

Chapter 29

Chicago Schools Expand



If Gertrude had looked to count the grave-stones of her friends after the funeral of Agnes Burke, she was abruptly brought back to a count of the living by a Chicago pastor in the parlor at Mt. Carmel. Within hours of Agatha's funeral, Msgr. Fitzsimmons of Holy Name Cathedral walked up the front steps to ask for

Sisters to teach in the Cathedral school. Because the Religious of the Sacred Heart were moving their girls' academy north on Sheridan Road, leaving Holy Name without teachers for September, he needed Sisters for both boys and girls. Gertrude gave him no promise.

However, Fitzsimmons had a persistent streak. No sooner had he returned to his Chicago rectory than he wrote begging the congregation to make the effort to staff Holy Name. In the same mail a note from Rosina Harrigan, superior at St. Charles (Muldoon's parish), informed Gertrude that Bishop Muldoon hoped Mother could accept. Fitzsimmons was playing all the angles. With Muldoon coming down in favor of Holy Name, the only question for Gertrude was how. She wrote telling Fitzsimmons she would answer him in two weeks. Then she set about creating teachers.

If not exactly creation out of nothing, it was surely out of inexperience. She had no one but novices. Once again she gave up her plan to keep the novices home in the fall. Unless the decision on boys relieved the community of some schools or grades, the young Sisters must go out to an apprenticeship under a master teacher for a year. At the end of two weeks, she accepted Holy Name (as she knew she must), promising six teachers (four of them novices) plus a music teacher and a housekeeper. Within a month Fitzsimmons asked for more Sisters, saying he couldn't

afford four lay teachers. She promised two additional BVMS, adding that with this offer he had to be content, and he said he was—for the time being.

The same day that Gertrude learned of Muldoon's support for Holy Name, she signed a letter to Bishop Garrigan of Sioux City asking if rumors about a change of Sisters in his diocese were true and adding that, if so, she would withdraw her BVMS to schools where they were urgently needed.¹

May 4 (1904) brought an answer from Garrigan denying even the thought of finding other religious and praising the BVMS in his diocese. Someone had maliciously begun the story, said he. Furthermore, he wanted her to establish a high school in Sioux City, though not on the Morningside property.² Would Mother come to see him about the school on her next visit? She replied that she would. Garrigan's letter had not solved the problem of teachers for Chicago schools, but it had stabilized the position of the BVM congregation in his diocese.³

Then, as often happened, into the middle of this community-wide decision-making intruded a single member's problem. Mother Gertrude pushed aside letters from pastors and bishops on the recent ruling about boys to go 60 miles south to Moline (IL). One of the Sisters there was "troubled in mind" (RE) and wished to return to her family immediately. That very day, Gertrude brought her back to Dubuque where her sister lived.

Since Archbishop John Keane was away at the time, Father Clarke, Mt. Carmel chaplain, wrote the bishop's office explaining the case above and obtained a partial dispensation. During the period of waiting, however, the Sister changed her mind, much to the annoyance of Father Clarke, who felt she should leave anyway. Not so Gertrude Regan! The Sister should stay if she wished. Concluding she really needed a change of scenery, Gertrude took her to Holy Family, Chicago—one of the busiest and most demanding parishes in the system. Pulcheria cryptically noted in RE, "She seems settled for the time being."

Some time in May, Father Hynes, pastor of Our Lady of Angels, Chicago, appeared at Mt. Carmel full of apology for missing Mother's visit in April. His hurried train ride followed closely on her acceptance of Holy Name. He accompanied his question about the promise of Sisters for his school with the point that he had already waited a year for them. Moreover, he was ready to do whatever Fitzsimmons at Holy Name did! (RE)

Actually, Fitzsimmons had done quite a lot. Father Hynes' contract finally read that he would pay \$200 per Sister per year, furnish the school and convent completely and supply everything but food and clothes. He'd buy the musical instruments as well. How many Sisters would Mother send? She would tell him in June. The delay produced fruit. In June, Hynes topped Fitzsimmons by adding that the Sisters could keep the music money. Gertrude promised four Sisters for August.

Meanwhile Gertrude's visits to parishes in Illinois and eastern Iowa won some acceptance for the policy on boys. Pastors readily agreed to limits on music lessons, but suggested keeping boys in commercial and high school classes. They reasoned that classroom situations involving older boys presented no great problem. Gertrude listened, but remained firm until she could refer the decision to her Council. By the end of May she had only pastors in Riverside, Iowa City, Cedar Falls and Waterloo (IA) to see. And then a board in the rectory walk in Washington (IA) temporarily ended her diplomatic mission.

She had just turned from saying good-by to the pastor when the superior, Delphine Conway, "a woman of generous proportions," (comments RE) stepped on a loose board in the walk. Her considerable weight unbalanced the other end, tripping Gertrude and catapulting her headlong to the ground. Her face, which had struck the ground, was only slightly bruised, but her shoulder and arm took the full force of the fall and were badly bruised but not broken (RE).

Characteristically, Gertrude wanted to stay the night and continue the trip as planned. It is an indication of the shock she sustained that she was overruled. The pastor and the superior put her on the train for Mt. Carmel with Pulcheria. A few minutes after midnight, the Sisters bundled her into bed at the motherhouse. Four days later a June 4th entry in RE states simply, "Mother in bed since her return to Dubuque. Corpus Christi and First Friday unable to go to Mass." A major Gertrude lie down!

Yet by June 19 she was back, shuffling teachers to staff the newest Chicago missions, which by now included St. Dominic. Father Griffin, pastor of the newly created parish, wanted the same Sisters as Holy Name. His school occupied the building formerly used for the Holy Name boys and he bolstered his request by adding that he had *sent many vocations to the*

BVMs. “This is true,” admits RE. Gertrude immediately wrote that four Sisters were assigned to open his school—more to come.

Mother Gertrude’s answer shows a consistent BVM response to the poor. Unlike Hynes, Griffin made no promise to match Holy Name's Fitzsimmons. Instead, he confessed that he could offer no salary at all, but “thought parish entertainments might supply the difference.” St. Dominic was a poor parish, but the Sisters could keep the music money. In July he asked for and got a commercial teacher for his 20 high school students.⁴

And then there were none—no more Sisters except the Council themselves, two of whom already filled other positions: Cecilia in Council Bluffs, and Bertrand Foley at Mt. St. Joseph (Dubuque). For the next six months, letters replying to requests for Sisters contained the unequivocal truth: we have none to send.

, , ,

Notes to Chapter 29

1. Mother Gertrude’s letter to Bishop Garrigan April 28, 1904.

Rt. Rev. Dear Bishop,

We have heard from a reliable source that you have invited Sisters of your own choice to take charge of the schools in your diocese. Will you kindly inform us at your earliest convenience if we may consider ourselves at liberty to place our Sisters elsewhere next September?...

2. Letter of Bishop Garrigan to Mother Gertrude May 1, 1904.

Dear Mother Gertrude,

Your note of the 28th ult. came duly to hand, and not only surprised me, but astonished and pained me. That someone whom you regard as a reliable source should misrepresent me, and even falsify me, is beyond my comprehension. I fear also that you have been disturbed and made anxious by this false statement. No, it never entered my head to make such a change, nor for that matter any change; and I have never approached any Community in the East or elsewhere on this subject. I could not do it if I wanted to; it is an impossibility; and it would be against my conscience, as I cannot be ignorant of the great injury

it would be to our schools and religion. God forbid that I should ever attempt a move so cruel and unjust as that would be! No, even the thought of it never came to me. I am well pleased with your Sisters and hear them well spoken of everywhere they are engaged in the diocese. Here in my own schools, I find your children good teachers, and good religious, and very easy to get along with. Why should I deprive my diocese of such a body of noble religious women? No, no, I never thought it, never said it. Now this is all I need say, I trust. I only request you to give me the name of this reliable source in order that I may vindicate justice and punish malice. With the expression of sentiments of esteem for yourself and your Community, I remain,

Yours very truly in Christ,

P.J. Garrigan

Bp. of Sioux City.

3. For more on Bishop Philip J. Garrigan – See Appendix to Ch. 29.
4. St. Dominic church, renamed The Shrine of St. Peregrine, was located next to the Cabrini Green CHA housing at 357 W. Locust St., Chicago. The Shrine closed in 1990; the church was torn down not long after.

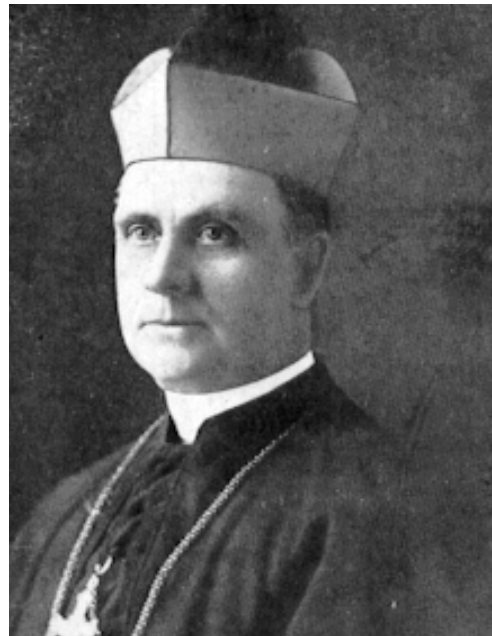
, , ,

Appendix to Ch. 29

Bishop Philip J. Garrigan

As vice-rector of Catholic U., Bishop Garrigan supported the movement among Catholic intellectuals to integrate 19th century science with Church doctrine. Labeled as *modernism* by its opponents, the movement was mentioned in Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors* in 1864 as a danger to Catholic dogma. In 1907, Pius X condemned it in *Pascendi Dominici gregis*. After the encyclical was published, conservative anti-intellectuals hunted suspects of *modernism* down in a witch-hunt similar to the political McCarthyism in the U.S. in the 1950s.

One of those intellectuals who favored the response of the Church to the modern world, Garrigan provided a focus of controversy on the



Bishop Philip J. Garrigan
Archdiocese of Sioux City Archives

Catholic U. campus. His appointment as bishop of the new diocese of Sioux City in 1902 effectively removed him from the debate to a midwestern diocese near his friend, Archbishop John J. Keane, also from Catholic U. and probably similarly tainted. Keane, an educator, had become Archbishop of Dubuque in 1900 on the death of Hennessy.

As bishop, Garrigan remained a friend of the BVMs, taking the 1915 Rule to Rome to aid in its approval. Of particular interest to him was the section permitting the BVMs to teach children without specifying girls or boys. He and Cardinal Falconio may be credited with the acceptance of non-geographic provinces as well as other changes in the 1914 Rule, placing fewer restrictions on the ministry and education of BVMs. (Coogan2 445-452).

Modernism/Americanism—19th century American heresy at Catholic U.

Few Catholics today have even a faint idea of the strain between the democratic American Church and the monarchical Vatican in the late 19th century. Vatican suspicion caused Pius IX, threatened at least twice by European wars from states trying to form a nation, to issue a list of what he called a *Syllabus of Errors* in which he “condemned modern life and liberalism” finally labeled as Americanism. His successors, Leo XIII and Pius X, both issued encyclicals condemning Americanism as a heresy.

The American bishops, proud of being American, had from the start worked to integrate the Catholic Church with the social mainstream. From the beginning, Irish immigrants chose to speak English. Years would pass before English was accepted as the main language in German Catholic churches. For many decades Germans, Italians, and French set up national churches and schools. Gradually, as the people became more assimilated into the American culture, the main language of their neighborhoods and churches became English.

By the turn of the century, the Catholic Church in the U.S. began to solve its regional problems by calling meetings like the Council of Baltimore and working out solutions independent of Rome. In 1884 the Vatican itself called the American hierarchy to the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore. Archbishop Gibbons (Baltimore) presided over 12 committees and 220 delegates. The 6th Committee (education) provided a great push to Catholic education in America by mandating that every parish provide a parish school. Every Catholic child was expected to attend and parents were to send their children to the Catholic parish school and not to the public school. Pastors who had no parish school within two years after Baltimore lost their parishes.

The U.S. Church inherited an intense interest in education from priests educated in Europe. Bishops John Spalding of Peoria (IL) and Bernard McQuaid of Rochester (NY) urged the Pope to set up a Catholic university for graduate education in Washington, D.C. A delegation of Gibbons, Spalding, John Ireland, bishop of Richmond (VA), and John Keane visited Leo XIII to persuade him to begin a Catholic university. Leo did so, appointing John Keane as its first rector. In 1888 the cornerstone of Catholic University was laid in Washington, D. C.

Meanwhile, an interest in the relationship between science and theology appeared among the Modernists. In alarm, opponents of Modernism saw the movement as substituting science for dogma. Both Leo and Pius X wrote encyclicals condemning Modernism as an American heresy. Pius even made the American clergy take an oath of loyalty to the Pope. Some church historians question whether Americanism/Modernism was a heresy at all. Now Bishop Keane's openness to change exposed him as founder and first rector of Catholic U. to censure as a Modernist. Also known as a liberal, he became a center of controversy at Catholic U.

When the discussion over science and theology heated up, Leo sent John Keane off to Dubuque as archbishop after Hennessey's death in March 1900, to remove him from the University. At the same time when the Dubuque archdiocese was divided, Keane's good friend and vice rector, Phillip Garrigan, became bishop of Sioux City. That's how it happened that when Mother Cecilia approached Catholic U. about the education of Catholic Sisters in America, she found herself on the side of clout with the help of Archbishop John Keane who had contacts among leaders at the University.

On taking over his archdiocese, Keane, an educator, immediately upgraded St. Joseph College, especially for the education of his priests. He approved of a dozen boarding schools in his diocese for girls and two for boys. He also urged Bertrand Foley, superior/president of Mt. St. Joseph, to raise the academy to a college. Keane advised Bertrand to investigate the courses of studies in Eastern colleges and approved her going to Columbia for tutors for her staff. She visited both Columbia and Catholic U. between 1903-05 to inquire about their course of studies and arranged for tutors at Columbia for some of her Mount teachers. Bertrand further consulted with Columbia and Catholic U. about initiating a college course of studies at Mt. St. Joseph.

"The first college registration in 1901 included six students. In 1913, the college in 12 years had conferred 149 academic diplomas, 60 special certificates, and 18 teaching certificates. In 1913 the college had 210 students from 22 states." (Clarke Lives 61)



Archbishop John J. Keane, Dubuque (IA)
1839-1918



Bishop John L. Spalding, Peoria (IL)
1846-1916



James Cardinal Gibbons, Baltimore (MD)
1834-1921



Bishop John Ireland, Richmond (VA)
1838-1918

The four most important bishops in America at the turn of the century—
they spoke at the Columbian Exposition and entertained the Vatican's
Apostolic Delegate Satolli.

, , ,