorrowful trials under which the Church suffered, raised the feast of the Holy Rosary, which he transferred to October seventh, to one of the second class with a new Mass and office and added the antiphon, "Queen of the Holy Rosary, pray for us," to the Litany of Loreto. All the members of the small Community, except Mother Frances, who remained at home, were present at St. Peter's for these solemn celebrations, during which they fervently prayed that the delicate seed which they represented in Holy Church might come to full fruition and eventually be recognized by the Vicar of Christ.

On the following day, October eighth, the first seven followers of Mother Frances made a pilgrimage on foot to the seven principal churches of Rome, at each of which they remained as long as possible, praying according to the intentions of the Pope and of Mother Frances. When they returned toward evening they ate their first meal of the
day, consisting of dumplings and brown sauce, which their spiritual Mother had prepared for them.

On All Saints Day, 1833, Mother Frances formally opened the novitiate, placing it under the protection of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, the outstanding example for novice mistresses. Mother Frances spared neither time nor effort in her instructions by word and especially by example. Even at recreation she endeavored to direct, in a simple and enjoyable manner, the hearts and minds of the Sisters toward spiritual things. The members of the Community, ever increasing in number, recognized in their Foundress the perfect model of a righteous, God-loving teacher of the spiritual life. Mother Frances instructed them by word and more so by an edifying example in the various phases of the spiritual life— in humility, self-denial, the practice of the holy vows, and prayer. Her methods of instruction were practical and so convincing that none of the Sisters could remain indifferent or unimpressed.

The Servant of God well understood how to restrain with prudence any excesses of zeal and to direct the natural liveliness of the novices toward their one great goal— their consecration to God. In her admonitions, the Servant of God, pointed out ways of improvement, emphasizing what was right and proper. If, through some inadveritence, she herself committed a fault, she frankly confessed it before the Sisters and asked pardon for "the bad example," as she expressed it.

Toward the end of November, the ninth month since the founding of the Community, Sister M. Johanna Ankenbrand became seriously sick with a paralysis. Being unable to open her mouth, she could, with great difficulty and much suffering, take only liquid nourishment. When the doctor declared that there was no chance of Sister's recovery, the convent family, trusting in God's power and goodness, took refuge in prayer and sacrifice. Mother Frances encouraged the sick Sister to trust with her whole heart that the solemn novena of Benedictions in preparation for Christmas, which the members of the Community were attending at Santa
Maria Traspontina for her, would bring about her complete recovery.

"Ask and you shall receive." These stalwart friends of God were not confounded in their hope in God. On January 6, 1884, accompanied by the completely recovered Sister M. Johanna, the Sisters went on a visit to the Miraculous Infant of Ara Coeli to thank God for the wonderful recovery of their sick Sister.

As their first Christmas in Rome was drawing near, Mother Frances hoped and prayed that God might provide something special for her spiritual daughters. The little money she had was needed for food, rent, and other essentials; and, besides, she always had to have a little in reserve for the poor and needy who came around frequently. One good Franciscan brother came regularly with his collection box; and Mother Frances, poorer than he, never disappointed him.

On Holy Eve an unexpected priest visitor, who had been rather unfriendly toward the Sisters in the past, came to the convent and, handing to them a large cloth bundle containing oranges and peas, said: "There, eat once to your satisfaction." From that time on he frequently brought them fruit from his garden. Thus God's Divine Providence was always watching over these humble handmaids of the Lord.

The eighth member—the first postulant from Italy—Agnes Pechinino, entered shortly before Christmas and was invested on New Year's Day, receiving the name Sister M. Veronica of Jesus. On this first New Year's Day in Rome, the small growing religious family looked backward with profound gratitude to God for all the blessings and graces received and forward with sincere hope that God would continue to shower His graces upon this tiny spiritual plant.

With the continuous increase of membership in the new Sisterhood, the rented dwelling at Borgo Nuovo N. 151 was getting too small, and hence a larger dwelling was secured
at Vicolo dell’Falco N. 18. Mother Frances made arrangements to rent only the first floor of the house and when necessary to obtain the second. Having appointed March 1, Ash Wednesday, as the moving day from the old to the new dwelling, Mother Frances, who had to go to Germany on a business trip sometime before that date, impressed upon the Sisters that the Holy Family picture, which she had brought from her native home and which had had the place of honor in their first convent chapel, should be brought first to the new dwelling and set between two lighted candles.

On Ash Wednesday Sister M. Veronica, carrying the picture and candles, went ahead of the other Sisters. Arriving at the new dwelling, she found nothing therein except a thick layer of dust upon the stone floor. Considering this very appropriate for Ash Wednesday, she knelt down and, laying the picture on the floor, lit the candles. When the other Sisters arrived with their poor belongings and saw the picture of simplicity which Sister M. Veronica presented, they had a hearty laugh. But finally, accepting Sister M. Veronica’s invitation, they knelt down in the dust in order to spend the first hour in the new dwelling in adoring God and asking His blessing. Next they prepared a small chapel and put the highly venerated picture of the Holy Family upon a little altar. During the first few years the Sisters did not have the Blessed Sacrament in their chapel but had holy Mass whenever it was possible for Rev. Father Jordan to come and offer the Holy Sacrifice. This same room which they prepared for the chapel was used as the refectory and the workroom.

The Sisters spend the rest of the day cleaning the new dwelling, arranging their scanty furniture, and putting in place their beds of straw mattresses and blanket-covered boards. While the Sisters were preparing this dwelling for occupancy, Mother Frances was on her return trip from Germany. This trip, her second journey to Rome, again happened to be on Ash Wednesday. (Her first trip was her answer to Father Jordan’s invitation to come to Rome.) On this second trip she was not alone but was accompanied by
three postulants from Germany. There was great rejoicing when they arrived at the convent on the following day.

The nearest church to the Sisters' new dwelling at Vicolo dell' Falco N. 18 was the attractive and devotional Franciscan Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, which derives its name from a picture of Our Lady which was brought from the Holy Land in 1586. Now the Sisters also lived closer to the church of St. Angelo, dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel, to whom the Community always had a special devotion. The youthful group of Sisters could often be seen wending its way to one or the other of the churches in the vicinity in order, through the intercession of the Blessed Mother and the Holy Archangel Michael, to call down God's blessing upon their new foundation.

During the first year of the Community's existence, 1883, the Sisters had no external activity, for Mother Frances considered it her paramount duty to devote the first year to the study and the practice of the spiritual life. Since the Sisters lived in austere poverty, the little they needed was paid for with the money which they had brought from their homes and with whatever was given to them by kind people.

During 1884 various activities were undertaken: The Sisters devoted themselves to typesetting for the missionary-printing activities of the Fathers of the Catholic Teaching Society, to the nursing of the sick in their homes, and to the education of poor children from the municipality. Some Sisters, generally two at a time, were sent to Germany and other European countries to collect alms for themselves and for the poor. But prayer, being their most important duty, was the very essence of their existence. During the first two years the Sisters visited the seven principal churches of Rome almost every week, if the weather permitted it. Penance and prayer were connected with these pilgrimages, as those days were severe fast days for the Sisters; and during their trip, going and coming, the Sisters prayed and kept a recollective silence. Although Mother Frances was very generous in permitting the Sisters to
visit the churches and holy shrines, she herself very seldom went out for that purpose. She remained at home, performing the simple household duties.

Mother Frances radiated to her spiritual daughters an intense love of prayer, based on a life of humility, mortification, and penance. As often as new candidates came, she deprived herself of even the most necessary things so that she could provide better for the newcomers. This good Mother gave up her straw mattress, her blankets, etc., for the new candidates, so that they might not feel poverty to the extent that it would harm them spiritually. She recognized that beginners in the spiritual life must first be strengthened in their religious vocation and in virtue. However, it is most edifying to reflect how wonderfully Mother Frances' example of humility and charity attracted young girls; Sisters, novices, and postulants vied with one another to practice those penances which are hardest for nature.

In preparing the poor, frugal meals, the Sisters used olive oil but never anything derived from animals, such as milk, eggs, or butter. It may be said in truth that during the first two years every day was a fast day, some days being more severe in regard to fasting than others. But in spite of their extreme poverty, the Sisters were filled with so much joy and peace that they did not heed the meager meals and unflavored food.

During the night before the Sacred Heart Friday, between eleven and twelve o'clock, all the members of the Community were permitted to pray in chapel with outstretched arms. No one was awakened for this purpose, yet the guardian angels, fulfilling the Sisters' petitions, awakened them on time; and it very seldom happened that anyone was missing.

Mother Frances, whose motto was, "The work for me, the honor for others," was never missing at work. She would do the cooking, the washing, or the cleaning of the rooms. She was so devoted to the Sisters that she chose for herself.
that work which was most difficult. Frequently when the Sisters were awakened in the morning, Mother Frances had already washed the floor of the chapel and that of one or another room. During the second year she frequently took over both the washing and the cooking so that the other Sisters would be able to devote more time to typesetting for the missionary publications of the Fathers of the Catholic Teaching Society, as this work was a means of livelihood.

Forgetful of self, Mother Frances was full of sympathy for everyone in need. When once a Sister, returning from St. Peter's on a cold winter day, mentioned that she had seen a barefoot man on the ice-covered square, Mother Frances told her to return immediately and to invite him to the convent. On his arrival Mother gave him some bread and hot wine, which she had received on the preceding day. Then she gave him the last seven lire she had on hand so that he might buy himself a pair of shoes. But God is never outdone in generosity. On that same day Mother Frances received a letter containing seven hundred lire from an unknown lady. This incident caused exciting joy among the Sisters, for Mother needed money for habits, veils, and other necessities.

Mother Frances was a soul that prayed. She spent a great deal of the night in prayer and meditation. All the early pioneering members of the Community who knew her personally were witnesses to that fact. Their admiration, love and respect for their spiritual Mother increased as they got to know her more and more. When at prayer Mother Frances knelt oblivious to everything around her, her hands folded straight without touching the pew, her body erect without leaning on anything. As some of the Sisters so aptly expressed it, "She talked directly to God, and God talked to her."

Let us listen to what Sister M. Antonina Annerl had to say on this point: "That intense devotion with which Mother Frances prayed went through and through us, setting our hearts on fire for prayer. Once as she raised her folded hands to her lips, I heard her repeat one prayer of which I
remember the beginning and the end: 'I will follow thee, O good Mother...to Golgatha and Calvary.' Her voice was strong and penetrating. Often she would send us to chapel, saying: 'Oh, children, go to chapel and pray.' Her manner of saying this told us that her heart was in anguish.

(Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, vol. I, p. 66.)

Ever since the two very devoted persons, Father Jordan and Mother Frances, had met in Rome, they disagreed concerning their ideas of a religious society of women, and they continued to disagree for two years. Father Jordan favored a modified rule; Mother Frances, a strict ascetical rule. If this contention would have been about accidentals and minor principles, agreement could have been reached by compromise. But since each one, guided by conscience, was defending high, praiseworthy principles, one had to expect that sooner or later a decisive moment would have to come.

While the conflict was going on between these two God-loving souls, fervent young girls, mostly from Germany, arrived in Rome to join the young Community, in which its members, living a mortified and ascetical life according to the original rule of Saints Francis and Clare, were a spectacle of edification to all who were aware of this blossoming seedling, which fervently hoped soon to be planted in the garden of Holy Church.

Father Jordan viewed with admiration the holy life of the little Community, concerning which he spoke to others. During the year 1884, twenty-two postulants entered, all of whom received the holy habit after two or three months. All the Sisters had the highest regard for both Father Jordan and Mother Frances, and, with the exception of one or two, they had not the slightest suspicion of the disagreements between the two Servants of God. One Sister expressed the attitude of all the Sisters thus: "We regarded both Father Jordan and Mother Frances as saints."
Sources:


Chronicle of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.

Reichert, Rev. Aquilin, Mother Frances Streitel—Her Life and Works.
Chapter IV

CLIMAX: POWER OF Penance AND PRAYER

As was explained in the preceding chapter, when the two Servants of God, Reverend Francis Jordan and Mother M. Frances Streitel, met for the first time in Rome, Italy, in February, 1883, they disagreed concerning the fundamental principles of the contemplated Sisterhood. As days and months passed the disagreement between these two devoted souls continued, but regarding the nonessentials of their ideals, both were ready to compromise. Being motivated by pure love of God and true zeal for the salvation of immortal souls, Father Jordan and Mother Frances hoped and prayed that gradually they would come to an harmonious understanding about matters which each defended as essentially important for the growing community.

Since Reverend Jordan had called Mother Frances to Rome and was responsible for her being in the position as superior, several times he thought of appointing another Sister for that office. But here he met with a dilemma, for he fully realized that the Sisters unanimously revered and loved their spiritual Mother and looked upon her as their Foundress and Superior. Mother M. Frances had come to Rome on February 16, 1883; and from March 6, 1883, when her first two companions arrived in Rome, until May 29, 1885, thirty-nine young ladies had joined her. Of these, one had left the community and two had died. Thus in the spring of 1885 the community consisted of thirty-seven members including Mother Frances, who guided the Sisters most effectively by word and example on the path of Christian perfection. As has been testified by the Sisters, there was only one Sister in the entire community whom they wished to have as their spiritual Mother and that was Mother Frances.

In the spring of 1885 the Cardinal Vicar, Lucido Maria Parocchi, devoted himself to an earnest study of the Catholic Teaching Society, which had functioned now as a
Reverend Francis Jordan: Father Jordan, founder of the Society of the Divine Savior, called Mother Frances Streitel to Rome in 1883 in order to begin a female branch of his missionary activities. For the first two years he directed this private community of women.
On September 17, 1885, the Cardinal Vicar, Maria Lucido Parocchi, appointed Reverend George Jacquemin spiritual director of the two-year-old Community and gave the new Congregation the title of Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.
Reverend George Jacquemin: When Reverend Father Jacquemin was appointed spiritual director of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, he was thirty-two years old and had three doctorates.
On December 1, 1885, a group of thirty-six, including Sisters, novices, and postulants, moved from the house at Vicolo dell’Falco No. 18 to their new motherhouse at Borgo Santo Spirito near the entrance of St. Peter’s Square, Rome, Italy.
private community for two years.

"The cardinal vicar is the vicar-general of the pope, as Bishop of Rome, for the spiritual administration of the city and its surrounding district, properly known as Vicarius Urbis."
(Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. III, p. 341)

"All matters concerning the monasteries of Rome and their inmates pertain to a special commission in the vicariate composed of about eight members and under the direction of the vicar." (Ibid., p. 343)

Cardinal Lucido Maria Parocchi was born in Mantua, Italy, on August 13, 1833. In 1877 he was promoted to the archbishopric of Bologna and in 1884 was made cardinal vicar by Pope Leo XIII, who had called him to Rome in 1882.

Besides the conflict existing between Reverend Jordan and Mother Frances, there also was another difficulty which as yet had not been solved; namely, the status of the vows which Mother Frances had made in Maria Stern on June 8, 1868.

On July 28, 1883, Mother Frances had written to Father Jordan about the matter of her former vows which she had made in Maria Stern and from which she had not yet been dispensed. Since month after month passed and nothing further had been told her about this matter, she was under the impression that the private vows which she had made into the hands of Father Jordan on March 18, 1883, had superseded the vows she had made at Maria Stern in 1868.

Doubts again arose in her soul, so in the spring of 1885 she talked about this matter to her confessor Father George Jacquemin, who, it seems, advised her to confer with Father Jordan, for in May, 1885, Father Jordan sent the following petition to His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII, through the Cardinal Vicar Lucido Maria Parocchi:
"May Your Holiness be pleased to grant to the undersigned, permission that Sister Angela Streitel, a member of Maria Stern in Augsburg, may now be received into the Sisterhood of the Catholic Teaching Society, by dispensing with the vows she previously made there. She has lived and dwelt for the past two years as a Sister in the Catholic Teaching Society." (Reverend Reichert, p. 83)

"In an ordinary audience (with Pope Leo XIII) on May 9, 1885, the Cardinal Vicar, Lucido Maria Parocchi, received permission to absolve from all censures as requested in the petition for Mother Frances. He appointed a confessor to impart the absolution and decreed as follows: 'The old vows remain in force. She must repeat the novitiate and complete it according to Canon Law, whereupon she may make her vows at the proper time, with due observance of all regulations. Dowry and support must also be provided. This decree must be fulfilled within six months.'" (Ibid., p. 84)

The decree was signed by the Vicar General on June 1, 1885. Mother Frances, having been informed by Father Jordan about this on the same day, immediately resigned her office. Apparently Father Jordan had not informed the other Sisters, for it is certain that the Community was without a superior until June thirteenth. On that date Sister M. Stanisla Schoen accepted the office of superiorship under pressure. But already on June twentieth she wrote to the Cardinal Vicar, humbly asking him to accept her resignation and to reappoint Mother Frances as superior. She wrote: "We are convinced this is the will of God in order that the Sisters may serve God in holiness and joy, for the welfare of the Church."

At this point the sufferings of Mother Frances had truly reached their climax, because she saw her spiritual daughters—all of whom she had initiated into the religious
life—the wilderness and in mental anguish. In the last letter which Mother Frances wrote to Father Jordan she revealed her interior suffering.

"Why are the designs of God fulfilled in so dreadful a manner? I suffer beyond measure. You are in pain; Sister Stanisla completely broken; Sister Angela quite unable to instruct; Sister Johanna sick in Germany. Those around me are souls bowed down with grief, and I am forced to watch that work which has been built up at the cost of so much pain and sorrow, of so much trouble and prayer, moving along the road to ruin. Grace alone supports me; my natural strength and courage of soul no longer exist. My God, forsake me not, for only Thy hand—though it strikes—keeps me from the abyss of despair."

(Reverend Reichert, p. 85.)

Inquiring about Father Jordan and recommending him to the Lord, she asked pardon for all her offenses against him and closed with the words: "In sorrow and grief, the spiritual daughter of Reverend Father, Mother Frances of the Cross. Rome, July 4, 1885." (Ibid.)

The young ladies who entered the Community during these early years had exceptionally strong characters. They appreciated their holy vocation to such an extent that they were ready to make even the greatest sacrifices to preserve this spiritual jewel. Some of them had tried for several years to be admitted into convents in Germany but were refused admittance because of the restrictions put on religious communities by the Kulturkampf. Hence the information of the new German-speaking community founded at Rome, Italy, by Mother Frances Streitel was a God-sent message for many young girls in Germany who sincerely desired to embrace religious life but were prevented by anti-Christian government regulations.

Three young ladies—Rosina Eichfelder, Barbara Niegel, and Margaret Hornung, who later became respectively Sisters
M. Agnes, M. Anna, and M. Joachima—arrived in Rome toward the end of May, 1885. They were the last candidates to enter the Community when the Sisterhood of the Catholic Teaching Society was under Father Jordan's direction. These young ladies had entered with the sincere hope of being invested within two or three months, as had been the custom in the Community up to that time. But since most of 1885 was a time of confusion, no definite plans for investiture were possible. To say the least, this was a bitter blow to these valiant young candidates, who were greatly pleased with the fervent religious spirit which permeated the convent. And now this disappointment!

Strange and sad things were happening: A few days after their entrance Sister M. Stanisla was taking the place of Mother Frances; and Mother Frances, the Superior General and Foun'dress, who had written such inspiring letters to them, was submissive to Sister M. Stanisla. Rumors were permeating even the peaceful convent walls—that the Community might be dissolved because it had no approval of the Church, that the professed Sisters would be advised to enter other religious communities, and that the novices and candidates would be told to return to their homes or to enter other convents.

During this critical period the three candidates were greatly disturbed and perplexed by the unstable condition into which they had come. Rosina Eichfelder had already been a candidate for several years in a religious community in Germany, where, on account of the Kulturkampf restrictions, her investiture was postponed from one year to the next, and hence she applied for admittance at the convent in Rome. When her friends and relatives tried to deter her from entering the community founded by Mother Frances Streitel because of the newness and strictness of the order, Rosina replied that she would go and remain there in spite of the greatest difficulties. We can imagine how disappointed she must have been on finding these confusing conditions. Even after fifty years in the Community, the period of her candidature during the summer of 1885 was as clear in her mind as though these things had just happened recently.
The Sisters' reaction to the rumors and reports which permeated the convent dwelling was the heroic resolve to begin immediately a crusade of prayer united with sincere penance by doing, by day and night, those things which are most repulsive to nature. When Mother Frances started taking her night's rest on boards, the others, including the candidates, followed her example—trunks, benches, or anything hard and uncomfortable served as beds.

From the report of Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder we know the details of the prayer crusade which the Sisters began immediately. For more than a month a group of the convent family left the motherhouse every morning about five o'clock and walked to St. Augustine's church. After having attended holy Mass and having received Holy Communion, they prayed at the miraculous shrine of Our Lady and Child known as Madonna del Parto, which is near the entrance of the church. This shrine is one of the most favorite shrines in Rome, where devout clients can be found from early morning until late evening.

Let Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, who as a candidate was in the group making this daily pilgrimage, give us the details:

"As we knelt down on the stone floor, we told our Lord that we would not leave until He had heard us. Praying from the bottom of our hearts and raising our hands to Mary, we told her that we would not leave her shrine until she had interceded for us before the throne of God. We begged her to keep us together as one community. Oh, how we prayed for our Mother Frances, whom we saw in such affliction!

"As we knelt there hour after hour, people began to offer us chairs, which we gratefully declined, as we wanted to pray in a spirit of penance that God might hear us more readily. Sister M. Stanisla, then our superior, realizing that we must have Mother Frances as our spiritual Mother, prayed with us. Oh, we had been so
happy and so peaceful together, and we wanted to stay together. God gave us extraordinary graces and strength so that we were able to pray so long and fervently and endure all these mental sufferings.

"Consoled by our prayer and full of hope, we returned home to the convent about two o'clock in the afternoon without having had anything to eat all day. We continued this particular prayer crusade every day for five to six weeks. Thanks to the Blessed Mother; God heard our prayers. Indeed, the foundation of the Community was laid into deep, solid, and secure ground." (Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, vol. II, p. 262.)

Since Sister M. Agnes was in anguish until October fourth, we may conclude that the candidates were not informed about the hopeful situation that had gradually developed. In a joyful and happy mood she stated in her report that October fourth was a most blissful and memorable day at the convent, for on that day the Community was temporarily approved and candidates could be accepted again. In that same month three candidates entered, whose names in religion were Sisters M. Theresia Henneberger, M. Sebastiana Hoerling, and M. Josephina Schleicher.

Sources:

Beda, Sister M., "Personal Interviews," vol. II.

Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. III.

Chronicle of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.

Reichert, Rev. Aquilin, Mother Frances Streitel--Her Life and Works.
Chapter V

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR—REV. GEORGE JACQUEMIN

APPOINTED BY THE CARDINAL PROTECTOR

In this chapter we shall acquaint our readers with Reverend George Jacquemin, who, in 1885, was appointed by the Cardinal Vicar, Lucido Maria Parocchi, as his representative of the new Sisterhood.

We shall quote from the writings of Reverend John M. Thill of the Diocese of La Crosse on the life and works of Reverend George Jacquemin.

* * * * * * * * * *

George Jacquemin, a native of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, was born on March 27, 1853, and baptized the following day in Echternach, a picturesque town of less than 4,000 inhabitants, which is tucked away, as it were, in a lovely valley between the last hills of the woody Ardennes and the River Sauer, which separates the miniature country from the German Rhineland.

George's God-fearing and industrious parents—Jean-Baptiste Jacquemin, a carter by trade, and Clare nee Wagener—were universally esteemed and respected by their fellow townsmen. In regard to earthly possessions, they were neither poorer nor richer than other families of carters were wont to be at the time. With respect to religion, they were neither more nor less devout Catholics than were the vast majority of people in their essentially Catholic country and native town. The early home education which they gave to their eleven children, the eighth of whom was George, was the traditional education of their land; namely, an education given by word and example. It consisted essentially in the family's reciting together their morning and evening prayers, grace before and after
meals, the Angelus, and in the instruction given the little ones in the fundamentals of Christian doctrine.

Education: Both parents, but particularly the energetic mother, ambitioned for their children a much better school education than they themselves had secured. Aside from what was done for their daughters' education, we know it to be a fact that three of the four surviving sons, George and his two younger brothers Charles and Theodore, received a higher education as a result chiefly of Mrs. Jacquemin's thrift and self-sacrifice. First in the Progymnasium of their home town and then in the Gymnasium or so-called Athenaeum in the capital city, they obtained the highest secondary education, which normally only the richer families could afford for their sons in the Grand Duchy in preparation for higher studies in the seminary in the city of Luxembourg and also in the universities of France, Belgium, Germany, and other foreign countries. The oldest son, John, born two years and a month before George, discontinued his studies after the Progymnasium and worked as a railroad employee. This work he did in order to assist his mother in the support of the family, particularly when his father's failing health and decreasing eyesight made his assistance all the more necessary, and also to help his mother in her tireless efforts to accomplish the higher education of her other sons. Her noble ambition would have failed, however, if it had not been for the fact that George, Charles, and Theodore were awarded grants and partial, even complete, "burses," in competitive examinations and in view of their application and general success in their studies.

This even enabled them to board in the Konvikt (from the Latin convictorium), a boarding institution which the Bishop of Luxembourg, Nicholas Adames, had built in Luxembourg to protect the out-of-town students at the Athenaeum against the dangers of boarding in the city. The Konvikt was opened in 1872 under the direction of a distinguished educator, Father Bernard Krier. George Jacquemin, one of his first students, spent his three pre-seminary years at this institution, at the same time attending the Athenaeum.
When George left the Konvikt, the director entered in the institution's records the following note: "George Jacquemin: moral and religious conduct, excellent; disciplinary conduct, excellent; application, very great."

These qualifications were almost the same as those which George invariably earned throughout all the years of his secondary studies at the Progymnasium of Echternach and at the Athenaeum in Luxemburg; they were never lower than "very good." In the various subjects of the curriculum, George almost always held the first place in his class. By his fellow students and all those who came to know him he was regarded as a serious-minded young man, not very communicative yet always friendly, peaceable, and obliging, firm and persevering in his purposes, very pious, and insistent on application and orderliness. These characteristic traits had been noticed already during his childhood and elementary school years and were remembered by some of his schoolmates even long after his death.

The Priesthood—Studies and Work in Rome: George felt his first interior inclination towards the priesthood while serving Mass in the chapel of the school Sisters in his home town. It became his definite goal during the happy moments of his First Holy Communion, which he received with great fervor at the age of twelve—the age regularly required in those times for its reception—after having been carefully prepared by Father Bernard Krier, at that time teacher of religion at the Progymnasium in Echternach. From the day of his First Holy Communion, George pursued the goal of his vocation unwaveringly and was strengthened evermore in his good purposes by the sacrament of confirmation, which he received two months later.

After concluding his secondary studies of the classics, George was admitted to the diocesan seminary and finally, on August 24, 1877, he was ordained a priest in the cathedral of Luxemburg by Bishop Nicholas Adames. So outstanding had been his conduct, application, success, and piety during the four years of his ecclesiastical studies that the Bishop and his counselors chose him as beneficiary.
of a medieval scholarship at the German college which is connected with the German national church Santa Maria dell' Anima in Rome. At this college he received room and board, and, like the other priest students of the institution, he had to do chaplain's work in the church itself while taking at the Gregorian University the courses leading to the academic degrees in canon law. He obtained his doctorate in canon law on July 29, 1879.

Bishop Adames, and after him his successor, John Joseph Koppes, allowed Father Jacquemin to remain in Rome, appointing him as their representative or agent for their diocesan affairs in the Roman Curia. Soon certain German and other European bishops entrusted him with the same position. Up to the time of his first trip to the United States in 1889, this work was, as he himself confides in a letter to his brother John, his main and almost exclusive source of revenue. After 1889 at least six American bishops joined the group of his episcopal employers.

Sometime before 1883, apparently around 1881, by agreement between the Cardinal Secretary of State and the Austrian government, Father Jacquemin was appointed to the vacant position of national consistorial clerk of the Sacred College for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy—the three other national clerks being those of Italy, France, and Spain. In this position he had to be on duty every three years at all of the pope's consistories with his cardinals, and during the twelve months of duty, residence in Rome was obligatory.

Father Jacquemin continued to reside at the Anima. For several years he was its vice-rector; for life, a member of its board of administrators. His great piety and priestliness, friendliness and humility had earned for him from the beginning the esteem and confidence of the rector, Monsignor Karl Jaenig, and of all his fellow chaplain students.

When, in 1880, Pope Leo XIII recommended and urged the study of scholastic philosophy, especially that of St. Thomas Aquinas, Dr. Jacquemin resumed his higher ecclesi-
astical studies—this time at the former college of St. Thomas Aquinas, where he obtained his doctorates in theology and philosophy in 1883 and 1884, respectively.

First Contact with Mother Frances Streitel: In the church of the Anima, Dr. Jacquemin distinguished himself by his zeal for the splendor of the sacred functions and for the ministry of the confessional. He soon became known as an excellent spiritual director of souls. It was in the exercise of this holy ministry, in the last days of February, 1883, that he came in contact for the first time with the future Servant of God, Mother Frances of the Cross Streitel, the foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother....

Some days after her arrival in Rome, on February 16, 1883, Mother Frances betook herself to Santa Maria dell' Anima to make her confession to one of the German chaplains, Dr. Jacquemin answered her call. The good impression which he made on her was such that she brought to him her first companions, who, in turn, recognized that Dr. Jacquemin was an excellent confessor and spiritual guide. Mother Frances and her followers, as well as their subsequent companions, ordinarily went to him of their own accord for their confessions, even before he was appointed ordinary confessor of the Community in 1886. He was not, however, Mother Frances' spiritual director in the proper sense of the term, for she always desired Father Jordan himself to be the special guide of her spiritual life, though not her confessor.

Because of his extremely anxious mind and consequent lack of self-reliance in matters entailing moral responsibility and because he well knew his lack of experience in regard to the religious life in communities of women, Father Jordan requested Mother Frances to draw up a set of fundamental rules for the new Sisterhood. Although she would have liked to receive such rules from Father Jordan himself, she obeyed and drafted regulations marked by extreme severity in regard to evangelical poverty and austerity of life, enamoured as she was with the primitive ideal of St.
Francis of Assisi and St. Clare. Father Jordan himself was a great lover of that ideal but did not consider it as appropriate for members of a congregation destined for the strenuous works of charity and zeal in hospitals, schools, and missions. Nevertheless, apart from demanding a few nonessential mitigations, he did not formally oppose her views. He relied on the experience she had acquired in her former religious institute, being convinced that the spirit of God was with her. Soon he came to admire the happiness and interior peace of her first followers and the remarkable fruits of sanctity produced in them under her guidance. He hoped that gradually actual experience would bring about further mitigations deemed necessary. Both Servants of God prayed fervently to God to manifest His holy will, which was the supreme and, in fact, the only object of their aspirations.

Father Jordan received Mother Frances' religious vows on March 18, 1883, a month and a day after her arrival in Rome. On the Feast of All Saints of that same year the first novices began their novitiate, with Mother Frances as their mistress. Between those two great events—around midsummer of 1833—Mother Frances was assailed with doubts concerning her former religious vows. Unfortunately, indeed, when she left the Carmelite novitiate and by force of circumstances returned to her parents' home, she was still bound by her previous vows. No one had informed her of the necessity of a papal dispensation, and she believed in unquestionably good faith (explicable in view of her ignorance of the canonical regulations with respect to such cases) that the new profession she was to make in the Institute to which God was calling her would supersede the obligations of the former profession. Unfortunately, too, the question of this former profession had been entirely overlooked in, again we say, unquestionably good faith, when Father Jordan's representative in Germany invited her to put herself at the founder's disposition for the foundation of the new branch of his Society and rather enthusiastically recommended her for the position. As soon as Mother Frances began to doubt the regularity of what had been done, she notified Father Jordan, who immediately bo-
gan to take steps which he thought were proper to obtain her release from her former vows. But for reasons partly unknown and otherwise too long to describe, he first presented a written petition to this effect to Pope Leo XIII in May, 1885. The dispensation was granted; but Mother Frances was to relinquish her position as superior to another Sister and make her novitiate anew before being admitted to new vows in the Institute.

Cardinal Vicar's Representative in Affairs of Institute: In spite of the perfect submission of the two Servants of God at the time and later, there soon arose in the Institute great difficulties which threatened to ruin Mother Frances' work. The Cardinal Vicar, Maria Lucido Parocchi, then entrusted Dr. George Jacquemin with the delicate mission to settle them and for this purpose appointed him as his plenipotentiary representative for the Sisters. Furthermore he entrusted him with the still more delicate task of examining the rules then in force in the Institute and of bringing them into harmony with the current church legislation concerning the religious life, on the basis of the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis, as approved by Leo X.

Dr. Jacquemin aptly acquitted himself of both commissions. In his revision of the rules, he conscientiously followed His Eminence's instructions. Adding nothing of his own, he adhered as closely as possible to the contents of the original rules, so that Mother Frances' ideal of poverty and self-denial and the other characteristics of her spirit remained unchanged. They were merely formulated in a language less rigid and in certain points were expressed in closer conformity with the phraseology customarily found in such religious documents. Such, then, was the origin of the Constitutions of 1885.

Constitutions: The Constitutions of 1885 were thereafter amplified, as actual experience demanded, and the text was recast by Monsignor Jacquemin himself in agreement with the Foundress and with the Cardinal Vicar's approval, as long as the Sisterhood was a diocesan Institute.
Further additions and textual changes were made after the Institute's first papal approbation in 1889 and after the second in 1905; others were made by the general chapters, chiefly at Monsignor Jacquemin's suggestion and initiative. The Chronicle of the Motherhouse shows him still working on a final recast in 1911, the year of the last papal approbation of the Congregation, which was granted on March 6, the very day of the Foundress' holy death. The Constitutions of 1885 were, so to speak, only the seed of the final ones. But their essential regulations and their spirit have been preserved intact.

**Spiritual Director:** On September 17, 1885, the Cardinal Vicar gave the new Congregation the title of Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother and on the same day appointed Dr. Jacquemin as spiritual director of the Congregation. On the Feast of St. Francis, October 4, 1885, the Cardinal Vicar approved the revised Constitutions and two days later, at His Eminence's request, Dr. Jacquemin read them to the Sisters assembled in their refectory. Six days later, His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII, dissolved the vows which the Sisters had made in the Catholic Teaching Society, because the validity of the vows was doubtful, and later enabled the Sisters to make new ones in accordance with all the canonical prescriptions. On October 12, 1885, by formal decree he declared the Sisterhood an independent self-governing religious Institute. By this decree Father Jordan was released of its direction. At that time there were ten professed Sisters, twenty novices, and three postulants in the Community in Rome. A few other Sisters were in Germany collecting much needed alms for the extremely poor Community.

**Private Chamberlain Administrator of Congregation:** On December 1, 1885, the Sisters transferred from their small dwelling place at Vicolo del Falco to a larger house situated at Borgo Santo Spirito 41, quite near the entrance of St. Peter's Square. The house had been rented for them from the Canons of St. Peter's Basilica by Monsignor Anton de Waal, the rector of the German college of Campo Santo in Rome, who had been appointed temporarily as business
administrator for the Institute. When he resigned this position on October 19, 1886, Monsignor Jacquemin, who had been a papal supernumerary private chamberlain since April 20 of that year, was made his successor by the Cardinal Vicar.

Towards the end of December, Monsignor Jacquemin transferred his residence from the Anima to the Convent, for only thus was he able to discharge his duties properly as spiritual director, temporal administrator, and de facto chaplain. For none of these offices did he ever claim a salary. He himself defrayed most of the expenses of his subsequent voyages to America and his trips in Europe in behalf of the Congregation.

Mother Frances Reinstated as Superior General: Before the end of 1885, Mother Frances had been permitted by Pope Leo XIII, at Monsignor Jacquemin's request, to complete her novitiate before the regular term. In consequence of this, on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 1886, she pronounced her vows for three years in the chapel of the convent. Two weeks later, the Cardinal Vicar acquiesced in granting the whole community's spontaneous petition, endorsed by Monsignor Jacquemin, to have Mother Frances reinstated in her former position as superior general. At Monsignor Jacquemin's own request, His Eminence permitted her to make her perpetual vows in the month of March of the following year, 1887, although only one year and two months had transpired since her first profession. At the ceremonies of her final profession, which took place on Holy Thursday, April 7, in the convent chapel, Monsignor Jacquemin acted as the Cardinal's delegate, as he had done on the occasion of her first vows. Thus were crowned his efforts on behalf of the Congregation's reorganization and normalization. One may, therefore, regard as truly prophetic the words which Mother Frances spoke to some of her Sisters on May 2, 1885, the eve of the Feast of the Finding of the Cross, "I feel that (tomorrow) something serious will happen. Tomorrow also there will come to our house he who has been destined from above for our salvation." On the following day Dr. Jacquemin came on his first visit to
the Community. He really became its savior and is regarded and honored as such by the grateful Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.

As temporal administrator, Monsignor Jacquemin personally kept all the registers of the convent for several years, that is, as long as none of the Sisters were able to relieve him of this work. Since the well-nigh insignificant resources which the Sisters earned by taking care of the sick in private houses, together with the small amounts of money they had brought from home, were hardly sufficient to pay the rent and provide for the most pressing needs of the convent and the small group of poor Roman children entrusted to the Sisters' care, Monsignor Jacquemin generously helped with his own resources and with contributions obtained from his priest friends and others. As even this was insufficient for the upkeep of the growing Community, some of its members were sent to German-speaking countries, with the Cardinal Vicar's approval, to solicit further help from charitable souls. (By Reverend John M. Thill)

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Note: When on September 17, 1885, the Cardinal Vicar appointed Monsignor George Jacquemin spiritual director of the Community, the Monsignor was thirty-two years old and held three doctor's degrees—the degree of canon law, received in 1879 at the age of twenty-six; the degree in theology, in 1883, at the age of thirty; the degree of philosophy, in 1884, at the age of thirty-one.
Chapter VI

GLIMPSES INTO THE EARLY DAILY LIFE

of the

COMMUNITY OF THE SISTERS OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER

June 1, 1885, until January 6, 1886—the period following the necessary removal of Mother Frances from the office of superior general—was a time of suffering and trial for the young Community. The individual Sisters were deprived of their spiritual mother and the Community, of its guide and teacher. New difficulties, which only Mother Frances seemed to be able to solve, had developed in the Community, within and without.

Since all the Sisters desired to have their foundress back as superior, the Cardinal Vicar requested Monsignor G. Jacquemin to ask each individual Sister whether or not she personally desired the reappointment of Mother Frances. When Monsignor informed the Cardinal Vicar that all the Sisters had but one desire, namely, to have Mother Frances as their spiritual mother, he approved her reinstatement as superior general on January 21, 1886.

On April 1, 1886, the Cardinal Vicar visited the Sisters at their new motherhouse at Borgo Santo Spirito. Inquiring in a very fatherly way about the spiritual and material conditions of the convent, he admonished the Sisters to write deeply within their hearts the rules and constitutions, that, progressing continuously in self-sanctification, they might, with Mary the Sorrowful Mother, follow Jesus on the Way of the Cross.

During the month of October, 1886, Mother Frances petitioned the Cardinal Vicar that he, by virtue of his office, might formally place the young Community under the protection of St. Joseph. This request was granted by the following decree, the original of which is preserved in the archives of the Community.
"Whereas it is right and proper ever more and more to honor the Holy Patriarch, whom Christ Himself honors in all possible ways by rewarding also his (St. Joseph's) clients; whereas we desire to obtain for the devoted Sisters the protection of the powerful spouse of the Mother of God, that, being filled with a burning love for the Virgin Mary, they may earnestly devote themselves to the education of youth according to the spirit of their constitutions: For these reasons, complying with your wishes, we choose and appoint St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, as the heavenly patron of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, hoping that the Sisters may regulate their lives according to the example of their patron and through his mighty and efficacious protection may obtain those priceless gifts by means of which, having happily completed their religious life on this earth, they may attain their eternal salvation."

Given at the Vicariate on October 31, 1886.
Lucidus Maria, Cardinal Vicar
(Chronicle 36; tr. from the German)

Benefits received through Pope Pius IX: The Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother had great confidence in the intercession of Pope Pius IX, to whom they often prayed with the result of remarkable favors and cures of sick Sisters. This was the case especially in regard to Sister M. Coletta Eberth, who in March, 1888, became sick with typhoid and for a long time hovered between life and death. On June 7, Reverend Father wrote to Sisters M. Scholastica Demer and M. Joachima Hornung that for eight days he could not leave the convent, because they feared that Sister M. Coletta might die at any moment. "Today," he wrote, "she has so far recovered that she could go to chapel for the first time. She recovered her health through the intercession of Pope Pius IX."
Pope Pius IX interceded so well for Sister M. Coletta that, even though of a delicate nature, she has been in good health during almost all of her convent life. On January 29, 1957, being in the best of health, she celebrated the seventieth anniversary of her entrance into the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother. At present, in November, 1959, she is still in excellent health.

Editorial Note: In order to get a realistic picture of the early years of convent life in the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, we shall now let some of the Sisters who entered the Community at Rome during the superiorship of Mother Frances relate to us some of their impressions and experiences.

Between 1936 and 1939 Sister M. Beda Hack—a faculty member of the convent high school at our American motherhouse, Milwaukee, Wisconsin—visited the various institutions of the Community in the United States for the purpose of collecting Community history. Sister M. Beda, conversing with the senior Sisters in an interesting and informal manner, collected several volumes of Community history, from which we are quoting the Sisters' reminiscences.

Since Sister M. Sebastiana Hoerling had so many interesting incidents to relate, we shall quote her more extensively. (The year of each Sister's entrance into the convent is given after her name in the references.)

Sister M. Sebastiana's Recollections

"Peace, calmness, and holiness reigned at the convent when we three—Sister M. Theresia Henneberger, Sister M. Josephina Schleicher, and I, Sister M. Sebastiana Hoerling—entered as candidates on October 22, 1885. We were the first group to enter the Community after it had been proclaimed an independent institute. Our meals were simple, but, if we ate what was set before us, we never had to get up hungry from table."
"Homesickness came faster than we thought it would. Sister M. Theresia was the first one of us candidates to tell Mother Frances that she would like to return to her home. When Mother asked, 'But what will your father say if you come home again,' she boastfully replied, 'Oh, my father said that he would kill a lamb if I come back.'

"Next Sister M. Josephina had a severe touch of homesickness, because the study of the Latin Office seemed to be an insurmountable difficulty. Kindly smiling at the two homesick candidates, Mother Frances settled the matter by saying: 'Children, if you want to return home, I shall get your trunks ready; but first you must visit some of the holy shrines and churches in Rome, so that you can tell your parents and friends something about the Eternal City. Sister M. Stanisla may go with you as your guide.'

"Already on their return from the first trip, Sister M. Theresia Henneberger, entering the convent, called to me from the distance, 'Oh, Agnes, the black St. Peter has converted me, I am not going home; but Sister M. Josephina Schleicher replied to this, 'I am not going to wait for you any longer, I want to go home.'

"Since we were almost ready to move to Borgo Santo Spirito, Sister M. Theresia and I persuaded Sister M. Josephina to stay until we had moved from Vicolo del Falco N. 18 to the new dwelling at Borgo Santo Spirito N. 41, which was near to St. Peter's. We had to carry all the furniture across St. Peter's Square and up the high stairway to the new dwelling. After we had finished moving, which took us about a week, Christmas was around the corner.

"For our first Christmas in the convent, 1885, we candidates had the privilege to trim the tree; and with this joy our homesickness disappeared. Before Christmas Monsignor De Waal, who knew about our homesickness, said
to us: 'Children, stay at the convent until after Christ-
mas. If you are still homesick after that great feast, you
can go home; then you have no vocation.' Later he asked:
'Candidates, how is the homesickness?' When we told him
that all was over, he was very happy.

"Once when we three were still candidates, Mother
Frances told us very enthusiastically: 'You may go to the
Vatican Garden and gather the fresh figs from the ground.
We have permission to do so.' With our aprons and little
baskets filled to the brim, we made our way home across
St. Peter's Square to the convent, where everybody smiled
at us and at our unrefined appearance.

"Mother Frances was most generous in permitting us to
visit the holy shrines in Rome, to which one of the older
Sisters generally accompanied us. Reverend Father, who,
when in Rome, guided the Sisters to the holy shrines about
once a week, used to walk ahead of us and wait at the
church. His explanations of the holy shrines were inter-
esting, cultural, and so inspiring that our hearts and
minds, being lifted heavenward, were attracted to an imi-
tation of the virtues of the saints whose shrines we vis-
itied: St. Cecilia, St. Agnes, St. Aloysius, St. Ignatius,
and so forth.

"Once when we made a pilgrimage to the Catacombs of
St. Sebastian, Reverend Father, giving each of us a candle,
gave ahead; and we followed, each holding her candle. When
we had advanced quite a distance, Reverend Father separated
us into two groups, one group remaining on exactly the
same spot on which we stood so we would not get lost, the
other going to a place farther away. He told us that his
group would sing the Stabat Mater and that as soon as they
would stop singing, we should begin the same verses, so
that all of us might have an idea of how it sounded when
the first Christians, singing psalms, held divine service
in the Catacombs.

"When we entered the Community in October, 1885, we
were told that, according to the new rule, each aspirant
must make a postulancy of at least six months in preparation for holy investiture. However, because Mother Frances was ill, we were not invested until June 25, 1886, nine months after our entrance.

"While our spiritual Mother was so seriously ill, Sister M. Stanisla Schoen or Sister M. Aloysia Morgenroth, went with us three candidates each morning to the shrine of our Mother of Perpetual Help at St. Alphonsus Church to attend holy Mass for the speedy recovery of our Mother Foundress.

"Mother Frances, having no room for herself, used to sleep in any corner, wherever there was a place available; and now, when she was so dangerously ill, she lay in a corner of the small sewing room, which was in front of the refectory and was surrounded only by a curtain. Although she was compelled to hear all the noises, she never complained. Some of the older Sisters, such as Sisters M. Scholastica Demer and M. Columba Gries, who took care of her, told us candidates not to disturb her; so, in perfect obedience, we did not even peek behind the curtain, even though we were extremely anxious to see her and had to pass by her room every time we went into the kitchen and refectory. Gradually she got well and her strength returned." (Sister M. Sebastian's Reminiscences—1885)

Recollections of Other Sisters

"On Sundays and feast days, Mother Frances always sent us to the different churches where there were special celebrations; but she remained at home, living a hidden life with God. During my two-year stay in Rome, I cannot remember that she ever left the convent.

"Our venerable Foundress knew how to try us. Once when a wall had to be torn down, she told me to wash the floor in front of it very nicely. I said to her: 'Do you mean that floor in front of the wall which will be torn down.' 'Yes, yes,' she answered. Then I knew right away it was a
trial, and I cleaned the floor as well as I could." (Sister M. Gabriela Ortlieb—1888, Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, Vol. I, p. 18.)

"After I had been at Rome for a short time, Mother Frances sent me to the cellar; I started to go but, not knowing where the cellar was, I asked for directions on the way. On hearing this, Reverend Mother, who always gave little acknowledgments when she had the opportunity, said to me: 'It is good to obey blindly.' If occasionally she had to give a rather sharp correction, soon afterwards she would show her motherly love in a special way.

"We all had a reverential fear as well as love for Mother Frances. Every morning we had to go to her and ask what work we should do that day. Once Sister M. Solana Rahm, who had been in the convent longer than some of us, suggested that we ask right away for a whole week, so that we would not have to ask every day. We did as she advised; but Mother Frances, shaking her head, told us that we would earn more merit for heaven by asking every day as obedience prescribed. Mother Frances, being very understanding, often asked us whether we preferred to work in the sewing room, in the laundry, or in the kitchen." (Sister M. Salesia Rebhan—1889, Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, Vol. I, p. 84.)

"Candidate Anna Maria Boch, who had entered the convent a day earlier than I, corrected me on something I had done wrong. Feeling offended, I complained to Mother Frances about it. Listening very kindly and looking amiably at me, she said: 'Now go to chapel and pray three Hail Mary's for Candidate Anna Maria.' This lesson was indeed one which I never in my life could forget." (Sister M. Dionysia Griebel—1891, Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, Vol. III, p. 49.)

"Abenberg by Nuernberg, my native town, was one of the places where the candidates used to come together before beginning their trip to Rome. In February, 1892, five of us girls, dressed as candidates, made our trip to Rome,
accompanied by Sister M. Scholastica Demer. Sister M. Stanisla Schoen was at the depot in Rome to greet us and conduct us to the motherhouse. On the top of the stairway leading to the convent, Mother Frances stood smiling with outstretched arms to welcome us. Then she led us into the chapel to adore our Lord in the Holy Eucharist.

"After breakfast the next morning we were introduced to Reverend Father Jacquemin, who had said holy Mass so devoutly that we immediately recognized his saintliness. He spoke very fatherly to us and told us to thank God daily for our holy vocation.

"Everything was so peaceful and serene that I thought I could never get homesick, but I did. I cried much during the night. Mother Frances tried in a most loving manner to console me; but when I persisted in my crying for home, she gave me quite a serious sermon, in which she said, 'I am going to write to your pastor at Abenberg and tell him about your homesickness.' This sermon didn't cure me either. But one night I had a peculiar dream in which I was at home, sitting outside our house on a block of wood, looking longingly at my home, where everybody was still sleeping soundly, as it was early morning. There was complete silence; no one stirred. All of a sudden my dear father came out of the house with our big ox whip in his hand and ran straight toward me. Immediately I started to run away from him, and he followed me. We both ran as fast as we could, but he could not catch me. When I awoke, was I ever happy to be in the convent! All my homesickness was gone forever, never to return. Was not this the consequence of the prayer of Mother Frances?" (Sister M. Berchmana Oberfrank—1892, Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, Vol. IV, p. 97.)

"As a means of supporting ourselves, we did the washing for a cardinal and for the churches of Campo Santo and the Anima. We used almost cold water to do the washing, and from morning until evening prayed aloud during our work. First we prayed the fifteen decades of the rosary, then all the other rosaries we knew—the Sorrowful Mother
Rosary, the Poor Souls Rosary, and the Sacred Heart Rosary. We loved to say the Rosary of Mercy, which is so short and impressive: Here is the way to say each decade: 'My Jesus, mercy' ten times and then this short prayer, 'O merciful Jesus, everything is possible to Thee except to reject a sinner.'

"We also said the Stations of the Cross and many other prayers in the form of verse. We knew the long form of the Stations of the Cross by heart because we prayed them so often. We said many Our Fathers for all our dear ones far and near. We often renewed the good intention and made acts of spiritual Communion. Thus while the sweat trickled down our foreheads, we prayed continuously.

"We worked very hard in the laundry. There were heap-
ing baskets of wash. Silence was kept perfectly while working. When we needed a piece of soap or anything else, we rapped quietly and thus by signs made known what we needed to the Sister in charge. The smiles of Mother Frances, who came to the laundry almost daily, proved how pleased she was at our silence, prayer, and work." (Ibid., p. 99.)

"When, in the summer of 1894, Mother Frances had a heavy cross to bear, she prayed almost all the time with that fervor with which only she could pray. She gave or-
ders that during the whole month of July, day after day, two novices together, changing off every half hour or every hour, should pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary in honor of the Most Precious Blood for her special intention. Kneeling at the Communion rail near the tabernacle, we novices felt honored to be permitted to assist Mother M. Frances in her hours of trial." (Sister M. Nolaska Gock—1893, Sister M.Beda's Personal Interviews, Vol. III,p.109.)

"We were greatly impressed by the inspiring and in-
structive meditations and conferences given once or twice every week by Reverend Father Jacquemin. Soon after our arrival in Rome in September, 1894, Reverend Father said in a conference: 'Candidates, the outlook in Rome is very dangerous. There is a revolt arising. If any one of you wishes to return home, you may do so.' Only one candidate,
who was sick, left.

"In the next conference Reverend Father said: 'I was pleased and edified that all of you were so steadfast and persevering in your holy vocation. Matters are still very serious and it may even come to the point of the shedding of blood for Christ. But since you have been faithful so far to your holy vocation, God will continue to give you all the graces to persevere in your holy Faith.'

"The Reds, men who wore red caps, had assembled in St. Peter's Square. No one was allowed to leave the convent, not even to look out of the window. Everything the Sisters needed from the city was taken care of by a poor old shoemaker who, living in the neighborhood, was supported by the Sisters.

"Did we pray during these days! Mother Frances, who was on her knees most of the time, prayed with such a recollection and fervor that she seemed oblivious to everything around her. One glance at her during prayer inspired us and set our hearts on fire. The insurrection passed over, however, and nothing happened to us; thanks to God.

"On investing and profession days Mother Frances donned the white apron and served us at table. When we saw this for the first time, we were deeply edified and overwhelmed at her humility. Thus she imitated our Divine Savior, who also served His apostles." (Sister M. Adelina Meidel--1894, Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, Vol.II, pp. 32-35.)

"Generally when the Sisters went on various pilgrimages in Rome, Mother Frances reminded them again and again to pray for the Sisters in America.

"Our candidature consisted in being sent to any part of the house to work: washing dishes, working in the kitchen, washing, ironing, watching the children at night, or wherever there was something to do.
"We received corrections from everybody with whom we came in contact—Mother Frances and every professed Sister—and we were trained never to contradict or defend ourselves. (Sister M. Carolina Schleupner—1894, Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, Vol. II, p. 39)

"Everyone had a good will. When we received a correction, we begged pardon whether we were guilty or not. Words of contradiction or criticism were an unheard-of thing; a spirit of charity reigned throughout the convent; each Sister was vigilant to find opportunities to do little favors for her fellow Sisters." (Sister M. Macaria Lauer—1895, Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, Vol. III, p. 159)

Sources:

Ave Mater Dolorosa, Community Publication.

Beda, Sister M., "Personal Interviews," Vols. I to IV.

Chronicle of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.

Reminiscences of Sister M. Sebastiana.
Chapter VII

SAINT JOSEPH WHISPERS, "AMERICA"

The house which was rented toward the end of 1885 at N. 41, Borgo S. Spirito, situated in the very shadow of St. Peter's, was very convenient because of its location but impractical as a convent, as it was built in the style of an apartment house. With the many applications for admission into the Community, it could easily be foreseen that within the very near future the housing accommodations would become too small. The Sisters came to the conclusion, therefore, that they would either have to obtain a larger house or buy the rented one in order that they could rebuild according to their necessities.

In the summer of 1887, these young, pioneering Sisters, uniting together in prayer, called upon their favorite saints—St. Joseph, the Head of the Holy Family; the Fourteen Holy Helpers in Need; and Pope Pius IX—that, through their help and guidance, they might find a suitable dwelling to meet the needs of the expanding Community. In their small chapel holy Mass and Holy Communion were frequently offered for this intention. Soon an opportunity for obtaining a larger dwelling presented itself, for which negotiations were immediately begun. But because of insurmountable difficulties this undertaking was soon abandoned.

The Sisters not only continued their prayers and sacrifices but increased them with the firm hope that God would hear their petitions. "Ask and you shall receive." On October 10, 1885, Monsignor Jacquemin finally succeeded in purchasing the rented house, for which the notarial deed was drawn up on October 19. During the remodeling and rebuilding process, which began immediately, the Sisters themselves did all the work they could possibly do. Msgr. Jacquemin was the architect. Sister M. Gabriel Ortlieb stated that one man was doing the main work and that she and Sister M. Alexia Bauer were assistant masons. They,
together with other Sisters, collected sand, stones, and bricks and carried them to the third floor of the building. The lime, which was purchased in the city, was gotten in pails by Sister M. Gabriel, whom Mother Frances assigned for this particular task. Everybody was especially interested in enlarging and beautifying the chapel.

A few years later the house opposite the convent was bought for the novitiate. This house was also remodeled and rebuilt into a suitable convent dwelling.

Month by month it became more evident to the superiors that they must provide activities which would assure the Community of a steady and sufficient income to meet their necessary expenses. Although the Sisters daily spent many hours nursing the sick in different parts of Rome, they received barely enough to defray the expenses of their extremely simple, poor living, let alone for the rent and other essentials. Besides nursing the sick, they were often called upon to take care of the children and to do the housework and the cooking. Since the Sisters, showing a willingness to nurse the poor gratis, did not request a definite pay for their work, they received very little in material gain, for even many who were well able to pay gave frequently nothing or very little. As far as the individual Sisters were concerned, they were satisfied; for, being filled with genuine love of God and neighbor, they realized that their charity brought down God's special blessing upon the Community and deepened its spiritual foundation. But they fully realized, too, that in order to continue their works of charity, they must be provided with food, clothing, and lodging.

United in love and loyalty to their infant religious Community, the Sisters implored the help of St. Joseph, the bread-winner of the Holy Family, to help them find missionary activities which would provide sufficient income for healthful living and also open to them the possibility of expansion. It is stated in the Chronicle of the Community that St. Joseph was fervently implored that he might provide the Community with activities which would assure it
of permanent existence. As always, St. Joseph perfectly fulfilled his clients' petition. The good Saint inspired the superiors to go westward to the United States of America in order to find such activities. Everyone in the convent family favored the idea and thanked good St. Joseph for his excellent suggestion. Monsignor George Jacquemin and Mother Frances began to prepare immediately for this undertaking. Thus it happened that in the summer of 1887, four years after its foundation, the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother looked westward toward America for a probable field of labor in the vineyard of the Lord and for financial help.

After careful consideration of this important matter, the superiors decided to send Sisters M. Scholastica Demer and M. Joachima Hornung to make that first decisive trip to America to collect alms and to explore prudently the chances of undertaking more exterior remunerative activities than could be started in Germany at that time because of the effects of the Kulturkampf.

Sister M. Scholastica Demer was the first spiritual daughter of Mother Frances. She had come to Rome on the Feast of St. Coletta, March 6, 1883, about three weeks after Mother Frances' arrival in Rome. Under the guidance of the Foundress, Sister M. Scholastica had embraced the austerities of the religious life with fervor and zeal. She was a very capable person and always willing to serve the Community. Mother Frances, being convinced of the fact that the foundation of a religious community must be laid deeply into a soil enriched by profound humility, mortification, and a fervent prayer life, did not hesitate to introduce and to lead her spiritual daughters on the way of asceticism. She understood the psychology of human nature well enough to know that if the rock foundation of a religious community has been laid firmly during the early pioneering years, necessary mitigations and modifications permitted in later times would not endanger the vital religious spirit of the community.
Sister M. Joachima Hornung, together with Sisters M. Agnes Eichfelder and M. Anna Niegel, had entered toward the end of May, 1885, during the critical period of the young struggling Community. These three Sisters, who were invested on January 6, 1886, were the first to receive the holy habit from Monsignor Jacquemin. Reverend Bernhard Doebbing, O.F.M., who later became bishop of Nepi and Sutri, north of Rome, had given the retreat in preparation for their holy investiture. His frequently mentioning in his conferences that crosses, sufferings, and difficulties of every description must form the foundation of a religious community so deeply impressed the Sisters that in later years when they were confronted with difficulties and sufferings in the establishment of the early missions, they used to remind each other of the beautiful exhortations of their first holy retreat.

Thus both Sister M. Scholastica and Sister M. Joachima had an excellent training in the religious life by the Foundress of the new Community, and thanks to Mother M. Frances that she did send to America Sisters who were thoroughly trained in the religious life. These two Sisters had to remain alone in America, physically separated from the Community for almost two years.

On Ash Wednesday, February 15, 1888, five years after Mother Frances' arrival in Rome, the Cardinal Vicar authorized the journey of the Sisters to America for the purpose of collecting alms for the needs of the Community and for the poor in Rome. He personally blessed the Sisters before their departure. Monsignor Jacquemin recommended the Sisters to his friends and relatives in America, from whom they might receive help in whatever way possible.

The two Sisters' luggage consisted of one small suitcase, which contained the most necessary clothing, their brevliaries and prayer books, including the little psalm book of the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Mother, and St. Joseph. The Sisters, having made farewell visits to St. Peter's, the Catacombs, and other holy shrines, at last took an affectionate and sincere leave of the Community.
and the motherhouse. On February 21, 1888, having received the good wishes and the assurances of daily remembrances in the prayers of their fellow religious, Sisters M. Scholastica and M. Joachima left for Naples, where they stayed with friends of Monsignor Jacquemin until the ship set sail on February 26. On March 27, after a long and stormy voyage of one whole month, the Sisters landed at Hoboken, New Jersey, across the Hudson River from New York City.

Knowing well how eagerly the convent family at Rome was waiting to hear from them, the first thing Sisters M. Scholastica and M. Joachima did after landing was to mail the letter which they had written on the ship. Through Reverend John Reuland, a friend of Monsignor Jacquemin, the Sisters were hospitably received in New York by the Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis at St. Francis Hospital. However, when these Sisters learned the purpose of Sisters M. Scholastica and M. Joachima's coming to America—to collect alms—they spoke most discouragingly to them and advised them to return to Europe as soon as possible. But these two valiant souls were not in the least discouraged. They had resolved to endure, for the love of their divine Bridegroom and their beloved Community, all the humiliations and difficulties which God would deign to send them. Their one desire was to serve and to be loyal to their Community despite all costs.

On April ninth Monsignor Jacquemin received the letter which the two Sisters had written on the ship, and he immediately announced to the Community the joyous message of the Sisters' safe arrival in New York. We are here quoting Reverend Father's reply, which he wrote on the same day.

Rome, April 9, 1888

Venerable Sisters:

Today God granted us the great joy of receiving your letter announcing your arrival in New York. But it was a joy similar to those of
the Sorrowful Mother Mary, united with suffering of soul and mind. Your fellow sisters have prayed fervently for you and now will ever increase their prayers so that the most pure and immaculate Virgin may protect you constantly.

On Holy Thursday we had holy Mass in the small chapel, and all the sisters received Holy Communion. Good Friday was a special day of prayer, on which one could feel that God was well pleased with the prayers of the Sisters. You, Venerable Sisters, are included in all their prayers just as though you were present. I beg you not to let a day pass without transferring yourselves in spirit to Rome in order to pray there in union with your fellow sisters...

Venerable Sisters, pray much and fervently. Renew your holy vows frequently and beg God each time for a renewal of the grace of holy profession, that it may strengthen you in your labors and sufferings, and protect and preserve you pure in all dangers of soul.

You wrote that the venerable sisters who so kindly received you were praying the "Ave Maris Stella" when you arrived. This same prayer I prayed for you daily, asking the Blessed Virgin especially that she fulfill in your behalf these words: "Preserve our life unspotted, make safe our path that, seeing Jesus, we may rejoice together forever."

Recommending you, Venerable Sisters, to the Sorrowful Mother, I remain with priestly greeting and blessing,

Your devoted spiritual Father in Jesus,

George Jacquemin
While in the United States, Sisters M. Scholastica and M. Jóchima lived according to their rule as well as possible under the circumstances. They carried on a faithful correspondence with their superiors at the motherhouse in Rome and conscientiously informed them about their travels and important happenings. The two Sisters attributed the special graces and favors which they received from God to the prayers and sacrifices which were being offered for them at the motherhouse in Rome.

When Sister M. Scholastica and Sister M. Jóchima came to Philadelphia for the first time, Divine Providence guided them to the school of the Christian Brothers, where, by a happy coincidence, they met the brother of our Sister M. Sebastiana, Brother Ferdinand Hoerling, who, in the true sense of the word, became a friend in need to the two Sisters. He helped the Sisters in many ways, particularly in making reservations for them at convents in the various cities where they planned to collect alms.

The Sisters at the motherhouse in Rome were very happy and thanked God that Brother Ferdinand had become a benefactor to their two fellow Sisters. Sister M. Sebastiana was especially overjoyed to receive the message that her brother was happy in his newly adopted country, America, and that he was helping the Sisters so kindly.

At Philadelphia, Brother Ferdinand led the Sisters to Elisabeth Heck, a widow who, living with her sister and two children, gave shelter, food, and protection to the Sisters in her house. From that time forward the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother were always welcome in her home, and the Community, in turn, always remained grateful to the Hecks and considered them among their first friends and benefactors in America.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame, with whom the two mendicant Sisters stayed whenever possible, were kind and solicitous for the spiritual and material welfare of the Sisters. Reverend Mother Carolina, the commissary general of the Notre Dame Sisters, was extraordinarily kind and
ordered that the Sisters be treated in all their houses as members of their own community. They gave to the Sisters whatever they needed, such as wash and other things. Sisters M. Scholastica and M. Joachima also made their retreat at the Notre Dame Convent with the Sisters. When Sister Mary Scholastica was sick for six months, she was taken care of by the School Sisters of Notre Dame at their motherhouse in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As a token of appreciation, Msgr. Jacquemin sent a papal blessing to each of their houses where our Sisters had stayed.

Sisters M. Scholastica Demer and M. Joachima Hornung experienced much joy as well as sorrow while traveling as strangers in America. The spiritual help given from Rome to the two travelers often had remarkable effects. For example, on June 30, 1889, Monsignor Jacquemin offered holy Mass in honor of St. Louis for the Sisters. On that same day the Sisters received permission from Father Muehlsiepen to collect in the city of St. Louis, where they received generous donations; and of greater consequence was the fact that at St. Louis the idea of the Community's first mission was conceived.

Since in the course of time various versions of the circumstances leading to the realization of the Community's first foundation in America were circulated in newspapers and otherwise, the Commissary General at the Convent of the Sorrowful Mother in Milwaukee asked Most Reverend J. Henry Tihen, one of the main characters in this momentous scene, for an accurate account of this happening. We are happy to quote the Bishop's reply to Mother Superior's request.

Most Rev. J. Henry Tihen
St. Francis Hospital
Wichita, Kansas
Oct. 7, 1936

Dear Mother Coletta:

In 1889 when Sisters Scholastica and Joachima were in America looking for a foundation
of their order, I was no longer in St. Louis. Having left St. Louis, where my first priestly activities were performed at St. John's Church, at the request of Bishop Hennessy of St. Louis, I arrived in Wichita on the fifteenth day of February, 1889.

Father Muehlsiepen, who was not only Vicar General of the Archdiocese of St. Louis but was also acting as Bishop—except of course in strictly Bishop's deeds—and who consequently managed affairs pertaining to German Church interests, was logically the man to whom Sisters Scholastica and Joachima would apply for information and direction. Father Muehlsiepen and Bishop Hennessy—both priests of the Archdiocese of St. Louis—were personally acquainted and friendly.

Shortly after Bishop Hennessy had arrived in Wichita, being convinced that a hospital, which had been started and conducted for a short while by three Sisters of Mercy who now wished to discontinue their management, might be taken over by the members of some other religious order, he had mentioned this fact to Father Muehlsiepen. After Father Muehlsiepen had informed your two Sisters, who had made application for a foundation in St. Louis, that Bishop Hennessy needed Sisters in Wichita and that there was an opening of a vacated hospital there awaiting a management, and knowing that I was doing secretarial work for Bishop Hennessy and probably also because of my familiarity with the German language, he gave them a letter of introduction to myself, which they duly presented upon their arrival and reported to me at my residence near the old Pro-Cathedral in Wichita.
"Whereupon I immediately took them to Bishop Hennessy's residence on the outskirts of the City, where Bishop Hennessy received the Sisters kindly; and after a period of questioning and conversing, he instructed me to convey to the Sisters the expression of his willingness to receive them into the diocese provided they were willing to undertake the task of furnishing and reconstructing the abandoned hospital. To this the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother agreed, and thus were the beginnings made for the great work accomplished in St. Francis Hospital....

Cordially yours,
+ J. Henry Tihen

Sister M. Scholastica wrote immediately to Rome, reporting that the diocese of Wichita had been established a short time ago—in August, 1887—that it was poor, and that the hospital seemed to be in a wretched condition. These conditions, however, did not deter the superiors from accepting the Bishop's offer. The poverty and simplicity of the hospital as well as that of the diocese appealed to them as a very promising beginning in America. Correspondence concerning this affair continued for several months. When, on July 27, 1889, the letter or cablegram of Bishop Hennessy's formal approval for the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother to take over the hospital at Wichita arrived, everyone was happy. On the following day Msgr. Jacquemin offered holy Mass in honor of St. Joseph and committed the whole matter to this powerful patron and advocate.

But before making definite arrangements for sending Sisters to America, more detailed information on the Wichita project was needed. Finally, on September 29, the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, Monsignor Jacquemin received from Reverend J. Henry Tihen definite answers to his requests.
The members of the Community, which was now in its sixth year of existence, had so far been devoted mainly to the contemplative life. But now, anticipating manifold activities in America, they would have to learn to unite, in the proper perspective, the active with the contemplative life; for that was the call of Mother Frances, when in 1882 as a novice at Himmelspforten, kneeling before the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she clearly understood that Jesus was commissioning her to unite the active with the contemplative life.

Through good St. Joseph, the Sisters at Rome got acquainted with an elderly priest from the Diocese of Breisgau, Germany, Reverend Paul Wehrle, who had been a zealous missionary in America for many years. Sister M. Sebastiana Hoerling tells us in her recollections that he had built nine churches in America. This good priest taught the Sisters English and instructed them in many practical things relating to America. Since Monsignor Jacquemin had planned to go to America with the Sisters, Reverend Wehrle offered to substitute for him as chaplain at the motherhouse.

Nine Sisters were appointed to go to America in order to settle there and to engage in such activities as holy obedience would assign to them. These Sisters fully realized that, for most of them, this trip meant a final farewell to their native country, their parents, and all those near and dear to them. Indeed, these young, devoted, and heroic souls appreciated their holy vocation so highly that they were ready to make any sacrifice which God would ask of them. Five of the Sisters were appointed for the hospital at Wichita, and the other four, for a prospective mission in Philadelphia. But since the Philadelphia enterprise did not materialize, all nine Sisters finally went to Wichita, where they were truly needed, as Bishop John Hennessy requested that the Sisters also take care of the sick in their homes.

These nine pioneering Sisters, who came to plant the first seed of Mary's Passion flower into American soil for God's honor, for the sanctification of their own souls and
the souls of others through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, were the following: Sisters M. Johanna Ankenbrand, M. Pia Hagmann, M. Columba Gries, M. Elia Henne-mann, M. Xaveria Niederbruckner, M. Mechtildis Bauer, M. Sebastiana Hoerling, M. Gabriela Ortlieb, and M. Alphonsa Boell.

In an audience on Sunday, September 30, 1889, these nine Sisters received the blessing of Pope Leo XIII. The Sisters took along from the motherhouse two particles of the Holy Cross and several pictures for the chapels of the two anticipated foundations.

Although everyone was grateful to God for so wonderfully guiding the destinies of the small Community, the farewell from Rome on October 29, 1889, was painful, especially for Mother Frances, since she would now be deprived of both the spiritual director and Sister M. Johanna, who had been a great support to her during the last two years. Having prayed the itinerary prayers in chapel, the Sisters, under the protection of holy Archangel Raphael and all the holy angels, went by train to Antwerp. On November 2, accompanied in spirit by the poor souls, they embarked upon the ship Noordland of the Red Star Line and on November 14 landed happily at New York.

Sources:

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Chapter VIII

COMMUNITY'S FIRST MISSION

ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL, WICHITA, KANSAS

1889

Before meeting Monsignor Jacquemin and the nine Sisters who are making their ocean-trip to America, we shall give to our readers a very brief summary of the history of the state and city in which the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother established their first mission in America.

The state of Kansas is the geographical center of the United States of America. The first European to visit this territory was Francisco de Coronado, who, as early as 1541, commanded a Spanish expedition across the plains which are now a part of the state of Kansas. In 1700 French fur traders from Louisiana were in the Kansas territory. The Lewis and Clark expedition, planned by President Jefferson, reached Kansas in June, 1804. Most of the territory forming the present state of Kansas was a part of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803.

Kansas, which became an organized territory on May 30, 1854, when President Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, was admitted into the Union as a state on January 29, 1861.

The great prosperity which prevailed in Kansas during the years following 1880 led to the so-called Kansas "boom" in the towns and cities of that area. Bonds were issued for all sorts of municipal improvements—electric light plants and street railways became numerous, waterworks were voted on, and hydrants arose amid the prairie grass. During a period of twelve months, extending into 1886, ninety-four new towns were chartered. Prosperity continued until the end of 1887 when the "boom" collapsed and hard times began.
In 1864 a trading post was established at the junction of the Arkansas and the Little Arkansas rivers. In the vicinity of the juncture of these two rivers was a temporary village of Wichita Indians, from whom the name of the city is derived. After the Indians were removed from that territory to Oklahoma, there developed a white settlement at the trading post, which became a stopping point for cattle drivers.

Wichita was laid out as a town in 1870. It was incorporated as a village in 1871, as a town in 1872, and as a city in 1886. In 1872 the Santa Fe Railway arrived in Wichita, and the Wichita Eagle was also founded. The population of Wichita in 1880 was 4,911 and ten years later, in 1890, it had increased to 23,853. At present Wichita is the largest city in Kansas.

In 1887 the Diocese of Wichita was erected from the Diocese of Leavenworth. The first bishop appointed to the Wichita Diocese was the Most Reverend James O'Reilly of Topeka, Kansas, who died on July 26, 1887, before his consecration. One year later the Most Reverend John Joseph Hennessy was selected. He was consecrated on November 30, 1886, at St. John's Church in St. Louis, Missouri, of which he had been rector.

When Bishop Hennessy took charge of his Wichita See, his territory, which was experiencing the effects of the Kansas "boom" collapse, was in a very discouraging condition. Over and above that calamity, there were several years of drought and crop failures. Many farmers abandoned their farms and went into the new territory of Oklahoma.

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Early Thursday morning, November 14, 1889— the day on which the Noordland ship landed—Sister M. Scholastica and M. Joachima were seen leaving the Leo House in New York, wending their way to the pier of the Red Star Line in order to welcome to America Monsignor Jacquemin and the nine
young Sisters who, having left their parents, friends, and country for the love of God and neighbor, had come to serve Christ unreservedly in the missionary field of America and to follow His counsel: "...let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Mat. 5:16)

The two Sisters, who had been separated from their convent family for a year and nine months, anxiously waited at the pier, and how they rejoiced to be reunited with their fellow Sisters and their spiritual director, Monsignor Jacquemin. Without being aware of the fact, these Sisters were making history—writing one of the most important chapters of the Community's history and laying the foundation of a chain of charitable institutions in America.

Sister M. Scholastica led the whole group to the Leo House, an institution conducted by Sisters to help German Catholic emigrants to America. It was decided that Reverend Father Jacquemin, Sister M. Scholastica, and the four Sisters who had been appointed for the probable mission in Philadelphia—Sisters M. Johanna Ankenbrand, M. Columba Gries, M. Elia Hermann, and M. Gabriela Ortlieb—should travel to that city on the following day, November 15, and that the other Sisters remain at the Leo House a few days longer. Sister M. Sebastiana was also permitted to go to Philadelphia to visit her brother, a member of the Christian Brothers in that city.

While Sisters M. Scholastica and M. Joachima were collecting at Philadelphia, they came in contact with several influential people who promised to help the Sisters to acquire an establishment there. Two parties had even offered to donate their houses for that purpose. Sister M. Scholastica introduced Reverend Father and the Sisters to their various friends, with whom she had made arrangements for temporary residence for the Sisters. While negotiations were under way in regard to the anticipated mission in Philadelphia, the four Sisters, with the bishop's permission, did private home nursing.
On November 19 Reverend Father Jacquemin, with Sisters M. Scholastica and M. Sebastiana, returned to the Leo House in New York, where the other five Sisters were staying. In the place of Sister M. Scholastica, Sister Mary Mechtildis was appointed to continue the collection tour with Sister M. Joachima. Reverend Father and the five Sisters began their trip to Wichita on November 21, the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They went by train to Chicago, where they stayed overnight with the Notre Dame Sisters and then travelled to Wichita, where they arrived on Tuesday, November 26. Indeed the arrival of Monsignor Jacquemin and the five Sisters—Sisters M. Scholastica Demer, superior; M. Xaveria Niederbruckner; M. Alphonsa Boell; M. Pia Hagmann; and M. Sebastiana Hoerling—at Wichita was an epoch-making event for the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother and for the city as well.

Already in Rome the Sisters had rejoiced that the title of the hospital which Bishop Hennessy had asked them to take over was St. Francis Hospital. It seemed as though St. Francis himself wanted to remind the Sisters, through the extreme poverty of the hospital, to preserve the true Franciscan spirit in the new world.

The incoming Sisters had been previously informed that the Sisters of Mercy, who had conducted the hospital, had already vacated the institution. But this was not the case. These Sisters were still in charge of the hospital and most kindly welcomed Monsignor Jacquemin and the five Sisters. Reverend Father immediately expressed sympathy toward these Sisters, as necessity compelled them to give up the administration of this hospital because they could not make ends meet financially. There were only three Sisters of Mercy at the hospital, and they could not get additional help from their motherhouse. Thus, being compelled to depend upon hired help, they were unable to administer the little hospital profitably.

The five incoming Sisters described the existing conditions as follows: There were several girls hired to do
the cleaning, a lady to work in the kitchen, and a Negro servant to wash dishes and to take care of the stoves in each room. There was not one pot or dish that was whole, through the carelessness of the Negro servant, who tossed one dish into the other. The big washing was done by outsiders, and almost all the wash—the pillow cases, the sheets, and so forth—was torn.

The Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother were given living quarters with the Sisters of Mercy on the third floor, on which there was also a small chapel, where our Eucharistic Lord was enthroned. The Sisters of Mercy continued their activity of supervising and of administering the medicines during the two weeks that they remained at the hospital. During that time the incoming Sisters tried to get a general view of the whole situation. Our Sisters were edified by the following practice which the Sisters of Mercy had introduced: After the evening dishes were done, all the hired girls recited the rosary aloud while they walked up and down the little hall so that the patients, being able to hear it, could pray with them.

This hospital which the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother took over had been built as an apartment house and was erected in the early years of the Kansas "boom," probably between 1880 and 1884. It was a two-story house with open porches and a mansard roof, topped with two ornate towers. This private hospital had been established by Dr. Andrew H. Fabrique—a doctor of great ability and knowledge of the latest medical technique. But since Dr. Fabrique did not obtain enough paying patients to enable him to keep the hospital open, he was compelled to give it up.

From the record book we know that the Sisters of Mercy had admitted their first patients on March 16, 1888, and their last patient on December 7, 1889. On Wednesday, December 11, the Mercy Sisters left, wishing their successors God's blessing in the new country.

Monsignor Jacquemin, realizing the necessity of keeping complete and accurate records, taught the Sisters how
to keep the books and to write a chronicle. The record book begun by the Sisters of Mercy was continued by our Sisters. It is interesting to note here that as soon as our Sisters took over the keeping of the books, the religion of the patients was recorded. This was very typical of Monsignor Jacquemin, whose one great interest in life was the salvation of souls. The Sisters were to know the religion of the patients so that they might be able to give proper attention to the spiritual welfare of the patients, especially to Catholics. The zeal of Monsignor Jacquemin for the supernatural and the spiritual life was so well known among those who came in closer contact with him that many called him "the human being living above the earth."

Reverend Father Jacquemin wrote the following introduction to the Chronicle of St. Francis Hospital, Wichita, Kansas. "The Chronicle contains not only the important historical statements, but also conversions and special deaths, i.e., those of an edifying or terrifying nature: All for the greater honor of God, for the glorification of the Sorrowful Mother, for the instruction and edification of the Sisters."

On December 16, Reverend Father left Wichita for Philadelphia, where affairs concerning an establishment of a field of labor for the Sisters did not materialize according to former promises and plans. Since Most Reverend Bishop Hennessy requested that the Sisters also take over the nursing of the sick in private homes, the four Sisters who had gone to Philadelphia in November, 1889, came to Wichita on January 23, 1890. Thus in less than three months the number of Sisters at St. Francis Hospital, the Community's first mission, had risen to nine.

At the urgent request of the Sisters, Reverend Father Jacquemin returned to Wichita about the middle of January in order to give them their first retreat in America. On January 30, 1890, at the close of the retreat, Sister M. Columba made her perpetual vows.
On February 12, 1890, Reverend Father left Wichita for Rome. His farewell greeting to the Sisters was as follows:

"May the Lord bless you, may the Blessed Mother keep you, may St. Joseph ever protect you. May God's blessing accompany you when you appear in chapel, when you go to nurse the sick, and when, in the refectory, you listen to the spiritual reading. May the Sisters always in spirit live before the Holy Eucharist, and may the sweet motherly eye of Mary ever rest upon you. May St. Joseph always accompany you, holy Mother Clare always pray for you, and St. Francis bless you." (Chronicle of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, p. 80.)

After the Sisters had taken over the administration of St. Francis Hospital, one of the first points on the agenda for discussion was the necessity of a complete, thorough, and unmitigated scrubbing and cleaning of the entire building. Since, in the beginning, the Sisters had to pay fifty dollars rent per month, and later forty dollars, they tried to save wherever they could. They gradually dismissed the hired help, and then they began their cleaning project. Everything was terribly dirty. In some places the dirt was more than an inch thick and had to be scrubbed repeatedly so that the surface of the floor could be reached.

Since there were no screens on the windows, mosquitoes and flies reigned supreme during the summer months. Cockroaches and bedbugs, which had established themselves permanently in the wooden walls of the house, the wooden beds, and other furniture, had multiplied into the millions. But this unsanitary condition was not unique to St. Francis Hospital. It seemed that this was a widespread problem. The patients brought these tiny little insects, which were hidden in their clothes, into the hospital. During the first few weeks, instead of having a peaceful night's rest, the Sisters had to carry on a regular warfare with armies.
of these tiny insects, consisting of millions and billions. When it was dark, the bugs came out of their hiding places and crawled right into the Sisters' eyes, ears, and mouth. At first the Sisters' warfare seemed to be useless, as hoards of these bugs hid themselves in the old wood.

As determined as the bugs were to stay, so determined were the Sisters to exterminate this scourge. They took the wooden bedsteads apart and boiled them in steam boilers, finally annihilating the pests. They put the bedding and mattresses into the drying room and then laid them in the sun in order to suffocate and stunn the insects. This stunning caused the bugs to fall on the ground, and then the Sisters completely destroyed them. They brushed gasoline, insect powder, and a mixture of kerosene and strong carbolic acid on the furniture and on all the woodwork throughout the house. They also poured it into the bedsteads and woodwork crevices. In order to exterminate the millions of hoards hiding behind the mouldings, the Sisters tore those down in all the rooms.

"Where there's a will, there's a way." After long and persevering efforts, the Sisters had succeeded in exterminating the pesty bedbugs. But to keep that scourge away from the hospital, they always had to be on the defensive by taking good care of the patients when they were first admitted.

Indeed, during these first months and years at St. Francis Hospital, the Sisters lived in extreme poverty. Being separated from their native country and parental home, they had to bring many sacrifices and had to trust and love God very much. They often renewed their dedication to God and their resolution to work cheerfully and joyfully for His honor and glory, despite the difficulties of being in a foreign environment.

Certainly it was not easy for the Sisters to repress their desire and longing to be once again at the motherhouse in Rome, where Mother Frances had so lovingly directed and guided them in the religious life. Daily they
thought of and prayed for their spiritual mother. What joy filled their hearts when they received word from Rome that Mother Frances was preparing for her first trip to America, as they greatly desired that she come to America to visit the first mission of her Community.

In the afternoon of April 30, 1890, Mother Frances, having taken leave of the Sisters in Rome, traveled to Germany with Sisters M. Caecilia Fisahn, M. Bonifatia Goetz, and M. Josepha Sigrist. On May 3, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, they left Antwerp on the Waesland Steamer and landed safely in New York on May 17, from where they traveled to Wichita.

Never had St. Francis Hospital experienced such a pleasing, heartfelt welcome than on the day when Mother M. Frances made her first visit to this first mission of the Community. The Sisters were extremely happy to have their spiritual Mother with them again, and they were very grateful to receive three more Sisters for the hospital, which raised the convent family at St. Francis Hospital to twelve members.

When Mother Frances saw the Sisters scrubbing, she went down on her knees without much ado and scrubbed side by side with the Sisters. The Sisters could neither prevent her from doing this nor stop her from helping them when they scrubbed until eleven or twelve in the evening.

Since, with hardly any income, the Sisters had to pay monthly rent for the hospital as well as defray all the other daily expenses, Reverend Mother Frances sent Sister M. Columba and another Sister to Wisconsin to collect alms in the summer of 1890. At La Crosse these two Sisters met Father Geyer, a priest from Marshfield, and Reverend Father Kaluza from Menomonie, Wisconsin. The priests asked many questions concerning the Community of which the Sisters were members; and when they heard that the Community had a hospital in Wichita, Kansas, they considered the Sisters as having been sent by God, because both of them had been trying to find Sisters to conduct a hospital in their re-
pective parishes. Father Geyer said: "I would like to have a hospital in Marshfield." "And I want one in Menomonee," Father Kaluza added.

After the Sisters' return to Wichita, they faithfully related all their experiences and especially the "hospital ideas" of the two priests to Mother Frances. In order to get the plans and details of these projects, Mother Frances sent Sister M. Scholastica with a companion to visit these priests at their respective parishes.

Sister M. Scholastica and her companion returned with the following report:

"Father Kaluza said that we could have a large, vacant house which used to be the poor house; and that, if Father Geyer would not yet have a house prepared for the Sisters, both the Sisters appointed for Menomonie and those for Marshfield could stay at his parish in Menomonie until Father Geyer would have a dwelling for them. He also promised to better the conditions of the poor house and that, after he has taken care of this, he would send a telegram to Mother Frances, asking her to send the Sisters to Menomonie." (Sister M. Sebastiana's Recollections)

But since Mother Frances was not completely satisfied with the information she had received so far, as there were still matters of importance of which she needed an explanation, she corresponded with both priests until she had all the knowledge necessary for beginning these two new institutions. On August 3, 1890, Marshfield was formally accepted; and Menomonie, on September 21, 1890.

As Reverend Kaluza suggested, Mother Frances came with the two groups of Sisters—those for Menomonie and Marshfield—on the trip to Wisconsin, probably in the beginning of October. After she had appointed the Sisters for Menomonie, she asked who desired to go with her to
Marshfield. Those who had volunteered and could be spared at St. Francis Hospital went with Mother Frances to Wisconsin in order to establish the two new missions at Menomonie and Marshfield.

Sometime later, probably in December, Mother Frances was asked to return to St. Francis Hospital in Wichita on some important matters. It is of interest here to note that while Mother Frances was in Wichita the Sisters' veil was changed. The light black veil, which the Sisters had worn up to that time, was changed by having a white starched strip sewed on the inside. From Wichita, Mother Frances and her companion, wearing the new veil, went directly to Marshfield. Were the Sisters ever surprised when they saw the change! Some priests and doctors remarked: "It looks much better."

Now let us return to our account on St. Francis Hospital. During the first years the number of patients at St. Francis Hospital was small, varying from just a few to eight or nine persons. The Sisters also did private home nursing. The people had peculiar ideas about the Sisters, and they expected them to do all the work, even the general cooking, housework, and the milking of the cows, besides taking care of the sick. When it came to a remuneration, many people considered twenty-five or fifty cents per day or week as good pay; many of the patients did not pay anything. The following experiences of Sister M. Joachima Hornung show us what little remuneration the Sisters received in nursing the sick in private homes. For two to six weeks, Sister M. Joachima took care of several typhoid patients without receiving any recompense whatsoever; and once a barber in Wichita gave Sister only fifty cents for a whole week's care of him, which included doing his housework.

The studying of the English language was one of the most important duties which the Sisters had to fulfill; but since there was very little time for study periods, the Sisters tried to learn the language during their work among the patients. They carried little notebooks with them.
and quickly jotted down new words and expressions in order to learn them while they went about their work.

There were no educational nursing requirements during those years. Some of the Sisters had formal nursing education in Germany, and almost all of them had some practical education in nursing, as many of the Sisters did home nursing in Rome. Bishop Hennessy gave the Sisters very good advice in regard to caring for the sick. He told them to do everything exactly as the doctors order, to ask if in doubt about anything, to be conscientious in giving medicine and to look at the label several times so that they might never give the wrong medicine to a patient. He also stressed the point that they should carefully observe the doctors as they administer to the patients in order to learn the proper procedures.

This brief advice of the good Bishop was the equivalent of a good course in nursing. So as to follow these prudent words most conscientiously, the Sisters recorded the doctors' instructions in their valuable little note-books. Through this diligence, combined with their virtues of obedience and prayerfulness, the Sisters became efficient practical nurses and gained the complete confidence of the doctors.

The pioneering Sisters of St. Francis Hospital tell us in their reminiscences that everyone in Wichita in those early times seemed to be poor. The churches were in just as poor a condition as was the hospital. The cathedral was an old dilapidated frame house with a riggedly wooden stairway entrance. The Most Reverend Bishop Hennessy had only one vestment, which he had to use for both Sundays and weekdays. In spite of this prevailing poverty, the good Bishop—their patron, benefactor, and friend—donated a monstrance, vestment, cope, candlesticks, and other articles for the Sisters' chapel. He also gave his own horse and buggy to them.

Bishop Hennessy frequently collected alms for his cathedral, and even then he remembered the poor in the
Sisters' charge by giving occasionally some money to the superior with the order to buy food for the patients and not to tell anyone from whom the gift was received. Many times he stopped at the hospital and gave the Sisters butter, eggs, vegetables, and other things.

Bishop Hennessy was always a dear friend of our Community, as the following incident related by him shows:

"I visited Bishop Schwebach of La Crosse. At my departure I said to him: 'Now I am going to visit my Sisters at Marshfield.' 'What?' exclaimed Bishop Schwebach. 'They are my Sisters. How can you call them your Sisters?' 'I have a right to call them my Sisters because I gave them their first house in America.' I told him." (Recollections of the Sisters)

On one occasion, shortly before Mother Frances came on her first trip to America, the good Bishop asked to see all the Sisters. When they had come together, he begged them to pray fervently and frequently for his intentions.

No labor was too low, too humiliating, too time consuming, or too difficult for those heroic, young, energetic Sisters. They worked unselfishly for God and their country. For the first six to seven years, they received almost no remuneration for their work, as the patients and the aged were extremely poor.

In 1893, the Sisters admitted one hundred patients, thirty-one of whom were charity cases. Everything—board, room, care, and medicine—was free for them. Eleven others were county cases, for whom very little was paid. One Sister reported that old Mrs. Fowler gave nine dollars to the Sisters and then stayed with them for nine years. There were similar cases besides the pure charity cases. In later years the Sisters often remarked that it was the poor who brought the blessings to St. Francis Hospital.
Even though the lack of provisions was great at times, God always sent help at the right time. During the first two years, the city of Wichita donated $750 to the Sisters, which donation was truly a great help. Many people, but especially the farmers, in and near Wichita—St. Mary's, St. Joe's, Colwich, St. Mark's, and other places—were very generous in providing the Sisters with farm products. These good people considered it an honor to be permitted to help the Sisters. From the beginning the Sisters themselves cultivated a small piece of land on their property for raising some of the farm products. Since there was no money to buy milk, a few Sisters went to the country in order to beg for a cow. These Sisters received a most hearty welcome from their fellow Sisters when they returned to the hospital in the evening, not with one cow but with three strong, healthy cows and a little calf.

May all the good benefactors of St. Francis Hospital during those early pioneering years be blessed with a special heavenly reward for their unselfish kindness in behalf of the Sisters. It is proper to make special mention here of two families: the John Springob family of Wichita and the Bartholomew Betzen family of St. Mark's, both of whom were extraordinarily generous in helping the Community during its early years. Two daughters of the Springob family and five daughters of the Betzen family became members of the Community.

Year after year the Sisters hoped and prayed for better times so that they might be able to renovate and improve the hospital. Now, 1893, the fourth year of the Sisters' residence in Wichita, was rolling around. And, behold, conditions, instead of getting better, looked worse than ever before. The Sisters heard people talking about a "crisis, a financial depression, something like that which had occurred in 1873." The Sisters did not know much about politics but noticed by experience that things were going from bad to worse.

Indeed, in the spring of 1893 the country was at the verge of a panic. Signs of depression existed everywhere.
Money became very tight and scarce and the wave of speculation of the last four years came to a sudden check. Panic conditions prevailed during the summer; over four hundred banks, the large majority of which existed in the West, were completely impoverished.

Wichita, being in the midst of the speculative territory, felt the terrific blow of the panic. Sister M. Pia Hagmann, the superior of St. Francis Hospital, felt that it might be best to give up the hospital and reported the conditions, as she saw and understood them, to Mother Frances in Rome. Soon rumors spread that the Sisters were going to leave Wichita. Most of the Sisters were horrified at the very thought of giving up the charitable works that they had so gladly pursued. They earnestly desired to remain in Wichita. One of the Sisters stated:

"We confidently and fervently prayed that St. Francis Hospital would not be given up, as we were very happy in having dedicated ourselves to the performance of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in Wichita. Trusting in God, we hoped to continue our work among the poor of this area. Reverend Father Tihen also desired that we Sisters remain in Wichita. On account of this miserable situation, we sent an unending chain of prayers to our heavenly Father in our little chapel." (Recollections of the Sisters.)

When Mother Frances received the letter in regard to the conditions in Wichita, she, having great confidence in the business abilities of Reverend Joseph Joch, concerning whom we will hear more in the following chapters, sent him the following telegram: SELL AND SETTLE WICHITA. Here we will let Father Joch give us his description of the desolate city.

"Was it due to its location—a promising railroad center—or a mere speculation that some St. Louis capitalists invested such great a—
mounts of money in the Wichita real estate. The "City" was laid out for many miles, and then the boom started. The property was changing hands among the speculators all the time, and prices were soaring sky high; nobody knew why. Free beer and whisky flowed and brass bands were playing at corners to keep the people in excitement. After the speculators had delivered their goods to the "suckers," they withdrew, and then the boom collapsed. All this was shortly after 1888.

"When I arrived in Wichita in 1893, Wichita looked 'an abomination of desolation.' Far out on the prairie stood a watch factory, unfinished. It must have cost about half a million dollars. Streets were laid out in every direction for miles. In the city proper, they were in a pitiable condition; every few feet on the wooden sidewalks some boards were broken or missing. I remember Grand Avenue, on which somebody was raising cabbage. Everybody was, if not down and out, at least downhearted..."

(Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. I, p. 42.)

It was a heavy blow for Bishop Hennessy, who had already suffered greatly on account of the financial difficulty in his diocese, when Father Joch showed him the telegram from Mother Frances. He definitely did not want the Sisters to leave and promised to help them.

For the Sisters it would have been a great sacrifice to give up this their first mission, where they had already made many sacrifices and had practiced the corporal and spiritual works of mercy for four years. But what can subjects do? Nothing in one way but infinitely much in another way—the way of prayer. Offering all their hardships to God, they confidently prayed that they might remain with their beloved poor in Wichita.
Father Joch further states:

"I was not in a great hurry to sell the property, so I looked around and studied the prospects of Wichita. The city, I found, was not completely dead; on the contrary, I believed it had a great future, considering its location, the fertility of the land, and so forth. I thought it would be a great mistake to sacrifice the hospital after so many sacrifices on the part of the Sisters, for I had already discovered that the harder the beginning, the better the prospects." (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. I, p. 43.)

While Father Joch was busy in Wichita, Monsignor Jacquemin and Mother Frances and the Sisters in Rome prayed that God's holy will be done. Needless to say, they all were happy when Father Joch wrote that, after careful investigation of the situation at St. Francis Hospital, he had come to the conclusion that it would be for God's greater honor and glory and for the good of the Community if the Sisters continue their work in Wichita.

In examining the deed of the hospital, Father Joch discovered that the property had been made out to Father Athanas Lingemann, O.F.M., who was then superior and rector of St. Boniface Church in Wichita. Father Joch transferred the property to the Sisters by a second deed, which was dated May, 1893. Since the title to the property was not clear, he had to apply to the court concerning some minor matters of the original owner.

Sister M. Mechtildis Bauer, the new superior appointed to St. Francis Hospital, re-established the hospital and brought new life into it. Everybody interested in Wichita was happy. The good Bishop and Reverend Father Tihen were very grateful for the promising turn of events. Many of the Sisters wept tears of joy and with renewed zeal gave themselves wholly to the works of charity among the poor.
The pioneering Sisters who were interviewed by Sister M. Beda were unanimous on the point that during the first seven years the foundation of St. Francis Hospital, Wichita, was laid deeply and solidly upon the rock of genuine Christ-like charity. They stated that the future success of the hospital would be assured on condition that the new generations of the Community continue to work in the spirit of humility and charity that was practiced by the pioneering Sisters.

About 1894 Father Tihen, then pastor of the Cathedral parish, persuaded Dr. Andrew H. Fabrique, the distinguished physician of the Southeast, to come to St. Francis Hospital and become head of its medical staff, so that more doctors would be influenced to come to the hospital. Being of a noble, generous, and benevolent character, Dr. Andrew Fabrique consented and willingly shared the poverty with the Sisters. In later years Dr. Fabrique revealed that for the first half year he accepted no pay for the care of the patients in St. Francis Hospital but admonished the patients to pay the Sisters.

Dr. Fabrique was by far Wichita's foremost pioneer physician and surgeon. He successfully introduced the science of surgery to the Wichita public and surrounding territory, and he did much to popularize the benefits of hospital care and service. He was the president of the St. Francis Hospital staff, which gradually increased in membership.

In the summer of 1911, Dr. Fabrique, at the age of seventy-five, performed his last operation. Shortly afterwards, the infirmities of age set in, to which blindness added its weight. But Dr. Fabrique remained cheerful to the last and was always loyal to St. Francis Hospital, which he visited at least once every year.

That the poor in spirit also possess the spirit of charity has been proven by the pioneering Sisters of St. Francis Hospital. Many of the earlier Sisters who have been transferred to Wichita from other missions and vice
versa frequently remarked that, after they had lived for some time at St. Francis', they noticed that an exceptional spirit of charity and peace reigned there. The Sisters loved one another with genuine love, so much so, that the hospital became known as a little heaven upon earth. Rev. Father Jacquemin often remarked that he loved to go to Wichita in memory of the early years when charity and peace prevailed there in a very high degree.

As we reflect upon the growth and development of St. Francis Hospital we can divide its development into several stages. In speaking of the first ten years we might refer to that period as the laying of the spiritual foundation by the Sisters upon the rock of profound humility, charity, and good will towards everyone, thus preparing the soil for the Community's further development and growth in the United States.

It was a big step forward materially when, in 1893, the Sisters bought the little hospital, for which, since their beginning in 1889, they had paid about $50 rent monthly. The cost of the hospital was $6,000, part of which was paid by the motherhouse of the Community and the remainder was borrowed at four per cent interest from Rev. P. Lucas of Louisville. This debt was paid by the Community in 1895.

We may be assured that while this spiritual foundation was being laid, heaven looked with pleasure upon the Sisters at St. Francis Hospital. God, never being outdone in generosity, poured His choicest blessings and graces upon the Sisters. Gradually the people began to change their attitudes toward hospital care. In 1897 St. Francis Hospital became too crowded, and the doctors demanded that the Sisters build, which they did as soon as permission to do so was received from the Superior General in Rome, Mother M. Johanna Ankenbrand.
Material Development of St. Francis Hospital

1897—First addition: After seven years of loving, devoted care and patient labor among the poor in the hospital and in private homes, it became evident to the Sisters that an addition to the hospital was necessary. Building was begun in August, 1897, and after a few months the addition, the cost of which amounted to about $6,000, was finished. At the same time the hot water furnace was installed in both the old and new buildings at the cost of $1,500. Shortly after the completion of this building project, the hospital was filled with patients.

1898—Second addition—the chapel: When the Sisters came to St. Francis Hospital in 1889, a small room on the second floor was used as the chapel. Later the Sisters established the chapel in a basement room, where it would not be quite so hot as on the upper floor. In 1898 the Sisters received permission from the higher superiors to build a new chapel, the size of which was 48 feet by 21 feet. This first new chapel was built on the north side of the original St. Francis Hospital.

When, in April, 1898, the building project of the new chapel was to be begun, there was no money. Not in vain did the Sisters storm heaven for financial help. An old man who had severely injured himself by a fall came to the hospital for aid and told the Sisters that he had $1,115, which he would give to them if they would keep him in the hospital for the rest of his life. This offer was gladly accepted, and again the Sisters passed safely through the hour of need. The Sisters felt God's blessing upon Saint Francis Hospital in a very special manner and always turned to Him with grateful, confident, and loving hearts.

On July 6, 1898, the chapel was solemnly blessed by the Most Reverend Bishop Hennessy in the presence of ten priests. This day was one of great joy for all. For many
years our Eucharistic Lord had to live in the poor basement cell, and only He knows the true joy that filled the Sisters' hearts when they could offer to Him, their Divine Bridegroom, this better dwelling.

1899—Third addition: A new addition had to be begun in 1898, as the hospital had again become too small. The building, which, including the equipment, amounted to about $12,000, was completed in February, 1899, and solemnly blessed by the Most Reverend Bishop J. Hennessy on April ninth.

The entrance to the hospital, which was formerly on the original building, was taken down and fitted to this second addition. At the total expense of $700 a barn was also built and a sidewalk laid.

1902—Fourth addition: The dimension of the fourth addition was 100 feet by 40 feet. A twenty-feet passageway connected this construction with the building already standing. This 1902 addition, including the equipment and a steam laundry, cost over $28,000.

1908—Fifth building project—an addition to the hospital and a new chapel: The state of Kansas became more prosperous, and the city of Wichita was growing rapidly. The attitude of the people toward hospitals was changing, and they were more grateful to have as fine and efficient a hospital in their city as that of St. Francis'. We are not, then, in the least surprised that again a new addition to the hospital was needed and that the chapel built in 1898 had also become too small, as more Sisters were gradually coming to St. Francis Hospital to help their fellow Sisters with the good work.

The building was begun in 1908. The chapel was 60 feet by 30 feet; the new addition, 62 feet by 40 feet. The new hospital wing extended from the south wing, and the chapel became another west wing, extending from this new addition. The cost of this building project was about $30,000. There was no architect to be paid, as Reverend
In 1889 the Most Reverend John J. Hennessy, Bishop of Wichita (1888-1920), invited the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother to take over a small hospital in Wichita, which was the Community's first mission in America.
In the summer of 1889 Reverend Henry Tihen received a visit from Sisters M. Scholastica and M. Joachima at his residence in Wichita. The Sisters presented to him a letter of introduction from the Vicar General of the St. Louis Diocese. Thereupon Reverend Tihen took the Sisters to the residence of the Most Reverend Bishop Hennessy.
On Tuesday, November 26, 1889, Reverend George Jacquemin and five Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother arrived in Wichita, Kansas, to begin their mission at St. Francis Hospital.
GROWTH OF ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL, WICHITA, KANSAS

1889  1891  1889  1886

1895  1897  1910  1916

1918  1916
In 1908 this beautiful Gothic-style chapel was built.
The architecture of the new chapel at St. Francis Hospital, built in 1948, reflects the Romanesque style: a rough ashlar stone exterior; tall, double-arched windows; arched doorways; and a graceful tower which dominates the whole group of buildings of St. Francis Hospital.
The chapel of the Sorrowful Mother at St. Francis Hospital, Wichita, was dedicated on October 15, 1947, by His Excellency, Bishop Mark K. Carroll. The high altar of St. Francis Hospital chapel is constructed of the most exquisite domestic and foreign marbles with inlaid mosaics. The crucifixion group of hand-carved Carrara marble was imported from Italy.
Admitting office
(Identification label)
Nursery

Record library
Business office
A section of the new modern St. Francis Hospital as it appeared in 1958.
The Sisters who staffed St. Francis Hospital, Wichita, in 1958.
An air view of St. Francis Hospital.
As we reflect on this picture of St. Francis Hospital, our thoughts go back to those humble and self-sacrificing Sisters who, many years ago, left their country and their home to dedicate themselves to the works of mercy in America. May Mother M. Frances, Monsignor Jacquemin, and all the pioneering Sisters pray for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Hospital.
Anton Joehren, the Sisters' chaplain at the American motherhouse in Marshfield, came to Wichita to make the plans and supervise the work.

On March 26, 1909, the new chapel was solemnly blessed by the Most Reverend Bishop J. Hennessy. To the great joy of the Sisters, Right Reverend Monsignor George Jacquemin, the spiritual director of the Sisters, arrived a few days before the dedication and assisted at the ceremonies. Right Reverend Monsignor Tihen and several other priests were also present. His Excellency, Bishop J. Hennessy, celebrated the last holy Mass in the old chapel, and Monsignor George Jacquemin celebrated the first holy Mass, which was a solemn high Mass, in the new chapel. The choir consisted only of priests. In the afternoon of the same day Right Reverend Monsignor Jacquemin carried the Blessed Sacrament from the little chapel into the large chapel, accompanied by all the Sisters, who carried burning candles.

1914—Sixth addition: A new addition was started in 1914 and was opened on January 29, 1915. The construction of this addition was again supervised by Reverend Anton Joehren. The building expenses, including the painting and the installation of a furnace, were $52,047.

On May 17, 1915, the first diet kitchens—one on each floor—were opened in the new building. Everybody thanked God and rejoiced over this improvement, because under these conditions it would be easier to serve warm food to the patients.

1915—Seventh addition: Part of the original building was torn down and rebuilt, and the addition of 1897, which was only brick veneered, was razed and built anew. This new building was erected mostly for charity cases.

1917-1918—Eighth addition: The winter of 1917 to 1918 was extremely cold, colder than ever before. A powerhouse had to be built in order to provide enough heat for any emergency. By September, 1918, the powerhouse was so far finished that the hospital could be heated therefrom.
The two large steam boilers, which produced much more heat than the seven boilers which the Sisters had before, supplied enough steam for everything in the hospital. On the second floor of the powerhouse were the rooms for the engineers, and on the third floor was the laundry.

1919—Ninth addition: Since the laundry was in the powerhouse, which was on the opposite side of the hospital, it was necessary to build a bridge from the hospital to the powerhouse. Permission for doing this was granted by the city.

Other constructions done at this time were the following: three diet kitchens, one extra elevator, a summerhouse, an ambulance entrance, and a playground for the nurses.

1921—Tenth addition: A nurses' home, which cost the Community $153,000, was started in February, 1921, and was blessed on December 18 of that year by the Most Rev. Bishop Schwertner with several priests attending.

1928—Eleventh addition: In October, 1928, a new addition was begun on each end of the Emporia building, north and south. This building cost about $600,000; the repairs of older buildings amounted to $88,817.49. The dedication of the new building was held on November 2, 1930. The Most Reverend Bishop Schwertner was the celebrant and delivered the sermon. Reverend William Schaefers gave a very inspiring talk and compiled a book for this occasion, as at that time St. Francis Hospital also celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the Sisters' arrival in Wichita.

1938—Twelfth addition: Chaplain's residence.

1940—Construction of animal house for laboratory research.

1946—1958: Erection of more buildings with short intermissions between the construction of each.
Early Nursing Education

Sister M. Melania Eberth, who came to Wichita in 1901, tells us that there was a small library for nurses at the hospital, of which the Sisters made good use. The older Sisters taught the younger Sisters hospital procedure in a practical and informal way.

Sister M. Melania also stated that in 1912 the state of Kansas formed a Graduate Nursing Association. The governor of Kansas appointed three nurses to act as board of examiners. One of these nurses, a Catholic girl, explained this educational nursing program to the Sisters at Saint Francis Hospital and invited them to join this organization.

The Sisters accepted the nurse's invitation, even though their taking part in this educational program meant, for them, many months of hard night study, because during the day they were busy taking care of their patients. After completing the required studies, the Sisters wrote the examination at the hospital under proper supervision. Later they received a state diploma at the courthouse, thus becoming registered nurses. This was, indeed, a great accomplishment for them. The following Sisters received their diplomas: Sisters M. Eleanora Schuebel, M. Stephanie Bernard, M. Ludovica Riedel, M. Gerarda Ott, M. Melania Eberth, M. Epiphania Adelhardt, M. Zita Gehring, M. Martina Niklas, M. Ligoria Goetz, M. Hildegundis Eckel, M. Agnesina Laschewski, M. Jostina Fromm, M. Angela Heckl, M. Huberta Hengl, M. Albina Dippold. After the completion of this course of studies, the doctors, especially Dr. Jaegers, continued to give occasional lectures.

Brief History of St. Francis School of Nursing

In June, 1917, under the able direction and leadership of Sister M. Melania Eberth, then superintendent of Saint Francis Hospital, the school of nursing was established.
Temporary quarters for student nurses were provided, the curriculum was set up for a three-year program, rules and regulations were agreed upon.

On June 1, 1917, thirty applicants were accepted into St. Francis School of Nursing. The first graduation took place in May, 1920, with twenty-six nurses receiving their diploma, out of an enrollment of seventy. Nine of these were religious, and seventeen were lay nurses. Now, in 1960, there are about 140 students and thirty-five affiliates from four other schools of nursing enrolled in the program.

The first superintendent of nurses was Miss E. Holderman, a graduate of Mullanphy Hospital in St. Louis. She was followed by Mary J. Lamb, Edith M. Lemmon, Sister M. Alfreda Hofstetter, Sister M. Gratiana Hirt, Sister M. Gonzaga Betzen, and Sister M. Eulalia Statlmann. The present director is Sister M. Bernadette Janning, who succeeded Sister M. Eulalia in 1956.

In 1921 a new nurses' home was built. To this was added, in 1942, a spacious and comfortable building which contains facilities for 165 students, an efficient educational unit consisting of classrooms, administrative offices, and a beautiful library. Adequate reception rooms and a large T.V. lounge are located on the first floor. The new auditorium accommodates five hundred people and is equipped with sound, lighting, and stage facilities. It is used for social as well as educational functions.

St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing is accredited by the Kansas State Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education. It is an institutional member of the Conference of Catholic Schools of Nursing and also of the Department of Diploma and Associate Degree Program of the National League for Nursing. In July, 1957, St. Francis School of Nursing received full accreditation by the Accrediting Service of the National League for Nursing, being the first of the twenty professional schools of nursing in Kansas to receive this recognition.
St. Francis Hospital Today

Looking upon St. Francis Hospital today, we must agree that this edifice is, indeed, an ultramodern institution, magnificent in every respect. This monument has been erected by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother for God's honor and glory and for the spiritual, physical, and mental welfare of all those who have entered its portals and who will do so in the future.

Who built this institution? May the fact be clear to everybody that this hospital, as we see it today in its splendor, is the result of the supernatural life led by the Sisters who have, in the course of seventy years, labored at St. Francis Hospital since its beginning in 1889.

Let us, viewing things with the eyes of faith, reflect upon the life of these Sisters. Living at St. Francis Hospital detached from country and home, they have dedicated themselves wholeheartedly and unreservedly to the service of the sick for God's honor and glory and the salvation of souls; and, day in and day out, for over seventy years, these valiant souls have labored and prayed in close union with Christ. In that wonderful supernatural state—sanctifying grace—these Sisters have been most pleasing to the Blessed Trinity, to Mary the Blessed Mother of God, and to all the angels and saints in heaven. Consequently, because the Sisters have been so pleasing to God, those who have, through the years, come under their care have also received the choicest and manifold blessings of God in the material and spiritual sphere.

During the pioneering years, the Sisters at St. Francis Hospital laid a solid rock foundation of profound humility and love of God and neighbor. After eight years of extreme financial difficulties, Divine Providence provided a chain of God-blessed building projects—nine additions within twenty-two years (1897 to 1919). Even though all the buildings erected between 1897 and 1919 were later razed, they had fulfilled their purpose and had prepared for the third stage—the erection of an ultramodern institution. All honor be to God.
Ultramodern St. Francis Hospital

St. Francis Hospital, which is located about one mile north of the business center of Wichita, is the largest hospital in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas. It has a bed capacity of 685 and has one hundred bassinets.

The buildings of St. Francis Hospital may be designated as follows: main hospital, nurses' home, chapel, convent, powerhouse, physical therapy, psychiatric and laundry, animal house for research work, and other dwellings. Most of the buildings erected before 1928 were replaced by new fireproof constructions. Thus the main hospital buildings were constructed at various times since 1928. The height of the various wings varies from one to seven stories. The buildings are generally steel or reinforced concrete, brick, and tile. The entire hospital is of fireproof construction.

The hospital is served by fourteen self-operated automatic elevators. All patients' rooms are outside rooms and are equipped with piped-in oxygen facilities. The nurses' stations throughout the hospital are connected through an automatic tube system, providing a quick method of distributing messages and prescriptions. The patients' rooms are equipped with an audio-communication system, permitting the patient to converse directly to the nurses' station.

The nurses' home and training school consists of a four-story reinforced concrete, brick, and frame section built in 1921 and a six-and-seven-story completely fireproof section built in 1940.

With the growth and expansion of the hospital, the chapel built in 1908 became too small. A new chapel building, which is 136 feet in length and seventy-five feet in width, was begun in 1946 and completed in 1947 at the cost of $1,000,000. From the delicate workmanship of its stained glass windows to its beautifully wrought sanctuary, the chapel is a work of great art. Its exterior is of rough ashlar stone; its interior, of marble, carved oak, and
bronze. It has a seating capacity for about six hundred. Corridors connect the chapel to the convent and hospital.

A new addition was made to the convent in 1956 by the erection of two floors, which provide living facilities for sixty Sisters.

A new powerhouse was built in 1946. It is three stories high in parts and houses the large, modern heating plant designed to provide heat, hot water, and steam for additions to the hospital, including the new St. Francis Street wing. Controls are completely automatic; and duplicate and emergency equipment is also provided.

The physical therapy department is located in the two-story reinforced concrete, brick, and frame building, which also contains the pumping equipment and living quarters for the maintenance employees.

The psychiatric department, the complete modern laundry, and the living quarters for twenty-two interns and residents are provided in a five-story reinforced concrete and brick building erected in 1946 and added to in 1953. There are fifty-eight psychiatric beds.

Additional buildings which are part of St. Francis Hospital are the brick rectory, four frame dwellings, and an animal house—a building used for research work. Through the use of two hospital parking areas, approximately two hundred automobiles may be accommodated in off-the-street parking.

In order to build the new St. Francis Street wing, it was necessary to raze a three-story building, parts of which were over sixty-five years old. The new St. Francis Street wing is nine stories high, 373 feet long, and has an average width of forty-seven feet. This structure is reinforced concrete with a brick front trimmed with Bedford limestone, Carthage stone, and granite. It is completely air-conditioned. This wing provides 270 additional patient's beds, Sisters' quarters, physical and occupational therapy
departments, nursery, lobby, waiting rooms, and offices. It has three automatic elevators, an air-tube system with thirty-five sending and receiving stations, and each room is piped for oxygen. The cost of this wing was nearly $5,000,000.

General Information on the Hospital

St. Francis Hospital is a member of the Kansas Hospital Association, the American Hospital Association, and the Catholic Hospital Association. It has been fully approved by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals.

St. Francis Hospital is a leader in many fields, particularly in research and thoracic surgery. Outstanding departments are orthopedics, in which the hospital serves a five-state area and maintains a residency; urology, including facilities, personnel, and apparatus for general surgery such as a mechanical kidney; radiology with a radioactive isotope laboratory; anesthesiology; pathology; electroencephalography; a mechanical heart-lung apparatus for cardiac catheterization.

The American Medical Association has approved St. Francis Hospital for the training of medical interns and residencies. The active medical staff is composed of 137 doctors. The total medical staff, including active, consulting, and courtesy staff members, numbers 267. There are 244 registered nurses on duty at the hospital at various times.

St. Francis Hospital Women's Auxiliary consists of two hundred members, who contribute time, service, and funds to the hospital.
Excerpts from Speech of Most Rev. Bishop Carroll
(Given at the cornerstone laying of the Saint
Francis Street wing on June 30, 1957)

"Dear Friends: This is the third time in ten years
years that I have had the high honor and privilege of bless-
ing and dedicating to God and to the service of sick hu-
manity three magnificent additions to what was many years
ago a very humble institution. I consider the growth and
development of St. Francis Hospital as the greatest story
in the history of Wichita. It is a Cinderella story, almost
unbelievable...."

Bishop Carroll traced the beginnings of hospitaliza-
tion work to the monasteries founded by St. Benedict in the
fifth century. "The Benedictine monks," he said, "were the
first to alleviate the miseries of the people. They opened
their doors to suffering humanity."

The Most Reverend Bishop pointed out that the Sisters
of St. Francis' Hospital have carried on a tremendous ex-
pansion program for the past ten years without receiving
any financial aid from the Community that it serves. "A
hospital," he said, "is an invaluable asset to any communi-
ty. A hospital is just as necessary, nay, even more neces-
sary, to a city than paved streets, parks, and lighting."

Ranking St. Francis' Hospital as "one of the greatest
institutions of its kind in this part of our country,"
Bishop Carroll reminded his audience that this success had
been achieved through the self-sacrifice and fidelity to
duty of "a group of dedicated women who work seven days a
week and every week of the year... and who have been able
to operate their hospital and carry out an expansion pro-
gram because they receive no salaries. As everyone knows,
no hospital makes a profit. If the Sorrowful Mother Sisters
have been able to expand their hospitalization work, it is
because they draw no pay checks."
Bishop Carroll remarked that the spiraling cost of living "has placed a tremendous burden on the Sisters of St. Francis' Hospital." He expressed his hope that financial help would be forthcoming from friends and benefactors.

Excerpts from Sermon of Rt.Rev.Msgr. Schaefers
(Given at the dedication of the new St.Francis Hospital Wing on October 5, 1958)

"Your Excellency, my dear brother priests, venerable Sisters, and friends all: This is a very happy day for our Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother. Yesterday they celebrated the diamond jubilee of their Order; this morning they rejoice as Bishop Carroll blesses the beautiful new addition to their St. Francis Hospital....

"Indeed, the pioneer Sisters had courage—and faith. They said, in effect, to the citizens of Wichita: We have come here to pioneer in hospital work. If prayer, devotion to the sick and the dying, sweat, work, and going into debt can get the job done, we will build you a great hospital in time.

"Well, the Sisters have made good their word. And we are assembled here this morning to join the Sisters in thanksgiving and rejoicing as their Bishop blesses the new addition which makes their St. Francis Hospital the largest, finest, and most modern hospital in the Mid-west. Of course it was not easy for the Sisters to bring their hospital to this pre-eminence. It took sixty-nine years of prayer, toil, and sweat to build this colossus of eight hundred beds. If ever a Kansan learned to appreciate the meaning of our state motto: Ad astra per aspera (To the Stars through Difficulties), it was the Sisters here at St. Francis. Privations and hardships, an early dire poverty that obliged the Sisters to go begging for produce so that they might have food for their patients, administration problems that at times seemed unsurmountable, pressing debts, heart-aches and body-aches: these are some of the
chapter-heads in the book that tells the story of the building of the hospital. It took sixty-nine years of prayer and toil and sweat to build this colossus of eight hundred beds....

"I recall that during the depression the Sisters not only managed not to go bankrupt but even to pay their bills, which included paying interest on a large loan they had made in order to get funds for building the new Emporia wing in 1929. And while the Sisters were accomplishing this miracle, banks and factories and big businesses were folding up throughout the country. The man on the street wondered; he asked, How do they do it?

"Well, the answer is that Sisters are not ordinary women. I know I have stated that they are, but I take that back now. For the truth of the matter is that Sisters are extraordinary women. They are sold on the idea the saints have practiced these many centuries, namely, that nothing counts but God. In love with God, the young girl forsakes the pleasures of the world to enter a convent that she might be free to give her life in service to the Divine Master. On her Profession day, she is mystically wedded to Him through her vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity. As a full-fledged Nun, she discovers the grandeur of obedience and richness of voluntary poverty, and sees more clearly the ravishing beauty of chastity. She is lavish with her fervor and zeal. Such words as ease, comfort, luxuries, primping, and social prestige are dropped from her vocabulary. She knows that God is had only through self-discipline, mortification, and sinlessness.

"But do not conclude that the life of the Sister is a life of drudgery. Giving one's all in the service of the Divine Master is anything but drudgery. It is the supremest dedication, the noblest form of slavery known to man. And so, although she prays and works the day long, the Sister is as happy as she can be. There are no cocktail parties for her, no Nobel awards, no champagne, steak dinners, cigarettes, mink stoles, or vacations in the Rockies, yet she is in high spirits and acts as though she were on an extended holiday.
"Such is the religious spirit of the women who built St. Francis Hospital. They are consecrated women. They have abandoned all so as to be free to serve Jesus Christ by spending their lives in helping to alleviate the sufferings of mankind. The man of the world cannot, of course, appreciate the religious life. He is more or less ignorant of God and the moral forces of religion, and he is always thinking in terms of dollars, pleasure, ease, and comforts. And so he is heard to remark, 'I think the religious life is unnatural and that the girl in the convent is wasting her time and talents.' Well, the man ought to be downright ashamed of himself for talking like that....

"The Sisters are most grateful to the doctors for the help they have given them. They realize that they are very fortunate in having a staff of excellent physicians and surgeons to serve their institution. No hospital can grow and prosper unless it has a competent staff, nor can a hospital grow unless the doctors bring their patients to it. The Sisters realize this very well, and that is why they not only work like Trojans for the doctors but also remember them in their daily prayers.

"And as for the student nurses at St. Francis, it has been said that hospitals do not appreciate their nurses. But, my dear friends, do not for a minute believe this. The Sisters know very well that without the help of the nurses, their work would be critically handicapped. The Sisters deeply appreciate the nurses, and that is why they remember the girls at Mass and in their daily prayers.

"Incidentally, the School of Nursing here graduates an average of about 30 to 40 nurses each year at a cost to the School of $4,800 per student; you see, this is another generous contribution which St. Francis Hospital makes to the cause of public health and the nursing man power in this community....

"To conclude: The Sorrowful Mother Sisters beseech St. Francis every day to give them strength, so that, like him, they will be able to suffer the heat and the burdens
of the day out of love for God and neighbor. It is this love, it is this passionate desire to be copies of the Divine Samaritan, it is this tremendous dedication that has built St. Francis Hospital. And the good Sisters know very well that so long as love of God and neighbor glows in their hearts and souls, their hospital will continue to grow and prosper...not only that, for what is vastly more important is that when time runs out for the Sisters, the gates of paradise will be swung wide open for them by our beautiful Lady of Sorrows."

Chaplains of St. Francis Hospital

During the first years Reverend Franciscan Fathers of St. Anthony's Parish, Wichita, acted as chaplains and confessors to the Sisters at St. Francis Hospital. Beginning in 1897 to the present are the following: Reverend A. J. LeGrande, November 6, 1897-1904; Reverend W. Dowling, 1904-1911; Reverend John Faber, 1911-1919; Reverend J.J. Steines, 1919-1921; Reverend David Egan, 1921-1927; Right Reverend Msgr. William Schaefers. 1927—.

Reverend Father LeGrande, the Sisters' first chaplain, was a Frenchman who spoke English but no German. He had been a bishop of the Episcopalian Church and had become a convert to the Catholic Faith. He studied under the Jesuits.

Daily in the afternoon, Father LeGrande had rosary devotions in St. Francis Hospital chapel, which everyone who was able attended. Every morning before his Mass, he kept an hour's meditation; he was very learned, pious, and kind. Every day he visited all the patients, regardless of their Creed, sex, or nationality. He could adapt himself to everyone—the child as well as the adult, the old as well as the young, the educated as well as the uneducated, the lowly ones.
Superiors of St. Francis Hospital

Between 1889 and 1896 the following Sisters were superiors respectively: Sister M. Scholastica Demer, Sister M. Johanna Ankenbrand, Sister M. Pia Hagmann, and Sister M. Mechtildis Bauer. Succeeding these Sisters are the following: Sister M. Seraphina Eberth, 1896-1903; Sister M. Gregoria Coecoll, 1903-1909; Sister M. Salesia Rebhan, 1909-1912; Sister M. Melania Eberth, 1912-1918; Sister M. Theodosia Koenig, 1919-1924; Sister M. Melania Eberth, 1924-1930; Sister M. Agnesina Laschewski, 1930-1936; Sister M. Bertina Mayer, 1936-1942; Sister M. Oswaldina Nutz, 1942-1948; Sister M. Aquila Schleer, 1948-1954; Sister M. Sigismunda Voegeler, 1954-.

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Chapter IX

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

of

RIGHT REVEREND MONSIGNOR JOSEPH JOCH

Introductory Note: All the facts and quotations of this sketch have been taken from the Autobiography of Monsignor Joseph Joch, which the author wrote in 1938 with the assistance of Sister M. Beda Hack and Sister M. Theophila Venne. This entire autobiography was published in consecutive issues of the Ave Mater Dolorosa, the Community's periodical, from 1938 to 1940.

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Joseph Joch, the second of five children, was born on March 17, 1861, and baptized on March 19 at Trebitsch, Moravia, a province of Czechoslovakia. His parents, John Joch—a tanner—and Elisabeth Schindler, were righteous and God-fearing Catholics.

In spite of the industriousness of the parents, poverty reigned supreme in the Joch family. The father worked twelve hours a day and earned about three dollars a week. He was much handicapped by his lack of schooling but was determined to work hard so that his sons might have the opportunity of an education. The mother, lovingly devoting herself to the care of the children, helped financially by collecting firewood in the forest, thus saving the fuel expenses.

Concerning his early childhood, Joseph tells us that, as a youngster, he was just as full of mischief as others. "We boys," he said, "tried almost everything as targets for our slingshots, and more than once broken windowpanes had to be accounted for. As a rule, I received the blame,
for suspicion fell upon me even when I was innocent. As a result of being accused so frequently, I became adept at establishing an alibi, and learned to defend myself."

(Autobiography of Msgr. Joch, p. 7.)

At the age of eight Joseph started his four-year elementary education in the Trebitsch public school, which was the equivalent of our eight years' elementary education. In his fourth year of school, he was fortunate enough to have an exceptionally good teacher, who, sympathetic and understanding with boys, inspired him with zeal and devotion for his studies. Being a talented child, Joseph did not have to exert much effort to keep at the head of his class.

One of the greatest sorrows of Joseph's life came to him during that year—the death of his "angel mother." Soon after her death, Joseph's father married again. Concerning the ambitions of his stepmother, Katharina, towards him, Joseph relates: "Since my father and uncles were in the tanning business, she thought the best thing for me would be to learn the shoemakers' trade."'He should become a shoemaker,' she remarked to others. But the shoemakers' trade did not appeal to me at all." (Ibid., p. 16.)

In the fall of 1873 Joseph entered the Real-Gymnasium at Trebitsch, which, corresponding to our American high school and college courses combined, provided a general education without specializing in any particular field. At the end of the second year, Joseph made the serious blunder of discontinuing school instead of going ahead to the Upper Gymnasium. The main reason for this unwise step was his being without the necessary guidance. He was burdened with so much outside work to help support his family that he did not have enough time for study, and besides he often did not have enough to eat nor decent clothing to wear.

At the age of fourteen, persuaded by some of his relatives, Joseph entered the decorating business. Here his training in drawing at the Real-Gymnasium was a great help, for the work of a decorator included paper hanging, paint-
ing, and stenciling. Since this job, for which he received board and lodging but no wages, neither appealed to him nor helped him financially, he gave it up after three months.

About this time his only sister Amalia, the oldest child in the family, was doing housework for a lawyer, to whom she recommended her brother as a dependable employee in his office. The lawyer, being well satisfied with Joseph's school credentials, gave him a job in his office. The boy liked this work, for it gave him an excellent opportunity to become acquainted with legal terms, forms, and procedures, which knowledge was very useful to him in his later years. His pay of $4.80 a month was, however, barely enough for room and board.

Joseph's heart was not at rest, for his aim and desire was, since his early childhood, to become a good, zealous priest. His sister Amalia came again to his rescue. Having the position of governess and cook in Hollabrunn with the family of Ferdinand Kesseldorfer, the director of the Real-Gymnasium, she talked to him about her brother, mentioning that he had completed two years at the Real-Gymnasium in Trebitsch and had worked in a law office. The director took a special interest in the boy and was pleased with his excellent credentials. He admitted him to the Real-Gymnasium at Hollabrunn, which was free for those students who were unable to pay.

Joseph considered the two years which he spent in Hollabrunn the finest of his school life in Europe, because the professors were kind and sociable, and, too, his sister Amalia, who was stationed at the director's house, made him feel at home.

After two years at Hollabrunn, Joseph attended the Boys' Seminary at Vienna for four years. The discipline was soldier-like at this seminary, and only the best boys, intellectually and morally, were admitted. When Joseph had completed his studies there, he was a young man standing again at the parting of ways. Influenced by some of his
friends and relatives, he accepted the position of a railway officer, which he held for one year. During this time he felt like a person exiled from his real goal in life.

However, Divine Providence always hovered over him. One day, through the mercy of God, his attention was drawn to an article by Bishop Rudigier of Linz. "I need priests for the diocese of Linz. All those who feel within themselves the vocation to the priesthood are invited to come to my diocese." (Ibid., p. 51.)

Being struck as with lightning from heaven, the young man exclaimed, "This call is for me!" He wrote immediately, and after he had sent his requested credentials, the Bishop wrote to him, telling him to come. In the fall of 1883, after receiving his exeat from the Diocese of Brunn, in which Trebitsch was located, Joseph entered the Priests' Seminary at Linz, Austria. He was extremely grateful to be once more on the right path. The seminary at Linz had a fine reputation, and its quarterly periodical was widely known for its fine articles on the various branches of theology, the only subjects taught at that school.

During these latter years the desire awoke in Joseph's heart to become a missionary, preferably in America. Twice he had talked about this to his ecclesiastical superiors, but each time he was discouraged with the reply that priests were needed in the homeland. Finally, after the death of Bishop Rudigier and before his successor was installed, Joseph succeeded in receiving his exeat from the chancery of Linz. Bishop Flasch of La Crosse, Wisconsin, with whom he had already corresponded earlier, sent the money for his trip to America. His only difficulty was that he could not get a passport because he had been declared fit for the Austrian army. But reasoning that he was a soldier of Christ and not of Emperor Franz Joseph, he felt justified in leaving without a passport. He related that the cassock, which he wore during the whole trip, served as his passport. He sailed from Antwerp about October 10, 1885, and landed at Hoboken, New Jersey, on October 22. Bishop Flasch had given him a letter of introduction to the Capuchin.
Fathers, who were in charge of the Mater Dolorosa Church in New York. Penniless, owning nothing but the cassock he wore, Joseph began walking to his destination, not even knowing the directions. After several unsuccessful attempts to find out the way to the Capuchin Monastery, he received complete directions and walked on, "a gazing stock for every pedestrian," until he came to his destination. The Brother who opened the door, seeing him, threw his arms into the air and said, "For God's sake, did you come here like this?" He answered, "How else?"

During the few days that Joseph Joch stayed with the Capuchin Fathers, they very kindly attended to all his needs. At the request of Bishop Flasch, the Capuchins conducted him safely to their convent in Milwaukee. "Reverend Augustin Zeininger, director of St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, came to the convent to conduct him to the Seminary, where school had already been in progress for a few weeks. Let Monsignor Joch tell us about some of his first impressions at the seminary:

"There were over a hundred students, mostly Germans, a considerably large number of Bohemians, Poles, French, and less than ten per cent native-born Americans. It was peculiar how the students of the same nationality stuck together. Because Bishop Flasch took me into his diocese to take care of Bohemians, I joined them in order to improve my use of the language.

"Priests who spoke Bohemian were very scarce in this new country, and the consequence was that the Bohemians, left to themselves, were losing their faith by the thousands. I was told at the time that New York City had a hundred thousand Bohemians who had fallen away from the Church. They had the worst periodicals against the faith, some of which were published even by apostate priests."
"Domestic duties at the Seminary were attended to by the Sisters of St. Francis. The first morning after my arrival, these good Sisters gave me for breakfast a piece of roast beef about as large as a skull. I was dumbfounded! I couldn't believe that the whole piece was intended for me, and so I glanced around to see who might share it with me. Finding myself alone, I did my duty towards it! The meals were excellent, and we always had enough to eat. On special occasions, we even had delicious pies, baked by a little "kugelrund" (chubby) Polish Sister." (Ibid, pp. 71-72.)

At the end of the scholastic year, 1886, Archbishop Heiss of Milwaukee conferred the subdeacon and deaconship on Joseph Joch in the seminary chapel. After these ceremonies, Father Joch left for La Crosse to live at the residence of Bishop Flasch in order to finish his theological studies under the tutorship of Reverend Edward Fitzpatrick, who formerly had been professor at St. Francis Seminary. He completed his studies in the beginning of September.

The day of his ordination was September 8, 1886, the feast of our Blessed Lady's Nativity. "It was my birthday as a priest. St. Joseph, my patron saint, had a share in the day too, as the feast happened to fall on a Wednesday. The church nearest to the Bishop's residence was St. Wenceslaus Bohemian Church. It was there that Bishop Flasch ordained me." (Ibid., p. 73.)

On the following Sunday, September 12, 1886, Father Joch said his first Mass in this same church. The pastor, Reverend Johann Aloys Blaschke, a Bohemian priest born in the diocese of Koeniggratz, left nothing undone to make the services and the day as solemn as possible.

"Even if I had been in the circle of my nearest and dearest at Trebitsch, with my own dear mother (who looked down from heaven) it could not have been more solemn. The Knights
of St. Wenceslaus and one other society, attired in their gorgeous costumes and holding flying banners, lined the way from the rectory into the church, where they saluted with their rifles. The whole Bohemian parish was out at its best. There was plenty of music and flowers. Reverend James Schwebach, the vicar general of the diocese and its subsequent bishop, was the assistant; Reverend Molitor, pastor of St. Wenceslaus Church in Chicago, delivered the sermon; Reverend Paul Geyer, (of Marshfield fame) who was in charge of a parish near La Crosse at the time, was deacon. A little Bohemian girl of the parish was the bride who carried the wreath. After the solemnity in the church, there was a good dinner at Father Blaschke's rectory. I was not a stranger in the parish, as I had preached to the people in Bohemian while I was still a deacon. (Ibid., pp. 73-74.)

Two days after his ordination Father Joch was appointed assistant to Father Ignatius Schaller, pastor of St. John Baptist Congregation, Marshfield, which was one of the best organized parishes in the diocese. About one month later, in October, 1886, not yet having unpacked his trunk, Father Joch was sent to Auburndale, as the first resident pastor. In spite of insurmountable difficulties, the first thing he did in that parish was to start a parochial school. After repeated pleadings he got a few Sisters for the school from Mother M. Alexia, the superior general of the School Sisters of St. Francis at St. Joseph's Convent, Milwaukee.

Besides the Auburndale parish, Father Joch had care of the missions of Milladore and Rozellville, to which Dorchester was later added. After Father Krogulske had left the diocese, his Polish missions of Junction City, Sigel, and Mill Creek were also assigned to Father Joch.
Father Joch, a very zealous and enthusiastic priest, tried to serve each of the missions entrusted to his care in the best possible way and, as a result, succumbed to a physical breakdown, especially during the influenza of 1888. In this hour of need and sickness, Mother M. Alexia invited him to come to their motherhouse for rest and recuperation. In appreciation thereof and to keep himself busy, Reverend Father taught religion classes to the Polish candidates.

Most Reverend Bishop Schwebach, who superseded Bishop Flasch, was consecrated Bishop of La Crosse on February 25, 1892. This good Bishop advised Father Joch to go to Woerishofen, Bavaria, in order to try the Kneipp Water Cure, to study it, and to introduce it in the United States. He gave Father Joch a letter of introduction which would permit him to attend the consultations of Father Kneipp and learn all about the Kneipp Water Cure.

Since Mother Alexia was suffering from rheumatism, Father Joch prevailed upon her to go with him to Germany, together with more Sisters. She gratefully accepted this offer. Father Joch, Mother Alexia, and Sisters M. Theresia and M. Hyacintha left New York on May 7, 1892, on board the SS. Veendam of Rotterdam for Woerishofen, Bavaria. They remained there during the summer months and started their return trip on September 10, 1892, on the Spaarndam, (Rotterdam, Holland) to New York.

Back in Milwaukee, Father Joch, having become interested in the Kneipp Water Cure, cherished the hope of introducing it, with the help of Mother Alexia, at the institution of the Sisters of St. Francis. But Divine Providence had ordained differently. Bishop Schwebach called him back to his diocese and sent him to Marshfield to help the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, who were pioneering in establishing a hospital there. Father Joch had already become acquainted with these Sisters when he was pastor at Auburndale.

Here we will discontinue our brief report on Father Joch because from now on we will meet him frequently in
the activities of the Community. In his Biographical Sketch of Rt. Reverend Monsignor Jacquemain, Reverend John M. Thill gives us a brief and concise description of Father Joch.

"Like the hospital in Wichita, the new establishment (the hospital in Marshfield) began in extreme poverty. Both were threatened with failure, but fortunately Divine Providence prompted Bishop Schwebach to send to the Sisters in Marshfield a young Austrian priest (Father Joch) who, besides being a good, zealous priest, familiar with the American moral and economic milieu, was endowed with a remarkable spirit of enterprise, a tireless energy, a special gift for discerning favorable opportunities and a practical ability for exploiting them. He was a born pioneer. He cast in his lot with the poverty-stricken Sisters from the first day, saved both establishments from ruin and laid the foundations for their rapid development into the large, prosperous, and wholly up-to-date hospitals of St. Francis at Wichita and St. Joseph's at Marshfield."
Chapter X

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, MENOMONIE, WISCONSIN
1890

On September 21, 1890, the Feast of St. Matthew, apostle and evangelist, Mother Frances, the Foundress of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, who at that time was in Wichita, Kansas, (this was her first visit to America) had acquiesced to Reverend Louis Kaluza's request for an establishment of a hospital at Menomonie, Wisconsin. She had agreed to convert an old, vacant county poorhouse into a hospital, to rent this building in the beginning, and later to buy it. Toward the end of September or in the beginning of October, Mother Frances and those Sisters assigned for the two Wisconsin missions—Menomonie and Marshfield—took leave of their fellow Sisters at St. Francis Hospital, Wichita, Kansas, and began their trip to Menomonie. Long before their departure, Mother Frances carefully packed whatever articles from St. Francis Hospital could be spared for the two anticipated missions. The Sisters had vied with each other in making contributions, such as embroidering and sewing altar linens, surpliccs, and albs, for their new undertakings.

Reverend Louis Kaluza, pastor of St. Joseph's Parish, Menomonie, was at the depot in due time to welcome the Sisters to Menomonie. He took them to his school Sisters—the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration from La Crosse—whom our Sisters stayed for one or two days and by whom they were treated most hospitably. But Mother Frances, not wanting to impose any hardships upon these Sisters any longer than absolutely necessary and also being anxious to begin their mission, asked Father Kaluza for a guide to direct them to their future mission of charity and mercy.

Having arrived at the abandoned poorhouse late in the afternoon, the Sisters immediately began to prepare for their night's rest. There were no blankets of any kind, but
luckily they found some straw, which they scattered on the floor of one of the rooms. Although it was quite cold, as it was October, the young, healthy Sisters did not mind being without blankets and beds, but they felt sorry for Mother Frances, who had lately been ill. Lo and behold! as they were prayerfully hoping to find something to protect their spiritual Mother from the cold air of the night, Father Kaluza's dog, which had followed them to the house, walked up to Mother Frances' place and lay down right at her feet, thus keeping her feet warm. Under these conditions all the Sisters tolerated the dog being in the room. There was a stove in the room, but the Sisters had nothing wherewith to make a fire, as they had come rather late in the day and had no chance to gather firewood.

On the following morning the Sisters said their morning prayer in this same room, which later became their refectory, and then walked quite a distance to church for holy Mass and Holy Communion. After their return from church, they energetically went to work to make the old building inhabitable and to convert it into as good a hospital as possible. At St. Francis Hospital all of these Sisters had had some very excellent experience in this line of work—cleaning and converting old buildings into suitable dwellings. Some Sisters went into the woods which belonged to the property and gathered fallen branches for the kitchen stove and the other stoves in the rooms which they were using. Other Sisters gathered acorns, which they pounded to powder and roasted for use as a substitute for coffee. (This drink was used for a few years.) Sister M. Xaveria visited a neighbor to beg for a little milk for their acorn coffee. She returned not only with some milk but also with a little flour, which they used for dumplings for their noonday meal.

The Sisters cleaned a few old iron bedsteads, which they found in the garret, and used some straw, which they found in the barn, for making mattresses. Sister M. Pia, an expert seamstress, and another Sister hurried down town with the intention of buying a secondhand sewing machine, some material for mattresses, and other things on credit;
they returned empty handed. There was no credit for them, as the Sisters were strangers in Menomonie, and the people didn't know whether they could trust them.

Mother Frances, having written to St. Francis Hospital, begging the Sisters to send some money, if at all possible, received by return mail whatever money could be spared at the hospital in Wichita. Now the Sisters, being able to pay cash, got what they wanted and from this time on were also able to buy on credit occasionally.

In spite of their extreme poverty, these young pioneering Sisters were always at peace and in good humor.

"We were always satisfied with everything even in spite of hunger, deprivations, and humiliations. No matter what happened, nothing interfered with our happiness, which was always complete and especially so when Mother Frances was with us. She took everything calmly and never complained about anything. No matter what happened, we never saw her become excited. These early years will ever remain unforgettable days.

"No one would have suspected that Mother Frances, who walked with us every morning to church and acted just like any of us, was our Mother Foundress. Although she did not want to be introduced, we sometimes did it out of politeness. We were ever ready to do everything she wished us to do." (Sister M. Sebastiana Hoerling's Reminiscences, p. 28.)

After a few weeks, the hospital—a two-story building which could easily accommodate fifteen patients—was ready for occupancy. The title given to the hospital was St. Mary's Hospital.

Dr. Read, a Protestant physician, sent the first patient, a twelve-year-old boy who had a broken leg. This patient was hardly in the hospital when the Lutheran minis-
ter came and asked to see the superior, whom Sister Mary Sebastiana called. As soon as the minister was introduced to Mother Frances, he sounded his warning, "I hope that you will not interfere with religion," to which Mother M. Frances replied most graciously, "Please don't worry; we will not do that as it does not belong to our business." Apparently satisfied, the minister left the hospital and after that did not inquire about the boy nor anything else. (Ibid., p. 36.)

Gradually more patients came, and through them the Sisters became acquainted with the people of Menomonie. Some farmers generously offered to supply the hospital with anything in the line of farm products. This offer was gladly accepted, and from that time on the Sisters had sufficient food.

Since there was neither a basement nor a furnace in the hospital, each room had its individual wood stove, for which the Sisters obtained wood from the forest on their property. Sister M. Clara Eichenseher and Sister M. Alphonsa Boell frequently sawed the wood, which, because they had no wagon, they dragged up the hill to the hospital.

After the Sisters had been in Menomonie for a few weeks, everything at the hospital was running quite smoothly. But one day there was quite an excitement, which we shall let Sister M. Sebastiana tell us about.

"One evening, for some reason or other, Mother Frances had prolonged our recreation period until nine o'clock. As we were going to chapel for night prayer, the doorbell rang. I went to the door and, pushing the curtain aside, I saw, to my surprise, Father Kaluza and another man. Probably afraid that, at this hour, I might not open the door for them, Father Kaluza said: 'Dear little good Sister, please open the door and let the Bishop come in.'" (Ibid., pp.32-33.)
The Most Reverend Kilian Flasch, Bishop of La Crosse, wanted to see the Sisters and their little hospital. Sister M. Sebastiana immediately called Mother Frances. With a kerosene lamp in her hand, Mother Frances, accompanied by another Sister, showed the Bishop the entire hospital, even the garret dormitory of the Sisters. Then Bishop Flasch spoke in a very fatherly manner to the assembled Sisters, expressing his appreciation for the good work they were doing in his diocese. After having given them his episcopal blessing, he and Father Kaluza left.

Father Kaluza was very happy that he had succeeded in getting Sisters for a hospital. Immediately after his appointment as pastor of St. Joseph's Parish in Menomonie in 1889, he began to make plans for the erection of a parochial school, which he built in the following year and opened in September, 1890. His next ambition—to find Sisters to conduct a hospital—was realized when he became acquainted with Mother Frances through the two mendicant Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother whom he had met at La Crosse. The school Sisters teaching at Menomonie told the Sisters at the hospital that Father Kaluza had turned to St. Joseph for the fulfillment of his petition. He had promised to say one hundred holy Masses in honor of St. Joseph, with the Litany of St. Joseph after each of these Masses, for the intention that the good saint send good Sisters to start the hospital. Besides this, he asked the school Sisters to say the rosary every day with the school children, including the invocation: "Dear holy Father Joseph, send us good Sisters for a hospital." Since Father Kaluza had not yet finished offering the one hundred Masses and prayers before the Sisters arrived, they attended some of those holy Masses and Litanies.

One of the greatest concerns of Mother Frances and the Sisters was to prepare as worthy a dwelling as possible at the hospital for their divine Bridegroom. They tried out several rooms for a chapel, finally agreeing that the room above the entrance on the second floor was the most satisfactory, as it was larger than the first two rooms which they had used as chapels and because it contained a
storage closet with shelves, in which could be placed the smaller chapel articles. The best trunks which the Sisters had brought from Wichita were used as vestment cabinets.

For the hospital chapels of Menomonie and Marshfield, Mother Frances ordered two altars of varnished natural wood from the Hackner Company of La Crosse. The people of Menomonie, who helped the Sisters in many ways, paid for all the chapel furniture.

After Father Joch had come to Marshfield to help the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, he introduced the ticket insurance system both at Marshfield and Menomonie. This insurance system was a great financial help to the hospital. Agents were employed to visit the lumber camps and, according to a set of rules, to sell tickets at ten dollars each, which gave each person free hospital care for one year.

Sister M. Cyrilla Chemelaz, whom Mother Frances sent to Menomonie in February, 1896, in order to prepare for nursing, repeatedly experienced the gratitude and kindness of the people. On one occasion Sister M. Cyrilla accompanied another Sister downtown, where, since they had no money, they bought a pair of shoes on credit, costing about $1.75. On their return to the hospital they passed a house from which a man—the brother of a seriously injured patient who had recently died at the hospital—hurriedly came out towards them. He stopped the Sisters and, talking to them for a while, expressed his thanks for what they had done for his sick brother and gave them five dollars. The Sisters immediately returned to the shoestore and, telling the storekeeper how they had gotten the money, offered to pay their bill. But now the shoemaker, also wishing to do a good deed for the Sisters, refused to accept the money. Imagine the joy and excitement at the hospital when the Sisters, having gone to town without a penny, returned with a pair of new shoes and five dollars. This incident is just one example of the many kind actions of the people of Menomonie towards the Sisters who conducted St. Mary's Hospital.
It was, indeed, a great calamity for the Sisters of St. Mary's Hospital (Menomonie) when their only cow died. Father Joerres, who had succeeded Reverend Louis Kaluza in 1892, noticed that Sister M. Pia Hagemann, the Superior, was especially sad and asked why. She replied, "We have no cow anymore; the one we had died." "Don't worry," he said, "I will see that you get another one." The good priest went to the Oberle Family, who were among the Sisters' best benefactors, and asked them for a good cow for the Sisters at the hospital. Very soon after this, in answer to Father Joerres' request, the only son of the Oberle Family led a Jersey cow to the hospital as a present for the Sisters. Later, when the Sisters received a second cow, they had enough milk for everyone in the hospital. The Sisters also had their own chickens, a horse and buggy, and a garden. (Ibid., p. 30)

The mission at Menomonie served as an educational center for the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother. Mother Frances had set a room aside in the hospital for classroom use, providing it with a blackboard, a large table and chairs, and the necessary books. On Saturdays the Franciscan Sisters from La Crosse who taught at the parish school attended holy Mass at the hospital chapel and after breakfast taught the Sisters. Various Sisters who studied at Menomonie at different times were Sisters M. Sebastiana Hoerling, M. Coletta Eberth, M. Salesia Rebhan, M. Agatha Erleiveis, M. Petronilla Derleth, M. Emilia Heigl, M. Ursulina Endres, and M. Innocentia Amschler.

Mother Frances was the first superior of St. Mary's Hospital, Menomonie. She went with the founding Sisters to Menomonie from Wichita, probably in the beginning of October, 1890, and remained there until December ninth of the same year. Mother Frances' successor until the end of 1891 was Sister M. Hildcogard Ankenbrand, who died of consumption at St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield, Wisconsin, on January 21, 1892. She was the first flower from the garden of the Sorrowful Mother in America to be plucked for the heavenly kingdom. Sister M. Pia Hagemann followed her as superior of the Menomonie hospital, and in December, 1894, Sister M.
Agnes Eichfelder was appointed Sister M. Pia's successor. In May, 1895, when Sister M. Agnes went with Father Joch to Denville, Sister M. Coletta Eberth was the superior pro tempore. In September, 1896, Sister M. Pia—Rev. Mother M. Johanna's representative—closed the school at Menomonie, because the Sisters were needed at some of the other missions. She sent Sister M. Coletta to teach in Kansas and appointed Sister M. Petronilla Derleth the superior of the hospital.

Reverend Mother Frances Streitel had planned the building of a new hospital in Menomonie, for the foundation of which several loads of stones had already been hauled. But later, after Mother Frances' deposition from office, it was decided to give up St. Mary's Hospital, because this mission never became self-supporting, since Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire, both cities only about twenty miles from Menomonie, had a hospital.

Since Reverend Maximilian Wurst, pastor of St. Felix Parish, Wabasha, Minnesota, greatly desired Sisters to conduct a hospital and an orphanage in his parish, the three Sisters stationed at Menomonie in June, 1898, when the hospital was discontinued—Sisters M. Petronilla Derleth, M. Alcantara Schreiber, and M. Veronica Waas—left for Wabasha, Minnesota, in order to establish a hospital there. The Sisters were requested by Reverend Mother M. Johanna Ankenbrand to pack everything which belonged to them and to have it shipped to Wabasha, Minnesota, so that it would be there about the time of their arrival, which was on June 22, 1898. The hired man at St. Mary's Hospital, Menomonie, led the cow from Menomonie to Wabasha, where he arrived safely after four days.

Sources:

Recollections of Sister M. Sebastiana Hoerling.
Reichert, Rev. Aquilin, Mother M. Frances Streitel—Her Life and Works.
Personal Interviews of Sister M. Kiliana with Sister M. Cyriaca.
Chapter XI

ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL, MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN
1890

Introductory Note: As was already explained in the chapter on St. Francis Hospital, Wichita, Kansas, the requests for the establishment of a hospital in Menomonie and one in Marshfield were made indirectly to Mother M. Frances—the Foundress of the Community—by two priests of the La Crosse Diocese through the two Sisters who had returned to Wichita from collecting alms in La Crosse during the summer of 1890. Corresponding with both priests concerning the details of the enterprise, Mother Frances approved Reverend Father Geyer's request for a hospital in Marshfield on August 3, 1890, and that of Reverend Kaluza in Menomonie on September 21.

Since the plan for the Menomonie hospital merely required the arranging of a two-story building into a hospital, which formerly had been a poorhouse, it was ready for occupancy at any time convenient for the Sisters. But before the Sisters could assume activities in Marshfield, the erection of a new building was necessary, and hence the Menomonie enterprise was started before that of Marshfield. This fact also explains why the account of the Menomonie hospital precedes that of Marshfield.

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When Marshfield, Wisconsin, was incorporated as a city in 1883, it was a progressive, industrious, and energetic young village. Two newspapers—one in English and the other in German—informed the citizens about everything of interest and advantage to their country, state, and particularly to their forward-looking city. By 1887 many of the earliest houses had been replaced by solid brick buildings. Mr. W. H. Upham, who was called the builder of the "sawmill city" of Marshfield, owned an enormous sawmill
and many other buildings. Within the city were also a furniture factory, stave and hub factories, boiler works, harness shops, nine hotels, and nineteen saloons.

At noon on June 27, 1887, a great fire caused by sparks from a locomotive broke out in the lumber piles in the center of the city and burned steadily all day. By nightfall the greater part of Marshfield was smoldering in ashes—250 buildings were destroyed. Many people, fearing that Marshfield had now become a city of the past, were happily surprised when, on the following morning, Tuesday, at six a.m., they saw the American flag hoisted before Hope Hall, opposite Mr. Upham's home, the only one of his buildings that had escaped the fire.

The second city of Marshfield was due mainly to the faith of Mr. Upham, towards whom all the city fathers had their eyes directed. The final decision—the silent order: we will rebuild—was expressed by "Old Glory," waving peacefully over the ashes of Marshfield. Now, with a strong will and a firm determination, everybody went to work to do his part in the rebuilding of the city. Within the next year Mr. Upham had sixty-two new business houses under construction.

From the Marshfield News we know that already in 1889 a group of zealous citizens had united to arouse interest among the people for a city hospital—a worthy institution deserving the good will of all—which they estimated to cost between 35,000 to 50,000 dollars.

Reverend Paul Geyer, who, in September, 1889, had been appointed pastor of St. John's Parish, Marshfield, became the leader in promoting the hospital project. Those interested seemed to have shared the unanimous opinion that a religious community of women experienced in hospital work be requested to build the hospital, the land of which would be donated by volunteers.

The two Sisters sent by Mother Frances from Wichita, Kansas, to collect at La Crosse in the spring of 1890 met
Reverend Paul Geyer and another priest, Reverend Louis Kaluza, both of whom were from Germany—the latter, pastor of St. Joseph's Parish, Menomonie, had come to America from Prussia, Germany; and Reverend Paul Geyer, pastor of St. John's Church, Marshfield, Wisconsin, had come to America from his native country Bavaria. Both priests listened with great interest to the story of how the Sisters had come to America to establish their first hospital in Wichita, Kansas. They also asked many questions.

Indeed, "Wisdom had conducted them (the priests) in a wonderful way." (Wis., 10:17) Reverend Father Geyer and Reverend Kaluza were happy to meet Sisters of a community which was interested in hospital work and had members available for new establishments. They received new hope that their prayers and those of their parishioners for Sisters experienced in nursing were now being answered. Each priest desired to have a hospital in his respective parish. After Mother Frances had been informed about these important matters, she sent Sister M. Scholastica Demer and a companion to visit the two priests in order to find out the details of their hospital plans.

Reverend Geyer most heartily welcomed the representatives of Mother Frances and discussed the whole matter of the hospital project for Marshfield with the Sisters, explaining that a new building, the plan and construction of which he would gladly take care of, would have to be erected. Since the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother was penniless, he suggested the obtaining of a loan, the technicality of which he would also tend to. Having been informed about all the details of the hospital problem, Mother Frances corresponded with Monsignor Jacquemin and, after many prayers and sacrifices, finally decided to build a new hospital. This decision was, indeed, a very significant one—a great step forward—as the hospital in Marshfield was the first new building erected by the Community.

On August 3, 1890, Mother Frances officially approved the building of a hospital at Marshfield, entrusting the
whole building project to Reverend Geyer and asking him to build as cheaply as possible. Mother Frances' trust and love for St. Joseph impelled her to dedicate the first newly erected building of the Community to him, the foster Father of Christ.

Reverend Geyer and the patrons of the anticipated hospital exulted that Marshfield was now assured of a hospital and that definite information could be given to the public.

Thanks to the editors of the Marshfield News, who have left to posterity the details concerning the progress of the hospital while under construction. The interest which the newspaper took in the building project at that time proves beyond any doubt that the city fathers of Marshfield, progressive and forward-looking men, realized the vital importance of a hospital for the near future.

On Wednesday, August 13, the people were informed concerning the sealed proposals, which we are quoting. Notice that, for the first time, the title of the hospital is mentioned.

"Sealed bids will be received at the Catholic schoolhouse at eight o'clock p.m. next Friday evening, for removing the dirt for the cellar and foundation of the new St. Joseph's Hospital, the dimensions of which will be forty by eighty feet and six feet deep at the highest point. Also sealed bids for the mason work at so much per cord and plastering at so much per yard. For specification and other information inquire of George Seubert." (Rev. Paul Geyer, Marshfield News, Aug. 13, 1890.)

On the following day the Marshfield News, extolling the benefits of a hospital conducted by a recognized institution of the Catholic Church, mentioned that the Sisters were in the city, referring to Sister M. Scholastica and her companion, with whom Father Geyer had discussed
the cost and the site for the new building.

"The plan first proposed was to secure the city park grounds, but this move met with such strong opposition that the idea had been abandoned and negotiations were made for ten acres of land adjacent to the cemetery and owned by Mr. Peter Bever. The purchase price is $1,000, which sum those instrumental in obtaining the hospital will have to raise, as the condition on which the hospital will be built is that a site be furnished. The hospital will be 40 x 30 feet of veneered brick and will cost between $5,000 and $10,000." (Ibid., Aug. 14, 1890.)

On Thursday, August 28, the Marshfield News announced that the excavation work for the new hospital had commenced and would be pushed forward as rapidly as possible. It also enumerated the benefits that Marshfield would derive from a hospital and encouraged the people to lend a helping hand in establishing this worthy institution in their city.

On the 18th of September, Father Geyer had the following advertisement published in the paper:

"Sealed proposals for doing the carpenter work on the St. Joseph's Hospital will be received at M. Steinmetz, North Side Store, at eight o'clock p.m. until September 23, 1890. Plans and specifications can be seen by calling at the above place." (Ibid., September 18.)

An announcement on Thursday, October 9, gave reasons why the building was considerably more expensive than had been estimated in the beginning.

"The contract for the building of the new St. Joseph's Hospital had been awarded to the Madison Building Company of Eau Claire. The building will be of solid brick instead of be-
ing veneered as at first proposed. An addition, 14 x 26, will also be erected. This, too, will be of solid brick. The foundation has already been completed and the brick work will be begun this week. The contract calls for the completion of the building December 1." (Ibid., October 9, 1890.)

While the building of St. Joseph's Hospital took place, those Sisters of the Sorrowsful Mother assigned to begin the hospital at Marshfield resided at St. Mary's Hospital in Menomonie, Wisconsin. They had planned to leave for Marshfield in the beginning of December, because, according to the contract, the institution was to be ready for occupancy on December 1. But when it became evident that it would be impossible to have the hospital thus far completed by December 1, Father Geyer rented a two-story house—the residence of Mr. J.J. Dumas on the north side of the city, near St. John's Church—as a temporary hospital and convent for the Sisters.

On Tuesday, December 9, 1890, Mother M. Frances and the five Sisters appointed for St. Joseph's—Sisters M. Pia Hagemann, M. Anna Niegel, M. Seraphina Eberth, M. Kunigunda Groeber, and M. Willibrorda Link—bade farewell to their fellow Sisters at Menomonie. Carrying their heavy bundles, they walked to the little depot to wait for the local coach, which took them to Chippewa Falls, wherefrom they traveled by train to Marshfield.

Either Reverend Geyer or his representative was at the Marshfield depot to welcome the Sisters and to accompany them to their temporary home. Indeed, these God-consecrated, prudent virgins were planting in the Garden of Holy Mother Church the good seed which, ever since 1890, has brought forth fruit a hundredfold—spiritually, morally, physically, educationally, and socially. As these humble, zealous, and devoted young ladies walked toward their temporary residence in a prayerful and hopeful mood, they were, indeed, making history for their Community as well as for the city of Marshfield, Wisconsin.

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Having deposited their luggage at the rented house, the Sisters made their first visit to the parish church, St. John the Baptist, where, in the Eucharistic presence of the God-Man, they renewed their dedication, offering to God a pleasing sacrifice—their separation amid extreme poverty from parents, friends, native country, and their beloved motherhouse in Rome.

Refreshed and strengthened by Christ, the King and Ruler of the Universe, the Sisters returned to their temporary home, which they immediately began to arrange into a hospital and a convent. They also tried to get some secondhand furniture. The largest room on the first floor was arranged for five to six patients, and the small room next to it, for the Sisters' dining, sewing, and community room. There was also a small kitchen on the first floor. The second floor served as the Sisters' sleeping quarters.

On December 11, 1890, the Marshfield News announced that the Sisters had arrived and also that the temporary hospital could accommodate six patients. But since the patients were slow in coming, the Sisters, having ample experience in home nursing, assumed this charitable work, for which they received some food or about twenty-five cents a day.

On Monday, February 2, 1891, the Sisters moved from the frame house into the new building. The Marshfield News, always loyal to the Sisters, stated: "The Sisters of Mercy moved into the hospital on Monday, everything now being in its proper shape. They are ready to receive patients to the full capacity of the hospital." (Ibid., February 5, 1891.) Notice the terms "Sisters of Mercy" or "of Charity" being used without reference to any particular community.

On February 2, the day on which the Sisters at Marshfield moved into the newly built St. Joseph's Hospital, six of their fellow Sisters embarked at Antwerp on the Red Star Line. On February 12, these six Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother landed in New York, where a priest of the St. Raphael Society met them at the pier and conducted them to
the Leo House. There the Sisters had a good meal, concerning which Sister M. Eichfelder remarked, "Each of us received a big piece of beefsteak, almost as big as the plate. Coming from Rome, where we saw so little meat, we made 'big eyes.'" (Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda, Vol. II, p. 272.) The St. Raphael Society provided the Sisters with a good box lunch and helped them get started on their trip to Chicago, from where they traveled to Marshfield.

Since Mother Frances did not know the definite time of the Sisters' arrival at Marshfield, she could not make any arrangements about meeting them. "But God takes care of His own." When the Sisters arrived in Marshfield, about midnight, a farmer happened to be at the depot at that time. He told the Sisters that if there were no one coming for them, they should wait at the depot until he would come with his farm wagon. One of the Sisters remarked, "St. Joseph must have sent that good man to help us thus." The Sisters' arrival at the hospital caused much joy and excitement. Mother Frances was the first to welcome her spiritual daughters with the rubrical kiss of peace.

These Sisters—powerful pillars of the Community—who had come directly from Europe to Marshfield were Sisters M. Mechtildis Bauer, M. Agnes Eichfelder, M. Theresia Henneberger, M. Aloysia Morgenrooth, M. Rosa Krapp, and M. Salesia Rebhan. The newspaper commented as follows: "Six Sisters of Mercy arrived in the city on Saturday of last week (February 14). They are all trained nurses and were sent here to act in that capacity in the new hospital." (Marshfield News, February 19, 1891.)

Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, who spent over fifty years of her convent life at St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, Wisconsin, still, in her declining years, vividly remembered her first impressions of Marshfield, which she expressed to Sister M. Beda Hack in these words:

"Since the city had burned down four years before we started here, nothing but miserable
frame houses and a few old huts could be seen; even the stores, the church, and the school were poor frame buildings. Our hospital was built upon the worst piece of land, the whole of which consisted of hills, swamps, holes, and rocks." (Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, op. cit., p. 273.)

The cost generally given for the hospital at Marshfield was $12,000, which did not include the expenses of the basement, which was to serve as the convent. Sister M. Agnes specifically said, "The first St. Joseph's Hospital, built by Reverend Paul Geyer, cost $14,000. Reverend Mother Frances brought some of the money from Rome; the balance we borrowed here, and Father Geyer took care of the loan." (Ibid., p. 284.)

Sister M. Agnes tells us that the yearly interest, which the Sisters had to raise, brought about many worries and anxieties.

"Once I saw Sister M. Hildegard Ankenbrand and Sister M. Johanna Ankenbrand, who was the superior, weep because we had nothing with which to pay the dues. Did we pray! Our dear Lord heard our prayers by graciously sending us a man from Oshkosh who told us that, if we would take care of him for the rest of his life, he would give us all his money, which was about three to four hundred dollars. Now we could breathe freely for awhile.

"How we thanked God for this providential help! Sister M. Hildegard immediately brought the money to Father Geyer, who, greatly surprised, asked: 'Where did you get that from?"' (Ibid.)

Even after St. Joseph's Hospital had been built and the people were informed by means of the Marshfield News that the Sisters were well educated for hospital work and
were ready to receive patients, there was practically no response to their appeal. In those times most of the people were not used to hospitals. They preferred to have the Sisters come to their respective homes to nurse the sick and to help with the work in and around the house and farm as well, a service for which they paid the Sisters very little or no money but generously gave vegetables and food products from their gardens.

Since the sick refused to come to the hospital, the Sisters continued their works of charity in private homes. Sister M. Wendalina Bauer was a favorite nurse in Appleton, Wisconsin, where, for a long time, day and night, she nursed the wife of Judge Moeske. Among the many Sisters who sacrificed their health and lives in the service of the sick was Sister M. Irmina Hertel, who, nursing consumptives in and around Marshfield, contracted the disease herself and died on May 5, 1895.

By their humble and charitable works, the Sisters called down God's blessing upon themselves and their Community and firmly laid the foundation of St. Joseph's Hospital into the rocks of humility, charity, and poverty. The Sisters, being taught by the word and example of Mother Frances to love poverty and how to practice it, closely followed her footsteps. From the fact that the Sisters' prayers were heard so quickly and visibly, we can conclude quite safely that the life of poverty and complete trust in God which these pioneering Sisters led was most pleasing to our heavenly Father.

An experience of a few Sisters whom Sister M. Johanna Ankenbrand, the superior, sent to Menomonie in the summer or fall of 1892 in order to make the retreat scheduled to be given by Monsignor Jacquemin will illustrate how confidently the Sisters relied upon God in all their needs. Sister M. Johanna had given the Sisters enough traveling money for their trip to Menomonie; but, being unable to give them the money for their return trip, she told them that if they trust in the Lord, good St. Joseph would surely take care of them.
Now let us listen to Sister M. Agnes' report of their experience.

"We went by train from Marshfield to Chippewa Falls, where we had to wait for quite a while for the arrival of a little coach, which would bring us to Menomonie, as Chippewa Falls had no direct train connections to any place. While we Sisters were waiting patiently and praying, a woodsboy—a complete stranger to us—walked up to us after buying his train ticket and said: 'I have just come from the Sisters' hospital at Chippewa Falls and out of gratitude that I am well again, I will give you something.' Opening his pocketbook, he gave each of us a dollar, for which we were all very grateful, as it enabled us to return to Marshfield. We were also spared all that worry concerning our return-trip fare, for the Sisters at Menomonie were even poorer than we and would not have been able to give us traveling money. We were convinced that St. Joseph had sent this benefactor to us." (Ibid., pp. 293–294.)

In the fall of 1892 Reverend Father Joch, after having returned from Germany, where he had learned the Kneipp Water Cure, was appointed by Bishop Schwebach to help the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother at St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield. While still pastor at Auburndale, Wisconsin, he had already met the Sisters on several occasions, each time performing acts of charity in their behalf.

In the beginning of 1891, Reverend Joseph Joch was appointed extraordinary confessor of the Sisters at St. Joseph's Hospital. On his first visit to the Sisters, Father Joch met the Servant of God, Mother M. Frances Streitel, who made such a favorable impression upon him that it remained a lasting and delightful recollection for him. Mother Frances was also overjoyed to see Father Joch and, because he was continuously performing acts of charity for the Sisters, she wanted to give him something in return. But he
told her, "Mother, you have nothing for yourself." (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. I, p. 58.) However, he had to take a picture of St. Alphonsus, which decorated his room for some time.

According to the Bishop's appointment, Reverend Father Joch began his chaplainship and other duties at St. Joseph's on December 15, 1892. As he entered the house and set down his suitcases, he said, "Here I am." Concerning his welcome, he later remarked, "Such a hearty reception I never had in my life. I was received with open arms, figuratively speaking. Sister M. Johanna Ankenbrand did everything to make me feel at home." (Ibid.)

Father Joch expressly stated that he wanted the same food as was served to the Sisters, nothing extra or special. "I remember that twice he looked into our refectory to make sure that he was getting the same food as the Sisters received. However, Sister M. Agnes always knew how to smuggle something better on his table." (Sister M. Dyonisia Grieben, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda, Vol. III, p. 57)

Since there were very few patients at the hospital in 1891 and 1892, Father Joch started the ticket insurance system, which required of each lumberman the annual pay of five or ten dollars. In case of any sickness or accidents, those so insured received free care at the hospital; and if they did not need hospitalization throughout the year, the hospital was the beneficiary of the five or ten dollars. Sister M. Agnes tells us that there were not many lumberjack patients at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Early in the spring of 1893, Father Joch, pondering over the existing situation at St. Joseph's Hospital, beheld the gloomy picture which the empty hospital presented. The six per cent interest on the mortgage of $6,000 was due; and the Sisters, working from early morning until late in the evening, even nights if necessary, barely earned twenty-five cents a day. As he thus meditated, calling upon St. Joseph for help, an excellent idea struck him. Jumping from his chair, he said excitedly: "Why not
start a 'Water Cure,' and thus turn my knowledge into money to help the Sisters." (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. I, p. 59.)

Being a man of action, Father Joch immediately began to advertise widely. He summoned the Sisters together to teach them the principles of the Kneipp Water Cure. People, anxious to regain youthful health and strength, came from all over. Before the summer had passed, people had come from Minnesota, Nebraska, Illinois, and other states, and, of course, from Wisconsin. The Sisters no longer did private home nursing nor did they go out collecting, because they were all kept busy at home. Since the hospital could not accommodate all the Kneipp guests, provisions for board and lodging for many patients had to be secured in the city.

In the midst of the best success, tragedy set in, for soon the well, which supplied the water—the most important essential in the cure—went dry, and there was barely enough drinking water. Arrangements were made with the city to have water sent in street sprinklers to the hospital. This water was emptied into a cistern in the basement of the hospital, from which it was drawn up with pails for the treatments. The Sisters practiced the Water Cure treatments in this manner until, about a year later, the Honorable W. H. Upham, who was then the governor of Wisconsin and who had earlier been the mayor of Marshfield, donated pipes, which were connected with the city water. But since the nearest hydrant was about half a mile away, the Sisters had plenty of trouble before they could secure a right-of-way to lay the pipes.

During the first year of the Kneipp Water Cure at St. Joseph's Hospital, while everything was progressing quite smoothly and successfully, a terrible forest fire, which Father Joch describes very vividly, broke loose.

"During the summer of 1893, thousands of people of northern Wisconsin trembled and feared as to whether or not they would survive the terrible scourge of a forest fire that raged for weeks, destroying many cities and farms.
The flaming wall of fire swept southward, unhindered and unconquered by human efforts. For days the sun could not be seen; the air was so hot and saturated with smoke that the people could scarcely breathe. For many nights the crackling of fire and the noise of falling timber kept everyone awake. The Sisters watched the house for several nights and had a fire hose ready in case sparks would carry fire to their roof. It was then that they learned the meaning of fear and excitement. After about five weeks the danger disappeared and life returned to normalcy. The danger caused by the fire ran into millions of dollars. (Ibid.)

Referring to the fire, Sister M. Dyonisia remarked:

"People had to flee before the fire, which crawled along the grass and up the trees, devouring everything in its path. The farmers tried in vain to conquer the fire by digging ditches, but the flames simply jumped over these and continued their scourge. The priests blessed the air that the fire might stop. Oh, how we prayed in our chapel with outstretched arms." (Sister M. Dyonisia Griebel, op. cit., p. 56.)

Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder gives us a vivid description of how the fire was finally extinguished. In reading her report, let us bear in mind that the cemetery was just a little distance from St. Joseph's Hospital.

"We could see the fire jump from one tree-top to another, approaching nearer to our hospital, and thus making it impossible for our recovered Kneipp patients to return home. The people brought wagonloads of pails to us and were ready to defend their hospital at all costs. Neighbors brought their religious articles and other valuable things to us for custo-
dy, for they firmly believed that St. Joseph would protect his hospital. As danger was imminent, we offered constant prayers to God for help. The nearer the fire came to us, the more fervently everyone prayed. The fire had already reached the graveyard and had begun to burn the crosses which were near the large crucifix, where our Sisters' graves were at that time. Just as the fire had reached the grave of our Sister M. Hildegard Ankenbrand, threatening black clouds began to appear in the sky. Within a short time a terrific thunderstorm broke loose, causing complete darkness at 3:00 p.m. The storm was accompanied by torrents of rain, which put an end to the flames.

"With all this affliction a humorous incident occurred in connection with the terrible storm. One of our Kneipp patients, a feeble-minded man, had frequently predicted to his family and to us Sisters that in 1893 the world would go down. Now when he saw this fierce storm and the expressions of fear on many people's faces, he leaped with joy and was very happy because he was sure that his prophecy was being fulfilled. With the happiest smile he repeatedly said to his brother, who was his constant guard: 'Sixt Dus, Sixt Dus, hab ich nicht gesagt Anno Dreilundneunzig geht die Welt unter?' (Don't you see? Don't you see? Didn't I tell you that in 1893 the world is going down?) In the midst of our tribulation we had to laugh at his prediction, which thereafter became a popular saying around the hospital." (Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, op. cit., p. 281.)

Although the Kneipp Water Cure was very successful in Marshfield during the first two years, it was discontinued entirely, because the institution could not function both as a hospital and a sanatarium. Sister M. Agnes stated that many remarkable cures, of which she gives us one example, resulted from the Kneipp Water Cure.
"The many conspicuous cures established an envious reputation for St. Joseph's Hospital and drew patients from distant places. I remember that once a very sick lady from Stevens Point, who was so low that no one expected her to live, was brought to us on a stretcher. Having been given the respective Kneipp Wickels, etc., prescribed for her ailment, she recovered her health completely and returned home within a week." (Ibid., p. 280.)

Financially, the proceeds of the Kneipp Water Cure put the Sisters on their feet, and Monsignor Joch was able to finish the hospital in Marshfield, making it habitable for the Sisters and patients, and to pay the mortgage. Looking into the future for expansion, he started almost simultaneously the building of the hospital in Rhinelander and the one in Tomahawk. (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. I, p.60.)

The complete change of St. Joseph's Hospital from a hydrotherapy sanatorium to a general hospital was effected in 1895, when the doctors, fully realizing the benefit of a hospital within the city, urged the Sisters to use the institution exclusively for hospital activities. Since that time forward, the Sisters have taken it upon themselves to improve, expand, and keep on a par with the best which is available for a modern American hospital.

One of the first interests of Mother Frances, after having moved to the new St. Joseph's Hospital, was to equip the largest room on the second floor, which could accommodate about thirty persons, for a temporary chapel. As it had been decided to establish the American motherhouse and novitiate of the Community in Marshfield, Wisconsin, rather than in Wichita, Kansas, the enlargement of the chapel in St. Joseph's Hospital became an absolute necessity. In March, 1901, Mr. E. Brielmaier was engaged to make the plans for a new chapel and six additional rooms to the hospital, which Reverend Mother M. Johanna Ankenbrand, the superior general, requested to be built as cheaply as possible. After considerable negotiations, the building price
of $13,000 was agreed upon. Mr. E. Brielmaier and Sons generously helped by asking only two per cent for this plan.

Work was begun as soon as the plans were completed. Sister M. Agnes says: "While the good farmers were busy bringing stones to us, we Sisters were not idle; but, taking pickaxes and other suitable tools, we dug up all the stones which we could find in our woods to be used for the foundation." (Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, op. cit., p. 286.)

On the day of the cornerstone laying, a picnic was held on the wooded slopes east of the hospital. The Sisters served homemade ice cream and cookies to a large crowd, which had gathered from the city. There were so many people that the supply of refreshments was quickly diminished. While the Sisters were wondering how and where to get more food, a sudden thunderstorm arose, dispersing the crowd and saving the Sisters from the embarrassment of disclosing that the provisions were exhausted.

The proceeds of the picnic, which amounted to several hundreds of dollars, helped to complete the beautiful Gothic chapel, which was dedicated to the Sorrowful Mother by the Most Reverend Bishop Schwebach on May 12, 1902. Mother M. Johanna had asked the Sisters to pray that it would not rain on the day of the dedication; it did not rain, it snowed! After dinner the Most Reverend James Schwebach and the priests who had been present at the ceremonies visited the Sisters in their new refectory, which was directly beneath the chapel. The Bishop talked in a very fatherly manner to the Sisters and gave each of them a holy picture.

As was mentioned before, it had been decided that the American Motherhouse and novitiate be in connection with St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, Wisconsin. Therefore, soon after the chapel had been completed, Reverend Mother M. Johanna and her council seriously considered the erection of a convent in order to provide facilities for the necessary administration of the Community and for the education and formation of the novices.
St. Mary's Convent, as the building was called, was begun in 1907 and completed in 1908 at the cost of $50,000. It comprised the southeast wing of the hospital. On February 2, 1908—the seventeenth anniversary of Mother Frances and the other Sisters' transferring from the rented house to the first new building of St. Joseph's Hospital—the Sisters moved into their American Motherhouse. The novitiate proper was on the third and fourth floors, the school department and the professed Sisters' rooms on the second floor. The chaplain's department, separated from the other convent departments, was directly connected with the chapel on the first floor. The refectories, the culinary department, and the laundry were in the basement, which had large windows above the ground.

In 1909 another wing, which provided more rooms for patients, a new operating room, and two surgical dressing rooms, was added on the northwest corner of the building along St. Joseph's Street. At this time the hospital's first elevator was also installed.

The convent school, which provided higher education for the Sisters, novices, and candidates, was formally opened in the beginning of September, 1908. Since it was impossible for Sister M. Boniface Goetz, Vicaress of Reverend Mother M. Johanna, to get a teacher from a religious community, she engaged Miss Mary Sheran—a well-qualified teacher highly recommended by the Jesuits at Mankato—to teach at the convent school for three years. The pioneer students of the convent school during the first year—from September, 1908 to 1909—under the direction of Miss Mary Sheran were the following: Sister M. Beda Hack, the only professed Sister; and Sisters M. Theophora Mayer, M. Damascena Sonntag, M. Donata Kerschen, M. Eligia Ruth, M. Rufina Hengl, M. Wencesla Bezdek, M. Kiliana Jakubowski, M. Natalia Brunn, M. Simplicia Weber, and M. Albertina Eckel.

Sister M. Coletta Eberth, who had been appointed novice mistress in the summer of 1904 by Mother M. Johanna, assisted Miss Mary Sheran in teaching the preparatory classes of candidates and novices. For several years she had
taught in Kansas in the parish schools of St. Joseph's, Ost, and St. Mary's, Aleppo.

In 1911, after the completion of the three years of teaching at St. Mary's Convent, Miss Mary Sheran went to St. Joseph's Orphanage with Sisters M. Beda Hack and M. Damascena Sonntag. These two Sisters did practice teaching under her supervision. Sister M. Imelda Ulmer, who had taught the upper grades at the orphanage, became the instructor at the convent school in Marshfield. Those Sisters who were considerably advanced in school continued their studying by correspondence courses at the Carnegie Institute.

In the summer of 1913, at the recommendation and influence of Right Reverend Monsignor Jacquemin, the Sisters began to attend summer school at the State Teachers' Normal School in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. This big step forward prepared the way for further higher education for the Sisters. From that time on, it became a custom in the Community that the teaching Sisters attend summer school at some college or normal school each year.

Already in 1913, the Sisters who were preparing to be teachers wrote the county examinations for teachers' certificates. Frequently during the summer months priests or Sisters from other religious communities were invited to teach courses in various subjects such as art, music, or psychology to the Sisters, novices, and postulants at the convent.

In 1913 two new stories—a third and fourth floor—were added to the original building of St. Joseph's Hospital—half of the third floor was a screened porch built along the whole south side of the building to provide sleeping quarters for those Sisters who desired to sleep in the fresh air; the other half was for hospital use. The fourth floor provided more dormitories for the Sisters.

An extensive building program was undertaken in 1918—the erection of a 42 x 142 southwest wing and a new unit.
north of the chapel. In this new project the following departments were included—X-ray rooms, operating rooms, laboratory and maternity departments, hydrotherapy and electrotherapy rooms, powerhouse, a laundry, isolation rooms, sun parlors, and new schoolrooms for the nurses.

St. Joseph's School of Nursing, which dates back to 1914, was accredited by the state of Wisconsin in 1915. Twelve Sisters were enrolled in the first class of the three-year nursing course, of which Sister M. Bartholomea Betzen was the superintendent and instructress. Sisters M. Cosma Klein, M. Rosalinda Schreiber, and M. Julitta Beck graduated in May, 1918, and Sisters M. Henrica Schoepflein, M. Leandra Senft, M. Blanche Bezdek, M. Olga Christoph, M. Placida Dusold, and M. Humilitas Heinrich, in 1919. The first lay students were enrolled in 1917.

The Sisters did not have a full-time chaplain from 1891 to 1893, but the Blessed Sacrament was kept in the hospital chapel. Frequently visiting priests remained at the hospital for quite awhile, and thus the Sisters had holy Mass in their chapel almost daily. But if this was not the case, they had to go to holy Mass at St. John's Church, which was about a mile from the hospital. However, after a few critical years, the bishop of the diocese provided full-time chaplains, whose work was to visit the patients, to assist them in their hours of agony, and to administer the holy sacraments to them. We wish to mention here a few of the many chaplains who faithfully served God in the hospital.

Reverend Anton Joesambre, who came to St. Joseph's Hospital in 1902, was not only a very pious and zealous priest but also a skillful mechanic. He helped the Sisters in carrying out early building projects in Marshfield, Roswell, and Wichita by making the plans and supervising the construction. Besides performing his priestly duties in Marshfield, he did a great amount of artistic carpentry work, such as making and designing altars and reliquaries for the hospital chapel.
Reverend Joehren was a noble character—upright, peace-loving, and simple in his ways. Every penny which he could afford to save he put aside for poor seminarians and other charitable purposes. His love and conscientious practice of poverty were outstanding and noticeable in his daily life. For example, in sharpening his pencil with a knife, he was careful not to break the lead, for, as he said, if it did break, a poor seminarian was deprived of help from him.

When in 1921, the old Marienburg convent at Abenberg, near Nuernberg, Bavaria, was renovated and partly rebuilt, Father Joehren gladly accepted Reverend Mother M. Johanna's offer to become chaplain and spiritual director at this new novitiate of the Community.

Reverend Father Joehren became seriously sick a few days before Christmas, 1927, and died on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 27. It was a privilege for this good priest, who truly had a genuine and childlike devotion to the Christ Child, to be called to his eternal reward during the octave of Christmas.

Reverend John M. Thill, chaplain of St. Joseph's Hospital from 1914 to 1917, not only took care of the spiritual welfare of the patients in the hospital but also gave well-organized conferences on the spiritual life to the young Sisters, novices, and candidates. He gave a solid, practical course in pedagogy to those Sisters preparing to teach in public and parochial schools and also taught Spanish to those Sisters preparing to teach in the missions of New Mexico.

Although Reverend John M. Thill was no longer connected with the Community after 1917, the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother who had been recipients of his inspiring spiritual instructions at St. Joseph's Hospital still remember him in prayer.

By Divine Providence the Sisters at the motherhouse in Milwaukee became acquainted with Father Thill in 1951.
One day in November, the Sister who was table reader announced, "This is the beginning of the book GOD'S FRIENDSHIP by N.N., translated by Reverend John M. Thill." About this time the Community urgently desired a biography of Rt. Rev. Msgr. George Jacquemin. When some of the Sisters who had known Reverend Thill heard his name, ideas and inspirations immediately shot through their minds. Since Father Thill had become acquainted with Msgr. Jacquemin when he was chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital, the Sisters unanimously agreed that he would be the right man to ask to undertake the difficult and painstaking work of writing the biography of Monsignor Jacquemin. Although Father Thill was seventy-eight years old when asked to do this favor, he did not refuse the Sisters' petition. He started the biography in 1952 and continued to work on it until 1958 when, because of poor health, he had to give it up, having had a great part of the biography completed.

Reverend John M. Thill will always be remembered by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother for the conscientious, devoted, and self-sacrificing labors he has done for the Community.

Reverend Herman Joseph Untraut was chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital from November, 1920, until his retirement about 1932. He resigned as chaplain but remained at the hospital, where he died on August 23, 1941. He took great interest in the religious education and development of the candidates and novices. He taught sacred liturgy to all the members of the convent and introduced the Missa Recitata in the convent chapel long before this form of praying the Mass had become popular. Being an excellent musician, he also taught Gregorian chant to the Sisters. He regretted very much the transfer of the novitiate of the Community to Milwaukee in the spring of 1927.

In 1936 the original building of St. Joseph's Hospital, which was the very first building erected by the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, was razed. The six rooms which had been added to the building in 1901 and the third and fourth floors, which had been built in 1913, were
On Wednesday, June 1, 1949, in appropriate ceremonies, highlighted by a pontifical high Mass, His Excellency, the Most Reverend John P. Treacy, Bishop of the La Crosse Diocese, formally dedicated the new million-and-a-half-dollar wing of St. Joseph's Hospital.

After the Mass, Bishop Treacy, addressing a few remarks to those assembled in the chapel, said that, as the shepherd of the diocese, he had a tremendous responsibility of providing people with the means of saving their souls. "With an institution of this kind, it relieves me of the apprehension for the sick and the dying." He also cited the works of mercy performed by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother in their hospital and by the chaplain who cares for the sick in the institution. Following the ceremonies, the Bishop blessed each floor of the new hospital wing.

For many years St. Joseph's School of Nursing was confronted with the space problem regarding the nurses' auditorium and the nursing arts room. Toward the end of 1953 the old gymnasium was converted into a new nursing arts room with a seating capacity for sixty students. This room, which is equipped with a complete hospital unit for demonstrations, has chairs arranged on elevated floors so that the demonstrations can be given more easily. The new auditorium—an entirely new building—has a seating capacity of about five hundred persons. The floor beneath the auditorium provides additional recreation rooms, kitchenette and lounge facilities.

On July 1, 1956, the Feast of the Precious Blood, St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing, having reached the hard-worked-for goal, received the National Accreditation of the school.

In order to bring the patients closer to God and motivate them to suffer patiently for the love of God and their immortal soul, St. Joseph's Hospital has adopted the custom of saying a common morning and evening prayer over the loud speaker. This project was approved by the Bishop of La Crosse in November, 1952. Another project which the Sisters
introduced is the liberal and well-organized distribution of religious pamphlets among the patients.

Some of our Community saints, known to God alone, might have inspired Sister M. Laurentina Thimm to enlarge the original chapel of St. Joseph's Hospital, which work was done in 1950 with the hearty approval of the superiors in Rome and Milwaukee. The chapel of St. Joseph's Hospital, built in 1902, having been the first spiritual powerhouse erected in the Community, and having served as the American Motherhouse chapel until 1927, when the central house of the Community was transferred to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is highly revered and valued by the Community.

At St. Joseph's Hospital chapel hundreds of Sisters were received into the Community at holy investiture and have made their temporary and perpetual vows before its beautiful Gothic altar. Whenever Monsignor Jacquemin, the Community's spiritual director for thirty-five years, was in Marshfield, he offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in this devotional chapel. He daily spent many hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and there gave many holy retreats to the Sisters. In this holy sanctuary Mother M. Johanna Ankenbrand, the second Mother General, spent many hours, day and night, before the Eucharistic King of heaven and earth. In this sacred place, too, Mother Mary Wendelina Bauer and Sister M. Boniface Goetz, each as Commissary General of the Community, and Sister M. Coletta Eberth, as Novice Mistress, received grace and strength from above for the manifold duties of their offices. Since the beginning of St. Joseph's Hospital, hundreds of Sisters have prayed in its chapel, which is very dear to the Community. It is a consoling thought to realize that in our materialistic age the Community has preserved this shrine, so sacred to the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.
Chaplains of St. Joseph's Hospital


Superiors of St. Joseph's Hospital

Sister M. Pia Hagemann, 1890-1892; Sister M. Johanna Ankenbrand, 1892-1894; Sister M. Sophronia Spehl, 1894-1897; Reverend Mother M. Johanna Ankenbrand, 1897-1899; Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, 1899-1903; Sister M. Boniface Goetz, 1903-1906; Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, 1906-1908; Sister M. Boniface Goetz, Vicaress, 1908-1912; Sister M. Wendelina Bauer, Vicaress, 1912-1916; Sister M. Boniface Goetz, 1916-1922; Sister M. Ernaesinda Goetz, 1922-1924; Sister Mary Immaculata Arendt, 1924-1928; Sister M. Cyriaca Goetz, 1928; Sister M. Margaret Margraf, 1929-1934; Sister M. Rosalinda Schreiber, 1934-1940; Sister M. Trenaeia Wittmann, 1940-1945; Sister M. Laurentina Thimm, 1945-1951; Sister Mary Oswaldina Nutz, 1951-1957; Sister M. Walberta Vasold, 1957-1959; Sister M. Carola Seidl, 1959-
In 1892 the Most Reverend Bishop Schwebach appointed Reverend Father Joch chaplain of St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield, Wisconsin, and helper of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother. He assumed his duties on December 15, 1892.
Reverend Paul Geyer invited the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother to begin a hospital in Marshfield, Wisconsin, where he was pastor until May, 1892.

Reverend John Eisen was pastor of St. John's parish, Marshfield, Wisconsin, from May, 1892, until his sudden death in August, 1899. He was a great friend and benefactor of the Sisters at St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield.
GROWTH OF ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL, MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN
The chapel of St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield, Wisconsin, was the first chapel built in the Community. It has been enlarged, but its original Gothic style has been preserved.
In 1936 the original building of St. Joseph’s Hospital built in 1890 (center) was razed and a modern four-story structure was erected.
In 1946 a three-year building program began at St. Joseph's Hospital. It included the erection of the north wing and the remodeling of the older buildings.
This is the architect's air view of how St. Joseph's Hospital will look after the building program begun in 1960 is completed.
These two pictures were taken in 1958. The white garb is worn by the Sisters engaged in hospital activities and similar duties.
Directors of the School of Nursing


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Chapter XII

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN
1891

When Reverend Roman Scholter—pastor of St. Mary's Parish, Oshkosh, Wisconsin—heard that German Sisters, who had come from Rome, Italy, had started a hospital in Menomonie and were building one in Marshfield, Wisconsin, he hoped that now his heart's desire would soon be fulfilled; namely, to have, in Oshkosh, a hospital owned and conducted by Sisters.

In February, 1891, Father Scholter, a man of an imposing personality, resolute and earnest in all his endeavors, called upon Mother Frances, the Superior General of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, who was then at the Community's new hospital on the outskirts of Marshfield. He pleaded earnestly with Mother Frances, prevailing upon her to send Sisters to Oshkosh as soon as possible in order to begin a hospital there. He explained that the city of Oshkosh, with a population of over 17,000 people—the third largest city in the state of Wisconsin—should have a general hospital conducted by Sisters.

Mother M. Frances, listening most sympathetically, replied that as much as she wished to acquiesce to his request she could not do so, because the Community would be unable, at that time, to begin a fourth hospital. She explained that the three hospitals—St. Francis', Wichita; St. Joseph's, Marshfield; and St. Mary's, Menomonie—having been established within the last two years, were still struggling for their very existence. Mother Frances further explained that the Community had neither enough Sisters nor the money to begin a fourth hospital; and if there would be Sisters available, she stated, they ought first to receive the proper education, especially as far as the English language was concerned.
But Father Scholter, a person with an indomitable will, continued to plead his cause and gave his reasons why the Community should accept the offer; namely, because the Church in America was in great need of the charitable works of religious; there were many souls to be saved and God's honor and glory to be enhanced. After carefully weighing this matter and recommending it to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the Blessed Mother, and St. Joseph, Mother Frances promised that the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother would begin a hospital in Oshkosh.

Father Scholter had assured Mother Frances that he would secure the four lots opposite St. Mary's School and Church in Oshkosh, on the corner of Merritt and Boyd Streets, on which stood an old two-story building, known as the Koebbler building, which formerly had been used as a store and saloon. The Community paid $6,074.71 for the land and building. For the beginning it was planned to convert this house into a temporary hospital.

It is of interest here to state the concern and interest which the public showed in this new enterprise through the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern.

"The City Hospital: The work of changing the Koebbler building on Merritt Street into a hospital will be begun this week, and it is hoped to have the hospital ready for the reception of patients by April. The Sisters of the Mater Dolorosa Order will have charge of it." (The Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, February 23, 1891, p. 4)

"The Mother Superior of the Mater Dolorosa Order is expected to reach Oshkosh this week to look over the house on Merritt Street, which is to be changed into a hospital, and to determine what changes are to be made. The motherhouse of the Order is at Wichita, Kansas, but the Sisters will come here from Marshfield, where a new hospital has been built."
"No extensive changes will be made in the building at present. The rooms and halls will be rearranged to make them suitable for hospital purposes. It is thought that the accommodation of the hospital will be in the neighborhood of twenty patients. Father Scholter says that the hospital will be, in every sense, a city hospital. It will be supported by no church or sect, and patients of all classes will be admitted. They (the patients) will be expected to pay for their nursing. Father Scholter says that some means will be found for taking care of those who are unable to pay.

"The doctors of this city are interesting themselves in the scheme, and there is no doubt that Oshkosh will have another successful hospital within a short time." (Ibid., February 25, 1891, p. 4.)

Under the guidance of St. Joseph, Mother M. Frances, Sister M. Scholastica Demer, and Sister M. Alphonsa Boell came to Oshkosh on Wednesday, February 25, 1891, to plant the seed of the new passion flower of St. Mary's Hospital, the Community's fourth mission in America.

Sister M. Alphonsa gives us a graphic picture of their first evening at the new mission.

"We left Marshfield in the morning and arrived in Oshkosh toward evening, finding an empty house. We had no bed, no table, no chairs, not even any dishes, except the three yellow crock earthenware and the spoons which we had brought along for each of us! We sat on boxes in the little hut which was built on to the house to eat the lunch which we had brought with us from Marshfield. We spread the three blankets, which we had also brought from Marshfield, on the floor for our night's rest." (Sister M. Alphonsa Boell, Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, Vol. III, p. 11.)
On the day after the Sisters' arrival, the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern carried the following report.

"...The Mother Superior of the Order of Mater Dolorosa and her secretary reached Oshkosh yesterday. They looked over the building on Merritt Street which will be used for a hospital and decided upon the changes necessary to make it suitable for the purpose. The work of remodeling and building will be begun immediately....As soon as it is determined that the hospital will be a success, a larger building will be erected. Father Scholter will have charge of the work until the building is ready to be turned over to the Sisters.

"The Sisters of the Order of Mater Dolorosa devote themselves exclusively to the care of the sick. They work in hospitals and also nurse patients in their own homes when called upon to do so. Their garbs are of ash-gray color with black cloaks." (Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, February 26, 1891, p. 4.)

A few days after Mother Frances and the first Sisters had arrived in Oshkosh, the other Sisters whom Mother M. Frances had appointed for Oshkosh also came—Sisters M. Boniface Goetz, M. Gabriela Ortlieb, M. Salesia Rebhan, and M. Anna Niegel. All the Sisters helped together diligently to clean, scrub, and prepare the two-story building for occupancy.

Father Scholter, an excellent organizer and businessman, directed the Sisters in the remodeling of the building and, in many practical ways, helped to make the building a suitable hospital. A hot-air furnace, a water system, and bathrooms were installed. The Sisters bought furniture and beds at an expense of about $2,980, which was paid with the money obtained from loans and collections. Reverend Scholter donated $600. This first frame building could accommodate about fifteen patients, the first of whom was a
tuberculosis patient, who came on Wednesday, March 11, 1891.

The Sisters were happy to have Mother Frances with them during their first days. Oh, her virtuous example! She, the refined, the unassuming, humble, and well-educated lady, worked so peacefully and joyfully side by side with the Sisters that all were inspired to make any sacrifice in a cheerful manner, no matter how hard it might have been for human nature.

Let us pause here for a moment to reflect on that colossal amount of work which Mother Frances, with a small group of Sisters—all emigrants from Europe—had accomplished during her first visit to America, which was a ten-month stay.

On May 17, 1890, Mother Frances arrived in America to encourage, direct, and help the first group of Sisters, who were struggling in extreme poverty to make a go of the first mission established in America.

In October, 1890, Mother Frances personally, with a few Sisters, founded the second mission of the Community, St. Mary's Hospital, Menomonie, Wisconsin, by converting a poorhouse into a hospital. In December of that same year, we see her, accompanied by a group of devoted Sisters, going from Menomonie to Marshfield, Wisconsin, to lay the foundation of a third hospital.

In the beginning of 1891, Mother Frances made arrangements for her return trip to Europe. Before leaving America, however, she began the Community's fourth mission, St. Mary's Hospital in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. After about a week's stay with the Sisters at St. Mary's, she traveled to New York, accompanied by Sister M. Columba Gries, and on March 14, 1891, returned via Norddeutscher Lloyd to Europe, arriving in Bremen, Germany, on March 23. Sister M. Columba remained in Germany for a longer time for the purpose of recruiting vocations. On April 3, Mother Frances, with two postulants, arrived at the Motherhouse in Rome.
Now let us return to our report on St. Mary's Hospital by again referring to the interest shown through the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern.

"St. Mary's Hospital—The New Institution on Merritt Street Will Soon Be Opened: The work of arranging the building for the new hospital was begun yesterday.... It will be named St. Mary's Hospital. It is intended to use the present building only long enough to try the plan. As soon as the hospital proves to be a success, a new building, equipped as a model hospital, will be erected large enough for the future as well as the present." (Ibid., March 5, 1891, p. 4.)

Although the Sisters tried their best to make St. Mary's Hospital appear clean and inviting, the sick people of Oshkosh, not being used to hospitals, were slow in coming. Since the patients did not come to the hospital, the Sisters, as was the case in the beginning of the other Community missions, nursed the sick in private homes, where they were generally expected to do other work besides, such as the cooking, the housework, and the taking care of the children. For the purpose of raising their own vegetables and fruits, the Sisters cultivated the fertile piece of land between the hospital and St. Mary's rectory.

The Dominican Sisters of Racine, who were teaching at St. Mary's School, came to the little hospital several times each week to teach the Sisters English.

It had been deeply impressed upon each Sister, beginning in the novitiate, that the work of God is always replete with crosses of every kind—humiliations, apparent failures, disappointments, mortifications, and so forth. This was also the pattern God had designed for the Sisters in their work of establishing St. Mary's Hospital in Oshkosh. Its foundation was one of sacrifices and difficulties of every description. However, this did not, in the least, discourage the Sisters nor make them unhappy; for, having
surrendered themselves entirely to God, they realized that they were instruments in His hands and that eventually everything would turn out for God's greater honor and glory and the salvation of souls.

In order to pay the debts which were accumulated when buying the property for the hospital and when remodeling the old frame building for use as a hospital, the Sisters were forced to beg for alms. In the following letter, which is a translation of the original kept on file at the chancery office of the Green Bay Diocese, the Sisters asked permission to collect alms. The letter is addressed to the Most Reverend Sebastian G. Messmer, who, from March, 1892, to November, 1903, was ordinary of the Green Bay Diocese. This letter did not have a personal signature.

Oshkosh, October 3, 1892

Most Reverend Bishop:

Your Excellency has kindly promised Msgr. George Jacquemin, our spiritual director, that we Sisters may collect in the diocese of Green Bay in order to pay our debts. Since this time after the harvest seems favorable, may we humbly ask you for a letter of recommendation.

We promise to pray daily for Your Excellency and also to keep our holy vows with fervor to make ourselves worthy of the benefits which God gives us through Your Excellency.

Asking for your episcopal blessing, we remain

In highest esteem of Your Excellency,

Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother

Let us objectively view hospital conditions at Oshkosh about 1891 when St. Mary's Hospital had made its appear-

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ance, hoping to be recognized and patronized. In general the public opinion was that a paid nurse would not have the interest and patience to give proper care to the sick, and hence the majority of the people avoided hospitals. To many people hospitals were taboo.

From the recollections of some of the Sisters who were active at St. Mary's Hospital during its earlier years, we learn that several doctors conducted small hospitals of their own in Oshkosh, to which they admitted patients in order to perform their operations. From the Oshkosh Centennial we learn that there have been doctors active in Oshkosh since 1881. Dr. Bernard Charles Gudden, who came to Oshkosh in 1881, had his own frame-building hospital, known as the German American Hospital. North of the city on Jackson Drive Road, Dr. Charles W. Oviatt, a surgeon who came to Oshkosh in 1887, opened the Maple Lodge Hospital in the ten-room Wakefield house, which had a bed capacity of fifteen and was used primarily for operations. Soon after his arrival in Oshkosh in 1903, Dr. M.E. Corbett secured a small frame building, which was given the title Lakeside Sanatorium.

Bearing in mind that, as we have mentioned before, the majority of the people were not interested in going to hospitals and that some of the doctors were conducting their own institutions, it does not surprise us that the Sisters' hospital was, more or less, disregarded during the first few years. But gradually both the doctors and the people discovered that the Sisters, having consecrated their entire life to God in the practice of Christian charity, had something to give which was above the natural realm of things. Doctors began to bring their patients to the Sisters' hospital, who, when once under the Sisters' care, remained loyal to them in every respect.

From the following letter, copied from the original on file at the chancery of the Green Bay Diocese, we learn that the Sisters had a considerable amount of difficulties in getting priests to attend to the spiritual needs of the patients.
Most Reverend Bishop:

Your Excellency knows that we have a hospital in Oshkosh, and it is self-evident that the sick and the dying should be given the opportunity to receive the holy sacraments. Since we do have considerable difficulties in this regard and have, without any success, repeatedly asked priests to do us the favor of administering the holy sacraments to the sick, we consider it our sacred duty to refer this matter to Your Excellency.

Until now Reverend Father Scholter has taken care of our German patients....(But the Sisters could not get any priest for those patients who did not know the German language.) Therefore, may we ask Your Excellency to appoint a priest who could take care of all of our patients, the German and the English-speaking ones.

May we present a second petition to Your Excellency. Until the present we did not have an extraordinary Father confessor. I think that Reverend Father Joch, who is with our Sisters at St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, would be willing to do this if he would receive the permission of Your Excellency.

We shall greatly appreciate Your Excellency's help in these matters. May the Sorrowful Mother guide us so that in all things God's holy will be done....

Yours very respectfully,

The Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother
Sister M. Boniface
Soon the small makeshift hospital, which could accommodate fifteen patients, became too small; and, although there was no money, it was decided to build a new hospital. The Architect Stevens of Oshkosh was engaged to make the plans for the new hospital, which, being eighty feet by forty feet, would have a capacity of about twenty-five to thirty-five patients. Father Scholter, an exceptionally good businessman, especially in regard to architectural and constructional work, hired the laborers and mechanics and also supervised the work. Father Joch was thus relieved of this heavy burden and could devote his time to the two hospitals of the Community at Rhinelander and Tomahawk, which he had started in 1893.

On September 4, 1894, ground was broken for the new St. Mary's Hospital, and eight days later the first stone was laid. From the chronicle of St. Mary's Hospital we learn that the new 1894 building cost $24,355, which, at that time, was considered a large sum of money. Reverend Joseph Joch tried to take up loans but had a hard time because when he was asked, What is your security? he could offer none. (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. I, p. 84.)

On July 1, 1895, Monsignor Jacquemin blessed the new building privately, and the Sisters moved into the new hospital in order to help with the interior work. On October 3, the vigil of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Msgr. Jacquemin celebrated the first holy Mass in the hospital chapel, which was dedicated to the Sorrowful Mother on November 17, without any solemnities whatsoever, by the Most Reverend S. G. Messmer.

The Oshkosh Daily Northwestern gives us a detailed description of this first new St. Mary's Hospital, built by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother in 1894.

"St. Mary's Hospital--A Model Institution: To minister to the needs of humanity, as a physician does, is one of the most sacred of human occupations, and at the doctor's right hand stands the hospital worker. Oshkosh is more
fortunate than many cities of its size in its possession of expert hospitals. Prominent among them is St. Mary's, for which a spacious and new, elegant building has just been erected on Merritt Street. It is almost an ideal hospital. The rooms are large, light, and airy and are arranged with a view to perfect comfort and convenience.

"The Arrangement and Attendant Facilities: In the basement of the hospital are the laundry, kitchen, pantry and dining room, and the boiler room, the entire house being heated by hot water. The basement also houses a large bathroom, where the Kneipp water cure will be given. On the first floor are situated the office, the large parlors, and some of the rooms which will be devoted to the patients. Located on the second floor is the minor operating room, which opens directly out of the drug room, and further down the hall is a room where the more dangerous operations will be performed. The chapel, with its stained glass windows, lends an air of sacredness to the second floor.

"The third floor is devoted to private rooms and wards. In the babies' ward are little white iron bedsteads, entirely enclosed, that the wee ones cannot fall out. All the rooms are furnished with bedsteads of white enameled iron, relieved by brass railings and knobs. The fourth floor is as pleasant as any, commanding a fine view of the city and the lake. The Sisters' dormitory is a large, airy room, ascetic in the plainness of its furnishings.

"To perfect the arrangement of the house, an elevator has been put in, and a dumb-waiter running from the kitchen to the top story was also installed. On each floor is a bell indicator and speaking tube. The closets and bathrooms,
with their granite basins and porcelain tubs, are convenient to all the rooms. All the floors are hard wood, and the walls are calcimined.

"The Hospital Force: Owing to the increased facilities for surgical operations, Doctors Oviatt and Mixer will move the department to St. Mary's and will convert Maple Lodge into a sanitarium for nervous diseases....

"Ten Sisters of the Order of the Sorrowful Mother, who came here four years ago, act as nurses at St. Mary's Hospital, Sister Boniface being the Mother Superior. The following is the personnel of the hospital staff: Attending physicians are Doctors M. E. Corbett, M. D.; Wm. F. Wegge, M.D.; and Harvey Dale, M.D. Attending surgeons; Doctors C.W. Oviatt, M.D. and M. E. Corbett, M.D.; assistant surgeon, Dr. E. R. Wilson, M.D.; attending neurologist, Dr. Wm. F. Wegge, M.D.; oculists and aurists, Doctors W. E. Searles, M.D. and L. P. Allen, M.D.; consulting staff, Doctors H. M. Mixer, M.D., H. B. Dale, M.D., and J. C. Noyes, M.D. The success of the hospital is assured; it is an ideal sanitarium. The staff of nurses and physicians is an efficient one, and the building itself is perfect in every respect." (Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, June 22, 1895, p. 2.)

In regard to the Sisters' education, it is generally asked, Where and how did the early pioneering Sisters receive their nursing education? Some of the Sisters who had a first-class nursing education in Germany before their entrance in Rome taught the other Sisters. At Marshfield Sister M. Xaveria Niederbruckner, an exceptionally well-educated nurse and an excellent practical teacher in all the nursing subjects, taught Sister M. Bartholomea Betzen and many other Sisters before they came to Oshkosh.
About 1895, when Sister M. Boniface Goetz, an efficient manager and prudent leader, assumed the duties of superior at St. Mary's Hospital, the impressive new building was attracting the attention and interest of the physicians and many people as well. The public was beginning to realize that it was a blessing from God to have a hospital in their city conducted by women who had dedicated themselves solely to the spiritual and physical welfare of suffering mankind.

When Dr. Charles W. Oviatt, the best surgeon and medical doctor in the city, became a member of St. Mary's Hospital staff in 1894, he brought great prestige to the institution and attracted other physicians as well. He was a personal friend of the Mayo brothers, William and Charles, who were as famous in Rochester and beyond the state of Minnesota as Dr. Oviatt was in Oshkosh and beyond the state of Wisconsin. Because of the wonderful success he had in his medical work, patients came to him from far and near.

Dr. Oviatt used to say that he had no faith. But he was so generous, charitable, and just in his dealings with the sick that the Sisters who daily worked with him were convinced that gradually he would receive the gift of faith, for God is never outdone in generosity. In her recollections Sister M. Assunta Janssen said the following about Dr. Oviatt.

"He had lofty ideals, being heart and soul for his vocational work. His patient was a person who needed a doctor; that principle was his guiding star. It made no difference to him whether the individual was a pauper or a millionaire. His loyalty to his patients was an outstanding characteristic.

"Long after his death, the other doctors used to tell how kind he was to the poor. When he had patients who could not pay, he used to say: 'Never mind, we will lay that up where neither rust nor moths can eat it.'" (Sister M. Assunta, Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, Vol. IV, p.47.)
During his first months at St. Mary's Hospital, Dr. Oviatt was opposed to the Sisters' praying so much because he was of the opinion that thus they were neglecting the patients. But he soon found out by actual experience that the very opposite was true and he began to take a great interest in their spiritual life. On September 1, 1901, when Sisters M. Cornelia Springob, M. Lioba Hildebrand, and M Dyonisia Griebel made perpetual vows, for which occasion he had bought all the flowers for the chapel, he was already in chapel at 5:00 a.m., an hour before the ceremonies began. He was deeply touched by the sublime and impressive celebration.

Dr. Oviatt was quite impulsive. It was not unusual for him to scold about something one moment and to be all smiles the next. Once in the forenoon he had an argument with Sister M. Clotildis Paul, the Superior, and in the afternoon when he returned to visit his patients, he stuck his head into Sister Superior's office and said: "Is she here?" Smiling, they shook hands and everything was as good as ever.

Sister M. Dyonisia Griebel relates the following incident concerning Dr. Oviatt.

"On the floor for which I was responsible, we had a lady about forty-eight years old who, because of kidney trouble, had to be catheterized three times a day. Once when I took care of this, the glass tube broke in the bladder and remained there. Dr. Oviatt, who had gone for his week-end outing, could not be consulted. Sister M. Cornelia Springob, the Superior, very frightenly said, 'Pray, that's all we can do.'

"With outstretched arms I prayed to the Infant Jesus of Prague. I gave warm Zinnkraut tea to the Lady three times a day. Oh, the power of prayer! On the third day the lady passed water, which she had not been able to do for a long time, and the broken piece of
glass, consisting of half the catheter, passed also. From that time on the lady was well and soon afterwards went home, never finding out what had happened. When Dr. Oviatt had heard this, he was surprised and kept the catheter, bearing a label on which the remarkable story was related. From this time forward Dr. Oviatt believed in prayer and Zinnkraut tea! How often did he say, 'I wish I had the faith you have.'" (Sister M. Dyonisia Griebel, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda, Vol. III, p. 73.)

Once after Dr. Oviatt had diagnosed another doctor’s patient, the lady said to him: "Doctor, I leave it entirely to you; do what you think is right and best." The patient's doctor, astonished at hearing this, said to Dr. Oviatt, "Say, Dr. Oviatt, why is it that people have such great confidence in you the minute they meet you? This patient never saw you before, and she is at once ready to put her life completely in your hands." Dr. Oviatt answered: "Well, well, don't you know yet? That is because I am bald-headed."

Things were proceeding well at St. Mary's Hospital, and the Sisters were extremely busy. Because of Dr. Oviatt's reputation, St. Mary's received patients from almost all the neighboring cities and even from more distant places. St. Mary's Hospital was patronized by most of the city doctors, among whom were Doctors Bernard Charles Gudden, Burton N. Clark, Clarendon J. Combs, and H. W. Morgenroth. There were so many patients that the original frame house had to be used. Thirty-five patients could be housed in the new building. Both places were filled to capacity and single rooms had to be made into double rooms.

Already in 1900 the first floor had an X-ray room, in which X-ray pictures were taken and treatments given. One of the Sisters stated that one of the X-ray machines, when applied to the patients, made their hair seem alive.
To the Sisters it seemed quite natural that at times there were arguments among the doctors. Yet as far as the Sisters were concerned, peace reigned supreme throughout the hospital.

Then it happened! One day Dr. Oviatt presented himself to Sister Superior, Sister M. Boniface Goetz, and announced that he had decided to leave Oshkosh and to go to Fond du Lac. Shocked as Sister M. Boniface was, she did not ask him to remain. When his patients got well, they went home and no others took their place. The hospital had been filled to capacity, but rapidly the number of patients dwindled down to a few chronic cases. While the Sisters suffered from lack of patients, Dr. Oviatt did not suffer less. Not finding in Fond du Lac what he had expected, he returned to St. Mary's Hospital after six weeks, never to leave again; once more St. Mary's had recovered from a crisis.

For a second time the hospital became too small, and it was decided to buy the adjoining property for the erection of a new chapel and a new addition to the hospital. But since the neighbors refused to sell to the Sisters except for an exorbitant price, Mr. John Springob, the father of Sisters M. Cornelia and M. Jacoba, bought the land in his own name at a reasonable price. When everything was conveyed to him by deed, he deeded it over to the Sisters. Mr. Springob, being the overseer of the building project, had no enviable job. Because of continuous strikes, there was endless trouble with the laborers, some of whom were union men and others not. The Sisters, being frequent witnesses to the quarrels and fights of the men and sometimes even seeing them defend themselves with bricks, increased their prayers and sacrifices that God might restore peace among the workers.

We are, indeed, very grateful to the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern for having preserved very interesting and informational material concerning the growth of St. Mary's Hospital. Here let us listen to what was said about the
Sisters and their hospital in the beginning of 1902 when the Community planned to build this second addition to the hospital (the 1904 addition).

"Addition to Hospital: St. Mary's is filled as never before in its history, and plans are being formulated for an addition to the present structure. St. Mary's Hospital on Merritt Street is a remarkable institution in more ways than one. Those who have never visited its interior have no idea of the great advantage it offers the sick and injured or the extent of its influence for good among those who suffer from the ills to which flesh is heir. This hospital is a center of modern surgery, and great have been the successes in this line.

"Since the beginning of St. Mary's in July, 1895, until now (1902), the hospital has had 2,300 patients within its walls. Of this number the percentage of those who have died is very low indeed. At present (January 28, 1902) there are fifty-one patients in the hospital. This number is a record breaker and is larger than has ever been reached at any one time before. The result is that the institution is crowded and every available bit of space is utilized. In some instances several patients are quartered in one room. The hospital parlors immediately off the main hallway on the first floor are also filled with patients. Even with these crowded conditions, the patients are getting along nicely, and the accommodations are as complete as usual so far as the service and attendance is concerned. Because of the crowding condition in the hospital, plans are being made to increase the facilities by the erection of an addition in the near future.

"Religion Cuts No Figure: Although St. Mary's Hospital is a Catholic institution,
patients in the institution are of all faiths, and the religious part of the institution is never pressed upon them. If patients do not want it, they are not even made aware that there is any religion connected with the hospital, but its existence is evident through the countless errands of mercy and the kind acts of attendance for the slightest want that are performed by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, who pass in and out of the rooms and are seen in all parts of the building at all times of the day and night, ready to assist at a moment's notice. There are twenty Sisters in the institution, with a Sister Superior in charge. They all wear the garb of the Order, which is always as clean and spotless as are their characters. They always have a smile and a kind word for everyone and something cheerful and encouraging to say to the patients under their care. These women are remarkable in that they do practically every bit of work in the entire institution, from shoveling coal into the furnaces to assisting in delicate operations, redressing wounds and, in fact, performing all the services that do not require the skill of the physician or the surgeon, besides answering the call bells located in every room and keeping these apartments clean and wholesome. They receive no pay for their services, and their work makes the hospital practically an inexpensive institution outside the cost of its maintenance....

"The hospital is a modern one in every respect, and much of the success of the operations performed there of late has been due to the complete facilities and the care that is taken to avoid infection of wounds. Everything is done to make all the conditions perfectly aseptic before and after operations."
"That a perfect aseptic condition is obtained is proved by an inspection of the operating room, which is located on the southeast corner of the third floor of the hospital. This room has a marble floor, which is as smooth and as polished as it can be. The wall, ceiling, and woodwork, the chairs and tables, the operating table, and, in fact, every object that comes in view of this room is a pure white enamel. The enamel is thick and highly polished, and the room can be thoroughly washed and disinfected throughout. Upon entering the operating room the visitor is almost led to believe that it has been carved out of the purest white marble, so immaculately white and clean it is. There is not a speck of dust or dirt anywhere. In a large enameled case at one side of the room are shelves upon shelves of surgical instruments, all highly polished and as clean and aseptic as possible. Near the operating table is an apparatus for supplying pure oxygen to patients after they come out of the influence of an operation. This application of pure oxygen assists in reviving and stimulating the patients.

"In a room adjoining the operating room is another room equally as white and clean, in which there are three sterilizers. These sterilizers were the first of their kind to be put into a hospital in this portion of the state. One is a steam sterilizer where all dressings are thoroughly sterilized and rendered aseptic, another is one in which filtered water is boiled and kept hot, and a third is used to allow boiled water to cool. The fabric for dressings and the animal ligatures for sewing shut wounds are also kept in this room. The latter are prepared in the hospital....
"Proposed Addition: The past year has demonstrated to the physicians, as well as to the Sisters of Charity, who have the management of the hospital, that immediate steps for the enlargement of the institution are necessary if the hospital is to retain its prestige among the medical fraternity as a thoroughly up-to-date hospital with ample accommodations. The present well-equipped structure was erected in 1894 and was designed to meet all the requirements of a first-class hospital. The structure is a four-story building of brick and stone, 40 feet by 85 feet, at the corner of Merritt and Boyd Streets. The cost of the hospital, exclusive of furnishings, was $25,000 and in addition the grounds represent a valuation of $6,000. There are twenty-six rooms with accommodations for forty patients. The equipment is complete, including a perfect system of hot-water heating, electric lighting, passenger elevator, electric call bells, speaking tubes, baths, treating rooms, etc.

"The proposed addition, to cost fully $60,000 alone, calls for a structure twice as large as the present hospital with fifty-one rooms and accommodations for seventy-five patients. With the present accommodations this would provide a total of seventy-seven rooms for 115 patients and would result in an institution second to none outside of Milwaukee." (Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, January 28, 1902, p. 6.)

"Raising of Funds: The Order of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, although expecting to raise the larger part of the 60,000 or 70,000 dollars necessary to build the addition, hopes for assistance from liberally disposed citizens. In order that such citizens should
receive something in return, a plan has been formulated whereby free beds will be maintained in the institution. Any resident, lodge, or charitable organization, by the payment of $5,000, will have a free bed maintained permanently. If the Sisters receive $10,000, they will establish two beds and so on—one for every $5,000 received. For instance, in the case of a lodge, if a member is taken ill—as is the case frequently—he can be taken to St. Mary's Hospital and there will be given, free of charge, the best of care from the Sisters. In case the sum of $5,000 is unobtainable, a free bed may be maintained for a year on payment of $300.

"Any balance remaining after using the funds as far as they will go toward the endowment of perpetual free beds will be used for establishing a temporary free bed for as many years as the funds extend at the rate of $300 per year. This system is in vogue in all large cities, and many free beds are maintained. In some cases employees of factories unite with the employers to maintain free beds for the use of the injured. The Sisters expect to secure several thousand dollars in this way and, inasmuch as the project has the endorsement of many in the medical fraternity, there is no reason why it will not be successful."

(Ibid., January 28 and August 19, 1902, p.6.)

This second building project was begun in 1903 and completed in 1905 at a cost of $56,000. The bed capacity of the hospital was raised to about eighty-five. The fourth floor of the new addition was equipped by Dr. Oviatt, according to his own plan. He had his own operating room, recovery ward, anesthetic room, bath and shower lavatory, small rest room, and a private office.
Dr. Oviatt's daughter, Mrs. Nieta O. Friend, tells us in a letter she wrote on October 13, 1959, to Sister Mary Capistrana Uhl that Dr. Oviatt "took Sister Boniface and Sister Cornelia to Chicago and escorted them through the most up-to-date hospitals and then took them with him to order the equipment. When they were all through and had returned to the Palmer House, he handed them a $100 bill and told them to go out and buy anything they wanted. When the Sisters came back and reported that they had purchased a statue of St. Joseph for the operating room, my father stormed (and he could storm): 'But you can't have it in there; it isn't sanitary!' 'Oh! I took care of that,' Sister Cornelia said. 'It will be covered with several coats of varnish, so we can wash it with antiseptic.'"

Sister M. Boniface Goetz, the Superior, took great interest and diligence in providing educational opportunities for the Sisters. She engaged a certain Miss Stoney to teach hospital procedures to the Sisters during 1902 to 1903. From 1904 to 1905 Miss Mary P. Hardy, a graduate of John Hopkins' Hospital, Baltimore, taught the Sisters the one-year basic professional program leading to the nursing diploma. From 1913 to 1914 some of the Sisters from St. Mary's, Oshkosh, went to St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield, where Dr. Victor Mason lectured four to five evenings every week in order to prepare the Sisters for the state board examinations, which they wrote at Fond du Lac in the spring of 1914. A few weeks later they received their certificates as registered nurses for the state of Wisconsin.

In 1912 Dr. M. E. Corbett, who had practiced for several years at St. Mary's, selected a beautiful location with a picturesque view of Lake Winnebago and built his own hospital—the Lakeside Hospital—at a cost of $150,000. Many of the doctors, being stockholders of this enterprise, left St. Mary's Hospital and directed their patients to Lakeside Hospital, which had a bed capacity of about forty-five patients and was modern in every respect. One doctor drew the other doctors from St. Mary's to Lakeside Hospital. Indeed, these were dark and trying days for the Sisters. In that same year, on October 30, 1912, Doctor Charles
W. Oviatt died after a sickness of a few months. Patients who had been in St. Mary's before and who sincerely wished to be with the Sisters when re-entering the hospital were forced by the doctors to go to Lakeside Hospital.

When the Sisters lamented to Sister M. Boniface about the detrimental effects this situation, if prolonged, would have on the hospital and the Community, she admonished them to trust in God and now, since they had less work to do, to spend more time in prayer. She told them that, in the end, all things would turn out for God's honor and glory and the salvation of souls. Indeed, Christ, the Bridegroom of virginal souls, was addressing these valiant women with the words: "Come and rest with Me awhile." There were many things for the Sisters to do during that time, and most of all they had a fine opportunity to renew their consecration to God with greater fervor.

When some of the people referred to St. Mary's Hospital as a "Sinking Ship because the doctors, joining together to patronize Lakeside Hospital, seemed to be causing St. Mary's to become an unnecessary institution, the epithet was correct but not its application. What Sister M. Boniface had so hopefully promised—that things would get better—happened sooner than the Sisters had expected. Patients again came regularly to St. Mary's Hospital and activities soon returned to normal and progressed smoothly.

In the summer of 1914 St. Mary's Hospital officially opened its three-year professional school of nursing with an enrollment of twelve Sisters. Sister M. Bartholomea Betzen was the directress and general instructor of the school, and the doctors taught in their specialized fields. In 1917 these twelve Sisters received their diplomas and wrote their state board examinations.

In the summer of 1917 the three-year professional school of nursing was transferred from St. Mary's Hospital, Oshkosh, to Marshfield under the title: St. Joseph's School of Nursing. Sister M. Bartholomea became the instructress, and the doctors from Marshfield taught in their specialized fields.
In 1894 ground was broken for the new St. Mary's Hospital, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, which was completed in 1896.
The city of Oshkosh was indeed grateful for this second new addition to St. Mary's Hospital, which was completed in 1905.
The chapel of St. Mary's Hospital was included in the building project of 1905.
Chapel of St. Mary's Home for the Aged, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, which was renovated and enlarged in 1959.
Rear of the chapel in St. Mary's Home for the Aged. There is plenty of space for wheelchair accommodations.
St. Mary's Home for the Aged after the extensive renovation and rebuilding program carried out from 1957 to 1960. A new wing can be seen on the extreme right of this picture.
Some of the Sisters at St. Mary's Home for the Aged gathered before their grotto of Mary Immaculate (1958).
Sisters in care of the aged at St. Mary's Home in Oshkosh, Wisconsin
In the meantime, however, things were not proceeding so well at Lakeside Hospital. The institution was not successful financially. Through sad experience Dr. Corbett and the other doctors who had left St. Mary's in 1912 to patronize Lakeside Hospital came to the realization that the sooner Lakeside Hospital would become property of a religious community the better it would be for the doctors who were stockholders of the institution.

In 1917 Dr. Corbett with other doctors began negotiations with the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother concerning their taking over Lakeside Hospital. He entreated the superiors several times to buy and manage the hospital, but for a long time Mother K. Wendelina Bauer, then Commissary General of the Community, manifested a disinterestedness in the project and opposed buying the hospital. Finally, having been repeatedly urged by the Most Reverend Paul P. Rhode of Green Bay and the priests of the diocese, the Sisters bought the hospital.

In the spring of 1918 the Community assumed the administration of Lakeside Hospital, the name of which, at the suggestion of Bishop Rhode, was changed to Mercy Hospital.

**St. Mary's Home for the Aged**

In truth, from that date on St. Mary's Hospital did become a "Sinking Ship" as far as hospital activities were concerned. But as it was sinking in regard to the diminishing number of patients admitted each year, it was rising more gloriously as an institution of mercy and charity for God's favorites, the aged.

In the course of years, as Mercy Hospital was enlarged, patients from the different departments of St. Mary's Hospital were transferred there. Thus as one wing after the other of St. Mary's became vacant, aged people were happy to obtain permanent homes therein. Since 1934, when the last patients—the obstetrical cases—were transferred to Mercy Hospital, St. Mary's has become, in the
Plot of St. Mary's Home for the Aged

Boiler room  Laundry
Help's Quarters  Garage

Garden Toolshed
Garage
Rectory
Greenhouse
Workshed
New north wing
Main
Chapel
c Hospital
New west wing

(Sketch by Sister M. Stephen Martens)

Merritt Avenue

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true sense of the word, a home for the aged—a haven of peace and rest for them.

Between 1955 and 1956 the great need of remodeling and renovating St. Mary's Home for the Aged was brought to the attention of the Superiors of the Community by the Oshkosh Fire Department and the Industrial Commission of Wisconsin. The estimation of the cost of the building and remodeling project was, at first, $500,000. But after the work was well underway, it was evident that the rebuilding would go far beyond the $1,000,000 mark.

It was planned that the construction would go on while guests were living in the home; hence, one section was undertaken and completed before work was begun in another section, so that the guests could be moved from one area to another as the work was completed.

The first building project was the erection of a new five-story fireproof addition at the north end of the building, facing Boyd Street. This new building provides the home with nine additional, beautifully equipped private rooms, three on each of the second, third, and fourth floors. A fireproof stairway, an elevator, well-equipped utility rooms, and a clothes chute and an incinerator, which serve all the floors, and many other facilities were installed in this new north wing. There is a large "walk-in" refrigerator on the ground floor and also an attractive recreation room which is used as an auditorium for movies, programs, and other activities for the guests. Among the contributions of the first floor are the priest's dining room and additional office facilities.

Under construction at the same time was an enclosed corridor on the rear of this new north wing and a beautiful new laundry, powerhouse, and employees' quarters, facing Monroe Street. The laundry, having the latest and best equipment, was constructed for service as well as beauty. Six large windows, which line the west side facing Merritt Street, give the appearance that the walls are constructed of glass.
The rooms for the women employees are located on the second floor of this new service building above the new laundry, and the male help are on the ground floor. Each room is furnished with a sink, running water, wardrobes with adequate storage space and wall and ceiling lighting fixtures. Facing Monroe and Parkway is a large recreation room, furnished with a piano, radio, and other recreational equipment for the enjoyment of the employees living at St. Mary's Home.

The powerplant, which has the latest or most modern equipment for safe and convenient heating, is in the sub-basement of this service building.

At the end of the Merritt Street wing an addition was made to include an enclosed fireproof stairway. Again in this area the guest rooms were provided with sinks, water, wardrobes, and other conveniences, as were the rooms in the new addition on Boyd Street. The Boyd and Merritt Street building was raised one story. The corner room of each floor facing Merritt and Boyd Street provides a parlor for the ladies to visit, play cards, or listen to records and watch television. The corner room on the first floor is the Sisters' community room. The Sisters have private quarters on the first floor and a large portion of the fourth floor of the Merritt Street wing.

The chapel and the sacristy of St. Mary's Home was completely remodeled and enlarged. Now St. Mary's chapel is truly a picture of simplicity. The tabernacle is the one object that holds your attention. Located in the rear of the chapel is a completely enclosed confessional, electrically equipped with lights, a fan, and a hearing aid. There is also a spacious area in the rear of the chapel for wheel chairs.

A new kitchen, refectory, diet kitchen, lunch room, food storage room, and vegetable room were also constructed. The kitchen has all of the facilities to provide nutritious, attractive, and flavorful meals with a minimum of energy expenditure as far as equipment is concerned. The
Sisters' refectory is small and simply decorated so that it still retains a touch of the ancient monasticism so dearly loved in the old refectory. The new diet kitchen, located on the second floor, is equipped with an electrically heated cart, in which the food is kept hot during the serving period; a one-tank Hobart dishwasher, a waste disposal, and many other convenient features. The bakery has been remodeled and is on a par with the other newly built departments of St. Mary's Home.

To insure the finest and safest accommodations for the guests nothing of the old St. Mary's Home has been overlooked in this renovating and remodeling program. All of the guest rooms have a nurse's call and telephone facilities. Each floor has a centrally located nurses' station so that the nurse on duty is nearby if and when she is needed.

In a glass enclosed niche above the new entrance a beautiful statue of the Immaculate Conception greets the guests of St. Mary's Home, which is now one of the most modern and most pleasant homes in its area. About seventy-five aged people live at St. Mary's, where they receive good meals and excellent care. If the guests are able, they may go and come as they please. The order and cleanliness of St. Mary's, both inside and out, are some of its special features. "Order is heaven's first law."

The good aged people at the home have laid aside their cares, worries, and disappointments of earlier years and live in peace and contentment, calmly looking forward to meeting their God and Redeemer. Indeed, St. Mary's Home is an ideal place to prepare for the journey to a happy eternity.

The chapel is filled to capacity during holy Mass, Benediction, Holy Hour, and other services. The majority of the aged at St. Mary's go to Holy Communion daily. In the eyes of the world these people do not do anything great materially, but spiritually they are able to accomplish much for the world. In truth, "more things are wrought by
prayer than this world dreams of."

Many of the aged pioneering Sisters of the Community, who in their youthful fervor and strength started the early missions of Wichita, Marshfield, Oshkosh, Tomahawk, Rhinelander, and Denville, have spent their last years in solitude at St. Mary's, leading a holy and prayerful life. They are now, as we sincerely hope, united with Mother M. Frances, their spiritual mother, enjoying eternal happiness in the Vision of God.

Chaplains at St. Mary's Hospital


Superiors at St. Mary's Hospital

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Chapter XIII
MERCY HOSPITAL, OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN
1918
(Continuation of St. Mary's Hospital)

Note: In order to understand the early history of Mercy Hospital it is recommended to read first the historical sketch of St. Mary's Hospital.

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In the summer of 1917 Doctors M. E. Corbett and H. W. Morgenroth paid a visit to Sister M. Wendelina Bauer, who at that time was Mother General's vicarress and acting superior at St. Mary's Hospital, Oshkosh, to inform her that the privately owned Lakeside Hospital was for sale and that the doctors greatly desired the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother to take it over. Sister M. Wendelina, who had already heard rumors that things did not go well at Lakeside, showed herself cold and disinterested regarding this offer. Sister M. Boniface Goetz smilingly said, "Yes, doctor, you want to take the rope from your neck and hang it around ours." Because they were losing money, the doctors who were stockholders of Lakeside Hospital were determined to sell in a hurry and continued to press their cause that the Community take over the hospital as soon as possible.

Many priests in Oshkosh advised the Sisters to buy the hospital. The Bishop of the Green Bay Diocese, the Most Reverend Paul P. Rhode, made a special trip to St. Mary's Hospital in order to discuss the Lakeside Hospital situation with Sister M. Wendelina. He earnestly urged that the Community take Lakeside, suggesting that they might use it as a maternity hospital.

In April, 1918, after considerable negotiations, Lakeside Hospital was bought for about half the amount of the
building cost. At the suggestion of Bishop Rhode the name of the hospital was changed to Mercy Hospital.

On that memorable April day on which the Sisters officially took charge of Mercy Hospital, they transferred the few patients to St. Mary's Hospital in order to give the institution a thorough cleaning and make the necessary changes and modifications. When the institution was ready for occupancy, Bishop Rhode blessed the hospital from top to bottom in the presence of Sisters M. Wendelina Bauer and M. Sebastiana Hoerling. In June patients were again admitted, only medical cases, however; all major surgical cases were taken to St. Mary's.

Dr. M. E. Corbett had started his school of nursing as early as 1906 in his frame building, the Lakeside Hospital. His first class was graduated in 1908. This school of nursing, functioning at Lakeside Hospital, was continued by the Sisters, who engaged a lay teacher for the first few years. The class of 1918 consisted of nine students.

For the first few years the two hospitals, Mercy and St. Mary's, supplemented each other, which required the student nurses to go back and forth from one hospital to the other for their practical duties in the different departments. Since St. Mary's remained the Sisters' residence until a convent addition could be completed at Mercy, the Sisters engaged at Mercy had to commute each morning and evening.

The Sisters, having chosen one of the sun parlors for chapel purposes, equipped it for their Divine Bridegroom's residence. On September 8, 1918, the chaplain of St. Mary's Hospital, the Reverend J. M. Wicker, blessed the chapel, offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and gave solemn benediction—a significant hour indeed, for from now on the God-Man lived among His brides at Mercy Hospital. Rev. J. Wicker offered holy Mass at Mercy each Sunday until December 14, 1918, when Reverend W. J. Rice, having been appointed chaplain by the Most Reverend Bishop Rhode, came
to the hospital as permanent chaplain. How happy the Sisters were that holy Mass would now be offered daily in their chapel.

Some of the Sisters active at Mercy during the beginning months were the following: Sister M. Meinrada Gehring was in charge of the student nurses and of second floor; Sister M. Eucharia Langold, of the operating room and the chapel; Sister M. Rosalinda Schreiber, of the first floor and the drug room; Sister M. Arsenia Schramski, of the dressing room. Sister M. Thomasina Hepp was in charge of the kitchen department. She cooked for everybody—Sisters, nurses, patients—and fixed the trays for all the patients.

Sister M. Meinrada Gehring stated: "Everybody helped all over—in the chapel, in the laundry, in the laboratory, and with giving proper care to the patients—we all were technicians!"

In 1939 Reverend William Rice retired from his office as chaplain and made his home with the Sisters until his death on March 16, 1940. During that time the Sisters always had a second Mass in their chapel. Reverend Rice, who refused to take a salary for his work as chaplain, will always be remembered by the Sisters for his saintliness and unselfishness.

In the fall of 1918, just a few months after the Sisters had taken over Mercy Hospital, the flu epidemic spread so rapidly that the two hospitals, St. Mary's and Mercy, were unable to accommodate the patients. The city authorities changed a saloon outside the city limits into an emergency hospital, of which, at the request of the city authorities, the Sisters took charge. Reverend Mother M. Johanna Ankenbrand appointed several Sisters for this charitable work and gave the responsibility to Sister M. Cyriaca Goetz.

The following is a quotation from the recollections of Sister M. Meinrada:
"The city police and ambulance took out beds and other things needed to this 'hospital.' We Sisters went back and forth by ambulance or patrol wagon. These same vehicles were used to convey the sick and the dead, of which there were many. On the first day that this emergency hospital was opened the house was filled, and every patient was seriously sick. When the police and the ambulance men had Sisters in their wagons, they would blow their sirens extra loud, making everyone get out of the way."

In June, 1922, four years after the Sisters had taken over Mercy Hospital, work was begun on the much-needed expansion of the institution. In the middle of August of the same year ground was broken for the chapel and convent. When the building was completed to the first floor level, the cornerstone laying took place without any celebrations. Into the cornerstone, which was blessed by Reverend A. Bastian, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul's Parish of Oshkosh, were put medals, a small statue of St. Peter, the apostle, an Agnus Dei, various pieces of money, and a list of the Sisters' names. In December, 1922, the chapel was under roof; and the building of the interior of the wing continued during the winter.

In June, 1923, the Sisters moved into the new convent. On July 9, in the presence of sixteen priests and two hundred people, Bishop Rhode blessed and dedicated the chapel and convent. On September 2, 1925, the first holy retreat began at Mercy Hospital, given by the Reverend Joseph Potham, an Oblate Father.

During 1923 building continued on a new north wing, containing a new powerhouse and a laundry, which was blessed by Bishop Rhode on November 2, 1924. With this enlargement, the hospital was able to widen the extent of its services, and the surgical department was transferred from St. Mary's to Mercy.
On January 1, 1925, the first patient for surgery was admitted at Mercy, and on the following day the first operation was performed. From that time on, all operations were discontinued at St. Mary’s Hospital and performed at Mercy.

It was indeed a great blessing when Reverend Mother and her council in Rome approved the building of the nurses’ home, the erection of which was begun in 1931. The edifice, a very imposing building, was a five-story structure with eighty private rooms for the nurses, besides lecture and demonstration rooms, a large auditorium, gymnasium, and lobby. The opening of this spacious building greatly facilitated the instruction and supervision of the nurses, who had heretofore been housed in three different places, the fourth floor of the hospital and two nearby cottages.

Today, Mercy Hospital School of Nursing is fully accredited by the State Board of Nursing and the Accrediting Service of the National League for Nursing.

For clinical instruction of the nurses, both Mercy and St. Mary’s Hospital were in use for several years. After the surgical department had been transferred to Mercy in 1924, the obstetrical cases were accepted only in St. Mary’s. This arrangement proved to be impracticable for the teaching and supervision of the nurses, and the maternity department was opened at Mercy Hospital in 1934. From that time on no more patients were accepted at St. Mary’s Hospital, which now was used exclusively as a home for the aged.

In 1938 preparations were made to add a four-story wing to the south side of Mercy Hospital. On the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, July 22, ground was broken and the work begun. In the following year, on May 18, the new addition was dedicated by the Most Reverend Paul P. Rhode in a simple but impressive ceremony. With this new addition the capacity of Mercy Hospital was raised to 225. Thus from a forty-five bed institution in 1918, Mercy had grown into a large hospital, modern in every regard, conducting special
In 1918 the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother bought Dr. Corbett’s Lakeside Hospital, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, which then became known as Mercy Hospital.
In 1924 a north wing, chapel, convent, powerhouse, and laundry were completed.
Mercy Hospital chapel which was built in 1924.
In 1931 the erection of a five-story nurses' home and school was begun.
In 1939 a new four-story maternity wing was added to Mercy Hospital.

Air view of Mercy Hospital taken in 1958: The one-story rehabilitation center is on the extreme left, and the nurses' home on the extreme right.
Administration wing addition of Mercy Hospital, Oshkosh.

In 1957 three new wings, including modern operating rooms, additional patients' rooms, administration facilities, and a rehabilitation center were completed.
A view of some of the many activities in Mercy Hospital, Oshkosh. (Picture was taken in 1960.)
Sisters active at Mercy Hospital in 1960.
clinics, pediatric, physio-therapy, outpatient, and x-ray departments. The hospital was approved as a class "A" hospital by the American College of Surgeons and the American Medical Association.

The private room accommodation of the Nurses' Home was raised to 120 persons, when in April, 1943, a sixth-floor addition which provided thirty more rooms was added to the building. Soon after this addition was completed, between 1944 and 1945, new classrooms, a new library, a conference room, and their facilities were added to the School of Nursing. Year by year installation of the latest and the best of everything for hospital procedures has been added. Hospitals have become institutions of scientific research and study; and to keep up with the times, every year calls for new and improved equipment and better specialized education for nurses and technicians.

Let us here quote from Sister M. Capistrana Uhl's report on "Nursing Education at Mercy Hospital, Oshkosh, Wisconsin," concerning the modern nursing profession.

"Following World War II nation-wide studies were conducted about programs in nursing. These were made to upgrade nursing education and prepare nurses to meet the modern demands of the nursing profession. The first study, known as the Interim Classification of Schools of Nursing, was made in 1949. The report listed schools in Class I, II, III, according to the merits of the school. Mercy Hospital School participated in this study and was ranked in the middle 50% of the Nation's Basic Programs in Nursing.

"In 1952 the National Nursing Accrediting Service was organized to accredit programs in nursing nation-wide. A twofold program was offered by this organization. In order to receive valuable assistance from this service, Mercy Hospital School of Nursing applied for Tempo-
rary Accreditation. This was received in 1952. The years between 1952 and 1955 were spent in preparation for Full Accreditation by the National Nursing Accrediting Service. Application for Full Accreditation was made in 1955 and was received on July 2, 1956.

"To be able to admit foreign students to the school the necessary approval was obtained from the U.S. Department of Justice in 1955. Thus far one Chinese student studied at Mercy Hospital School of Nursing. The School also received approval from the Government to train Veterans under the Public Law 550. The School holds Institutional Membership in the Conference of Catholic Schools of Nursing and the Department of Diploma and Associate Degree Program on the National League for Nursing.

"The School now has an enrollment of over 100 students (in 1960). It has granted more than 950 diplomas to graduates who are active in all the states of the Union and in several foreign countries. During World War II and the Korean War eighty-five graduates served their Country in all the various military installations. Two of them gave their life for their Country. Another joined the Medical Missionaries and died of malignant malaria in India at the age of thirty-nine. Still another one was executed by the Japanese for aiding Filipino and American soldiers. Eighteen girls enrolled in the school entered various religious orders. Many of them continued their education to the Bachelor's and Master's level. Each diploma granted is a proof that the school has tried to develop the recipient as a Christian person. The School's standards throughout the year's of growth have not changed: still can it be said, in the words of the Bulletin, that education aims to prepare man for what he must do.
here below in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created." (Sister M. Capistrana Uhl's report on "Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 1913-1960."

Before Sister M. Laurentina's appointment as administrator of Mercy Hospital in the summer of 1951, it had become evident that within the near future the institution would be in need of expansion and extensive repair, chiefly to eliminate the fire hazards of early constructions.

Sister M. Laurentina Thimm, studying the situation and formulating various plans, discussed the prevailing conditions and needs of the institution with the higher superiors. Eventually she received approval to execute the plan which she had presented, and the building was begun in 1955. Since more was needed than had been planned, the extensive building and remodeling project lasted for two years until May, 1957.

In the spring of 1957 three new wings, which included modern operating rooms, additional patients' rooms, an administration facility, and a rehabilitation center, were completed. Patients' beds were increased to 260.

In the $500,000 Cleveland Street wing five new operating rooms are housed on the fifth floor together with a sterilizing room and a scrub-up alcove. Four other surgery rooms have been remodeled and modernized, and space was found for a recovery ward. Twenty-four new rooms, equipped with lavatories, toilets, telephone connections, and tele-talk communication, were added.

On the first floor are the following conveniences: a new cafeteria accommodating ninety persons; the hospital pharmacy, a doctors' library, and the morgue, replacing older facilities; the central supply room, which is a central station for a pneumatic tube system carrying messages and requests from all nursing stations throughout the institution, and two dumbwaiters of shining steel which carry supplies from the pharmacy and central supply directly to other floors.

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Across the front of the hospital a new $750,000 five-story administration wing replaces the former two-story entrance. The hospital now presents a recessed entrance directly off the sidewalk on Hazel Street. A second-floor lobby affords a pleasant view of Menominee Park. On this same floor is the information desk, the switchboard with twenty-four hour service, and various administrative offices. New elevators are located in the administration wing.

Five private rooms and four double rooms are available on each of the third and fourth floors of the administration unit. The showers installed in the maternity rooms are new features.

The fifth floor of this wing, air-conditioned throughout, houses a radiologist's office, X-ray and film room, deep therapy facilities, tissue room, pathologist's offices, bacteriology laboratory, and a large waiting room.

Food, hot from the stove or iced from the refrigerator, is delivered by the central food service directly to every floor in the hospital. This $68,000 service utilizes waste space on the first floor and a small addition at the rear of the hospital. Two dumb-waiters are replaced with tray-conveyors, which carry filled trays ready for service from the kitchen to floors above. Trays ride endless belts as they are filled according to the dietician's order from steam and cold tables.

Rehabilitation Center: Since the rehabilitation center is an entirely new department added to the hospital, a detailed description of it follows:

The Oshkosh Curative Workshop, to which doctors of seven counties referred their patients, was housed in a condemned building until the beginning of May, 1957. When a fund-raising campaign initiated to raise money for a new building proved unsuccessful, the matter was referred to the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, with the hope that Mercy Hospital might be able to provide for these patients.
According to convent procedure, Sister M. Laurentina consulted the higher superiors of the Community, receiving the permission to go ahead with the plans of adding the rehabilitation center to Mercy.

The building of a new wing for the patients of this workshop was completed in the spring of 1957. The Curative Workshop of Oshkosh ceased to operate on May 3, and on May 6 the Rehabilitation Center in Mercy Hospital began to take in patients. This center serves the doctors in the seven counties of Winnebago, Fond du Lac, Outagamie, Waukesha, Green Lake, Milwaukee, and Dane. With new and improved facilities, more patients can be expected to find assistance here.

The services of Mercy Hospital, which have no age restrictions, are available to both adults and children. Patients to be admitted must have references from physicians in the community and surrounding area. All physical restoration treatments are provided under the prescription and direction of the patient's private or clinic physician, who is required to keep in close contact with his patient and the rehabilitation staff members.

Physical therapy facilities occupy 3,500 square feet on the ground floor of the center. For the beginning, three full-time physical therapists are staffing the facility. Under medical prescription, the department is able to provide all forms of physical therapy treatment, including ultrasonic, short wave, indoctotherm and microtherm, radiant heat, ultraviolet ray, electric stimulation, paraffin, hot packs, whirlpool, massage, weight resistance exercise, muscle re-education, posture training, muscle testing, and the like. Limited facilities are provided for speech therapy, which is available primarily for brain-injured patients and aphasic adults.

About 1,200 square feet of the ground floor are devoted to the occupational therapy department, providing many forms through its exercise room, activities of daily living section, woodworking project, sand, crafts, printing, and weaving equipment.
Although Mercy Hospital determines and executes the policies of the rehabilitation center, the former directors of the Curative Workshop, who act in an advisory capacity and assist in co-ordinating the work of outside agencies with the rehabilitation center, play a vital role in the work of the center.

On Tuesday, May 21, 1957, the dedication of the three new additions took place. At ten o'clock a.m. a solemn pontifical high Mass of Thanksgiving was offered in the hospital chapel by the Auxiliary Bishop of the Green Bay Diocese, the Most Reverend John B. Grellinger, who was assisted by Father Dennis Worzalla, the hospital chaplain; Father Aloysius Trzebiatowski, deacon; Father Francis McKeough, subdeacon; and Father Paul DuCharme, master of ceremonies. After high Mass Bishop Grellinger gave a fitting and forceful sermon. Then accompanied by his assistants, he went through the building to bless the newly expanded facilities of Mercy Hospital, which marked the completion of a two-year building program.

A few words from the Bishop's timely sermon after holy Mass is quoted here as follows.

"Other cities have been forced to conduct extensive drives for hospital construction. These good Sisters have taken that burden upon their own trusting shoulders. By doing so, they have given our physicians the most necessary tool of their healing art, for a hospital with its operating rooms, its trained staff, its complicated equipment, its established routines is in itself a mammoth tool. But when the whole complex is animated with Christian spirit, it takes on the character of the hand of God's mercy."

In addition to the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, training schools in X-ray, anesthesia, and medical technology were established in 1945, 1956, 1958, respectively. These schools were established at Mercy Hospital for the
purpose of training technologists primarily for the institution itself because of a growing shortage in these fields. All of the schools are fully approved by the various accreditation agencies. Mercy Hospital has also won full accreditation from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals for top-standard patient care and facilities.

In September, 1957, Sister M. Oswaldina Nutz was welcomed to Mercy Hospital as the new Sister Superior and administrator, replacing Sister M. Laurentina Thimm, who had held the post for six years. Sister M. Oswaldina, in her generous and self-sacrificing spirit, is carrying on the ever increasing responsibilities toward progress in research and scientific medicine.

October, 1958, marks the beginning of a new manufacturing program undertaken by the Pharmacy Department of the hospital; namely, that of manufacturing intravenous solutions. The actual inception of this program began in 1957 when the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee endorsed the proposal of manufacturing intravenous solutions, which was later approved by the medical staff.

This program is designed to produce only the more commonly used intravenous solutions such as dextrose, saline, and combinations thereof. Other solutions which utilize essentially the same equipment are also prepared. These include irrigating solutions which may consist of plain distilled water or isotonic salt solutions. By means of the parenteral program it is possible to provide in parenteral form such drugs as procaine, morphine, codine, demerol, dilaudid, water for injection, and so forth.

On April 1, 1958, the Mercy Hospital Auxiliary, stemming from the Women's Auxiliary Board of the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, was the first auxiliary ever organized for the purpose of serving the hospital. The auxiliary members are very active in raising funds to provide for the expansion of hospital facilities and in helping to maintain and foster public understanding and relations of the hospital with the people of Oshkosh.
The Gray Ladies of Mercy Hospital are also serving the hospital. The Gray Lady Service of the Red Cross Chapter was organized to serve at Mercy Hospital in 1943 and have served the institution continuously to the present.

January 1, 1960, marked the beginning of the recitation of the morning and evening prayer over the loud-speaker system. This is done for the benefit of the patients.

**Chaplains of Mercy Hospital**

Right Reverend Msgr. William Rice, 1918-1935; Reverend C. Gerry, C.PP.S., 1936; Reverend Paul Denzel, C.PP.S., 1937; Reverend Lawrence Loerke, 1938; Reverend Lawrence Eckhart, 1939-1952; Reverend Dennis Worzalla, 1953-

**Superiors of Mercy Hospital**


Sources:

Archives of the Chancery Office of Green Bay Diocese.
Chronicle of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.
Green Bay Register.
Oshkosh Northwestern.
Recollections of Sister M. Meinrada Gehring and other Sisters.
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Research work by Sister M. Capistrana Uhl and Sister M. Josue Marek.
Chapter XIV

MOTHER FRANCES PLANTS THE SEED IN ABENBERG

To have a foundation in Germany was the wish and desire of Mother M. Frances Streitel and her early followers from the beginning of the Community. Even before the superiors had chosen America as a field of labor, Mother Frances had been sending Sisters—generally two at a time—to Germany to collect alms for charitable purposes and to study the possibility of establishing a foundation.

Since most of the early Sisters were from Bavaria, they were especially interested in Abenberg near Nuernberg, Bavaria, where a religious community known as the Marienburg had flourished already in 1488. At various times in the course of centuries religious life in the Marienburg fell into ruin because of war, persecution, and secularization and at intervals would rise again to new life and vigor. About 1890, during Mother Frances' time, the ancient monastery lay in ruins.

St. Stilla, a countess and citizen of Abenberg, who had lived a holy life and died a holy death about 1150, lies buried in an ornate tomb in St. Peter's Church at the Marienburg. Because of the many miracles which God has wrought through this Saint, devotion to her has flourished through the centuries. In the Community chronicles we read that already in the early years the Sisters at the motherhouse in Rome had great devotion to Blessed Stilla of Abenberg, to whom they prayed especially for the sick Sisters, and their prayers were generally answered.

The first mission of the Community was established toward the end of 1889, when Monsignor Jacquemin and nine Sisters made their memorable trip to America in order to establish the Community's first mission, St. Francis Hospital in Wichita, Kansas. On May 3, 1890, Mother Frances Streitel, accompanied by three Sisters, traveled to New York and from there to Wichita that she might guide, exhort,
encourage, and instruct the Sisters in their new activities in the foreign land. During this first visit to America Mother Foundress started three missions in Wisconsin—at Menomonie, Marshfield, and Oshkosh. Thus she had founded four missions in America in less than two years.

In March, 1891, Mother Frances with a Sister companion returned to the motherhouse in Rome, for there were important matters to be discussed and problems to be solved, one of which was how to get more vocations for the spreading activities of the Community in America.

In June, 1891, Mother Frances returned to America with eleven Sisters in order to visit the four missions which she had founded. To the Sisters living in America, working in a strange country and under unaccustomed circumstances, the presence of their spiritual mother was a consolation in all difficulties and an inspiration to strive for higher perfection.

During her four-month visitation trip Mother Frances came to the realization that the Catholic Church in America presented an inexhaustible field of labor for God and country, for which a continuous flow of laborers was required. Sincerely convinced that the Community should have at least one mission in Germany in order to recruit vocations, she decided to go to Abenberg, Bavaria, on her return trip to Europe, in order to begin negotiations concerning a mission there. On September 30, 1891, she and Sister M. Scholastica Demer returned to Europe and landed safely at Antwerp on Columbus Day, October 12.

Six young ladies from Bavaria, having applied for admission to the Community, had been requested to meet at Abenberg and to go to Rome from there with Mother Frances or her companion. In this group was Catharina Schuebel, the daughter of the mayor of Abenberg, Mathias Schuebel. Miss Schuebel was the first vocation from Abenberg, from which place the Community has received more vocations than from any other European country.
First things first! As soon as Mother Frances and Sister M. Scholastica arrived in Abenberg, they prayed most fervently at the altar and tomb of Blessed Stilla in St. Peter's Church for the intention that a new, fervent spiritual life might emerge from the ruins of the Marienburg and that the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother might become the sentinels at the tomb of Blessed Stilla.

Mother Frances had a lengthy discussion with Reverend Alois Hoffman, pastor of St. Stilla Church in Abenberg, and Mayor Mathias Schuebel concerning the matter of the Community's acquiring the Marienburg as a foundation for charitable works. She declared that the Community would gladly buy the property if it were not too expensive. Both the pastor and the mayor promised to do all in their power to help the Community to obtain the foundation in Abenberg.

Hopefully Mother Frances left Abenberg and, after having taken care of other duties in Germany, returned to Rome with two candidates on October 23, 1891; Sister M. Scholastica arrived with the other four candidates a day later.

At the motherhouse in Rome the Abenberg project was one of the most important matters on the agenda for special prayers and deliberations. Mother Frances explained that to have a mission in Germany would help to facilitate and increase vocations from that country, because many of the young ladies would rather enter a convent in their native country than one in a foreign land and would be more inclined to go to a foreign country after profession. Thus the training for religious life could be done in a novitiate in Germany, and from there the young Sisters could later go to America.

The letters in the parish archives of Abenberg from Mother Frances and from the General Vicariate of Eichstaett, to which diocese Abenberg belongs, give clear evidence of the fact that Mother Frances handled the Marienburg project skillfully, prudently, and intelligently.
Let us here quote part of a letter dated October 8, 1892, written by Mother Frances to Mayor Mathias Schuebel.

"Sister M. Scholastica Demer had to go to Munich in order to accompany a sick lady. I gave her our Constitutions and a written petition for his Excellency, the Bishop. Since the State Minister is now at his health resort, she has been asked to visit him there and talk personally with him in regard to Abenberg. I did not yet receive an answer." (Monsignor John Sperber, Das Ave Mater Dolorosa, I/16.)

This letter shows that Mother Frances used good common sense in management and organization. Sister M. Scholastica, who had to go on a necessary trip to Munich, was commissioned to use this opportunity to further the prospect for a mission in Germany. As Mother Frances' representative she was to visit the Most Reverend Francis Leopold, Bishop of Eichstaett, and the State Minister of Bavaria.

In that same letter Mother Frances wrote: "Confidentially, if we receive Abenberg, then I will send Sister M. Ermesinda to console you. Let us pray that God's will be done." (Sister M. Ermesinda was the first candidate from Abenberg and the daughter of the mayor, to whom this letter was written.) These lines give us a beautiful picture of that kind, motherly heart of Mother Frances, to whom so many fervent young girls were most loyally devoted.

Several documents in the parish archives of Abenberg indicate that Mother Frances Streitel carried on a lively correspondence with the Bishop of the diocese of Eichstaett, Most Reverend Francis Leopold von Leonrod. His Excellency was well disposed toward the Sisters and did all in his power to help the Community to obtain the foundation in Abenberg. In a letter of August 30, 1892, the Vicariate of Eichstaett requested Reverend Hoffmann pastor of St. Stilla Church in Abenberg, to send a report to the Vicariate concerning the objectives, the means of self-support, endowments, and prospects which the recently es-

* to Abenberg 204
tablished Community founded by Mother Frances had for the future.

In a letter of March, 1893, the Vicariate inquired about the details of the activities which the new Community would be able to undertake, such as nursing, teaching in a kindergarten or a domestic science school. The letter also stated that a contract, which was to contain a yearly mutual report, should be drawn up and presented. In another letter the Vicariate commissioned Reverend Hoffmann to inform Mother Frances to appoint a fully authorized representative in regard to the anticipated Abenberg mission and to have the German council in Rome confirm the authenticity of her signature. Mother Foundress complied with these requirements by appointing Reverend Alois Hoffmann as her representative in Abenberg.

On July 22, 1893, a contract setting the cost of the Marienburg property at 14,000 marks was made between the two parties—the parish of Abenberg and Reverend Alois Hoffmann, the representative of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother. But after Mother Frances' written petition for a reduction, it was decided to set the final price at 13,500 marks.

In the same letter in which Mother Frances requested for a reduction of the price, she stated that the second daughter of Mayor Schuebel had joined the Community, saying: "Concerning them I can only say praiseworthy things. Sister M. Eleanora Schuebel tries very hard to make progress. (Ibid., p. 17.)"

A letter of Monsignor Jacquemin to Reverend Hoffmann states that Bishop Francis Leopold von Leonrod of Eichstaett, during his visit at the motherhouse in Rome, remarked that Blessed Stilla herself could not be more happy than Mother Frances if the Community would obtain the official approval to establish a mission in Abenberg.

In spite of the fact that the city of Abenberg and the diocese of Eichstaett tried their level best to help
the Sisters to obtain the establishment in Abenberg, their labors were in vain as far as the immediate present was concerned. The "dead hand" was still in effect, meaning that no religious community could acquire property and establish themselves without the express approval of the royal Bavarian government. In the spirit of the ministry of Johann Lutz, who had already died in 1890, the Bavarian government did not give its approval. Besides, at that time the German government was not interested in the activities of nursing Sisters because, as was alleged, there were enough nurses in the country, and the government was anxious "not to take away light and air from the established religious communities within Germany." (Ibid., p. 16-18.)

Although Mother Frances' attempt to establish a mission in Germany was not an immediate success, she had planted the seed which remained dormant until the year 1920 when it began to sprout, to blossom forth, and to develop into a plant bringing forth fruit a hundredfold in the garden of Holy Church.

Sources:

Das Ave Mater Dolorosa, No. 1, Ostern, 1955.
Chapter XV

MOTHER FRANCES AND THE CARE AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

One of the main charitable works of the Community is the education of children in the schools and the care of abandoned and orphaned children. In specifying teaching as a main purpose of her congregation, Mother Frances thereby indicated that, although in her youth and her early years in the religious life she had preferred to dedicate herself to the service of the sick, she fully realized that her Sisters could do much good also in the educational field and in institutional work with children. She herself had had experience in both, as she had held the diploma of a teacher, had actually taught in schools, and had over a period of ten years held the superiorship in three different children's institutions. In the first of these, a girls' school for languages and needlework, she had also given music lessons.

In Europe: Already in 1884, the second year of the Community's existence, the Sisters took into their house in Rome a number of orphaned and neglected children of the city for care and education. Sister M. Salesia Rebhan, who entered the Community at Rome in December, 1889, states in her reminiscences of the Motherhouse:

"On the first floor there were about twenty young girls, children, for whom there were two large rooms. Sister M. Raphaela and Sister M. Coletta were in charge of them to give them regular school instructions. Reverend Father Jacquemin gave them religious instructions.... They also accompanied the Sisters on shopping tours and so forth. Some were cripples and couldn't walk." (Sister M. Salesia Rebhan, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda, Vol.I, p.84.)

The Sisters also instructed these girls in household tasks and simple handwork. A few of them, on reaching a suitable age, entered the Community and became Sisters.

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Gradually the number of children decreased. Sister M. Macaria Lauer, who came to Rome from Vienna as a candidate in January, 1896, says that there were five or six orphans at the Motherhouse at that time and that sometime during the three years she spent in Rome they were sent to relatives. Only two remained—Assunta and Santina, both of whom entered the Community. Assunta died soon after as an aspirant, and Santina, who became Sister M. Michelina Maltempi, celebrated the diamond jubilee of her entrance into the Community, in Rome on August 12, 1959.

Two other European establishments for children undertaken by the Community during the generalship of Mother Frances need only a brief mention here, as they are treated in the next chapter, Chapter XVI, under the Austrian missions. These were the home for sick Viennese children on the island of Lussin, where the Sisters worked for the temporal and spiritual welfare of their charges from 1893 until 1914, and a needlework school opened in Vienna, Austria, in 1895.

In the United States: While the Community was establishing its first hospitals in the United States, it was at the same time beginning work in the field of elementary education in parochial schools in the United States and in the care of orphans. Although the first schools, which were accepted by the Mother Foundress during her term of office as Superior General, were later given up, because of the lack of a sufficient number of Sisters to staff them, these pioneering efforts in the educational field indicate the desire of the Foundress that her community should contribute to the work of Catholic education of American youth. These early attempts are definitely a part of the history of the Community in parochial school education in the United States.

In taking over the first hospital, St. Francis Hospital in Wichita, Kansas, at the request of Bishop Hennessy in 1889, the Sisters at the same time assumed charge of the diocesan orphanage. For a short time a few orphans resided at the hospital. Then in 1893 (According to the reminiscences of Hierotheus Maria Rhein, Sister M. Marie})
niscences of Sister M. Aegidia Betzen, 1893 seems more correct than 1894.) Bishop Hennessy leased part of his residence on the west side of Wichita to the Sisters, without rent, as a home for the orphans. The two floors of the large, roomy house were completely partitioned off, so that the Sisters and the orphans had their own separate chapel and living quarters in the rear of the house. Although this orphanage depended in many things upon the superior of the hospital, it actually was a separate mission. Three Sisters were assigned to this mission, called St. John's Orphanage: Sister M. Joachima Hornung as superior, Sister M. Stephanie Geldner as housekeeper, and Sister M. Sebastianz Hoerling as teacher of the children in their charge. These arrangements, however, proved to be inadequate and undesirable; for, with such limited living accommodations, only girls could be accepted into the establishment, and hence brothers and sisters were separated from one another. Besides, the Sisters were urgently needed to fill vacancies elsewhere. For these reasons, the orphanage in the Bishop's residence was discontinued after about a year.

In 1891, when the Community was struggling to make a success of St. Francis Hospital, Mother Frances accepted two parochial schools outside of Wichita. She had been persuaded to do so by Father John Loevenich, former pastor of St. Anthony's parish in Wichita, who was urgent and persistent in his request for teaching Sisters for his parish at Ost, Kansas, and its newly established mission at Aleppo, about ten miles distant from Ost and about thirty miles from Wichita. Father Loevenich realized that the Sisters could not have been adequately prepared to teach in the short time since they had come to the United States. But educational requirements were not so rigorous in those pioneering days, especially in rural, frontier areas; and with their good will the Sisters would accomplish much good. They would be a help to him in preserving and strengthening the faith among his people, and he definitely wanted them for his schools.
St. Mary's School at Aleppo opened in 1891, with one Sister teaching about thirty children in the one-room school. Later another classroom was added when the enrollment increased, and then two Sisters taught. During the first year, several young Sisters came to Aleppo to prepare themselves for the teaching profession by observing classroom procedures and studying under the guidance of the teaching Sister, Sister M. Carolina Kuenstle, who had been educated by the Notre Dame Sisters before her entrance into our Community.

In these pioneer days a corner of the classroom served for a time as the post office, with the teaching Sister as postmistress. Once a week, after the Sunday Mass, the parishioners would stream in to pick up their mail which had been brought out from the city during the week.

The Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother taught the children of this parish for eleven years, until 1901, when they were forced to withdraw because of an insufficient number of Sisters to staff the school. During these eleven years, on at least two occasions the little country church at Aleppo was the setting for the ceremony of the taking of vows by some of the Sisters stationed at this mission. Also during these years two Sisters, Sister M. Elia Henne-mann and Sister M. Philomena Schilling, died here and were buried in the parish cemetery. In 1901, when St. Mary's School was given up, the remains of these two Sisters were exhumed and re-buried in the Sisters' burial plot in Wichita. After the withdrawal of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, the school passed into the charge of the Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood, of Wichita.

St. Joseph's School in Ost, Kansas, was begun in the fall of 1892 by Sister M. Coletta Eberth and Sister M. Salesia Rebhan, two of the Sisters who had been studying at Aleppo the preceding year. They opened classes in the district school about half a mile from the church, but a month later transferred to the old frame church which had been hastily remodeled and equipped with school benches after the new church was completed in the summer of 1892.
Here, too, for some time there was only one classroom. The two Sisters alternated in teaching, one teaching in the forenoon and the other in the afternoon. Since the settlers of Aleppo and Ost were German or of German descent, in these early days some of the classes were conducted in the German language. Later, a partition was put in so that there were two classrooms, and still later, in 1897, the parish built the first real school building.

With the exception of a year or two, the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother taught at St. Joseph's School until 1899. During the intermission the Sisters had the opportunity to make further progress in their own studies at the hospital in Menomonie, Wisconsin, where Mother Frances had established an educational department for the Sisters of the Community. Sister M. Sebastiana, who was one of the Sisters studying in Menomonie at this time, describes their teacher preparation as follows:

"Sister M. Veneranda, who was an elderly Sister, became our teacher. The ward next to the operating room on the first floor was converted into a classroom. Our desks consisted of a long table with chairs around it. A blackboard hanging on the wall completed the classroom furniture.

"We studied grammar—with much diagramming—United States history, physiology, arithmetic, geography, penmanship, English, drawing, and music, for which we had a little old organ....

"Sister M. Agnes was our local superior at this time. Then Father Joch came along one day and took her to help start Denville....Before Sister M. Agnes left in 1895, Father Joeres (pastor of St. Joseph's parish in Menomonie) gave us a regular examination. All of us got good marks.
"In order that we might get still better prepared to teach, Father Joerres advised the Sister Superior to let us go into his parochial school and watch the Sisters teach there. This we did. The Sister in charge of the eighth grade in that school, Sister M. Simplicia, being Irish, did not know German very well, although she had to teach it. She asked us to teach German for her, and we changed off doing this. Thus we did our practice teaching. The children became entirely accustomed to our daily appearance in the classroom. Sometimes this Sister M. Simplicia kept us after school and gave us further explanation." (Reminiscences of Sister M. Sebastiana Hoerling, pp. 35-36.)

In 1895 the Sisters were recalled to Ost, and they remained there until they were succeeded in 1899 by Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood.

Another rural school accepted by Mother Frances in 1891 was a small school in Bakerville, Wisconsin, six miles from Marshfield. Mother Frances accepted this school on a trial basis, yielding to the repeated request of Rev. Paul Geyer, of Marshfield, for one Sister to teach at his mission in Bakerville, where, he said, most of the teaching would have to be done in German, since his people were German.

Mother Frances selected Sister M. Sebastiana Hoerling for this mission, and in September, 1891, some Bakerville people called for her and her companion, Sister M. Petronilla (later her companion was Sister M. Wendelina Bauer), and took them by lumber wagon to board at the home of parishioners, the Nuber family, in Bakerville. They were to return to Marshfield every week end, the parishioners taking turns in transporting them. But this arrangement proved to be one of the main difficulties at this mission. After a time the parishioners became irregular in carrying out their agreement to come for the Sisters. The decision was
then made to withdraw the Sisters, since they were needed elsewhere. In December, shortly before Christmas, the Sisters left Bakerville and the little one-room log school, where the one Sister had taught and where they had endeared themselves to the children during their short stay of a few months.

The fact that Mother Frances accepted three school missions and an orphanage in the United States all within four years after the Sisters had come to this country and simultaneously with the establishment of the first hospitals is sufficient proof of her high regard for the work of educating the young and that she wished her Sisters to devote themselves wholeheartedly to this work also. Always deeply interested in the schools, she desired that the teaching Sisters be properly educated for their work. Around 1894 she mentioned to Sister M. Coletta Eberth, who was studying at Menomonie at the time, that she planned to send some of the Sisters away for higher education. Had she remained in office as Superior General, she would no doubt have carried out her plans and would also have found a way to provide a few more Sisters for the two schools in Kansas. (This chapter was written by Sister M. Bona Ney.)

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Chapter XVI

MISSIONS IN AUSTRIA

1. Simmering, Vienna; 1892

While Mother M. Frances was negotiating with the Most Reverend Francis Leopold von Leonrod, Bishop of Bichstaett, and with the officials of Abenberg, Bavaria, concerning the anticipated foundation at the Marienburg, some pilgrims from Vienna who stayed in Rome at the motherhouse of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother became intensely interested in the new Sisterhood.

These pilgrims, two pious ladies of the nobility—blood sisters, Marie and Elise Kuppelwieser—were greatly impressed with the Christ-like spirit permeating the convent. When they heard of the Community's desire for an establishment in a German-speaking country, they promised to help the Sisters if they should desire to come to Vienna, saying that they had great influence in the higher circles of Vienna. (Marie Kuppelwieser had been the reader for Empress Elizabeth.)

The small, fervent Community rejoiced at this good news and thanked God's divine providence for this blessing. Mother Foundress asked the Sisters to pray and sacrifice that, if it be God's holy will for the Community to spread out into Austria, He might show the way. And, indeed, spurred on by the example of the Foundress, the Sisters, uniting their humble prayers with penances and mortifications, trustfully prayed for this intention of establishing a mission in Austria.

Since the negotiations with the Bavarian government gave little hope that the Community would obtain the approval of an establishment in Germany within the near future, Mother Frances seriously considered starting a mission in Austria, for which she had important reasons. Since the Community depended mainly on German-speaking countries
for vocations at that time, she wished to have recruiting centers either in Germany or in Austria for girls applying for admission. Then, too, because the unhealthful climate of Rome affected the health of many of the young Sisters, Mother Frances hoped to establish a novitiate outside of Italy.

Finally, after a year of fervent prayer and sacrifice, Mother Frances decided to send Sister M. Scholastica Demer and a companion Sister to Vienna, that they might study and investigate the possibilities for a foundation. The two Sisters left Rome on the evening of the Feast of the Presentation of Mary, November 21, 1892, and arrived in Vienna at the Westbahnhof at 5:30 a.m. on November 24, the Feast of St. John of the Cross.

All the money the Sisters had left from the trip was six kreuzers, which was not enough for bus fare to St. Stephen's Square. A kind gentleman, noticing the embarrassment of the two Sisters, paid for their bus trip. From St. Stephen's Square the Sisters went to the home of the two Miss Kuppelwiesers, with whom they stayed for a day in order to discuss ways and means of getting the State's approval for an establishment of the new Community.

Through the influence of Madame Chaudor, one of the most prominent ladies in Vienna, the Sisters received living quarters at the Sacred Heart Convent on the Rennweg, where they stayed until February, 1893. After this very kind reception Miss Kuppelwieser went with the Sisters to His Eminence, Cardinal Anthony Joseph Gruscha, and pleaded their cause for an establishment in Austria. Because of the Kuppelwiesers' high reputation, the Cardinal promised to give his permission and blessing for a foundation of the Sisters in Vienna, on condition that the government would also give its assent.

At the recommendation of Cardinal Gruscha, the Sisters visited the Most Reverend Bishop Angerer, who, being kindly disposed toward the Sisters and their plan, stated that neither he nor the Cardinal could be of much help to
the Sisters. He said that the initial help would have to come from the noble ladies of the court. At the suggestion of the Bishop, Miss Kuppelwieser made arrangements to introduce the Sisters to some of the most highly influential court ladies—the Countesses Gavis, Coudenhove, and Coudre-court. Although these ladies were sympathetic, kind, and understanding, they all agreed that for some time they would be unable to recommend this matter to the Emperor, for, just lately, the Austrian government and especially the Emperor had again definitely stated that new religious communities, especially recently founded ones, should be debarred from establishing in Vienna, for the reason that there were already more than enough convents in the city.

The Sisters left the palace somewhat depressed but not discouraged, for they trusted that continuous prayers were being offered at the motherhouse for the "Vienna intention." Having returned to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, instead of eating dinner, they went to chapel to pray; and, spiritually united with Mother Frances and the Sisters at Rome, they humbly entrusted this whole matter to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of the Sorrowful Mother. The venerable sacre-coeur Sisters were also very sympathetic to the Sisters and prayed for their intentions.

About five o'clock on that same day the imperial carriage stopped at the Convent of the Sacred Heart with a message requesting the Mother Superior to send one of the Sisters from Rome to the palace, because the Countess Elisabeth Coudenhove had had an accident and immediately needed a nurse who knew how to give massages. With a joyful heart Mother Superior informed the Sisters and remarked: "Indeed, Sisters, now you have won. This is the work of God." The Countess Elisabeth Coudenhove, besides being a court lady, was also the governess of Emperor Franz Joseph's beloved granddaughter, who was nine years old and was the daughter of the Crown Prince Rudolph.

Although neither of the two Sisters was much of a nurse nor knew much about massaging, one of them, with a
fearful heart, was taken in the royal carriage to the palace. When Sister entered the room of the lady, she was received kindly. The Countess, smiling, stretched out her hand and said: "Gruess Gott, liebe Schwester. See what has happened to me." Then she explained that, since she had severely sprained her foot, the doctor had ordered that she lie still for fourteen days, that compresses be applied every five minutes, and that later the foot be massaged.

The Countess maintained that this, her accident, requiring a nurse, was a sign that she was chosen by God to be instrumental in helping the Sisters to obtain the necessary permissions for an establishment. Leave it to the loving heart and resourcefulness of a woman! The Countess, knowing that the Emperor would visit her, decided to use this opportunity to entreat him in behalf of the Sisters' wishes.

The Sister diligently applied compresses every five minutes and in-between time prayed a decade of the rosary. Of course, the Emperor did come to visit the governess of his granddaughter and, to the joy and surprise of many, graciously gave his approval on condition that the petition for the establishment of a new foundation be made to the ministry and the mayor of the city.

Later the Countess sent the Sisters to the Most Reverend Bishop Angerer, who, because the Sisters had the approval of the Emperor, readily gave them a written recommendation for the mayor. After reading the note, the mayor replied: "Yes, Austria, especially Vienna, is swarming with religious; and now some new ones again. However, if the Emperor, Cardinal Gruscha, and the Bishop put nothing in the way, I won't either; but you must make your petition to the ministry for the approval for a firm foundation." (Monsignor John Sperber, Das Ave Mater Dolorosa, 2/67.)

Now the Sisters had reason to rejoice, and of course Mother Foundress and the Sisters at Rome were also happy on hearing the good news.
On December 9, 1892, Mother Frances sent five Sisters to Vienna and on December 20, four more. From the middle of December, 1892, until the beginning of May, 1893, some of the Sisters lived at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, and others, in a rented room of the home of two elderly ladies on Baker Street, No. 14.

The Sisters lived from one day to another relying on the help of Divine Providence in their needs. They nursed the sick in their homes, accepting for their service whatever the people were willing and able to give. From the poor they could expect nothing or very little; but at times they were well paid by sympathetic people of means. Christ, their divine Bridegroom, to whom they had dedicated their lives, saw to it that they did not have to go hungry for too long a time. Occasionally they came together at their residence for some hours of well-earned rest.

On February 2, 1893, with the approval of Mother Frances, a small house, which was to serve as the first convent of the Sisters, was purchased for 10,000 florins at No. 175 Simmeringer Hauptstrasse for the mission. From the Sacred Heart Convent the Sisters received twelve beds and mattresses, one table and several chairs, all of which were still in good condition. Benefactors, among whom were members of the Emperor's household, made possible the expansion of the small house into a sizable convent. The work of building began in the third week of July, 1893, during which time the new group of Sisters who had come from Rome received free board and lodging from good-hearted people.

On June 20, 1894, Mother Frances Streitel, the Foundress of the Community, came on her first visit to Vienna. She, who always esteemed holy poverty so highly, was deeply moved and happy to see the Sisters living in the true spirit of Franciscan poverty.

God blessed Mother Frances' visit to Vienna. On the third day after her arrival the Sisters received the long-hoped-for document—the written and recorded approval from
the Austrian government—officially stating that the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother was accepted in Austria and that the headquarters of the Sisters were in Vienna. Mother Frances and the Sisters greatly rejoiced that now the Community was finally solidly established in Austria.

On the day after the good news of governmental approval had come to the Sisters, Mother Frances returned to Rome. The Sisters immediately began to make plans to tear down an old, small building in order to build a new convent, which was solemnly blessed on November 19, 1894.

The activities of the Sisters consisted in nursing of the sick in their homes and in conducting private kindergartens, asylums, and sewing schools for girls. These activities were approved by the educational board of Austria. Some years later the Sisters added sodality work to their apostolic labors. The spiritual and physical blessings which, since 1892, the nursing of the sick in their homes has brought to thousands and tens of thousands of the sick in Vienna cannot be explained in statistical language but is recorded in the Book of Life.

2. Lussingrande, Istria: 1893

While the mission in Vienna was still in its infancy, Baroness von Hasslinger, a resident of Vienna, told Mother Frances that she intended to establish at Lussingrande on the island of Lussin, which is south of Istria and in the Adriatic Sea, a home for children of Vienna who were suffering from scrofulosis and rickets, and that she would be glad if the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother would take charge of this work of charity. Mother Frances, having a special love for the poor, the sick, and especially for suffering orphan children, accepted the offer. The Sisters took charge of the asylum on May 5, 1893. Sister M. Stilla Niegel, the first superior of the mission, described their arrival in the following words:
"We were received with great joy. The Baroness came in a boat to meet us, but the little ones, whom we had to carry, would not allow themselves to be touched by the noble lady.... The languages spoken here are Slavonic and Italian. Since there is little rain, we must buy water at two kreutzers a pitcher from the only well of the place. We should like to have you here, Reverend Mother, for at least a few hours. We have quite a large house, nicely furnished; but a chapel, which we hope to have, is still lacking."

The poor orphans, often suffering from eruptions and contagious diseases, received not only physical but also moral, intellectual, and spiritual care from the Sisters, who instructed them in religion and the essentials of reading and writing.

Since the Baroness' generous annual contributions of 800 to 1,000 florins were not sufficient for the support of the Sisters and the children, she transferred all her rights and duties concerning the home to the Orphans' Auxiliary Society in Vienna. With the aid of contributions from this society, the institution began to grow.

In December, 1894, Sister M. Ermesinda Schuebel, the new superior, wrote to Mother Frances in Rome that a chapel was being prepared and that Sister M. Emmanuela Deinlein distinguished herself by her untiring efforts for the sick children. Although Sister M. Ermesinda herself was ill and, like the children, covered with sores, she instructed them with devoted love. She died a saintly death on January 26, 1897. Four years later when the crypt was opened her body was found perfectly fresh and intact.

The responsibility for the support of the asylum was later assumed by a commission of the Austrian government, which granted the Sisters aid and appropriate remuneration. The good work of the Sisters in the asylum was fully recog-
nized, and it is much to be regretted that the events of World War I necessitated their giving up the mission.

The Sisters did not leave the island with the children until they were in very grave danger. By a special dispensation of Divine Providence they were saved from drowning by arriving too late at the port to embark on the ship that they were to have taken. This ship, after putting out to sea, was blown up by a mine, and all on board perished. Several days later the Sisters and their charges returned to Vienna on another ship.

3. St. Mathilda Home in St. Stephen's, Vienna, 1893

In the spring of 1893 Mother Frances accepted full charge of the St. Mathilda Home in St. Stephen's near Vienna. The Home, a resort for women, especially sickly teachers, was open from May until September. For two summers the Sisters did the housework here and took care of the women who needed their services. After that the mission was given up.

4. Maria Theresa Hospital, Vienna, 1894

In May, 1894, the Sisters took charge temporarily of the Maria Theresa Hospital for Women in Vienna in return for board and a cash compensation. When the government approval of the new foundation in Simmering was given on June 1, more Sisters were sent to Vienna. On July 17, 1894, Mother Frances notified Father Joch that six Sisters were then doing satisfactory work in the hospital for women.

The Sisters continued to work in this institution, accomplishing much good for the spiritual and physical welfare of their patients, until 1899, when they were withdrawn, because they were needed in the hospitals in America.
5. Kukus, Bohemia, 1895

On April 19, 1895, Mother Frances began a mission in Kukus, Bohemia, in the Diocese of Koenigsgraez. In 1897 this mission house was destroyed by fire, and the Sisters returned to Vienna.

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Sister M. Stilla Niegel's Recollections.
Chapter XVI

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, RHINELANDER, WISCONSIN

In the 1890's the northern part of Wisconsin, known as the "Land of Silver Lakes and Streams," was a wild, desolate, and practically impenetrable forest area. Each of the few settlements, which usually centered around railroads, consisted of a railroad station, a general store, a blacksmith shop, a few widely scattered houses, invariably several saloons, and sometimes a small church. During the winter months the extensive forests were scenes of great activity where hundreds of woodsmen earned their living. The flourishing logging industry exposed the men to dangers such as accidents and diseases resulting from unhygienic conditions.

The lumberjacks and millworkers were men who wrestled with great pines, whose muscles were hardened to work, and whose bodies were inured to discomforts. Even as hardy as the lumbermen might have been, their bodies were still made of flesh and bone. An axe might slip, a tall pine might topple over, or a saw might snap, causing death or serious injury to workers. Accidents were frequent. There were no or few safety shields around saws, and workers were rather careless.

The nearest hospital was at Chippewa Falls, a hundred miles away. Trains were infrequent, and service unreliable. Poor roads with horse and buggy transportation jeopardized highway travel. Consequently, because of a delay in obtaining the necessary help, many a critically injured lumberjack lost his life or became an invalid. Pioneer doctors did not have the equipment for treating certain cases nor were they able to provide the necessary nursing care. Last, but by no means least, the spiritual care of the soul was almost entirely neglected, because the few priests available could hardly reach the dying lumberman nor spend much time with him.
The town of Rhinelander, located in the northern part of Wisconsin on the Wisconsin River, received its city charter in 1894. In 1891 the people of Rhinelander, realizing the need for a hospital, used a boardinghouse on the corner of King and Pelham Streets, west of St. Mary's Church, as the Rhinelander Hospital, which was first conducted by Doctor J.M. Dodd and later by Doctors A. D. Daniels and T. McIndoe. Other doctors of early fame were Dr. C.C. Packard, Dr. F.L. Hinman, and Dr. H. Keith, dentist. These doctors, having encountered the difficulties of the practice of medicine and surgery in the lumbering days, recognized the need for better hospital facilities.

Reverend Nicholas July, pastor of St. Mary's Church, Rhinelander, having heard of the wonderful work being done in St. Joseph's Hospital at Marshfield, Wisconsin, by Reverend Joseph Joch and the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, went there in the spring of 1893 in order to discuss with Father Joch the possibility of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother coming to Rhinelander to care for the sick. He suggested that, for the beginning, the Sisters take over the recently established Rhinelander Hospital.

Since Father Joch was aware of the fact that the motherhouse in Rome was filled with zealous and deeply spiritual-minded novices, he corresponded with Mother Frances and Monsignor George Jacquemin, who approved of the Community's taking over the hospital and promised to send more Sisters to America. In reply to his letter to the Most Reverend Sebastian G. Messmer, then Bishop of Green Bay, Father Joch received His Excellency's most sincere and grateful approval.

With their few earthly possessions, consisting of one trunk, one loaf of bread, and fifty dollars in cash, Reverend Father Joch and three Sisters—Sisters M. Pia Hagemann, M. Petronilla Derleth, and M. Virginia Boch—left St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield, on June 5, 1893, in order to begin a hospital in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. They took up their abode near the church in a few unfurnished rooms of a framehouse on the corner of King and Pelham Streets.
For the first few months a few rooms of this house were occupied by another family, and hence the Sisters had very little privacy.

This new mission, as did all the other missions which the Community had founded, made serious demands upon the Sisters. They had to live in dire poverty for a long time, enduring cold, hunger, and want of every kind. But the pioneer Sisters frequently attested that, in spite of all the crosses which surrounded them, they were happy to be able to do good to others for God's sake.

The Sisters' water supply, which came from a little well in the neighborhood, was inadequate; and since there was only one small stove in the whole house, the water often froze in the winter even during the day. The necessary cooking utensils were lacking; their kitchenware consisted of a few bowls, an iron kettle, and a few tin cans. Their furniture included a few backless chairs, an old bench, and a table of rough boards.

The Sisters immediately began their work of charity by nursing the sick in private homes in the Rhinelander vicinity, a service for which they did not charge, and consequently most of the people took it for granted that this work was free in the real sense of the word. Because after their first six weeks in Rhinelander the Sisters had, besides an accumulation of debts, no more than one dollar, they had to go begging for the poor sick and for themselves. On some of their collection tours, the Sisters had gotten lost in the woods and nearly froze to death.

After the family with whom they shared the house had moved, the Sisters arranged the vacated rooms for the patients, who gradually came to the Sisters' Hospital. Even though nursing procedures were primitive and facilities inconvenient, the patients were glad to be in the Sisters' care.

A few months later, in August, 1893, the convent family of three Sisters had increased to six by the arrival

In summer and fall the Sisters went to the woods to pick berries by the hundreds of quarts—raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, and cranberries. They felt they had earned a million's worth.

In order to help the hospital financially Father Joch started the ticket system in Rhinelander, which already had been introduced there by some of the doctors. To secure patients for the hospital, tickets, costing five dollars and being good for one year, were sold to the lumberjacks. When these men became sick or were hurt, they received free hospital care; if they did not get sick, the hospital had the benefit of the five dollars. Agents were hired for the purpose of collecting the insurance. One agent, Mr. Matt Stapleton, a foreman of a lumber company and a friend of Father Joch, set up special rules and regulations to be followed by the agents and saw to it that these rules were carried out faithfully. Mr. Stapleton was a zealous promoter of the hospital.

Gradually, ticket patients filled St. Mary's Hospital to its capacity. Most of these patients were victims of accidents or typhoid fever; their sick or injured bodies were often filthy and full of vermin. During the typhoid epidemic cots and stretchers were set up in all available corners of the hospital, and in emergencies even the halls served as operating rooms. The Sisters, like angels of mercy, worked unflinchingly in caring for the patients, with whom they were like members of one large family. It was certainly because they saw Christ in the sick and injured that the Sisters were able to attend to them, as their condition was by no means attractive.

Soon after the Sisters' arrival in Rhinelander, Father Joch, having planned the construction of a new hospital, had bought, at a cost of $1,125, five lots outside the town at the edge of the woods and the banks of the Pelican River, where the hospital now stands. According to the
register of the deed, the purchases were dated July 12, 1893, and recorded on September 18. The plans for the new hospital were purchased from the Messmer Company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Since Reverend Joch had assumed the responsibility of the building of St. Mary's Hospital, he had to travel back and forth from Marshfield to Rhinelander. Trusting in God, he began the construction of the hospital, with no money, in the fall of 1894. Since the workmen had to be paid by the day, Father Joch was kept busy collecting ticket orders from the logging and lumber companies around Rhinelander. His place of residence in Rhinelander was at St. Mary's Rectory, where he stayed with his friend, Reverend Father July. Both priests, anxious to speed up the building process, kept a watchful eye on the construction work. The Sisters helped by carrying bricks and lumber and by painting the doors, window sills, and other woodwork. Soon after the new building was finished, the following Sisters arrived: Sisters M. Nolaska Gock, M. Bonaventura Herbst, M. Raphaela Eberth, M. Anna Niegel, and M. Camilla Heieck.

With the aid of small surpluses and donations from the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, financial conditions gradually improved so that the Sisters could buy a secondhand sewing machine for St. Mary's Hospital, enabling them to make the quilts and mattresses for the patients. Father Joch saw to it that there was enough food, drugs, and necessary medical equipment, without which not even the smallest hospital could function.

In May, 1895, when the new St. Mary's hospital was nearing its completion, Reverend Father Joch and some Sisters left for Denville, New Jersey, in order to establish a sanitarium there and to introduce the Kneipp Water Cure.

In June, 1895, to the great joy and satisfaction of the Sisters, Right Reverend Monsignor G. Jacquemin, spiritual director of the Community, came to America with a group of Sisters in order to visit all the missions of the Community. He gave retreats, presided at the Sisters' holy
investiture and profession ceremonies, explained the holy vows and Constitutions to the Sisters; and, in whatever house of the Community he was residing, he explained each day's meditation to them. He was revered not only by the Sisters, but also by their patients, whose confidence he won by his outstanding, fatherly kindness and the interest he showed in each and every one of them, especially in those who were poor, wretched, and forsaken.

Experiencing all the excitement of a moving household on an open wagon, the Sisters moved to the new hospital on July 4, 1895; and, after the last piece of furniture had been placed, Monsignor Jacquemin blessed the hospital and its chapel. On the following day, which was open-house day, Monsignor celebrated holy Mass for the first time in the chapel of the new hospital. How happy the people were to have better and safer accommodations for the sick in this new two-story brick building with its twelve rooms. The Beaudin's house, which was next to the Sisters' property, was bought and moved across the street for the chaplain's rectory.

In August, 1895, Mother Frances made her third and last visitation trip to the Community's missions in America. During her stay in Rhinelander she introduced the title "Sister Superior" for the head-Sisters, who until then, had been called by their name: Sister M. N. N.

That, as the Sisters had noticed, Mother Frances was worn out and sick at this time is verified in a letter dated October 25, 1895, which she herself had written to Father Joch: "I was very sick for several days...." Two days later, on October 27, she informed him that urgent money matters prevented her from visiting other missions.

Although there was no chaplain at St. Mary's Hospital for the first five years, the Sisters had the Blessed Sacrament in their convent chapel. The pastor of St. Mary's Parish came to the hospital about once a week to offer
GROWTH OF ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, RHINELANDER, WISCONSIN

Rhinelander Hospital was taken over by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother in 1893.

1895: St. Mary's Hospital built by the Sisters.
1922: Addition to St. Mary's Hospital, Rhinelander, Wisconsin

1925: St. Mary's Hospital was enlarged and remodeled, and a new chapel was built.
1952: Work was begun on a new five-story addition, which was completed in 1954.

Some of the Sisters active in St. Mary's Hospital, Rhinelander, Wisconsin, in 1958.
Hospital activities at St. Mary's Hospital.
holy Mass, for which the Sisters had otherwise gone to the parish church. Once when a new priest had come to St. Mary's Parish, the Sisters received the following note from him through his housekeeper: "I will come to say holy Mass for you tomorrow and take the Blessed Sacrament from you."

Sister M. Nolaska Gock gives us a graphic description of the Sisters' reaction to this message.

"We were struck with consternation, for none of us was aware of anything we might have done to cause such a loss. Sister M. Bonaventura Herbst, our Superior, and Sister M. Theresia Henneberger went at once to the rectory to find out the reason for this action. But the priest simply told us that he had decided to take the Blessed Sacrament from the chapel and that's what was going to be done the next morning. When the Sisters returned to the convent with this terrible message, it was decided that during the whole night two Sisters should kneel in adoration in the chapel, begging our Lord for mercy. Every hour we changed off and prayed aloud, begging our dear Lord to remain with us. We couldn't bear the thought that our Lord should be torn away from us, hence our fervent prayers and tears. There were nine of us: Sisters M. Bonaventura Herbst, M. Bernardina Huemer, M. Juliana Seelman, M. Ludovika Riedel, M. Theresia Henneberger, M. Luitgardis Nuesslein, M. Augustina Thuemmel, M. Raphaela Eberth, and M. Nolaska Gock.

"The next morning when it was time for Mass, Father did not appear. But the housekeeper came with a message saying: 'Father is sick and wants a Sister to come down and take care of him.' This message changed our sorrow into joy and smiles, and we thanked the Lord for what He had done for us. Sister M. Theresia, who was deeply religious and very attached to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, was sent
to take care of the Reverend Rector. She told him that we prayed before the tabernacle during the whole night. 'Yes, you prayed me sick,' was all he could say.

"Never again did he say that he would take our Lord from us. On the contrary, whenever he could do us a favor, he did so. Occasionally he would ask: 'Do you want Benediction? I have time now.' Quickly everybody would help together and prepare the altar. We did not have Benediction regularly, and therefore we experienced great joy on these occasions." (Sister M. Nolaska Goch, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda, Vol. III, p. 126.)

A few examples of the Sisters' experiences in Rhine-lander might be of interest. Sister M. Theobaldka Kurowski related the following to Sister M. Beda Hack.

"One afternoon a middle-aged man was brought to our hospital with the announcement that he would not live through the night. On examining this patient we found that he was nearly eaten up by vermin. What a sight! Sister M. Anna Niegel and I got busy at once to care for him. During our clearing ordeal the skin actually opened and out came the tiny creatures. The man improved gradually, got well, and went home again." (Sister M. Theobaldka Kurowski, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda, Vol. II, p. 243.)

"Another poor man came into the hospital with both legs frozen black. His doctor had decided to amputate them. The Sisters, feeling compassion for the poor man, begged the doctor to wait for some time, during which Sister M. Theresia Henneberger treated the man's legs with hayseed applications. The Sisters stormed heaven for the patient's recovery. Gradually
the blackness disappeared and circulation began, and thus the treatment was kept up until both legs were restored to normal." (Sister M. Augustina Thuemmel, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda, Vol. III, p. 141.)

The lumbermen found help not only in their physical ailments, but also in their spiritual sicknesses. Many of them practiced no religion at all; some had not been inside a church for many years; and others were embittered or blinded by prejudices. The Sisters took as much interest in the salvation of the souls of their patients as if their own salvation depended upon it. They perseveringly begged God for the grace of conversion, combining prayers with work and penance. Some of the men responded almost spontaneously, while others again had to struggle long and hard before accepting the grace of God. The good example of the Sisters—their life of self-renunciation, their mercy and charity, their simplicity and self-sacrifice—spoke louder than words.

The transformation of the hospital from a clean-bed, comforting-care institution to one more modernized started in 1903 with the gift of Dr. A. D. Daniels—the most modern sterilizing equipment, which was the first of several other gifts. Dr. Daniels maintained his interest in the hospital by frequently giving donations.

An incident which is unique in the Community's history happened during 1921 and 1922. Since neither a building nor a renovating project had been done for quite some years, St. Mary's Hospital had become a regular fire trap. It was too small and was deficient of many essentials necessary for a hospital at that time. The citizens of Rhinelander, having shown themselves indifferent and having refused to contribute to the erection of a new addition, were told that unless the city help with the building and remodeling of the hospital, the Sisters would close the institution.

When, in spite of this announcement, the people kept up their apathy concerning the building project, Reverend
Mother M. Johanna Ankenbrand, the Superior General of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, sent Mother M. Wendelina Bauer, Commissary General of the Community, with Sister M. Bartholomea Betzen to Rhinelander in order to inform the people that the hospital would be closed on May 1, 1922. But to give the people a last warning, Mother M. Wendelina sent Sister M. Bartholomea and another Sister to visit all the important business concerns of Rhinelander—the banks, the paper mills, and all other important industries—to tell them personally and authoritatively that the Sisters intended to leave Rhinelander. The people were dismayed and thunderstruck by this announcement. They pleaded and begged that the Sisters stay and that under no conditions should they give up the hospital. Finally convinced that the Sisters meant what they had said, the people, not only of Rhinelander but of the whole Oneida county, unanimously arose to organize a committee to promote the worthy cause of saving their hospital. The gracious Queen of May did not permit the defeat of her hospital, her Sisters, and her favorites—the sick.

At a courthouse meeting it was decided that the hospital may not be closed and that the Sisters may not leave. By unanimous vote it was resolved that the citizens of Rhinelander contribute $15,000; Oneida county $20,000; and the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother $35,000 for the new addition.

The county was solicitous to invest wisely and, as time has proven, they did not fall short. To make the contract valid before the law, the Sisters had to bind themselves for ten years, beginning on January 1, 1923, to give free care at their hospital to five patients from Oneida county, that is, if five such patients were available. The county's agreement to pay one dollar per day for all county patients above five was, indeed, a profitable bargain for the county, for from 1923 until 1932 the free beds maintained by the Sisters amounted to $25,719.43.

The plans for the new addition to St. Mary's Hospital were made by E. Brielmaier and Sons of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
The bids, opened on June 30, 1922, proved much higher than had been expected. But the Sisters trusted in their heavenly architect, good St. Joseph, and started to build; excavation began on July 17, 1922. The cost of the new addition came to $75,000. Most Reverend Joseph Pinten, Bishop of Superior, blessed and dedicated the new addition on April 5, 1923.

As time went on, the population of Rhinelander and the whole Oneida county increased, especially when this area was opened to tourists. A gradual increase in service to Rhinelander followed from year to year, and the commencement of the United States Forestry Program made Rhinelander the hub of all activity in the section of the State north of Wausau.

The remodeling and enlarging of the old St. Mary's Hospital was started by the Hutter Construction Company in April, 1935. Two new operating rooms were added to the surgical department, and a new chapel, accommodating seventy-five persons, was built. Besides a new altar, a choir and seven new art windows, portraying the seven sorrows of the Blessed Mother, were installed in this chapel. The Most Reverend Bishop Theodore Reverman blessed the new addition on December 11, 1935, and dedicated the new chapel to the Sorrowful Mother. The financial part was taken care of by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Golden Jubilee celebration of St. Mary's Hospital was on Wednesday, June 5, 1943, the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the hospital. Although war conditions prevented an elaborate celebration, the Sisters, their friends, and the people of Rhinelander gave honor and sincere thanks to God for all the blessings received during the first semicentennial of the hospital's existence and begged for God's continual blessings upon the institution. The following editorial from the Rhinelander News, dated June 3, 1943, reveals to us the attitude of the people of Rhinelander toward their hospital.
"If it were possible to single out, in a balanced, well-developed community such as Rhinelander, the one institution whose loss would be most acutely felt by most people, the choice here undoubtedly would be St. Mary's Hospital. For an institution of the character of the hospital here is one of the most vital factors constituting the difference between a settlement and a city.

"St. Mary's Hospital had won the position of esteem and affection which it now occupies because of the excellence of its service and because of the alertness of its operating Sisterhood in developing its possibilities. It is difficult to realize that only twenty years ago there was a very real possibility that the institution might find it necessary to close. Today, any such possibility would be met by an appreciative community with a marshaling of resources organized overnight. " (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. XIII, No. 1, p. 7.)

In 1950 the grounds extending from the Sisters' property almost to the bridge of the Pelican River to the east of the hospital were acquired from the city of Rhinelander. Six years later, the roads of the hospital grounds, including the shore of the Pelican River, were black-topped, adding to the landscape and its beauty, for which it is noted at all seasons of the year.

To make the largest and latest addition possible, the Sisters found themselves compelled to call upon the aid of the Federal Government and local contributions in addition to their own big financial burden. The total cost of the needed addition was estimated to be $1,333,000. A campaign to raise $200,000 of local contribution was successfully carried out by public-spirited citizens of the city of Rhinelander. The Federal Government, under the Hill-Burton Act, contributed forty per cent of the total cost, which was a great help to the Sisters and the city. Work on the
five-story addition started in June, 1952, and was successfully completed in the fall of 1954 by J. P. Cullen and Son, Construction Company in Janesville, Wisconsin, with the Hutter Construction Company as consultant. In 1954 a new chaplain's rectory was erected next to the hospital on Kabel Avenue.

The building project of the hospital included the remodeling of the old building and an addition of a fifth floor, which is entirely utilized by the surgical department. The radiology department and the new A. D. Daniels' Memorial Laboratory are located on the fifth floor of the new addition. The fourth floor serves maternity; second and third floors are devoted to medical and surgical patients.

Visitors are favorably impressed by the friendly atmosphere of the lobby, the modern administrative department, the pharmacy, the medical record library, the large staff room, the cafeteria, and the auxiliary ladies' gift shop.

Since 1955 St. Mary's Hospital has been listed among the accredited hospitals in the United States. About twenty doctors are on the staff. St. Mary's Hospital is served by a full-time pathologist. With the improvements now made available, it has a bed capacity of 135. Earlier statistics show a bed capacity as follows: 1895—40; 1922—65; 1933—75.

In conclusion, appreciation is extended to Sister M. Roswitha Beitzinger for writing the first draft of the history of St. Mary's Hospital, Rhinelander, Wisconsin.

Chaplains of St. Mary's Hospital

For the first five years the pastor of St. Mary's Parish acted as chaplain at the Hospital. Beginning in 1898 to the present are the following: Reverend Father Rhode, 1898-1900; Reverend Father Adamer, 1901-1902; Reverend Father

Superiors of St. Mary's Hospital


Sources:

Chronicle of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.
Reichert, Rev. Aquilin, Mother Frances Streitel—Her Life and Work.
Rhinelander Daily News
Sister M. Beda's Personal Interviews, Vols. II and III.
As most of the towns of northern Wisconsin, so Tomahawk, having been incorporated as a city in 1888, owes its growth and development to the lumber industry. When Mr. William H. Bradley, president of the Tomahawk Land and Boom Company, had promised two lots of land to any group which would build the first church in Tomahawk, the small energetic group of Catholics took advantage of this offer and built their little church, forty-six feet by twenty-eight feet, which functioned as a mission of St. Mary's Church, Rhinelander, until the end of October, 1889.

On All Saints' Day, 1889, Reverend Charles Hoogstoel, a highly educated priest who had come to America from Belgium in 1884, became pastor of the parish, which then numbered thirty-six families. Now that Tomahawk had its own church and pastor, Catholics flocked there; and the little mission church became too small for the growing town. At a parish meeting in February, 1891, a hundred parishioners unanimously voted to build a new church, for which Mr. William H. Bradley generously donated the site. The construction of the church, a truly beautiful and well-proportioned building—a credit to Reverend Hoogstoel—was begun in April, 1891, and completed in May, 1892.

When Reverend Hoogstoel was a patient for the Kneipp Water Cure at St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield during the summer of 1893, he was informed by Reverend Father Joch that the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother were getting ready to start a hospital in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. Upon hearing this, Reverend Hoogstoel exclaimed that if Rhinelander needed a hospital, then Tomahawk also needed one. He urgently pleaded with Father Joch and the Sisters to start a hospital in Tomahawk and also wrote to Bishop Messmer, the ordinary of Green Bay Diocese, asking him to recommend the project to Father Joch.
After Father Joch received a letter from the Bishop, commenting that it would please his Excellency very much if Tomahawk would have a hospital, Father Joch presented this whole matter to Monsignor Jacquemin and Mother Frances at the motherhouse in Rome. Since the higher superiors of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother had great confidence in the business ability of Father Joch, they acquiesced, expressing the hope that much good for bodies and souls might be done.

Mr. Bradley donated the land for the hospital and helped in many other ways. In those days Bradley meant Tomahawk and vice versa. Father Joch says of him:

"Bradley owned and controlled almost everything. He had a sawmill, a bank, and a hotel—up-to-date buildings which would have done honor to any town. He had his own railroad, about six miles long, extending from a point north of the Tomahawk River to the Soo Line at Bradley, Wisconsin.

"No doubt, Mr. Bradley did much for Tomahawk, but if you wanted to succeed there, you had to listen to him. All this was good for the time being, but it excluded all competition." (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. I, p. 79.)

When, because of poor health, Reverend Father Hoogstool had to go to Tucson, Arizona, for the winter of 1893 to 1894, the Most Reverend Sebastian Messmer asked Father Joch to substitute as pastor at Tomahawk. Father Joch gladly accepted this offer, because it gave him an opportunity to start the hospital and make plans for the new building.

On the morning of October 1, 1893, Father Joch left Marshfield for Tomahawk with the following Sisters—Sisters M. Anna Niegel, M. Alexia Bauer, M. Gabriela Ortlieb, M. Clementia Baes, and M. Dionysia Griebel—and arrived in Tomahawk at noon.
Let Father Joch tell us about their beginnings.

"We started the hospital the same day that we arrived. We rented a ramshackle building—an abandoned saloon—drew a curtain through the middle of the barroom, put up a stove and beds in the front section of the room, used the rear for a kitchen, and the hospital was finished. On the same day we had one patient. After the building had been heated a little, all the hungry bedbugs that were hidden in the crevices came out, and the Sisters had quite a killing time." (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. 1, p. 80.)

But even for these times the place was poorly suited. After a few months the Sisters rented Mrs. Ed J. Roller's two-story residence, which had four rooms on each floor and was located on 127 Spirit Avenue. When the Sisters moved to the Roller's house, Mr. Matt Nick carried the two patients from the second floor of the building down to his bobsled, in which he brought them to Mrs. Roller's house. According to the chronicle of Sacred Heart Hospital, twelve patients were admitted between December 2, 1893, and January 12, 1894.

As a convent for the Sisters, Father Joch had secured a small, newly built house that had not yet been occupied. The Sisters' first winter in Tomahawk was a severely cold one, and there were many feet of snow, as is the general case in that part of Wisconsin. Early in the morning, when the biting cold is felt most keenly, Father Joch led the Sisters from the convent to the church, which was a distance of about half a mile, in order to break a way through the snow, which at times was three to four feet deep. Frequently the temperature in the church was below zero when Father Joch offered Mass.

During the winter months Father Joch made the plans for the new hospital, which was begun in the spring of 1894, even though the Sisters had no money and no credit.
The laborers had to be hired for only a day or a week's duration at a time because of the uncertainty of the future. Father Hoogstoel said that some of the people of Tomahawk had pledged $1,000, but when the Sisters needed the money, there were no subscriptions and no subscribers.

In order to raise funds, ticket agents had to be employed, and the Sisters were also encouraged to go to the lumbermen's camps. Father Joch was not in favor of the Sisters' going on these dangerous trips, and he saw to it that they were soon discontinued. He said that in mid-winter the Sisters had to walk from camp to camp and sometimes, in order to visit all the camps in the Tomahawk area, had to be gone from the hospital for a whole week and at times even longer. They had to walk miles across snow-covered woods and lakes or ride in open sleighs or logging trains, enduring the bitter cold of below-zero weather.

There were certain stations where the Sisters usually stopped overnight, and many times they arrived at their destination hardly able to walk. Once when the Sisters were taken on a collection tour by sleigh, the driver lost his way when returning to an overnight lodging. After circling the woods a seemingly countless number of times and crossing frozen lakes, the ice of which cracked beneath them, they finally arrived at their destination at 3:30 in the morning.

Sister M. Dyonisia tells us in her reminiscences that on their collection tours the Sisters always brought provisions to the camps, such as cough medicine, white pine syrup, physic tablets, and other needed supplies. She also stated that it must be said in praise of the woodboys that they always treated the Sisters with profound respect and were grateful for every act of kindness shown towards them. The money which the lumbermen promised to the Sisters was sent to the hospital by the foremen of the camp in the spring of the year when the men were paid.
GROWTH OF SACRED HEART HOSPITAL, TOMAHAWK, WISCONSIN
This chapel was included in the building project of 1937.
In 1937 a three-story addition and a program of extensive remodeling was begun at Sacred Heart Hospital, Tomahawk, Wisconsin.

Architect's drawing of the new Sacred Heart Hospital, Tomahawk, Wisconsin.
Sisters who were active at Sacred Heart Hospital, Tomahawk, Wisconsin, in 1958 gathered around the shrine of St. Francis of Assisi on the hospital grounds.
As we also learn from Sister M. Dyonisia, the Sisters discontinued all begging during their second year in Tomahawk, as there were enough patients at the hospital. Thence-forward the selling of hospital insurance tickets at the camps was taken care of solely by ticket agents.

Some of the early settlers recounted later how the people came with their teams to excavate the ground for the new Sacred Heart Hospital, each putting in work for a day or two as a donation. Mr. Anton Weingart and Mr. Van Ruden erected the building—a two-story frame structure, forty feet long with a stone foundation. Later it was brick veneered. As soon as the plastering was started, two Sisters slept in the new building, and twice during the night, in order to keep the plaster from freezing, they had to refuel the furnace, using for fuel heavy wood, three feet long.

There were two wards and two private rooms on each floor of the new hospital, which had a bed capacity of twenty-five patients. The chapel was the Sisters' spiritual powerhouse and the place where they received joy, consolation, and strength in all their troubles and deprivations. Mr. Hennemann, a friend of the Community, had made the altars and pews; and Monsignor Jacquemin provided the relics for the chapel, as he did for all the other chapels of the Sisters' missions in America.

The many stones lying on the property were used for building a devotional grotto in honor of Mary Immaculate.

The hospital was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on July 20, 1894, with a solemn high Mass and a sermon. The ladies of Tomahawk had made extensive preparations to help the hospital financially by means of a public dinner, of which Mrs. Matt Nick, Mrs. Anton Weingart, and Mrs. Jacob Nick were in charge. Everyone in town gave donations for the supper and participated in the celebration, paying well for everything, with the result that the festivity was a great financial success.

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In their love for holy poverty, the Sisters cheerfully endured the difficulties, countless deprivations, and many trials connected with the beginning of Sacred Heart Hospital. They were too poor to have a hired man and hence did all the work themselves, except for the ploughing of their garden, which was done by a farmer. They had to refuel their furnace almost every half hour, day and night, as the fuel consisted of remnants of wood from the sawmill.

The Sisters did all the laundry work on washboards, and we can easily imagine, and perhaps know with certitude, that, with the immense amount of hospital wash, the Sisters' laundry day meant long hours spent bent over a washboard and many sore knuckles rubbed bare from washing article after article until all was finished. The wash was boiled in two large cooking kettles, as the Sisters could not afford to buy a boiler.

After the exhausting hours before the washboard, there were still trying hours to be spent ironing with irons that had to be heated by placing them on a stove. We can picture quite vividly and perhaps even recall the patience required in heating and reheating the irons constantly. Sister M. Macaria Lauer tells us in her reminiscences that laundry day required four days—one for washing and drying, another for sprinkling and folding, a third for mangling, and a fourth for ironing.

In order to save money, the Sisters mended their old shoes with flax cord and made slippers out of old clothes left at the hospital by the lumberjacks. Sister M. Nolaska Gock tells us that the Sisters begged for leather. When she and Sister M. Theresia Henneberger had time, they went into the shoe business.

Mr. Bradley, a "St. Nicholas" to all poor people in Tomahawk, was the Sisters' greatest benefactor. He owned a fine dairy farm, and at Christmas he treated all the poor people with various farm products—cheese, flour, beans, and all kinds of foods. He treated the Sisters likewise, not only on Christmas but several times throughout the year.
One of his gifts to the Sisters was an excellent Jersey cow.

In the beginning of June, 1895, Monsignor Jacquemin came to America with fourteen Sisters and four candidates, and in August of the same year Mother Frances landed in New York with twenty-one more Sisters. (This was Mother Frances' third and last visit to America.)

We can imagine how happy the Sisters in the various missions were, now that they had in their midst once again their spiritual Father, who through his instructions guided them on the way of Christian perfection, and Mother Frances, who gave the Sisters a wonderful example of humility and other virtues.

Thanks be to God! by whose divine providence many devoted young girls from Germany entered the Community at Rome annually, for the six hospitals established in America within the last four years needed help. These valiant young Sisters, leaving home and country, made it possible for the Community to keep up the many missionary activities begun in America by the Servant of God, Mother Frances Streitel.

On October 13, 1895, the holy ceremonies of profession, for which Monsignor Jacquemin had given holy retreat, took place in the hospital chapel at Tomahawk. Sister M. Augustina Bergermeier made first profession; Sisters M. Dorothea Griebel and M. Stephania Gledner renewed their vows; and Sister M. Mechtildis Bauer, who was the Superior, made perpetual vows.

During those early years, the days of investiture and profession were without glamour and external celebration. One of the Sisters tells us that on the day preceding holy profession there was no more wood for the kitchen stove, so the brides—those Sisters who were to make their vows on the following day—went into the woodshed and sawed and split wood until 11:30 p.m. On the following day they made their holy profession during holy Mass, at which Msgr.
Jacquemin gave an inspiring sermon. Their hearts were full of peace and joy as they performed their usual work during the day, celebrating their holy profession interiorly with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in extreme poverty. The presence of Mother Frances was a spiritual tonic for the hearts and souls of the Sisters.

In those early pioneering years, the conditions in Tomahawk were about the same as in Rhinelander, where every employment depended, more or less, upon the lumber industry. During the winter months the lumbermen cut the trees, deposited them along the river, and in the spring floated them down the river to the sawmills. Thousands of men were engaged in this dangerous logging business. In the case of accidents and sickness a hospital could be reached only with great difficulty, for the hospital nearest to them was at Chippewa Falls, a hundred miles away. Truly, in those times the Sisters' hospitals established in Tomahawk and Rhinelander in 1893 were a great blessing for this region of Wisconsin.

Those woodboys who did not live in nearby towns and villages dwelt in camps scattered throughout northern Wisconsin, each of which accommodated about ninety to one hundred men. Since much of the country was yet in a pioneering stage, the sanitary and hygienic conditions in the camps were deplorable. When the sick and injured woodboys came to the hospital, their bodies and clothing were frequently infested with lice—parasitic wingless insects which suck the blood of their victim and deposit their eggs in the clothing, often causing typhus and other diseases.

The Sisters were compelled to carry on a constant warfare against offensive hoards of parasites, which they killed by boiling, burning, ironing, or by using kerosene. They became very skillful both in destroying the obnoxious pest and in diagnosing many of the cases that came to the hospital.
At times patients, whom relatives and friends expected to die, came to the hospital deathly sick with high temperatures. However, the fever frequently left them as soon as the Sisters had freed their bodies of the ugly parasites by a thorough washing and cleansing. It happened at times that the doctor, upon his arrival, would find his patients miraculously healed, so it seemed. Indeed it was the miracle of Christlike charity.

In imitation of the wonderful ideal which Jesus gives us in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Sisters treated the patients most kindly, taking care to wash and clean them, to prepare comfortable beds for them, and to make them feel at home. This Christlike charity which the Sisters practiced by day and by night had its benevolent effects upon the woodboys. Having been made comfortable and supplied with clean clothing, a comfortable bed, and good food, the lumberjacks became quite docile and eager to listen to the Sisters' instructions about God, the Blessed Mother, prayer, and the sacraments. Their hearts were raised to a higher spiritual level and to a greater love for God and an appreciation for their holy religion. Many of the lumberjacks, not having been to confession and Holy Communion nor to church for many years, returned to the sacraments and the practice of their religion. Truly it can be said that many of the patients left the hospital as better men.

In an informal manner, by example, the Sisters gave the lumbermen lessons in sanitary living and on how to combat the dangerous hosts of parasites that were prevalent in the unhygienic conditions of the camps. Gradually, too, the camps were conducted in a more healthful manner.

The lumberjacks made up the great majority of the patients at Sacred Heart Hospital. They were brought to the hospital on stretchers as victims of broken and bruised limbs, or came as victims of different diseases such as typhoid fever or pneumonia. Around 1910, with the lumber business gradually declining, the percentage of lumberjack patients decreased proportionately.
Reverend Father Joch says:

"Tomahawk can be proud of the laurels it won during the first ten to fifteen years of its existence—by the charitable works the Sisters performed for the poor lumberjacks, who found a real home for their bodies and souls in the Sacred Heart Hospital." (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. I, p. 79.)

Although Sacred Heart Hospital is and will most probably always remain a small hospital, the people of the city and its environment are greatly attached to their medical center. Doctor George Baker, Tomahawk's pioneering physician—an excellent medical and surgical doctor—was instrumental in giving Sacred Heart Hospital a fine reputation. Patients from Tomahawk and the surrounding country patronized their hospital with great confidence in the early years and will continue to do so, because other excellent doctors have moved to Tomahawk and are ready to serve the people by means of the latest and best methods available.

Several small but necessary additions were made in the course of years. In 1908 an addition of sixty feet raised the bed capacity to about thirty-five persons. On November 18 of that same year Reverend B. Scheyer, the pastor of St. Mary's Church, officiated at the dedication ceremonies, at which many priests and friends were present.

For this 1908 addition Mr. Bradley had given a donation of $6,000 and a loan without interest of the same amount. When the Sisters returned this money a few months later, the honorable Bradley nobly returned it to the Sisters as a donation for either an isolation or a future maternity department. The Sisters decided to use it for an isolation hospital, which was built in 1910 and dedicated in January, 1911. It was a solid two-story building with two separate entrances, one for each floor.
In 1928 a third story was added to the hospital in order to provide more and better convent accommodations for the Sisters. In 1937 a three-story addition and a program of extensive remodeling was begun—a new chapel was built, a maternity department arranged, and sun parlors provided. Modern and better scientific equipment was installed in the X-ray and laboratory departments. With this new addition and the remodeling of the old part of Sacred Heart Hospital, the bed capacity was raised to seventy.

On December 14 a solemn high Mass of thanksgiving was offered; and Monsignor William Smits, pastor of St. Mary's parish, Tomahawk, assisted by several priests, dedicated and blessed the chapel and the new addition. The Most Reverend Theodore Reverman, Bishop of Superior, unable to be present because of illness, sent his congratulations.

The Golden Jubilee of Sacred Heart Hospital was celebrated on Thanksgiving Day, November 25, 1943. The celebrant of the solemn high Mass was Reverend Florian Gehrards. His Excellency, the Most Reverend P. O'Conner, Bishop of Superior at that time, gave a most inspiring sermon, from which the following is quoted:

"Fifty years is a long time. It is a longer time than the Diocese of Superior has existed. We remember today those intrepid women who ventured in the face of difficulties to set up here this house of healing...God only knows what they suffered and underwent that this edifice might stand, that they might carry on their work of healing body and souls. We shall not forget these Sisters who lived and worked here. I remembered them all. I said Mass for them, for all those noble souls who sacrificed themselves here and have since passed to their reward. It was something of a personal experience, as I saw in spirit this whole array of Sisters and persons connected with this hospital pass before me, and I felt very humble in the presence of the supernatural, the unseen
things, on which the success of this hospital rests. We remember today the benefactors, the doctors; we think of the nurses, the sacrifices they brought and the tears they shed, as they went about doing good." (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. XIII, p. 12.)

"I hope that the next fifty years for this Sacred Heart Hospital will be as prosperous as the last fifty years. May God assist you and prosper you, so that like the Divine Savior, you may go "up and down" doing good. At the Benediction, I should like to rededicate this hospital to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the next fifty years, that the consolation to die here, to beat out the last pulse of life in this hospital, may be granted to many. Let us ask God for the faith and hope necessary to carry on the good work in the years to come. (Ibid, p. 31.)

New Sacred Heart Hospital: During 1959 and 1960 plans had been made for building a new Sacred Heart Hospital in Tomahawk, Wisconsin. The original building erected in 1894 was razed. The Washington Avenue wing was rebuilt and remodeled for a rest home for the aged.

The new Sacred Heart Hospital is a four-story brick structure on Seventh Street and Lincoln Avenue. It is a fifty-bed unit and has X-ray and laboratory departments, operating and emergency rooms, a maternity department, office space, a master kitchen, service kitchen and dining room. A chapel and convent were built at right angles with the new hospital wing. The heating and laundry is a separate building connected to the hospital by a tunnel.

The cost of this building and remodeling was over $1,700,000. An application for federal aid for the amount of $596,000 had been approved for the construction of the new hospital.
New Parish Church: Since Sacred Heart Hospital has been, from its very beginning, the immediate neighbor to St. Mary's Church in Tomahawk, it is proper to mention here that the Right Reverend Monsignor William Smits' desire and aspirations for a new and larger church have at last become a reality.

Toward the end of 1958 the old rectory of St. Mary's parish was razed, and the building of the new church was begun on this place. The solemn cornerstone laying took place on Sunday, October 11, 1958, in the presence of many priests. The new St. Mary's Church was dedicated in summer, 1960.

The cost of the new structure, which is contemporary in design, was over $300,000. It has a seating capacity of 650 persons, 200 seats more than in the old church.

Chaplains of Sacred Heart Hospital

Since Sacred Heart Hospital adjoins St. Mary's parish church, there were, for many years, no regular chaplains at Sacred Heart Hospital. An accurate record of permanent chaplains is not available until 1928. Beginning in 1928 to the present are the following: Reverend John Naber succeeded Father Andrew, O.S.B., c.1928-1935; Reverend Henry Keil, 1935-1937; Reverend Ignatius Kinney, 1937-1941; Reverend Florian Gerhards, 1941-1947; Reverend Julian Voskuhl, C.PP.S., 1947-1955; Reverend Ambrose Lengerich, C.PP.S., 1955; Reverend James W. Jost, C.PP.S., 1955-1959; Reverend Cletus Dirksen, C.PP.S., 1959-.

Superiors of Sacred Heart Hospital

Sister M. Anna Niegel, 1893; Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, 1894; Sister M. Mechtildis Bauer, 1894-1896; Sister M. Aquinata, 1896-1897; Sister M. Raphaela Eberth, 1897; Sister M. Theresia Henneberger, 1897-1900; Sister M. Caecilia Fisahn, 1900-1902; Sister M. Wendelina Bauer,

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_Tomahawk Leader_, local newspaper.
Chapter XIX

ST. FRANCIS HEALTH RESORT, DENVILLE, NEW JERSEY

1895

Monsignor Joseph Joch, the friend, helper, and counselor of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, in America, was God's instrument in preparing the way for a new mission of the Community in the United States. How it all came about that the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, who were very busy with their pioneering activities in six hospitals and several schools, all of which had been started within the last six years—between 1889 and 1895—wended their way eastward for a new mission is very interestingly and graphically related to us by Monsignor Joseph Joch, from whose manuscripts we are quoting.

"Origin of the founding of St. Francis Health Resort: The cradle of St. Francis Health Resort, Denville, stood in the Convent of St. Agnes at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. As I mentioned previously, in describing the system of the Kneipp Water Cure at St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield, I used to go to Fond du Lac to attend to the physical ailments of the Sisters and of Father Francis Haas, O.F.M.Cap., the former General Definitor of his Order in Rome, who with Father Bonaventure Frey was instrumental in establishing the Capuchin Order in this country. During one of those visits (March, 1895), I met, for the first time, this same Father Bonaventure, who was then Provincial of the Order. I was greatly impressed by his personality. He told me about his work and his experiences in their various houses and in the course of his remarks mentioned Denville, New Jersey, as a place where he and the Abbot Hilary Pfraengle of St. Mary's Abbey, Newark, New Jersey, were accustomed to go for a few days' relaxation and recuperation.
"He procured some paper and made several rough sketches of the house and its surroundings. He suggested that this would be an ideal place for the Kneipp Water Cure. Of course, I was 'all ears.' As I listened, I became more and more enthusiastic....

"Father Bonaventure told me he intended going to New York in a few days, and he invited me to accompany him and look over the property in Denville. He suggested that I join him at Milwaukee. This I did, and on Monday we started eastward by way of Chicago. Here we stopped at the Alexian Brothers' Hospital, where Father Bonaventure was always a welcome visitor. This welcome included me, too, for my 'thick' growth of beard classed me as one of the Fratres. We made a second stop at Detroit, the Provincial House of the Capuchins. Here my 'water cure' proved beneficial to Father Fidelis, a great sufferer from arthritis, and to others.

"After a few days we again resumed our journey and in due time arrived safe and sound at St. John's Monastery in New York City. The following day we went to Newark, New Jersey, to call on the Benedictine Abbot. The Benedictines were only too ready to sell the Denville property. We went on to Denville accompanied by Father Ernestus, O.S.B., then the Prior; Father Polycarp; and Mr. Grimm. The latter reminded us that we could not obtain a substantial meal at the village, but he had prepared for this by taking with him a large juicy beefsteak. He left this steak at the Wayside Inn and instructed the proprietor to have dinner ready for us upon our return.

"We then continued our walk to the Protector, as the building was called, having formerly
been used as a sort of reform school for wayward Catholic boys. The place had been in possession of the Benedictine Fathers for about ten years. They had bought it as a site for a college, but this plan had proved impracticable, and the property had become a 'white elephant' in their hands.

"Historical facts of interest: It might be of interest to mention some of the early history of the place. Many stories have been told about it. For instance, it was reported that the spot had been used as a hiding place for British military stores during the Revolution. The first verified tale, however, that comes down to us concerns the famous Colonel William Glover, a Georgian. He had come to Denville about 1800 and brought with him a retinue of slaves. He erected a house two stories high, the finest and most imposing structure in the town... It shows clearly the early colonial workmanship. The beautifully carved and decorated woodwork as well as the artistic spiral staircase with its mahogany rail is still greatly admired.

"After some family trouble, the Glovers moved and sold their estate to a man who professed to be a Cuban but who was really a Negro. This is the man who had formerly been a slave and who had now become a slaveowner. The old place changed hands several times and was finally bought by Bishop Corrigan to be used as a Catholic Protectory for boys. In 1881, it was sold to the Benedictine Fathers.

Inspecting the property: The so-called "Protectory" did not present a very inviting appearance. In fact, it was quite the reverse. The farmer who leased the place stored his corn in the building... As a result of this, rats and mice were in complete possession. They were large,
well-fed specimens and were not much afraid of mere 'humans'... Everything was in the most run-down and dilapidated condition imaginable.

"I might relate an incident which gives a graphic picture of conditions. Sometime before, the Benedictines had sold the place to the School Sisters of St. Francis of Milwaukee. Mother M. Alexia and several other Sisters, accompanied by Father Michels, came on a tour of inspection. As the Sisters stepped out of the carriage in front of the building, an enormous rat ran across the road directly in front of them. The immediate effects of this can better be imagined than described. Sufficient to say, the Sisters gathered their skirts about them and ran shrieking into their carriage. They lost no time in returning the deeds and canceling the contract.

"We inspected the entire property, about two hundred acres, driving through the land on the far side of the river to see our lake, then known as Protectory Lake but now called Arrowhead. It covered about five acres and was certainly over one hundred feet deep,....The ice on the lake was strong enough to bear our weight. I suggested that we celebrate the occasion by a song and soon the air resounded with the words: 'Was schimmert dort auf dem Berge so schoen.' This was sung in four parts with the singers grouped on the ice. It was truly a solemn chorus.

"Approval of the Bishop obtained: After a tedious drive we returned to the Inn and enjoyed our beefsteak with et ceteras. Later, we went to Newark via South Orange to call on Bishop Wigger. No words of mine could do justice to this dear old man, who received us with open arms and made us very welcome. He was delighted to hear of our intended project and willingly offered us every
Monsignor Joch lost no time in presenting to Mother Frances and Monsignor George Jacquemin his intention to begin a new mission in Denville, New Jersey, and, of course, he received their full approval to go ahead with this promising enterprise.

Since the Sisters in Wisconsin depended a great deal upon the assistance and counsel of Father Joch, it was quite a blow to the Sisters when he declared that he would be going east to begin the Kneipp Water Cure at a new Community mission. During his preparations for Denville he visited Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, the superior at St. Mary's Hospital, Menomonie, Wisconsin, asking whether they had any money, because he needed traveling money to go to Denville. Sister replied that they had none on hand; but that since they had two hundred dollars coming from the insurance tickets, she would send Sister M. Sebastiana Hoerling with a companion to the sawmill to get that money. It was this money that brought Reverend Father Joch and the first seven Sisters to Denville.

Father Joch, having the permission from Mother M. Frances to select those Sisters whom he considered best suited for the work of the new mission, had spoken so enthusiastically about the place that many volunteered to go with him. The following Sisters chosen to go to Denville gathered at Oshkosh at the appointed time: Sisters M. Vincentia Eggenberger, M. Seraphica Ebner, M. Agnes Eichfelder, M. Kunigundis Groeber, M. Wendelina Bauer, M. Caecilia Fisahn, and M. Euphemia Sachs. On May 21, 1895, Reverend Father celebrated holy Mass at St. Mary's Church, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and after holy Mass he and the seven Sisters, each representing a joy and a sorrow of the Blessed Mother, began their trip to the East. These brave and zealous souls were about to begin a new foundation requiring a great and heroic spirit of self-sacrifice and endurance.
Here let the pioneer Sisters themselves tell us about their first impressions and experiences. Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder gives us a vivid picture of what the seven Sisters, the founders of St. Francis Health Resort, saw when first viewing the place.

"When we passed Convent Station, Father Joch said to us, 'That's nothing, our place is much nicer.' We walked from Denville depot to our future house. When we stood on the bridge, Father Joch paused and, pointing to the buildings and the whole property, said: 'So this is our home.' Sister M. Wendelina Bauer, our future Mother General, had tears in her eyes when she beheld the dilapidated cottage and the desolation of the place. After a few months, Sister M. Wendelina, referring to this incident, remarked that when first seeing the gloominess of this place, she could not imagine that in such a short time it would be a center of cleanliness, healthfulness, and peace.

"The upper buildings were a sight, inside and out, for all the windows, doors, and stoves were pounded to pieces, torn, and ruined. The interior of the buildings had been exposed to all kinds of weather and hence was full of dirt. The cracks and holes around the stove were occupied by myriads of cockroaches. Since we Sisters could not get at them, the only thing we could do was to close the holes with Parish green, which had to be used sparingly and carefully to prevent sickness." (Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda Hack, Vol. II, pp. 299-300.)

Sister M. Vincentia Eggenberger relates to us some of their first preparations.
"Two Sisters went into the farmer's barn to get some straw for erecting beds on the attic floor. Sister M. Euphemia Sachs and I cleaned and decorated the chapel—the room which had been used by the Benedictines as a chapel—for our first holy Mass on the following day, the great feast of our Lord's Ascension into heaven. There were an altar and two small stands, on which the statues of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph stood. The face towels, which we had brought along on our journey, were used as decorative coverings for these stands; our coffee jars served as candleholders; and some old wine bottles, which we found in the cellar, as flower vases. This unforgettable Ascension Day was a day of prayer and penance. Without an organ we seven Sisters sang the praises to the Lord during holy Mass." (Sister M. Vincentia Eggenberger, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda Hack, Vol. II, pp. 46-47.)

A few days after the Sisters' arrival, all sorts of workers—carpenters, plumbers, and others—came to remodel the place. Father Joch went to Rockaway to buy dishes, tableware, and furniture—all on credit, of course. The Benedictine Abbot Hilary sent some chapel equipment and a wagonload of used furniture.

The Benedictines were happy to see the place transformed and improving week after week. Sister M. Agnes relates:

"Once the Abbot came with a whole procession of people for a picnic at our place in order to get acquainted with the Kneipp Water Cure. He brought ham and other food with him, thus keeping us busy the whole day preparing the meals. One of the Benedictine brothers had the job of cutting the ham for the crowd. They left plenty food for us." (Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, op. cit., p. 301.)
Joseph Schaefer, of Barclay Street, dealer in Kneipp supplies, had widely advertised in the Catholic papers the news of the introduction of the Kneipp Water Cure at Denville, New Jersey. Reverend Father Joch, having learned the processes and methods of the Water Cure in Bavaria from Father Kneipp himself, was the first to introduce these treatments in the United States. The popular acceptance of the Kneipp Water Cure by the Denville patients helped in firmly establishing the Sanitarium.

Patients were clamoring for admittance even before the Sisters were ready to accept them. In less than a week after the Sisters' arrival, the first patient had made his appearance. The Sisters tried in vain to persuade him to return home and come later; however, in spite of the Sisters' urging he was determined to stay, and he did. He was the first of many adventurous souls who bravely overlooked the inconveniences in their desire to regain their health under the solicitous care of the Sisters. Most of the earliest patients were outpatients, that is, they came only for the Kneipp treatments and then returned home.

Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, who became acquainted with the Kneipp Cure when Father Joch had introduced it in Marshfield, Wisconsin, recounts:

"Besides pure water treatments, all kinds of herb teas and herb baths were included in the Kneipp Cure. Kneipp foods, consisting of all kinds of cereals in their natural form, unadulterated and unchanged, were also used to preserve the vitamins which in modern cereal manufacturing are frequently destroyed. We had to use whole wheat flour or whole rye flour for bread." (Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder, op. cit., p. 280.)

Father Kneipp had discovered that having the patient walk on wet grass or fresh fallen snow and having him keep a proper diet and take the right amount of rest brought about a remarkable improvement in health. Gradually, with
the advancement of science, this water cure was replaced by the treatment now known as hydrotherapeutics.

During the first years Father Joch took the place of the doctor in examining, prescribing, and sometimes even treating male patients. The women patients were treated by the Sisters, especially by Sister M. Wendelina Bauer, who, as Father Joch said, "charmed away the ills and dissatisfaction of all who came under her influence" by her habitual cheerful disposition and winning smile.

Reverend Father stated: "To increase our reputation, we admitted all who knocked at our doors—the young or the old, the lame or the blind, the nerveless or the nervous, and even those who were slightly demented. Whole families applied at times. Once a family of nine children came with their parents. A separate table had to be arranged for them. All our guests were grateful for everything and returned to us again and again." (Reverend Joseph Joch, Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. I, p. 104.)

In late summer of 1895 the Servant of God, Mother M. Frances Streitel, accompanied by twenty-one Sisters, made her third and last trip from Rome to America. The seven missions in America, having been established within six years, were in great need of help. The Sisters travelled from Rome to Germany, where they boarded the Kaiser Wilhelm Steamer, Norddeutcher Lloyd, on August 7, 1895. They landed safely at Hoboken, New York, about 9:00 p.m., on August 20, the Feast of St. Bernard. Since it was rather late, they remained on board the ship until after breakfast the following morning.

The Sisters were met at the pier by Sisters M. Johanna Ankenbrand and M. Seraphina Eberth and Reverend Father Joch, under whose leadership they, heavily laden with bundles, walked to the depot at Hoboken to board the train to Denville. Viewing Denville for the first time, the Sisters were struck with amazement. The whole of Denville consisted of a few small houses and a small depot, which was nothing but a little wooden shed. On their way to St. Francis San-
itarium Father Joch, Mother Frances, and Sister M. Johanna rode by horse and buggy.

In preparation for Mother Frances' first visit to St. Francis Sanitarium the Sisters there had given the house and cottage a special cleaning. "Then," Sister M. Euphemia Sachs says, "we decorated both houses with wreaths which we made by winding garlands of cedars and other greens together, with flowers placed between them. The patients helped with the decorating and were just as enthusiastic and happy as we Sisters were." (Sister M. Euphemia Sachs, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda Hack, Vol. IV, p. 38.)

Having arrived at the convent, all the newcomers and the Sisters from the house went into the beautifully decorated chapel in order to adore their Eucharistic King. Then Mother Frances greeted the Sisters and also the patients, who greatly appreciated this kind consideration.

After dinner Reverend Mother Frances introduced the twenty-one Sisters who had come with her from Rome to Reverend Father Joch, mentioning the native home of each.

Sister M. Carolina Schleupner was wonderfully impressed by the peaceful atmosphere of the Sanitarium, which to her seemed like a beautiful hermitage, a solitary paradise. Sister M. Cyrilla Chmelaz, speaking about Mother Frances' loving kindness, related:

"On the first day in America, Mother Frances told us to go out under the trees and eat all the apples we wanted, because at the place where we were going in a few days, referring to Marshfield, there were no apples. We certainly did justice to ourselves and ate all the apples we could during the few days we were in Denville." (Sister M. Cyrilla Chmelaz, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda Hack, Vol. II, p. 222.)
Where did all the Sisters sleep while in Denville? Wherever there was place—in the wash kitchen, the wood-shed, and in the hallway. The Sisters covered the floors with straw for their night's rest. That all were happy and satisfied and at peace of heart was confirmed by Sister M. Cyrilla, who said: "We slept well and soundly in our new home in America." (Ibid., p. 223.)

Realizing that the events related above happened just three months after Father Joch and the seven Sisters had come to Denville, everyone marvelled at the almost superhuman task accomplished. Everything appeared refreshing and inviting.

With the cold weather beginning, the number of patients at St. Francis Sanitarium decreased. Father Joch had made plans to enlarge and improve the guests' quarters. With the help of Architect Schickel, who drew up the plans for St. Joseph's Hospital in Mankato, he designed a detached frame building with the sole intention of increasing the number of rooms. The articles of agreement were made on January 11, 1896, and signed in the presence of Father Joch by Mother Frances Streitel, president, and Sister M. Seraphica Ebner, secretary.

The construction of the building was begun immediately, and it was completed in early summer. On June 15, 1896, the Most Reverend Bishop Wigger blessed the building and the chapel in the presence of many priests and friends. The invitation to the dedication read as follows:

St. Francis' Sanitarium

Respected Friend:

You are cordially invited to attend the Solemn Blessing of the New St. Francis' Sanitarium at Denville, Morris County, New Jersey, which will be performed by the Rt. Reverend Bishop W. M. Wigger on Monday, June 15th, 1896, at two o'clock p.m.

Rev. Jos. Joch

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The solemn ceremony of the crowning of the Infant Jesus of Prague also took place on that same day. The crown was made from precious jewelry such as finger rings, earrings, and crosses collected by friends. The Bishop blessed the crown and then placed it upon the statue, which was standing on the high altar.

During the summer months there were no vacancies at St. Francis Sanitarium, but during the winter months the house was almost empty because of the poor heating conditions. To remedy these conditions a hot-water heating plant was installed in the fall of 1896.

During the first years in Denville there were many handicaps, but all worked untiringly for the patients. And in spite of the primitive conditions of the Sanitarium its fame began to spread, attracting New York newspaper reporters, who came to find material for write-ups in their respective Sunday supplements and magazines.

Perhaps the greatest problem which the Sisters faced in the midst of the numerous difficulties attending their beginning labors at Denville was the widespread religious prejudice which, together with an almost universal ignorance, caused an antagonistic attitude on the part of the laity. The Sanitarium was situated in a non-Catholic area where priests, and especially nuns, were considered to be mere curiosities to say the least; and who, more often, were regarded as positively detrimental to the town's well-being. Not infrequently the Sisters were subjected to abusive language and threatened with gestures on the part of those who feared that which they could not understand. But gradually as the people observed the continuous acts of charity which the Sisters performed cheerfully for everyone, as they marveled at the virtues of diligence, good order, cleanliness, and so forth practiced by the Sisters, they began to accept, respect, and love them for what they really were: virgins consecrated to God. Father Joch himself once wrote: "What a contrast—then and now! In these days the Sisters enjoy the esteem of the community and receive every courtesy; they exercise the rights of citizen—
ship and can demand the privileges attached thereto." (Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. II, p. 4.)

During the years that Father Joch was active with the Kneipp Water Cure at St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, Wisconsin, he got acquainted with Dr. Matthias Schmitz, who was a nephew of Mother M. Antonia, the Superior General of the Sisters of St. Agnes, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. During Father Joch's demonstration of the Kneipp Water Cure at the Capuchin College in Mount Calvary, Wisconsin, Dr. Matthias Schmitz showed great interest in this cure, and Father Joch took advantage of the Doctor's enthusiasm by inviting him to come to St. Joseph's Hospital to help with the Kneipp Water Cure. Dr. Schmitz accepted the invitation. He remained in Marshfield after Father Joch had gone to Denville. The doctors on the staff of St. Joseph's Hospital were not, however, particularly interested in the Kneipp Water Cure, and around 1898 it was given up entirely. Father Joch then used this opportunity to invite Dr. Matthias Schmitz to become the house doctor of St. Francis Sanitarium, which later became known as St. Francis Health Resort.

Dr. Schmitz remained the faithful house physician of St. Francis Health Resort from 1898, when Father Joch invited him to Denville, until his death on December 1, 1936. He had a serious heart attack, and before becoming unconscious he received the last sacraments. A few hours later he died a holy and edifying death.

This conscientious and devoted doctor was highly respected and appreciated by the Sisters and the guests. Sister M. Mauritia Stier said:

"With the death of Dr. Schmitz, we and the medical profession lost a conscientious physician. He was very intelligent, quiet, peaceful, and meek. He made no demands of any kind, being satisfied with everything which the institution offered him in the line of housing and food. He was temperate in eating and drinking. Long
after his death he was missed by those who knew him, especially by the older patients. We sincerely hope that he is enjoying his eternal reward." (Sister M. Mauritia Stier, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda Hack, Vol. II, p. 169.)

Sister M. Carolina Schleupner relates:

"Dr. Schmitz was very solicitous that we had fresh vegetables for the patients; and when he read about new varieties of vegetables, he informed us, so that we could raise them for our patients. He took so much interest in St. Francis Health Resort, as though it were his own family. He was very kind to the Sisters and took fatherly care of them when they were sick. His religious fervor was known to all. He attended holy Mass daily, often said the Stations, visited the Blessed Sacrament during the day, and regularly made a good-night visit to his Lord. He had no auto, no radio; he lived a simple life similar to that of a Capuchin Brother." (Sister M. Carolina Schleupner, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda Hack, Vol. II, p. 168.)

The fame of St. Francis Health Resort spread and the number of patients constantly increased, so much so, that in 1902, seven years after Father Joch and the Sisters had come to Denville, a new building, which was completed in the following year, had to be erected.

In 1910 an addition, the first floor of which was reserved for treatment purposes, was built with a porch on the east side. The floor and walls of the treatment rooms were covered with marble. This time their aim, as Father Joch remarked, was to construct something durable and up-to-date.
GROWTH OF ST. FRANCIS HEALTH RESORT
Entrance to the main building of St. Francis Health Resort.

Driveway entrance to St. Francis Health Resort.
Various buildings and scenes on the grounds of St. Francis Health Resort.
This beautiful Gothic-style chapel of St. Francis Health Resort was built in 1915.
The erection of this modern, fireproof building in 1927 made it possible to double the number of guests who could be admitted to the Health Resort.
A reminder of Monsignor Joseph Joch's deep devotion when celebrating Holy Mass.
The chapel of St. Francis Health Resort is the spiritual powerhouse for both the Sisters and their guests.
Bicentennial celebration of the birth of George Washington commemorated in 1932 at the Health Resort under the superiorship of Sister M. Ottilia Gehring.
The living room of Monsignor Joseph Joch at the Health Resort.
This picture was taken at the Golden Sacerdotal Jubilee of Rt. Rev. Monsignor Joseph Joch in September, 1933. Reverend Mother M. Wendelina, who was Mother General at that time, is standing in the foreground (left). Sister M. Ottilia, who was local superior, is on the opposite side.
The Sisters who were active at St. Francis Health Resort in 1958.
Air view of St. Francis Health Resort
In 1914 plans were made for a chapel, convent, and a third-story addition to the original house, construction of which was begun in 1915 with Mr. Thomas Duff as architect. Father Joch laid the cornerstone on June 19, 1915.

The Most Reverend Bishop J.J. O'Connor blessed the chapel and dedicated the new addition on Thursday, March 2, 1916. Right Reverend Monsignor Jacquemin sang the high Mass. Among the distinguished guests were Reverend Thomas J. Walsch, later Bishop of Newark, and Senator Thomas Hillary, the institution's great friend. Most of the priests from the neighboring towns and other friends of the Sisters took part in the celebration.

The new chapel is a very beautiful gem of Gothic architecture. The magnificent stained glass windows, furnished by Mr. Franz Mayer, of Munich, were donated by friends of the Sisters. Truly, the chapel is a powerful aid in the fulfillment of the aim of St. Francis Health Resort; namely, to restore and refresh health of mind, body, and soul. Before the Blessed Sacrament, the guests find peace of mind and soul and courage to endure difficulties and disappointments, which, sooner or later, come to all men in this valley of tears.

Since the Sisters at Denville had been giving financial help towards the modernization of almost all the hospitals of the Community in the West, Father Joch and the Sisters came to the realization that it would be the highest time that St. Francis Health Resort also be modernized. They received the approval of their plan to erect the greatly needed modern health resort, and building was begun in 1927. The cornerstone was laid by Monsignor Joch on September 5, 1927, and the dedication took place on June 24, 1928. This new fireproof building greatly increased the capacity of the Resort, which often exceeds two hundred.

Let us now deviate from our report on St. Francis Health Resort to tell you more about Father Joseph Joch, who was God's instrument in establishing the Resort.
When, in 1911, Father Joch celebrated the silver jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood, the Sisters, complying with Father's wish, did not tell the guests about it. Just before leaving his room to go to the chapel to celebrate a high Mass of thanksgiving he received a cablegram from Rome—a special blessing from the Holy Father.

In 1927 Father Joch was called to Rome, where he was elevated to the dignity of a Monsignor in recognition of his many years of untiring service in the vineyard of the Lord. On his return to Denville, Monsignor Joch was met by a procession of his many friends at St. Francis Health Resort, who carried flags and rejoiced at the honor paid to their chaplain.

God in his mercy bestowed upon Monsignor Joch the singular grace of celebrating his golden jubilee as a priest on September 8, 1936. Although Monsignor was very weak physically, he celebrated a solemn high Mass on that morning with solemn Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. All of the guests were cordially invited to a banquet served by the Sisters, but Monsignor Joch, as was his usual custom, ate alone in his room.

On February 20, 1944, the last Sunday before Lent, Monsignor Joch celebrated holy Mass for the last time. He was stricken at the altar when he attempted to read the Gospel, and one of the Sisters helped him into the sacristy, where his strength gave out completely. On Easter Sunday, with tears streaming down his cheeks, Monsignor Joch remarked, "This is a very sad Easter for me, for I would need two men to hold me up at the altar if I wanted to say Mass." This was the only complaint he made during this his last illness. He gave up his soul to its Maker on April 29, 1944.

A beautiful monument marks the grave of Monsignor Joch in the private cemetery of the Sisters at Denville. Yet far more precious in the eyes of his divine Master must be the living memorials erected in the hearts of the Sisters, with
whom he shared the joys and sorrows abounding throughout his years at Denville. Sister M. Carolina Schleupner, who is most emphatic in her praise of Monsignor Joch, writes:

"Reverend Father Joch had a watchful eye over all of us—the Sisters, the hired help, and the guests. If something was out of place, he saw to it that order was established at once. He was solicitous for the whole institution and worked constantly for its welfare. Shunning no work, he was the first and the last at every job. When he saw water spilled on the floor, for instance, he immediately got a rag and wiped it up. He considered no work too low for himself... He was strict but kind, and we are still reaping the fruits of his efforts in teaching us. When the poor asked for help, he even gave them his own good clothes." (Sister M. Carolina Schleupner, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda Hack, Vol. II, p. 65-66.)

Sister M. Alphonsina Amschler tells us another revealing incident.

"At one time it happened that there was only one hired man, a boy of seventeen, to help on the farm. Father could not get any hired help from anywhere, and so he himself hauled the potatoes home." (Sister M. Alphonsina Amschler, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda Hack, Vol. II, p. 87.)

"One day," relates Sister M. Afra Vollert, "Reverend Father Joch made a short remark so impressively and earnestly that I shall never forget it. Pointing to the tabernacle, he said, 'There, there is your Superior. To Him you can tell everything that you have in your heart.'" (Sister M. Afra Vollert, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda Hack, Vol. II, p. 186.)
"Once before Monsignor Joch left on a trip," recalls Sister M. Blasia Flieger, "he said as his parting words: 'I wish you all the spirit of St. Francis, his spirit of poverty. St. John told the Christians to love one another, and I also say to you: Little Sisters, love one another.' He would always leave us with a few words of inspiration and cheer." (Sister M. Blasia Flieger, Personal Interviews of Sister M. Beda Hack, Vol. II, p. 180.)

Up to and including Sister M. Ottilia Gehring, Msgr. Joch wrote a brief estimation of each superior of St. Francis Health Resort. From this account we are quoting.

"Sister M. Agnes Eichfelder was a marvel; she was everywhere, and by her example and practical ways, she inspired the Sisters to do their utmost and best. I do not believe that any other Sister could have filled her place under such difficult circumstances.

"Sister M. Caecilia Fisahn was the second Sister Superior at St. Francis Health Resort.

"Sister M. Sophronia Spehl was most unselfish in caring for others, especially the sick.

"Sister M. Wendelina Bauer, who was superior for about nine years, had made many friends while working with the patients, and her name will never be forgotten. Her memory is enshrined in the hearts of all who came under her influence.

"Sister M. Virginia Boch was one of the most able and conscientious Sisters. She was a splendid executive; and while she kept everybody busy, she did not spare herself.
"Sister M. Clotildis Paul's hobby was beautifying the entire place, inside and out. The chapel was decorated, and the grounds were beautified.

"Sister M. Humilitas Heinrich, although frail looking, performed the work of a giant. It was a tremendous undertaking—the erection of the new fireproof, up-to-date, one-million-dollar building. I believe that no other Sister would have done as well as she did.

"Sister M. Ottilia Gehring had many excellent qualities for her position." (Reverend Joseph Joch, as quoted in the Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vol. II, p. 8.)

Superiors following Sister M. Ottilia Gehring are Sisters M. Damascena Sontag, M. Baptista Redel, M. Florina Gunzelmann, M. Bonaventura Fuchs, and M. Gerardia Eibner, the Superior in 1960.

In the early years the Community's activities at Denville resembled those of a sanitarium; but later, after these activities were reorganized, the official title of the institute was changed from St. Francis Sanitarium to St. Francis Health Resort.

The methods of treatment at the Health Resort represent the use of scientific health-building measures. The treatment departments are equipped with modern hydro- and physiotherapeutic apparatus by means of baths, needle sprays, and other appliances, which can be given with absolute precision as to duration, pressure, and temperature. A well-equipped clinical laboratory and basal metabolism equipment facilitate thoroughness in treatment. Trained Sisters and male masseurs work in the medical department of the Resort, which is under the direction of the medical director of the institution.
St. Francis Health Resort has a bed capacity of 240. It may be recommended in case of mild anemia and mild nervousness, circulatory disturbances of an organic or functional nature, or to convalescents who do not need special nursing care, to postoperative cases, and also to those in need of rest and recuperation. The institution is not a hospital nor a sanitarium.

Ladies' and men's recreation rooms, music rooms, a beautiful and well-equipped library, sound movies, billiard pool, ping pong, croquet, and horseshoe and shuffleboard courts provide facilities for delightful entertainment and exercise for the guests.

The Health Resort is ideally located on a one-hundred-acre estate in a beautiful rolling countryside, 500 to 600 feet above sea level. Numerous lakes in the neighborhood lend additional attraction to the scenery. St. Francis Health Resort's farm, orchards, vegetable gardens, flock of chickens, and herd of registered cattle make for unexcelled quality in food. A large powerhouse, which supplies heat, electricity, and water, insures the patients' comfort at a most economical rate. All water is analyzed both chemically and bacteriologically by approved laboratories.

After the death of Dr. Matthias Schmitz in December, 1936, Dr. A. O. Hubert became the house doctor at the Health Resort. Prior to that time, Dr. Hubert had been a consultant physician of the institute and therefore was well acquainted with St. Francis Health Resort. Dr. Hubert not only tries to heal the physical and mental ailments of his patients, but is also interested in fostering their spiritual welfare. It is no exaggeration to say that everyone who comes in contact with him is for this very reason a better Christian and more fervent in the service of God than if he had not had the opportunity of the Doctor's acquaintance. In 1960 he was still the main physician at St. Francis Health Resort, and the Sisters hope that he will remain with them for many years to come.
On September 18, 1949, the Stations of the Seven Dolors were canonically erected by the Most Reverend Francis Tief, a guest at the Health Resort. Bishop Tief, who had retired from his Salina bishopric, to which he had been consecrated on March 30, 1921, was appointed Titular Bishop of Nisa on June 11, 1938. He has been at St. Francis Health Resort since 1947. His example has been a bright shining light for the guests at the Health Resort, inspiring all who come in contact with him. Daily he would come to chapel about five o'clock in the morning, saying his Mass regularly at 5:30. He has spent many hours during the day in deep recollected prayer in chapel.

The Most Reverend Thomas A. Boland, Bishop of Paterson, pontificated at the consecration of the cemetery of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother at Denville, New Jersey, which was held on May 13, 1950. In this cemetery lie the remains of Monsignor Joseph Joch and of the Sisters who, having departed from this earth, have already taken flight to their heavenly home. It is a most consoling thought for all the living members of the Community active in Denville to know that, after their demise from this life, they will receive many consoling visits of prayer and blessings of holy water from both the Sisters and their guests, who visit the cemetery daily.

Many years have passed since the day when a small group of humble, hard-working, self-sacrificing Sisters first planted the seed of the true faith in Denville, New Jersey. God has blessed their labors and the efforts of their successors bountifully. Today the original number of seven Sisters performing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy at the Health Resort has increased more than ten-fold. Our Sisters carry on Christ's work in three institutions in Denville: St. Francis Health Resort, St. Clare's Hospital, and St. Mary's School. In September, 1959, the Community opened Mater Dolorosa Convent as the seedling of a new province of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.
Chaplains of St. Francis Health Resort


Superiors of St. Francis Health Resort


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Chapter XX
A REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT
of the
COMMUNITY OF THE SISTERS OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER
during
THE FIRST TWELVE YEARS

Six Years of Hidden, Contemplative Life (1883-1889)

In the first chapters of this volume we have dealt somewhat in detail with the main events of the growth and development of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, founded in Rome, Italy, in 1883 by the Servant of God, Mother M. Frances Streitel.

During the first six years Mother Frances gave her spiritual daughters a thorough training in the religious life by word and more so by her holy example. The Sisters had access to their spiritual mother in all their difficulties and doubts. The activities of the Sisters at the motherhouse in Rome consisted in humble household duties, home nursing, and caring for poor children at the motherhouse. During these first years a firm foundation, consisting in the practice of humility, charity, self-abnegation and self-immolation, was laid by the pioneering Sisters for the apostolic activities which Divine Providence was providing for the Community.

Summary of Facts from 1889 to the Spring of 1896

In the seventh year of its existence the Community began to spread out. New missions were started in quick
succession both in America and in Europe. Devoted young girls, filled with love of God and of neighbor, applied for admission into the Community and enthusiastically undertook the hard labors and humiliations connected with the establishing of new missions. Mother Frances was the leader and the shining light directing, instructing, and inspiring her spiritual daughters. Since the events of this important period—the expansion of the Community—are scattered throughout several chapters, we shall devote this chapter to a review of that period.

Mother M. Frances and Monsignor Jacquemin, imploring St. Joseph for help in finding charitable activities which would sufficiently provide for the financial and temporal needs of the growing Community, decided to send two Sisters to America for the purpose of collecting alms for the needs of the Community and the poor in Rome and also to look for a possible mission site.

On February 15, 1888, the Cardinal Vicar authorized the two Sisters' journey to America. The two appointed Sisters—Sisters M. Scholastica Demer and M. Joachima Horning—left for America on February 21 and arrived in New York on March 27.

1889:

June 30—The two mendicant Sisters of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother received permission to collect in St. Louis, Missouri, in which city the idea of the Community's first mission was conceived. On that same day, in the convent chapel at Rome, Monsignor George Jacquemin had offered holy Mass in honor of St. Louis for the Sisters.

July 27—The higher superiors at the Community's motherhouse in Rome received Bishop Hennessy's formal approval that the Sisters
may take over the hospital in Wichita— the Community's first mission in America.

September 30— The nine Sisters appointed for missionary work in America— five for the hospital in Wichita and four for a prospective mission in Philadelphia— received Pope Leo XIII's blessing in an audience.

October 29— Right Reverend Monsignor George Jacquemin and the nine Sisters bade farewell to Mother Frances and the Sisters at the motherhouse in Rome.

November 2— Monsignor Jacquemin and the nine Sisters set sail from Antwerp, Belgium, on the steamship Noordland Red Star Line.

November 14— This pioneering group landed in New York, where they were met by Sisters M. Scholastica Demer and M. Joachima Hornung.

November 26— Monsignor Jacquemin and the five Sisters appointed for St. Francis Hospital arrived in Wichita. The Mercy Sisters, who were in charge of the hospital, were still there.

December 11— The Mercy Sisters, wishing our Sisters God's blessing upon their work in America, left the hospital, of which our Sisters then took charge.

December 16— Monsignor Jacquemin left Wichita for Philadelphia, where affairs concerning an establishment did not materialize.
January 23—Arrival in Wichita of the four Sisters who had been appointed for the anticipated mission in Philadelphia.

January 30—Close of the Sisters' first retreat in America, given by Monsignor Jacquemin at St. Francis Hospital. Sister M. Columba Gries, who made perpetual vows after the retreat, had the privilege of being the first Sisters in the Community to make perpetual vows in America.

February 12—Monsignor Jacquemin left Wichita for Rome.

April 30—Mother Frances with three Sisters left Rome to visit the Sisters at St. Francis Hospital in Wichita, Kansas.

May 3—Mother Frances and her companions embarked the Waesland Steamer at Antwerp, Belgium. On May 17 they arrived safely in New York and from there travelled to Wichita, Kansas.

May 23—Mother Foundress and her small group arrived at St. Francis Hospital. How the Sisters rejoiced to see their spiritual mother. During 1890, most probably during this visit of Mother Frances, the Sisters at Wichita assumed charge of the diocesan orphanage, at the request of the Bishop.

August 3—Mother Frances formally acquiesced to Rev. Paul Geyer's pleadings to build a hospital in Marshfield, Wisconsin.

September 21—Mother Frances accepted Reverend Louis Kaluza's request to begin a hospital in Menomonie, Wisconsin.
October (beginning)—Mother Frances with the Sisters whom she had appointed for the missions in Marshfield and Menomonie left Wichita for Menomonie, Wisconsin.

December —Mother Frances returned to Wichita for some important matters. During her stay in Wichita, the Sisters' veil was changed. When Mother Frances and her companion returned to Marshfield, they wore the new veil.

December 9—Mother Frances and the five Sisters appointed for St. Joseph's Hospital left Menomonie to begin their hospital activities in Marshfield in a rented frame house.

1891:

February 2—Mother Frances with the Sisters at the temporary hospital at Marshfield moved from the rented frame building to the newly built St. Joseph's Hospital. On that same day six Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother from the motherhouse in Rome embarked at Antwerp, Belgium, for America.

February 12—The above-mentioned Sisters landed in New York, from where they travelled to Marshfield. They arrived at St. Joseph's Hospital two days later.

February — Reverend Roman Scholter visited Mother Frances at St. Joseph's Hospital to ask her to establish a hospital in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Unable to resist Reverend Scholter's pleadings, Mother Frances acquiesced to his wishes.

February 25—Mother Frances and two Sisters travelled to Oshkosh to begin the Community's fourth
mission in America. A few days later four more Sisters arrived at Oshkosh to help prepare the two-story frame building for a temporary hospital.

March 14—Mother Frances, accompanied by Sister M. Columba Gries, returned to Europe, where she arrived in Bremen, Germany, on March 23. Reverend Mother Frances with two candidates arrived in Rome on April 3. Sister M. Columba remained in Germany for a few-weeks' home visit.

April 13—After holy Mass in the morning, an explosion of a gunpowder magazine caused a violent shaking throughout Rome, Italy. The motherhouse was shaken terribly. Many windows were broken, but the chapel had remained intact.

May 6—Sister M. Columba Gries with six candidates arrived in Rome.

June 13—Mother Frances with eleven Sisters embarked at Antwerp, Belgium, and landed in New York on June 23. From there they went to Wisconsin. On her trip to Marshfield, Mother Frances stopped at St. Mary's Hospital in Oshkosh. She found the Sisters living in a very peaceful and happy atmosphere and still sleeping on straw sacks in the refectory.

September—Mother Frances accepted two parochial schools in Kansas: St. Mary's School in Aleppo and St. Joseph's School in Ost.

September 30—Mother Frances and Sister M. Scholastica Demer returned to Europe, where they landed safely at Antwerp on October 12. From Antwerp they travelled to Abenberg, Bavaria.
Before returning to Rome, Mother Frances began negotiations concerning the acquiring of the Marienburg in Abenberg, Bavaria. For several years she corresponded with the civil authorities of the Marienburg in Bavaria but without immediate success.

October 23—Mother Frances returned to the motherhouse in Rome with two candidates; Sister M. Scholastica returned on the next day with four more candidates.

1892:

November 21—Mother Foundress sent Sister M. Scholastica Demer and another Sister to Vienna to study and investigate the possibilities of establishing a foundation there. Through the influence of two ladies of nobility, the Sisters received help both in acquiring accommodations and later in obtaining the approval of a foundation.

December 9—Mother Frances sent five more Sisters to Vienna; these five were followed by four others on December 20. The Sisters' main activity during the first few years in Vienna was home nursing.

1893:

February 2—Mother Frances purchased a small house at No. 175 Simmeringer Haupstrasse for the establishment of the Vienna mission. The transaction was made provisionally in Mother Frances' name, but on January 25, 1895, the title was formally transferred to the Community.
May 5—According to the arrangement of Mother General, some Sisters took charge of an asylum for sick Viennese children at Lussin-grande on the island of Lussin.

June—Mother Frances accepted full charge of St. Mathilda Home in St. Stephen's near Vienna. This mission was discontinued after two years. It was an institute in which sickly women were cared for during the summer months.

Spring—Reverend Nicholas July presented his petition to the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother and to Reverend Father Joch at Marshfield, Wisconsin, to begin a hospital in Rhinelander, Wisconsin.

June 5—Having received the approval of the Most Reverend Bishop Messmer and the written permission of Mother Frances and Monsignor Jacquemin, Father Joch with three Sisters left St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield, Wisconsin, to begin a hospital in Rhinelander.

Summer—Mother Frances sent Reverend Father Joch a telegram which stated: Sell and settle Wichita.

August 7—Mother Frances had written to Reverend Joseph Joch, asking him to take the best of care of the Community's missions in Wisconsin, as only a good father can do.

October 1—Father Joch with five Sisters began Sacred Heart Hospital in Tomahawk, Wisconsin, after having received the approval of the higher superiors.
November 5—Mother Frances appointed Sister M. Johanna as her representative of the Community's missions in America with the right and duty to visit the missions in her name as often as necessary. This appointment was approved by Cardinal Vicar Parocchi.

December—The increasing number of applications for entrance into the Community necessitated the enlargement of the motherhouse in Rome. Mother Frances rented the second floor of the adjoining house of Capella Giulia, which was connected to the motherhouse by having a door made between the adjoining walls. The newly acquired department, which became the novitiate, was blessed by Right Reverend Monsignor Jacquemin on January 1, 1894.

1894: The Community's missions received its beloved picture of the Sorrowful Mother: At the Anima, Monsignor Jacquemin had become acquainted with the Artist Andreas Behr, who was a convert to Catholicism. Since the Artist knew that Monsignor Jacquemin was trying to get a suitable picture of the Sorrowful Mother for the Community, he, with his artistic talent, secured the picture at an antique shop in Rome. This original art picture and picture of grace has been in the motherhouse chapel at Rome since it was acquired for the Sisters in 1893. This precious original picture of the Sorrowful Mother was, after the tabernacle, the most treasured article in the motherhouse.

Large photographs were made of this picture of grace and sent to the twelve missions in America. During the month of March the first picture was sent to St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, Wisconsin, because from its beginning Marshfield was considered
the headquarters of the American houses. The other missions received their pictures in July. All these photographs had been touched to the original picture in the motherhouse chapel in Rome.

In a brief of July 9 Pope Leo XIII granted an indulgence of 300 days, once daily, to the Sisters who visit the picture of the Sorrowful Mother in their respective chapel and a plenary indulgence on the feast of the Seven Sorrows in Passion Week and on the third Sunday in September.

May — The Community took temporary charge of the Maria Theresa Hospital for Women in Vienna in return for board and a cash compensation. In 1899 this activity was discontinued, because the Sisters were needed in America.

June 20—Mother Frances made her first visit to Vienna. On the third day after her arrival the Community received the written approval from the Austrian government to establish headquarters in Vienna. On the following day Mother Frances returned to Rome.

1895:

February 9—While the Sisters at the convent in Vienna were at evening prayer, the Superior—Sister M. Scholastica Demer—and five Sisters, dressed in worldly garb, secretly left the convent in order to live together in the world. How did they come to such a decision? Through private friendship and sensuality. One of the five Sisters soon returned to the convent. After eleven years, having asked for readmittance, Sister M. Scholastica, who had been the first to join Mother Frances, received papal dispensation and,
with a contrite heart, returned to the Community.

February 10—As soon as Mother Frances and Monsignor Jacquemin were informed about the almost unbelievable happenings at Vienna, the Sisters at the motherhouse began immediately to offer prayers in reparation. For some time there was Benediction every evening, at which the Miserere was sung and the rosary of "My Jesus, mercy" was prayed.

February 14—Sister M. Johanna, the Vicaress, arrived in Rome from America and was extremely sad when she heard of what had taken place in Vienna while she was travelling to Rome.

February 20—Although Mother Frances was physically weak, she went with six Sisters to Vienna in order to guide, encourage, and lift the sad hearts of the Sisters heavenward. One of her companions to Vienna was Sister M. Valeria, whom Mother Frances installed as the new superior of the convent. Little did she know that this Sister would be the cause of more mental suffering for her.

April 19—After having opened a mission in Kukus, Bohemia, in the Diocese of Koenigsgraez, Mother Frances returned to Rome. This mission was destroyed by fire in 1895, and the Sisters returned to Vienna.

May 21—Reverend Father Joch with seven Sisters who had come together at Oshkosh went to Denville, New Jersey, to begin a new mission.

July 4—Monsignor Jacquemin dedicated the new addition and chapel of St. Mary's Hospital, Rhinelander, Wisconsin.
August 7—Mother Frances with twenty-one Sisters left Genoa, Italy, and arrived in New York on August 20.

October 13—Holy Profession at Sacred Heart Hospital, Tomahawk, Wisconsin, for which Monsignor Jacquemin had given the holy retreat.

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Reminiscences of the Sisters.
Chapter XXI

EVENTS OF 1895 AND 1896

Mother Frances' Last Trip to America

When Mother Frances made her third trip to the United States in 1895 in order to visit all the mission houses of the Community, which then consisted of six hospitals, one sanitarium, two schools, and an orphanage, neither she nor any of her spiritual daughters thought it possible that this trip would be Mother Foundress' last trip to America as well as her last visitation of her Community.

On August 7, 1895, Mother Frances with twenty-one Sisters embarked the Kaiser Wilhelm Norddeutscher Lloyd Steamer at Genoa, Italy, and landed safely in New York on August 20, 1895.

The first mission visited by the Mother General was the sanitarium at Denville, New Jersey, which had been founded only a few months previous to her arrival. A group of Sisters and candidates, fifteen in all, stayed only a few days at the sanitarium and then went to Marshfield, Wisconsin, the headquarters of the Community in America. Mother Frances remained in Denville for about two weeks, and then she, too, with another group of Sisters went to Marshfield. The Sisters at St. Joseph's Hospital made their holy retreat, which was given by Monsignor George Jacquemin, the Community's spiritual director. The retreat closed on September 15 with holy investiture and holy profession.

Sister M. Cyrilla Chmelaz, who received the holy habit on that occasion, has a very interesting account of this event in her reminiscences. Fifteen postulants were invested, five of whom were from America. On the day preceding holy investiture Mother Frances had a private conference with each of the postulants. She encouraged each of them always to serve God faithfully in the mission country even if they should encounter difficulties.
"Mother Frances surprised me," Sister M. Cyrilla states. "I had been a candidate less than two months, and she told me that I would receive the holy habit on the next day. She had told me already on the ship that I would receive the habit soon. Mother Frances took off her own starched wimple and put on her night wimple. She then tried her starched wimple on my head and said: 'Oh yes, it fits you all right.' And the next day this wimple from Mother Frances was my investiture wimple."

The investiture and profession ceremonies took place in the little convent chapel at St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield, Wisconsin. Some of the Sisters pronounced first vows, and Sisters M. Sophronia Spehl and M. Josephina Schleicher made perpetual vows. Already at that time the Sisters who made perpetual vows wore the little red wreaths.

After the blessing of the religious garbs, Mother Frances presented the habits, all of which had been used by other Sisters, to Monsignor Jacquemin, who handed one to each postulant. Then the postulants went upstairs to two small rooms, where they knelt down while Mother Frances, who said to them: "I will invest you with the habit myself," put the habit on each of them. Sister M. Cornelia Springob, Sister M. Innocentia Amschler—the Novice Mistress—and other Sisters helped clothe the new novices.

Mr. Joseph Klinkhammer, who took care of the Kneipp Water Cure treatments for the male patients at St. Joseph's Hospital, was the organist for the high Mass, which the Sisters sang. Monsignor Jacquemin gave an inspiring sermon. During Holy Communion, while Monsignor Jacquemin held the Sacred Host, the Sisters pronounced their holy vows.

"Those of us," relates Sister M. Cyrilla, "who had been invested or had made holy vows had dinner in the Kneipp dining room. Reverend Father Jacquemin had the place of honor in the center of the table, as Christ did at the Last Supper. At his right sat Mother Frances, the two Sisters who had made final vows, and then those who
had made first vows. To the left of Father Jacquemin was Reverend Father Eisen, who was full of fun, and then Mr. Klinkhammer...and Mr. Oswald, from Kansas, the father of one of the novices. We new novices were at another table, at the head of which was Dr. Schmitz...At that time there was no rule forbidding the Sisters to eat with outsiders. Our rules consisted of a few written sheets...Reverend Father Jacquemin holds these Constitutions in his hands on the photograph which is well known to the Sisters...."

Two days after holy investiture, on September 17, as we also learn from Sister M. Cyrilla, the Sisters celebrated Mother Frances' name day at St. Joseph's Hospital. On the following Sunday the whole Community celebrated the Feast of the Sorrowful Mother. Sister M. Cyrilla mentioned that all these feast days compelled the newly invested novices, to whom everything was very new, to call out in an outburst of joy: "How nice it is in America—-one feast day after the other!!"

The few months in 1895, while both Mother Foundress and the Community's spiritual director, Monsignor George Jacquemin, were in America, were busy times, replete with extraordinary graces and blessings for all the missions of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, in America.

Soon after the Feast of the Sorrowful Mother, Monsignor Jacquemin, Mother Frances, and Sister M. Petrina left Marshfield for Tomahawk. This was Mother Frances' first visit to Sacred Heart Hospital, Tomahawk, Wisconsin. Realizing how important it was for the Sisters to study both the English language and nursing procedures, Mother Frances started a school at Tomahawk for the Sisters. Sister M. Petrina, who had been a teacher previous to her entrance into the Community, was given the office of teaching English to the Sisters. Monsignor Jacquemin gave holy retreat to the Sisters at Sacred Heart Hospital, and on October 13, at the close of the retreat, Sister M. Mech-tildis Bauer, the Superior, made perpetual vows, and two other Sisters made temporary vows.
Around this same time Mother Frances organized a school at St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield. The Sisters were most desirous to have an opportunity to learn the English language. Mother Frances said to Father Joch: "We must do something for the children (Sisters) to make it possible for them to learn the English language." Rev. Father Joch was a man of action, so it was not a surprise that a set of elementary English readers arrived at St. Joseph's Hospital the following day. These books had been sent, at Father Joch's request, from St. John's Parochial School in Marshfield. Mr. Klinkhammer was appointed as the teacher for the Sisters, and later he also gave organ lessons to some of the Sisters.

Toward the middle of October, 1895, Mother Frances made her first visit to St. Mary's Hospital in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. Monsignor Jacquemin had already made his first visit to Rhinelander in July, when he blessed the newly built St. Mary's Hospital. The Sisters were happy and grateful to Mother Frances and their spiritual director, through whose conferences and instructions they received an extra amount of graces and blessings. In Rhinelander, as in all the other missions, Monsignor Jacquemin gave an inspiring retreat, which, on October 24, closed with the profession of holy vows.

From Rhinelander the higher superiors visited St. Mary's Hospital, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Doctor Oviatt, the main surgeon at St. Mary's Hospital, was happy to see the Community's spiritual director and to have a few words with the Foundress of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother. Mother Frances well remembered her experiences when, four years previous to this visit, she with two other Sisters started St. Mary's Hospital, Oshkosh, in an old building. With grateful hearts the Sisters thanked God for the newly erected hospital. Retreat at this mission closed on the fifth of November. Sister M. Boniface Goetz, the very efficient superior and administrator of the hospital, made perpetual vows, and many of the Sisters made temporary vows.

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The next place destined for special graces and blessings was St. Mary's Hospital in Menomonie, Wisconsin. This visit to Menomonie awakened in the heart of Mother Frances very happy memories of the great sacrifices which this mission demanded in its beginning and of the many heavenly blessings which were the effects of the sacrifices. Mother Frances had designed Menomonie as the Community's educational center. Little did she think that in a few more years this institution would be closed.

On November 30, after all the missions in Wisconsin had been richly supplied with retreat and profession graces, the devoted spiritual director and Mother Foundress with other companions went southward to St. Francis Hospital, Wichita, Kansas. The saintly Bishop Hennessy was happy to meet the visitors from Rome and thanked them for having saved the St. Francis Hospital during the years of trial and difficulties, when the Sisters were almost at the point of giving up St. Francis Hospital.

Soon after Mother Frances and Monsignor Jacquemin arrived, the Sisters at the Hospital began their holy retreat. How they rejoiced to have once more the privilege of having their spiritual director as retreat master. At the close of the retreat on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Sisters had holy profession.

Whenever Mother Frances was in Wichita she would stay for a few days at St. Mary's School in Aleppo for a physical, mental, and spiritual rest. She liked the quietness and peace which permeated this country place.

Since the Sisters who were teaching in the schools in Kansas were unable to come to St. Francis Hospital for their retreat, Reverend Father, a good shepherd in the true sense of the word, went out to St. Mary's School to give retreat to the Sisters. Early in the morning of December 13, the close of the retreat, the ceremonies of holy profession took place at St. Mary's Church. Sister M. Coletta Eberth made perpetual vows, and Sister M. Josepha
Sigrist and Sister M. Veneranda Straub made temporal vows.

Now there was only one more mission where the Sisters were anxiously waiting to enter into retreat before the end of 1895, and that was St. Francis Sanitarium in Denville. From the reminiscences of several of the Sisters we know that Christmas Day, 1895, was a big day at St. Francis Sanitarium, because on that day Mother Frances, Monsignor Jacquemin, Reverend Father Joch, and Sister M. Johanna were present. Toward evening on Christmas Day the Sisters began their retreat, which closed with holy profession—the making of both temporary and perpetual vows—on December 29. Monsignor Jacquemin left New York for Rome on January 6, 1896.

Mother Frances Deposed from Office: 1896

When, in the spring of 1895, Father Joch wrote in glowing terms to Rome to Mother Frances and Monsignor Jacquemin in regard to starting a new mission—a sanitarium at Denville, New Jersey—and to introduce thereat the Kneipp Water Cure, they gladly approved the undertaking of this new mission, because they had great confidence in the good judgment of Father Joch.

In August, 1895, on her first visit to St. Francis Sanitarium, Mother Frances seemed to be very pleased and well satisfied with the general run of that institution. But on her second visit to Denville, about December 15, 1895, Mother Frances learnt that certain incidents had occurred in connection with the Kneipp Water Cure, which, in her opinion, were incompatible with the religious life. She felt obligated in conscience to take measures to prevent the repetition of these happenings. Although Father Joch was somewhat involved, he was unaware of the fact.

It is quite reasonable to think that Mother Frances had talked this matter over with Monsignor Jacquemin and also with Sister M. Johanna, her representative in America. To both Monsignor Jacquemin and Mother Frances the spirit—
ual good of the Sisters in the Community far outweighed all temporal considerations. They were ready to sacrifice any material gain in order to preserve the spiritual and supernatural values of the Sisters.

Since the Kneipp Water Cure at that time was a new organized health measure and had not yet been introduced as an activity of religious Sisters, Mother Frances had begun to consider seriously whether or not it might be advisable to give up the mission at Denville. Serious doubts had arisen in her mind concerning the fitness of this health cure as a charitable activity for a religious community.

Around this time Reverend Anton Joehren, who was a missionary in the state of Washington, had offered to the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother a girls' school in Uniontown, Washington, for the price of $5,000. This seemed to have come to Mother Frances' attention at a most opportune time. She hoped to interest Father Joch so that he might prefer the taking over of this educational institution and thus to influence him in giving up the sanitarium.

Mother Frances talked this matter over with Father Joch and asked him to go to Uniontown, Washington, to visit and inspect this girls' school and then to report to her his reaction in regard to accepting Reverend Joehren's offer.

When Mother Frances told Father Joch about her intention of discontinuing St. Francis Sanitarium, truly a sword must have pierced his soul. He had put his entire self into this enterprise and hoped that Denville would be the first place in the United States where Father Kneipp's Water Cure would be introduced, and that it would become as famous as Woerrishhofen, Bavaria, where he had studied the Water Cure under Father Kneipp's instruction. Rather than give up the sanitarium, Father Joch suggested to expand and increase the facilities of the Cure and thereby pre-
vent some of the difficulties and incidents which Mother Frances hoped would never occur again.

Monsignor Jacquemin had returned to Rome in the beginning of January, 1896, and Mother Johanna left for Rome in March. It seems that Mother Frances had planned to give this sanitarium problem further consideration in Rome, as well as other important matters which had come up in the various mission houses during the pioneering years from 1889 to 1896.

When Mother Frances returned from Wichita to Denville for her third and last visit to the sanitarium before her return to Rome in March, 1896, she was informed that Father Joch wanted to see her. This was a surprise to her, for she thought he was still in the state of Washington, looking for a mission site.

Mother Frances had great respect for Reverend Father Joch and appreciated all his labors in behalf of the community in the United States, but she did not wish at that time to discuss with him this matter of giving up the sanitarium or of increasing its facilities. This good young priest had a fiery temperament, and Mother Frances, realizing that she had to defend principles, did not want to be pressed to make a decision which, later on, she might have to repent.

Mother Frances sacrificed and prayed for light from above. In order to avoid any further annoyance from Father Joch and to have time to consider well the many problems which needed attention, she decided to return to Europe earlier than she had planned. She had been in America for more than seven months and felt that it was time for her to return to Rome. About the middle of March, without telling Father Joch, she took the first ship sailing from New York to Europe, probably the one to Antwerp, Belgium, and from there travelled to Vienna. She arrived at the Sisters' convent in Vienna on Holy Thursday, April 2, 1896. She went to Vienna instead of going directly to the mother-
house in Rome, Italy, because she had great confidence in Sister M. Valeria, whom she had installed as superior of the convent in Vienna during the spring of 1895, after the defection of Sister M. Scholastica Demer. Mother Frances wished to consult Sister Valeria in regard to Denville and other important matters. Previous to entering our Community, Sister M. Valeria had been a member of a Benedictine community until it was suppressed.

On Easter Monday, April 6, after a spiritual revival of the commemoration of Christ's Passion and Resurrection, Mother Frances, accompanied by Sister M. Valeria, left Vienna and travelled to the motherhouse in Rome. But what a surprise and consternation for Mother Frances when, on her arrival at the motherhouse, she heard that Father Joch had come to Rome. This young priest had misjudged the reasons for Mother Frances' quiet ways and sudden departure for Europe. He was of the opinion that his priestly honor was at stake. He had told the Sisters at St. Francis Sanitarium that he would go to Rome immediately to defend himself. "This erroneous assumption of his led him to misunderstand the situation and so bring about a result which he did not intend." (Reichert, p. 149)

In the evening of the day on which Mother Frances had arrived in Rome, Monsignor Jacquemin informed her of Father Joch's desire to see her. But Mother Frances replied that it was too late and that she would see him the following morning. That night was a night of suffering and torture, a real Gethsemane, for Mother Frances. She was not ready to acquiesce to the wishes of Father Joch and therefore did not wish to see him.

From Sister M. Valeria we learn that Mother Frances spent several hours during the night in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and then waited in her room without even opening her suitcase. Sister M. Valeria tried to impress upon Mother Frances that the influence exercised by Msgr. Jacquemin and Father Joch was a hindrance rather than a help to the Community. Sister Valeria's great influence

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over Mother Frances helped to increase Mother Foundress' mental sufferings.

In this crisis Mother Frances placed her trust in God. Let us here quote from Reverend Aquilin Reichert.

"Through a powerful and proven intercessor, St. Anthony of Padua, she (Mother Frances) wished to obtain the necessary light from God; and so at the break of day she and Sister Valeria left the convent and went to St. Antonio, the church in the Via Merulana dedicated to this great wonderworker. There she prayed for several hours, full of confidence. She then went to confession. Sister Valeria tells us that Mother Frances stayed for a long time in the confessional and invited her to receive the sacrament of penance also. She states further that the confessor advised her not to forsake her Mother General. The two then took the next train to Padua to implore St. Anthony's intercession at his tomb. Mother Frances remained there for many long hours, storming heaven with fervent pleas for a sign of God's holy will, for the problem was one which concerned the welfare of her entire Community. From Padua she and Sister Valeria went to Vienna, arriving there three days after their departure from Rome." (Reichert, p. 150)

We can well imagine what a consternation there must have been at the motherhouse when on the following day it was discovered that Mother Frances and Sister M. Valeria were gone, without anyone knowing where they were. Mother Frances had deliberately kept her whereabouts a secret, because she did not wish to have an interview with Father Joch at that time, as that would not have been for the good of the Community.
While Monsignor Jacquemin and Father Joch were discussing this strange happening, they had no idea of the sufferings Mother Frances was enduring in her soul, and hence explained her departure in their own way. Both these priests were of the opinion that Mother Frances must have been mentally deranged, because at times, especially during the last few months, she had been physically weak and ailing. After a day had passed without the Sisters having heard anything about Mother Frances, the priests consulted with the Franciscan Father Doebbing, who was then the Sisters' Father Confessor at the motherhouse. These three priests decided to report the matter to the Cardinal Vicar, Maria Parocchi. The Cardinal had a telegram sent to the convent of the Sisters in Vienna to inquire whether the Sisters knew where Mother Frances and Sister M. Valeria were. When the Cardinal was informed that the Sisters knew nothing about Mother General's whereabouts, he felt that the only thing to do was to remove Mother Frances from office and appoint another Mother General.

"The decree of the Cardinal, issued April 14, 1896, stated that the motives of the deposition and their gravity had been seriously considered by him and had been found valid before he took the step. There are no more data in the archives of the Cardinal-Vicariate of Rome. The Cardinal acted 'ex informata conscientia,' as he understood the case...." (Reichert, p. 151)

When the decree of Mother Frances' removal from office and the appointment of her successor were made known, the Sisters were stunned. They felt the heavy hand of God on their young Community. The three priests were seized with the same feeling. Father Joch especially would have wished to undo the whole affair. Monsignor Jacquemin felt more keenly than the others the great loss to the Community.

"He now applied all his knowledge and ability, his tireless energy, his deep faith and piety to the preservation and growth of
the Community. In every possible way he sought to make up for the great loss, the void caused by the deposition of Mother Frances. In particular he assisted the new Superior General, Mother M. Johanna Ankenbrand, who approached her task with the best of will and a deep faith. Though still lacking in experience and maturity, she began her work with love and zeal. While she did not yet possess the broad view that her office demanded, the new Superior General undertook the exercise of her duties with confidence. No Sister in the Community at that time had sufficient preparation for such an office, and though all firmly believed that the Community was in God's hands, they realized their human insufficiency more than ever...." (Reichert, p. 152)

After Mother Frances had been deposed from office, letters were written to all the missions. The Sisters were informed that, not Mother Frances but Mother Johanna would hereafter be the Mother General. This brief message, that Mother Frances would no longer be their spiritual mother, struck each house like a thunderbolt.

Mother Frances had been the very soul of this newly budding Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother. She had been the bright light radiating her own intense love for the virtues of charity, humility, and sacrifice. In very truth, at that time the Sisters felt compelled to believe that she was the only one qualified to administer the Community and to lead its members heavenward.

The Community at that time was a large happy family in which the members knew each other and recognized and loved each other as spiritual children under the leadership of Mother Frances. From the reminiscences of the Sisters who went through these trying times, we know that all the Sisters felt very bad about this happening for their own sake, for the sake of the Community, and for the
sake of their beloved Foundress, for whom they felt the deepest sympathy.

On Mother Frances’ last visit to the houses in America, the Sisters noticed that she appeared somewhat sad and weaker physically than on former visits. But they felt that their beloved Foundress would soon recover her health if she would be able to take the necessary rest, and this they hoped she would be able to do in Rome.

The Sisters at Menomonie, Tomahawk, and Rhinelander felt so forsaken that they even consulted the Bishop of their diocese. In some of the other houses the local superiors tried to forestall any drastic actions by reasoning with the Sisters, admonishing them to accept this happening as God’s holy will, because Rome, the representative of Christ, had spoken.

One Sister stated in her reminiscences:

"We felt terrible. We were talking, crying, and consulting one another. We were wondering what we should do... We decided that each of us should write a letter to Mother Frances at Vienna, promising her that, no matter what would befall her, we would be ready to share every cross and every trial and difficulty with her. In this manner she received letters in three languages: English, German, and Bohemian... After several weeks we received Mother Frances’ answer, which again gave evidence of the nobility of her whole being. She thanked us in a general letter for our filial sympathy in her hours of suffering. I don’t remember the whole contents of the letter, but one part made a deep impression on me. I often repeated it during my life. Mother Frances said: 'Hold together with Reverend Father, and you will not go astray.' These were the last words we heard
from Mother Frances, the Servant of God. We never received another letter from her...."

Sources:

Chronicle of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.

Reichert, Rev. Aquilin, *Mother Frances—Her Life and Work* (Report of Mother Frances's deposition from office is condensed from Father Aquilin's account).

Reminiscences of the Sisters.
Chapter XXII

HIDDEN LIFE OF FIFTEEN YEARS

Mother Frances' deposition was the result of a series of difficulties which led to unforeseen results. Divine Providence permitted that Mother Frances be removed from office contrary to the wishes of her spiritual daughters, as we have shown in the preceding chapter. God had assigned to Mother Frances a great task, and this she had accomplished. The hospitals, schools, homes for orphans and crippled children which Mother Frances had founded in America and Europe within six years are a perpetual memorial of her boundless love for God and mankind. These charitable institutions, most of which have grown from small mustard seeds to magnificently large trees, give evidence to the fact that Mother Frances was a person endowed with extraordinary gifts both in the supernatural and natural order.

Sister M. Johanna Ankenbrand, whom the Foundress had selected to make the first canonical visitation in the Community's houses in America and whom, in 1893, she had appointed as vicaress, was appointed Mother General by the Cardinal Vicar. Mother Johanna possessed talents and abilities, though not in an exceptional degree, and received very precious gifts from God—a deep faith and trust together with a true love and veneration for the Foundress, who hereafter would be her spiritual mother. She firmly hoped that she would obtain from God whatever special graces she needed through the pious prayers of Mother M. Frances.

That the happenings in the Community during 1896 were God's holy will can be deducted from Mother Frances' own disposition. She herself had hoped and prayed that she would not die as a superior. Of course she did not expect to give up her position in the way that it had been taken from her, but God's ways are not our ways. "Those whom God loveth he chastiseth." That Mother Frances was sincere
in her desire to die as a subject is evident in the following words which she repeated often:

"...that the Lord will grant me the grace at least not to die as a superior—a petition which I have asked for ten years already and will always ask of God and my spiritual authorities. This grace I hope for with the utmost confidence...."

Mother Frances must have deeply felt the humiliating manner in which she was separated from the work of which she was the foundress. "Humanly speaking, it was no small sacrifice for her, who had given the Community its rules, determined its course, and implanted the religious spirit in the Sisters, to submit now in all things to the will of another...." (Reichert, p. 160) But being a woman of faith and possessing the virtue of humility in a high degree, she said her Fiat and bowed to the holy will of God.

For fifteen years Mother Frances lived a hidden life of prayer, sacrifice, humility, and self-renunciation for the edification of everyone who came in contact with her. In 1927 Father Joch stated that Mother Frances had impressed her ideals upon her Community and had communicated to it her spirit, which still animates it and which, he said, was the best and most beautiful heritage the Community received from Mother Frances. But, he added, her greatest contribution was made after her retirement in her quiet cell. "There she appears to us in her full spiritual greatness. There for fifteen years she fasted, prayed, preached by example, and so implored God's blessing upon her work, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother." (Reichert, p. 157)

From 1896 until 1905 Mother Frances stayed at the motherhouse in Rome and spent most of her time before the Blessed Sacrament. She would kneel in chapel for many hours in succession in deepest recollection. Only in the next world will it be known how many hours she spent during the night in adoration before her Eucharistic Lord
and God. On the Recollection Day for the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, which is the first Sunday after the first Friday of each month, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in all the houses of the Community. On those days Mother Frances remained in chapel practically all day with the exception of attending other necessary Community exercises. Shortly before her death she impressed upon Mother Johanna her ardent wish and desire that solemn adoration of the Blessed Sacrament be introduced in one of the houses of the Community; if possible, at the motherhouse in Rome.

In 1897, to the joy of Mother Frances, the Stations of the Cross were erected in the motherhouse chapel. From that time on she prayed the Stations daily with profound devotion. Mother Frances, who always was liturgical-minded, suffered with her Divine Bridegroom during the holy season of Lent. She often said: "It is only in great trials that the soul is drawn closer to God." These words and the following indicate how much Mother Frances appreciated and longed to suffer with Christ. "The Cross is the key to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in which are kept all the treasures and riches of the Eternal Father. May the Precious Blood of Jesus become for us a balsam of salvation so that we may one day appear before God wholly cleansed."

Mother Frances had a positive hunger for humiliations. She knew that through humility she would win the battles of the spiritual life, and, knowing that humility is gained only through its practice, she accepted humiliations for the love of God. During Advent of 1898 she wrote the following in her small green notebook:

"Humility is truth; truth is light, and in this light one advances along the way of union with God. Considered in this light, no humiliation will ever appear to us as such but rather as a token of the grace of God, who has compassion for our errors and leads us in this manner to recognize them."
The Community Chronicle contains nothing of special importance relative to the Foundress' years at the mother-house except that "by her humble example she was a model of the religious life to her Sisters and that she assisted the Superior General by her prudent counsel."

While Mother Frances was in Rome, she went daily to St. Peter's Basilica whenever possible, especially after her health was restored, in order to pray at her favorite shrines. Her first visit would be to the chapel near the right side of the entrance where Michaelangelo's shrine of the Sorrowful Mother—the Pieta—stands. Next she would visit the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, and her last visit before leaving St. Peter's would be to the altar of St. Peter under the baldachin. At each of these shrines she spent a long time in deep recollected prayer. Her prayer life was all-embracing. She prayed for the Pope, bishops, priests, religious, the living and the dead, for the conversion of sinners all over the world.

Already in 1901, the Most Reverend Bishop Doebbing, Ordinary of the Diocese of Nepi and Sutri, had planned a kindergarten in Castel San Elia, a town in his Diocese about thirty miles from Rome. Castel San Elia was at that time and still is a very poor village. The people get very little from their very poor soil, and mothers have to go to work to produce some meager crops for their family's sustenance.

Since the Bishop was well acquainted with the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, as he had formerly been their Father Confessor, he repeated for several years his request for Sisters for Castel San Elia. Finally in 1904 Mother Johanna yielded to the Bishop's pleadings for Sisters. She discussed this matter with Mother Frances in order to interest her to help in any way possible to make this Community's first mission in Italy an institution pleasing to God and the saints. Mother Frances offered to go to this new mission if this was the will of the Superior General.
Here in the convent and kindergarten at Castel San Elia, Italy, Mother Frances spent the last six years of her life.
The chapel of the convent of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother at Castel San Elia was Mother Frances' little heaven on earth. She spent many hours daily before the Blessed Sacrament in fervent prayer and loving contemplation.
A drawing of the room in which Mother M. Frances died.
The grave of Mother Frances is near the Basilica of St. Elias in Castel San Elia, Italy. Throughout her life as a religious Mother Frances had a special devotion to St. Elias, a Prophet of the Old Testament.
Basilica of St. Elias, Castel San Elia, Italy.
The Sanctuary of the Madonna and Rupes near the Basilica of St. Elias was one of Mother Frances' favorite places to which she would go to pray for hours in succession.
The original grave of Mother Frances was under the cypress trees near the Basilica of St. Elias. The remains of Mother Frances now rest in a vault in the wall of the Sisters' chapel in Castel San Elia, Italy.
"The Cross is the key to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in which are kept all the treasures and riches of the Eternal Father. May the Precious Blood of Jesus become for us a balsam of salvation so that we may one day appear before God wholly cleansed." (Words of Mother Frances Streitel.)
Bishop Doebbing offered the Sisters a roomy house for a kindergarten together with a field belonging thereto. The Community remodeled and rebuilt this house, for which Monsignor Jacquemin donated 4,100 lire. On May 25, 1905, Sister M. Bernarda Huempfner—the superior—Mother Frances, and another Sister moved into this new mission to begin apostolic work in one of the poorest villages in Italy. Mother Frances always had a very special devotion to the great Prophet St. Elias, so the title of the village, Castel San Elia, gave her great joy.

In this new mission Mother Frances combined her contemplative life of prayer and sacrifice with an active life, which consisted in taking care of the neglected children of Castel San Elia. Although Mother Frances was over sixty years of age, she worked among the children with an enthusiastic joy. Many of the children came to the convent in the morning in a wretched state of neglect, and Mother Frances delighted to select for herself those children who needed the greatest care. She cared for and watched over the children with motherly love. With great conscientiousness she gave them lessons in Christian doctrine and taught them to make the Sign of the Cross, to say their little prayers, and to make little sacrifices.

During the afternoon rest period of the hot Italian summer, Mother Frances sent the younger Sisters to take their siesta, while she took care of the children. If time allowed, Mother Frances helped Sister in the kitchen.

Prayer before the Blessed Eucharist was her very life. She was present at all the Community exercises and spent every other available hour in the chapel. She took only a few hours of rest at night and spent several hours at prayer with her Eucharistic Lord. People who saw her marveled at her spirit of prayer. The Mayor Crispigni of Castel San Elia said: "I remember seeing her praying in church for half a day on one occasion and attending all the Masses. Often amazed, I asked myself how a human being could endure this—to be on her knees all the time and at her age!" (Reichert, p. 171)
The Very Reverend P. Joseph Ranocchini, a Pallottine Father, gave a beautiful tribute concerning Mother Frances. He was ten years old when Mother Frances died. He remarked that he spent the most beautiful years of his youth in Castel San Elia.

"...Her image (Mother Frances') will never fade from my memory," Father Ranocchini said. "Even today, after so many years, I can most clearly state my impressions of that time.

"Mother Frances appeared among us children like a mother full of solicitude, kindness, and love. Her patience in enduring our childish faults was admirable and exemplary. To sum up my impressions of her I may say that I was deeply touched above all by her humility, so great and profound, her desire to be hidden and to conceal her identity as Mother Foundress, and her virtues and undoubted holiness. Our mothers often sought her out for instruction and advice. She was their guide and comfort. As proof of her deep humility, I wish to remark particularly that in caring for the children she preferred the smallest ones because these needed the most menial care. And she did all with plain natural efficiency, with motherly kindness and great love.

"At her death the whole community mourned; the grownup people wept, we children passed by her body in silence, deeply moved. Eagerly we gazed upon her features, her eyes now closed forever...." (Reichert, pp. 171-172)

A Blessed Departure to Eternity: Toward the end of November, 1910, with the permission of her superior, Mother M. Frances made a ten-day retreat. This her last retreat was, more or less, her formal, immediate preparation for death. She asked God for the grace to suffer a long, painful death agony as an act of reparation for her sins so to
be prepared to enter heaven immediately after death and also for the grace to share in His painful crowning with thorns. Both of these petitions were granted to her.

The sufferings which would be the answer to the graces she asked for began on Feb. 2, 1911, the Feast of the Purification. Having fainted in chapel, Mother Frances was carried to her bed, where, on account of extremely painful headaches, she was compelled to remain until February 8. Since this day was the anniversary of her mother's death, she asked to be taken to chapel for holy Mass. Having fainted again, from what the doctor stated was a brain hemorrhage, she was taken to her bed, from which she never rose again.

After a slight let up, greater and more violent headaches followed for a period of four weeks without interruption. Mother Frances accepted these sufferings as a participation in Christ's crowning with thorns. During the night of February 27, after the Sisters had told her that she was in danger of death, Mother Frances asked to receive the last sacraments. After receiving Holy Communion as Viaticum she closed her eyes, and they remained closed until the afternoon of March 4. During this time she said to the attending Sister: "The judgments of the Lord are inscrutably severe. What are honor and reputation? What good do they do us at the hour of death?"

When Mother Johanna, who was at the motherhouse in Rome, was informed about Mother Frances' condition, she went to Castel San Elia immediately. She entered the sick room just when Mother Frances opened her eyes in the afternoon of March 4. When Mother Johanna asked the Foundress to press her hand if she wanted to receive Holy Communion once more, Mother Frances did so.

On the following day, the Sunday of solemn adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Mother Johanna said to Mother Frances: "Today your Guardian Angel will take your place in keeping adoration." Mother Frances answered silently with tears in her eyes. She asked that the Sisters pray
for her and also that she be forgiven by all.

All those who saw Mother Frances as her earthly life neared its end were impressed. Some remarked that "her face shone as if transfigured." During her last days the Sisters prayed aloud at the bedside of their dying Foundress, who, as far as she could, joined them by praying along with her lips. The Most Reverend Bishop Doebbing visited her several times, recommending to her the needs of his diocese and those of the whole Church. The Franciscan Fathers in charge of the Sanctuary of the Madonna ad Rupes gave her spiritual assistance for many hours.

Mother Frances' death was slow and painful. Each time after the prayers for the dying were said her strength was so much renewed that she had to endure the death agony repeatedly. Monsignor Jacquemin came from Rome on the eve of March 5 in order to assist Mother Frances and to bring her a special blessing from Pope St. Pius X with a plenary indulgence at the hour of death.

For about three hours preceding her death in the morning of March 6, the Feast of St. Coletta, to whom Mother Frances had special devotion, she moaned loudly, showing signs of great anguish. Her forehead was covered with sweat. When asked to lay quietly so as not to exhaust herself, Mother Frances became silent after a few soft moans, offering this as a last act of obedience and love to God. Then Monsignor Jacquemin went to chapel to offer holy Mass, which he had barely begun when a little signal bell called him and the Sisters to the bedside of Mother Frances. Here they recited the Stabat Mater aloud, and Monsignor Jacquemin gave the General Absolution, which Mother Frances received with full consciousness. After about fifteen minutes, just after the clock struck seven, the Lord called His faithful servant to her eternal reward.

Greatly moved, all stood around her deathbed, hoping and praying that her heavenly Bridegroom may soon call: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
On the day of Mother Frances' death, March 6, 1911, the Constitutions of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother received its final approbation from the Holy See. By this approbation the Constitutions have been declared a secure path to religious perfection.

Funeral of Mother Frances Streitel: "The venerable remains, which lay so peacefully on the deathbed in the poor convent cell, were brought a few hours later into the boys' hall of the institute. When the people of the place and the vicinity heard that the pious, humble and modest Sister had died, they came in large numbers to see and venerate the 'saint,' as they said. The Sisters had all they could do to restrain the good people from touching the body and cutting little remembrances for themselves from her clothing. The better to protect the body, school benches were placed around the catafalque as barriers. When the Sisters asked the faithful to pray for the departed one, the people answered: 'Mother Frances does not need our prayers. She is a saint and must pray for us.' Great was their astonishment when they heard that the saintly Sister was not only a pious religious but the Foundress of the Community.

"The entire congregation in Castel San Elia now wished to provide for a solemn funeral for Mother Frances, who had worked there as an obscure religious. The mayor issued an invitation to all by displaying posters in public—a most unusual distinction. At the funeral on March 9, the Bishop of the Diocese of Nepi and Sutri gave a noteworthy address in the parish church. Among other things he said that those who are chosen by God to found a new religious congregation must expect unusually great sufferings, for they are to be purified in a veritable furnace of affliction. When they appear to have accomplished something in the face of much opposition and many difficulties, the whole work is suddenly destroyed and must be begun anew. The Bishop stated that he knew this from personal experience, since he had been personally concerned in Mother Frances' removal from office in 1896 and felt therefore

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that he was under a moral obligation to make amends for his action by this public statement. Mother Frances, he went on to say, had reached the heights of Calvary and had stood beneath the Cross with the Sorrowful Mother so that by dying to herself she might be worthy to serve the Lord, as those present had witnessed themselves. Out of humility she did not wish to be buried in Rome but in that small spot in the valley which had been the resting-place of so many saints ever since the sixth century. Just as the relics of the saints were carried in solemn procession to the Basilica in the valley each year, so now the venerable remains of the saintly Mother Frances would be carried there for her last rest. There she would sleep, awaiting the great day of resurrection. The Bishop then told the people that they should esteem it a great honor to have the religious Foundress buried in their midst.

"The faithful understood these words well and knelt down in the streets as Mother Frances was carried to her tomb. They did so, not only out of respect but also in order to beg the blessing of the Servant of God for themselves and their families. It was noon when the zinc-covered cedar coffin was lowered into the earth. A special place of honor had been chosen for her, who long since had found a place of honor in the hearts of the people. They were convinced that some day she would be glorified here on earth." (Reichert, pp. 177-178)

Mother Frances' first grave was in the holy valley surrounded by high walls of rock beside the venerable old Basilica. She rested under the shadow of mighty cypress trees, scarcely a ten minutes' walk from the shrine of the Madonna of the Rocks, where she spent many hours of recollection, enlightenment, and prayer, where she implored the intercession of the Queen of Heaven for herself, her Community, and all mankind. The cross over her grave bore the significant inscription: Vivas in Deo anima sancta! (Mayest thou live in God, O holy soul!) At the back of the cross was an image of the Sorrowful Mother carved in wood. The grave of the Servant of God was highly treasured as a
sacred spot by the Sisters, the local people, and visitors. At the first official investigation of her tomb by the diocesan court in 1939, her body, which had been in the ground for twenty-eight years, was found well-preserved. It was placed in a new coffin, which was then enclosed within another coffin of lead and sealed and buried in a walled crypt next to the original tomb. On March 14, 1949, the remains of Mother Frances were exhumed and placed in a vault in the wall of the convent chapel of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother at Castel San Elia.

Source: Reichert, Reverend Aquilin, Mother Frances Streitel--Her Life and Work.
Chapter XXIII

PROCESS OF BEATIFICATION OF MOTHER FRANCES

For many years it had been the desire of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother to have the beatification cause of Mother Frances Streitel, the Foundress of the Community, introduced. When Reverend Mother M. Wendelina, a great admirer of the holy life of the Foundress, was elected as superior general of the Community at the General Chapter in 1931, she asked the delegates of the Chapter for their opinion on the important matter of making the first steps in the introduction of the beatification process. Mother General's announcement aroused great joy in the hearts of the delegates, for most of the Sisters assembled in Rome at the General Chapter had known Mother Frances personally and had been witnesses to her holy life.

The Most Reverend Luigi Maria Olivares, Bishop of Sutri and Nepi, in whose diocese Mother Frances had lived during the last years of her life, was greatly interested in furthering the cause of the Foundress's beatification. In a letter of November 12, 1936, to Reverend Mother M. Wendelina he stated that he had no objections to the initiation of the diocesan process for Mother Frances' beatification and to having the Reverend Aquilin Reichert, O.F.M.Conv., as postulator.

From 1937 to 1940 the diocesan process of the canonical examination of Mother Frances' writings, of her reputation for sanctity, and of the obedience due to the decree of Pope Urban VIII forbidding any public cult to be paid a candidate for beatification, was conducted in the episcopal court of Nepi. The first session of this process took place in the Bishop's residence in Nepi, Italy, on April 5, 1937.

During this time also the rogatorial processes were conducted—those in the Dioceses of Paterson, New Jersey, and Winona, Minnesota, in 1938 and those in the Diocese of
Wuerzburg, Germany, in 1939. As it would have been extremely difficult for many of the witnesses to come to Nepi, Italy, they were examined by the authorities of their home dioceses. A total of sixty-five witnesses were heard. With two exceptions, all had known the Servant of God personally and therefore were able to make their depositions on oath. Of these sixty-five, thirty-two were not members of the Community. The witnesses, who were recognized as reliable, made their statements only "to give testimony to the truth and glory to God."

On March 11, 1940, the diocesan process was closed, and in that same month the Sacred Congregation of Rites took over the work. After the protocols had been brought to Rome, the Sacred Congregation examined the writings, with due observance of all legal requirements, and thereupon issued the following resolution: "There is nothing that can be found to hinder the advancement of the cause." Meanwhile many letters of recommendation for the introduction of the cause of beatification were sent to the Holy Father by two Cardinals, many archbishops, bishops, superiors general of men and women religious orders and communities, as well as others.

On April 3, 1940, upon the petition of the Very Reverend Aquilino Reichert, O.F.M., Conv., apostolic penitentiary of the Vatican Basilica in Rome and postulator of the cause, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, on the report of Carlo Cardinal Salotti, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, graciously granted in an audience the favor asked for the Process by appointing and delegating His Eminence Cardinal Hermenegild Pellegrinetti as ponens. The office of ponens demands that the Cardinal so designated "devote special attention to the cause, and report in the plenary or ordinary meeting of the Sacred Congregation all things which seem to favor or prejudice the cause."

(Canon 2009)

On February 26, 1943, the Sacred Congregation of Rites approved the writings of Mother Frances. On May 27, 1947, at an ordinary meeting in the Vatican, the Cardinals resolved to introduce this process at the Holy See. His
Holiness, Pope Pius XII, approved this resolution with his own signature on June 13, 1947.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, Mother Frances' body was exhumed by the diocesan court in 1939. Her body, which had been in the ground for twenty-eight years, was found well preserved. It was placed in a new coffin, which was enclosed in another of lead, sealed, and buried next to the original tomb at Castel San Elia. On March 14, 1949, a second exhumation took place. Present at this exhumation of the body of Mother Frances were a representative of the Vatican, the Most Reverend Bishop of Nepi and the whole ecclesiastical court of Nepi, Reverend Aquilin Reichert, the mayor of Castel San Elia and other officials, three witnesses in connection with the Process, Reverend Mother M. Melania Eberth and another Sister representing the Community, and others.

All present were under oath to adhere strictly to the rigorous requirements demanded by Holy Church on such occasions. A medical representative of the Sacred Congregation was present to see that everything was done according to the law of the Church.

After all the members had taken their respective oaths, the entire text of "The Introduction of the Cause of Beatification of Mother Frances Streitel" was read aloud. Then the procedure of exhumation followed. The remains of our Mother Foundress were found comparatively well preserved. The habit, two thirds of which was in fairly good condition, was removed from the body, disinfected, washed, and aired. It is now in the possession of the Postulator, who has the right to distribute this relic the way he sees fit. Under the supervision of doctors the flesh that still remained was removed from the bones and burned. The ashes were placed in an urn. The bones were disinfected, treated with a chemical preservative, and then laid in the air to dry. To prevent anyone from handling or removing the exposed remains during the three weeks that they lay exposed, the windows and the door of the sacristy (presumably the
The Very Reverend Aquilin Reichert, of the Roman Curia — the Sacred Penitentiary — Vatican City, is the postulator of the cause of the beatification process of Mother Frances Streitel.
First religious garb of the Sisters (1883-1891). In 1886 a medal of the Sorrowful Mother was added.

Religious garb from 1891 until September, 1959.

Change of veil, September, 1959.
The Servant of God, Mother M. Frances Streitel.
sacristy of St. Elias Basilica) were screened and cross-sealed with silk threads and the episcopal seal.

At the second meeting, three weeks later, the bones, the ashes, and the documents were placed in a tin casket containing three compartments. This procedure was carried out with due legal formality. The casket, carried by six Sisters, was taken to the parish church, where His Excellency, the Bishop of Nepi, sang a requiem high Mass, after which several psalms were sung by the clergy.

Directly from the church the procession made its way to the Sisters' convent chapel. The remains of Mother Frances were placed in a vault in the wall of the chapel. The opening of the vault was immediately sealed with plaster, over which a marble slab was later set. With the permission of the Defender of the Faith, the Sisters were allowed to place flowers before the vault.

The last meeting at Castel San Elia took place in the second week of May, 1949. What a happy privilege for our Sisters at Castel San Elia, Italy, to be the custodians of our Foundress's remains!

On June 7, 1949, the apostolic process on the specific virtues of Mother Frances was closed. Thereafter all the witnesses who had testified concerning her heroic virtues were free to speak concerning the matter. In the apostolic process there were forty-six witnesses. All of these testified to the heroic virtues of Mother Frances, and the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation were besought to give their favorable judgment of her virtues to His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, so that he might be able to give his infallible decision.

On December 14, 1949, the Acts of the Apostolic Process were transferred from Nepi to the Sacred Congregation of Rites. After thoroughly examining the processes, both the diocesan and the apostolic, which were conducted in Nepi and elsewhere concerning Mother Frances' life, virtues,
and miracles, whether general or specific, the Sacred Congregation of Rites came to the conclusion "that everything was done according to the laws of the Church and that the validity of the process is established, on condition that His Holiness approves it." (Quoted from "The Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites Concerning the Validity of the Previous Processes for Beatification of the Servant of God, M. Frances Streitel," February 3, 1952.)

On February 3, 1952, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, confirmed the validity of all the preceding processes—those conducted from April 5, 1937, to December 12, 1949—the diocesan and apostolic processes, but not the process dealing with the miracles.

The apostolic process on the specific virtues is validly established by passing through three congregations: the antepreparatory, the preparatory, and the general. The antepreparatory, the preparatory, and the general congregations prepare the Holy Father for the decision as to whether he can with a good conscience declare the virtues practiced by the Servant of God heroic.

At the antepreparatory, which is held in the presence of the Cardinal ponens, all the prelates have the duty to hand in their written objections within a few months. This first congregation gives the Holy Father full proof, so that after the general congregation he can confer on the candidate in question the distinguished title of "venerable." At the preparatory congregation, which is held at the Vatican, only the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation of Rites may vote. At the general congregation the Holy Father judges whether or not the heroism of the virtues has been proven. If he decides in the affirmative, a decree is drawn up at his command stating that the heroism of the virtues has been proved. This decree is then published and thereafter the Servant of God in question may be called Venerable. The candidate for beatification may not yet be honored by a public cult.
After the proof of the virtues has been validly established, the miracles of the one in question are investigated. After the three great congregations, however, the goal of the process has been practically reached, since the miracle process relates only to the permission for the beatification, and also to the permission to celebrate holy Mass in the candidate's honor.

As we close this first volume of the history of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother in September, 1960, it is the fervent hope and ardent desire of the spiritual daughters of Mother Frances and her clients and friends the world over that the day of Mother Frances' beatification will come very soon.

Sources:

Letters and reports written by the Very Reverend Aquilin Reichert, O.F.M.Conv., Postulator of the Cause, and published in the Ave Mater Dolorosa, Vols. VI, IX, XVI-XIX, XXI, XXV, XXVIII.

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